



# WriteBrain FAQs

---

## What is WriteBrain?

WriteBrain is a standards based, user-friendly, online writing solution for Grades 2-12 that gives teachers the tools, flexibility, and customization necessary to support and engage every student.

## What are the benefits to a web-based writing tool?

There are several benefits to the online format of WriteBrain. Students can use the product at school, at home, or any other location with an internet connection. The online feature also fosters communication and collaboration - the electronic exchange of written works, ideas, assessment, and reporting between students, teachers, and parents, all entirely within the product.

In addition, the web environment allows WriteBrain to maintain a digital, online portfolio for all students, providing a means for monitoring and reflecting on a student's growth as a writer over the years.

## How does WriteBrain engage and motivate students to write?

WriteBrain supports students in the application of the best practices through engaging them with an easy to use online writing tool. WriteBrain provides students with differentiated instruction from their teacher, flexibility within the program, text to speech for younger writers, the ability to publish their works to the entire WriteBrain community and an unrivaled assessment and revision functionality that fosters self-reflection and critical thinking skills beyond the writing process.

## How is WriteBrain specifically geared towards today's students?

- Like TTL, Key Skills and other award winning Sunburst programs, WriteBrain focuses on providing best of breed solutions for life long skills
- Develops students' critical thinking skills, as well as their abilities to process, research, organize and present information
- Creates a non-threatening and highly engaging learning environment
- Prepares students to succeed on standards-based tests
- Cultivates media literacy skills that students will need throughout their lives

## Does WriteBrain have lesson plans and other instructional materials available?

The program contains 170 system lessons, covering eleven different genres over grades two through twelve. In addition, teachers are able to create new lessons on their own or edit existing lessons from their school, district or the entire WriteBrain community.

## Can teachers change or add new lesson plans?

Yes. WriteBrain offers instructors a highly flexible lesson creation tool, enabling teachers to create lessons on their own or edit existing lessons. This customization of lessons content provides differentiated instruction for your students. Teachers are also able to share their lessons with the entire WriteBrain community for others to utilize and/or customize for their specific needs, i.e. a teacher in Illinois can access a shared lesson plan posted by a teacher in California.

## Can I assign individualized lessons to students?

Yes. Teachers can assign lessons to an entire class or to individual students.

## How are the students scaffolded through the writing process?

The teacher can scaffold instruction by gradually removing the supports as students become more competent. These tools include templates for different text structures, vocabulary, image banks and links to other print and web resources. It includes specific strategies for each of the components of the writing process (e.g. brainstorming for planning, concept maps for organization, self-assessment or revision, etc.)

## Does WriteBrain correlate to my state standards?

Yes. WriteBrain is standards-based. Every lesson within the solution is aligned to curriculum standards in all 50 states.

## Is WriteBrain research-based?

Yes. WriteBrain is 100% research-based. Developed by educators, cognitive psychologists, and writing specialists, WriteBrain uses principles from the latest research on teaching writing. (we will direct readers to the white paper website)



# WriteBrain FAQs

---

## What if my students are not very good readers yet? Will they be able to use WriteBrain?

The WriteBrain program has an auditory text to speech component for all steps in the writing process.

## How does WriteBrain assess and evaluate student papers?

Assessment and revision are the most abstract parts of the writing process. WriteBrain contains an unrivaled, built-in assessment capability, including customizable instructor, peer, and self assessment based on 6-Trait rubrics. Students seamlessly give and receive feedback on their writing, and use this feedback for revision directly within the program. This robust assessment and revision functionality not only enhances students' writing skills, but also fosters self-reflection and critical thinking skills beyond the writing process.

## What type of reports can I create with WriteBrain?

WriteBrain contains a powerful and flexible reporting engine. Generate reports for an individual student or an entire class. Display scores by state standard, genre, or lesson. High-stakes test preparation is visible within genre and lesson reporting. Use the reports to demonstrate that students are improving as writers over time and meeting adequate yearly progress. Student and Parent reports are also available.

## Are peer assessments monitored and/or controlled by the teacher?

Yes. Students are not able to share their writing with a peer during the assessment process without the teacher giving permission.

## How does WriteBrain prepare my students for high stakes testing?

To help prepare students for high stakes tests, WriteBrain also contains Test Prep content for grades two through twelve, modeled after standardized writing exam prompts, such as SAT, NY Regents, and NC State exams. This test prep component supports students by gradually moving them away from the scaffolding in the product toward timed testing situations.

## How do I know if my computer, school and/or district meet the minimum technical requirements needed to incorporate WriteBrain?

WriteBrain requires only an internet connection and a web browser. It is both PC and OSX compatible.

### Operating Systems and Browsers

Windows 98, 2000, XP - Internet Explorer 6, Netscape 8.1, Firefox 1.5.0.1

Mac OSX 10.2, 10.3, 10.4 - PowerPC and Intel Platforms - Netscape 7.2, Firefox 1.5.0.1, Safari 2.0.3 (on OSX 10.4), Safari 1.3.2 (on OSX 10.3), Safari 1.0.3 (on OSX 10.2)

(all browser upgrades are free online from: [www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/ie6/downloads](http://www.microsoft.com/windows/ie/ie6/downloads), [browser.netscape.com](http://browser.netscape.com), [www.mozilla.com/firefox](http://www.mozilla.com/firefox), and [www.apple.com/support/downloads/](http://www.apple.com/support/downloads/))

### Hardware

Windows: 450 MHz Processor or faster at least 128MB of RAM, 1024x768 recommended screen resolution, 800x600 supported

Mac: 500 MHz PowerPC G3 or faster, Intel platform at least 128MB of RAM, 1024x768 recommended screen resolution, 800x600 supported

### Plug-Ins

Flash Player 7 or higher – required, free download at: [www.adobe.com/downloads/](http://www.adobe.com/downloads/)

Shockwave Player 10 or higher (may not be supported on all Intel Mac machines) – necessary only for text-to-speech features, free download at: [www.adobe.com/downloads/](http://www.adobe.com/downloads/)

## Is home/remote/community-based access available to students and educators?

Yes. Students, teachers and parents are able to access WriteBrain from anywhere with an internet connection.