

## K-3 Essential 6, Bullet 5 Instruction in Capitalization, etc. Sample Video

MAISA Literacy Essentials

<https://youtu.be/vX23YhQVeos>

Narrator: When teachers provide research and standards aligned writing instruction, they support students' literacy learning. In this classroom, the teacher provides explicit instruction in capitalization, letter formation and sentence construction.

Teacher Elissa: So some of the writing skills that I teach include capitalization, letter formation or handwriting, sentence construction and spelling. And the reason that these skills are so important to young writers is because they help students to write fluently. When I teach these skills and the students are able to do them independently, they can focus more on conveying meaning in their pieces rather than the mechanics of writing. In English, our alphabet can be written in two different ways. The letters in our alphabet, we can use uppercase or capital letters, or we can use lowercase letters. Now it's really important that when you're writing, you understand when to use your capital letters and when to use your lowercase letters. And the reason for this is because we want people to be able to read our writing clearly. So there's a few different times that you can use capital letters, and I'm going to give you a little chart that's going to help you remember when you can do this.

Okay? One of the skills that I teach is capitalization, which is a standard convention that can be taught when students have an understanding of the concept of a sentence. So they have to understand how a sentence works so that they can know when they need to use capitalization appropriately. In the sentence, I am going to show the students the times that you're supposed to capitalize letters. Alright, so your chart looks just like mine, okay? Now, some places that we use are capital letters are for the names of months, the first letter and the name of the month. We also do that for the days of the week. The first letter is going to be an uppercase or a capital letter. Now I need your help. I want to write the sentence on Saturday ala and I went to the movies. So I have to think really carefully about how I'm going to write this sentence.

The first word that I want to write is on. I know that at the beginning of my sentence, that first letter is going to be a capital. So when I write the word on, I have to use a capital O. Okay? So o, n, O, right? The next word that I wanted to write was Saturday. I have to think. Is Saturday the name of a month or the name of a day of a week? Trevor? Day of the Week. It's a day of the week. So that means I have to use a capital letter at the very beginning of the word Saturday. Make it an uppercase. Okay, so Saturday.

So I wrote on Saturday. Now I'm going to write ala and I went to the movies. First I'm going to think aloud for how I'm using that resource to help me know how I need to capitalize different letters throughout my own sentence. And then I'm going to actually be pulling students up to my board. I have some different sentences written down that have only lowercase letters, and I want them to think about what they know about when to use capital letters so that they can fix some of those sentences. Now you are going to help me to fix some sentences, okay? Okay. I'm going to give each one of you a marker eraser and an eraser, and we're going to think back to your chart, and we're going to see how we can fix some of the sentences that are up on the board. The first sentence says, my cat's name is Max. I want you to think, okay, where do we need to turn some of these lowercase letters into uppercase letters. Think about the beginning of a sentence. What do we always have to have at the beginning of a sentence? Chandler? An uppercase. So can you come over and you're going to erase that lowercase M.

You can grab an eraser. You're going to erase that lowercase M and you're going to make it a capital letter. A capital M.

Very good. Okay, so my cat's name is Max. Do you see another spot, boys and girls, that we have to make a lower case letter into an upper case letter? Do we have any names of pets or people?

Student: We have a name.

Teacher Elissa: Very good. So we have to change that M to an uppercase, a capital M. So go ahead and erase it. Alright, it says, John and I played tag. So where do you think we need to turn one of these lowercase into an uppercase or a capital letter?

Student: This one.

Teacher Elissa: You're right, because when I stands alone, it has to be a capital. So let's fix that one. After each student has had the opportunity to come up, then they're going to practice using capitalization correctly in their own writing. So I'm going to have them look back at a piece that they've already completed and then they're going to find a spot that they need to fix either a lowercase capital letter or an uppercase letter, or a vice versa. Alright, friends? So I asked you to all look through your writing so that you could find a spot that you needed to make a correction with your capital, your uppercase letters, and your lowercase letters. I would like for one of you to share an example of when you did this. So you're going to tell the spot that you did it and you're going to tell me how you know that you needed to make that correction. Okay, Trevor,

Student: I did this one because it wasn't in the chart.

Teacher Elissa: Okay, so which word point to it. So you had a D in the word do.

Student: I had these ones not in the chart.

Teacher Elissa: So you had your two Ls and a name, but they were at the end of the name, so you knew that you had to make those from uppercase capital letters to lowercase letters. When you're writing, make sure that you're using your capital letters in the right spot so that whoever picks up your piece can read it clearly. For my lesson today, I'm going to show the students the lowercase letter K, and I'm going to model for them how you write that letter. I'm going to remind them of the different steps and what the diagram is for the letter K, and then I'm going to have them actually practice tracing it before they try doing it with a pencil. One thing I'm going to focus on is making sure that my students are holding the pencil the correct way because they need to have a comfortable grip in order to make their writing easier as well.

So I'm going to be checking their grip and then they're going to practice writing the letter K in isolation and in some different words. Today, writers, we're going to work on forming our letters correctly. I want to remind you that when we're doing letter formation, it means how we're writing our letters on our piece of paper. Now, learning to form your letters correctly is really important for two different reasons, okay? The first reason is you want to make sure that you're holding your pencil comfortably so that your writing is easier, but the more important reason is you want your reader to be able to read your writing so that they can understand everything that it is that you're sharing with them. So I have up here a diagram of the lowercase letter K. So when I'm starting the letter K, I start it at the very top of the line and I go down.

My next step is I'm going to go to that middle line and I'm going to pull in. My last step is I'm going to go out. Okay? So when I make that letter K, I go from the top to the bottom, then I draw my line in and out. I have for you a little whiteboard, and on here we're going to practice together the different steps of making the letter K. So I want you to go to the first K. You're going to put your finger at the top. Put your finger right up at the top, okay? Put your forefinger. You're going to use this one, okay? And we're going to trace it together. Ready? We're going to start at the top. We're going to trace down. We're going to erase the line. Okay, very good. We're going to do it quick. Then we're going to go to this one.

We're going to slide it back, and then we're going to slide down and out. Letter formation or handwriting, it's a motor skill that can be taught in brief, but frequent lessons. When I'm teaching handwriting, I really want the students to know that they don't only do this with letters in isolation, they have to make sure that they're using neat handwriting in words and then for their own piece. And I really stress the importance that this is going to help them become a fluent writer. If they're not focusing on handwriting all of the time because they're able to do it quickly and easily, then they're able to focus much more on conveying meaning to their reader, and the reader's going to be able to actually read what it is that they wrote. Now that you've practiced tracing it on your whiteboard, we're going to practice actually writing this letter.

Now, when we're doing our writing, I told you one of the reasons we have to practice our handwriting is because we want our hand to be comfortable when we're doing our writing. So we're going to check our grip on our pencil. When we hold our pencil, I want to remind you, okay, that we take our thumb and our forefinger, and we use that to pinch our pencil. Then we rest it on our middle finger, okay? This is the most comfortable way for you to hold your pencil so that your writing is easier. So I'm going to give each one of you a pencil. I want you to practice that, and I'm going to check your grip before you start your writing. Now we're going to use this script as we practice the letter K, okay? Remember, we start at the top, we go down, and then we do our other lines.

We go in and then back. And I want you to keep practicing. I'm going to check, we're going to try that practice, okay? Try another one. Start at the top, go down. Okay, so when you go back to your writing today, make sure you're writing those letters nice and neat so that your reader can understand your writing and understand exactly what the meaning of your piece is. So another skill that I teach is sentence construction, and it builds from the concept of a simple sentence to making stronger and more engaging sentences. In my lesson today, I'm going to teach the students how they can use a sentence frame to take a short idea and build it into a longer sentence. Alright? Writers, you have an important job when you're writing, and that job is that you want to hook in your reader and keep them interested in what it is that you're writing about.

Now, there's a way that you can do this. You can write different types of sentences to really keep your reader's attention. You can make some of your sentences longer, you can make some of your sentences shorter, but that's what makes your writing so interesting to read. Explicit instruction is when I directly tell the students what it is that I want for them to know and to be able to accomplish independently, I explain to students a skill or a strategy, and I tell them why it's important to them as a writer. And I also explain how and when they're going to apply it to their own writing. So what I do is I give a direct lesson where I'm teaching the students the skill, and then after that I do a model to show them exactly what it is I want them to know or be able to do independently.

And the reason I do the modeling after I do the lesson is because I want my students to know precisely what is happening while they're watching me teach. My sentence says in blank, I like to, and there's a

blank while I blank. So I have to think, what could I put in this first blank? I have to think about someplace that I could be in or a time of year that I could be in, or it could even be a sport that I could be playing. Let's see, I'm thinking about a time of year Mira that I really like. My favorite time of year is fall. So I think in the first blank I'm going to write fall because there are all kinds of things that I like to do in the fall. So for the first spot, I'm going to write in and I'm going to write fall. Okay? I have to think. What do I like to do? I love to go to the pumpkin patch. I love to carve pumpkins. I really like to drink cider. That's one of my favorite things about fall. So I'm going to write, I like to drink cider. Okay. And do you know what I do while I drink cider? I eat donuts. So while I eat donuts. Okay, so I just made a really great interesting sentence. It's longer than just saying I drink cider and eat donuts. I told you when I do it. So in fall I like to drink cider while I eat donuts. Now that I've showed you how I can do this, I want you to help me. Okay? We're going to make a long interesting sentence. What could we write for this first blank? Mira?

Student: Writing

Teacher Elissa: And writing. Okay, sure. So in writing, what is something that you like to do? When we are doing writing, what do you think Aya illustrate? You like to do the illustrations? Okay. So how do we, your illustrations, what do you like to do? So I like to draw illustrations. Okay. So I like to draw illustrations while, what else are you doing while you are drawing your illustrations? Marissa? Color While I color. Sure. Okay. Once we draw our illustrations, we're doing our coloring as well. Very good. The students really need practice with dividing a run-on sentence or combining and expanding shorter sentences. And the reason that this is important is because varying your sentence length is going to make your writing more interesting for your reader. People are going to want to read these sentences because they have more information in them. So in spring I like to ride my bike.

Student: Good.

Teacher Elissa: Okay. What do you do while you're riding your bike?

Student: Go up and down hills.

Teacher Elissa: Perfect. In dance, I like to do ballet while I What do you do while you're doing ballet?

Student: Smile. Sure. Because my teachers don me

Teacher Elissa: To smile. I'm sure they tell you to smile a lot, don't they? I'm going to have you share which one you think is so interesting and would really help to keep your reader's attention. Remember? That's why we make these sentences because we want to hook in our reader and keep them reading. So pick one and then I'm going to have you share. Aveh, let's start with you. Let's hear the one sentence you think would really keep your reader's interest

Student: In winter, I like to build snowman. Well, I play in the snow.

Teacher Elissa: Perfect. So we knew what season you were in. We knew what you'd like to do. Wonderful. Let's hear yours, Marissa,

Student: In spring, I like to ride my bike while I play with my sister.

Teacher Elissa: Very good.

Narrator: Learn more at [literacyessentials.org](https://literacyessentials.org).