AAC languagelab®

Conventional Literacy Intervention Guide: Writing Checklist

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Supporting Conventional Literacy & Independent Communication

When working with conventional literacy learners who use Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC), our primary objective is to support autonomous writing, preserve the author's intent, and minimize unnecessary cognitive hurdles. Use this checklist during instructional writing sessions.

AAC WRITING INSTRUCTIONAL CHECKLIST

CONTEXT	❌AVOID DOING THIS	✅DO THIS INSTEAD
Spelling	**INTERRUPTING** Grabbing their hand, resetting their screen, or cutting them off to correct a misspelled letter mid-word.	**HONORING ATTEMPTS** Let them complete the full word. Read it aloud exactly as they spelled it, and model the correct spelling **after** they finish their thought.
Prompts	**CLOSED QUESTIONS** Resorting to strict "Yes/No" choices (e.g., *"Is the cat bad?*) to speed up the lesson.	**OPEN CORE DESCRIPTORS** Ask open-ended questions (e.g., *"What do you think about that cat?"* or *"Tell me about the trick."*).
Device Use	**OVER-ASSISTING** Flipping pages or selecting the first part of a symbol sequence for them to make the writing process move faster.	**DESCRIPTIVE PROMPTS** Provide descriptive, verbal navigation clues to build independence (e.g., *"I think that word might be an ACTION word."*

Writing Coach Reminders

WAIT
- Allow productive silence
- Give time to
  - think,
  - navigate,
  - spell
- Let them finish

WONDER
- Stay curious
- Could this represent a meaningful idea?
- Is there another interpretation?

SUPPORT
- Help without taking over
- Ask open-ended questions
- Use descriptive prompts and respond to ideas first

Honor the AAC author's intent

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1. Manage and Isolate the Cognitive Load

Writing independently requires intense cognitive, linguistic, and motor planning for an AAC user.

The Fix: Do not force the student to copy repetitive sentence frames or carrier phrases *Provide a frame (e.g., "The cat played a trick because..."*) and let the AAC writer complete it with unique responses instead of copying the carrier phrase. Dedicate 100% of their energy to generating their own unique text.

2. Protect and Value Author's Intentt

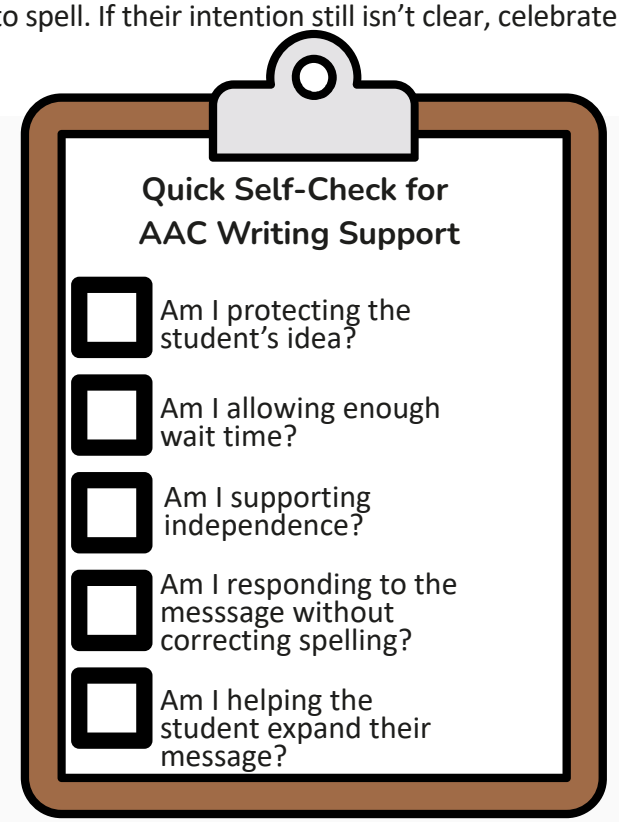
If a student selects a core word or phonetic spelling that seems completely out of context, do not instantly write it off as an error or an accident.

The Fix: Ask an open, clarifying question that respects their choice: *"You selected the word GO. Did you mean the cat made Chip GO away, or that cats GO fast?"* Show them how to reshape or expand that exact idea.

3. Normalize "Creative Spellsing" (Invented Spelling)

Conventional literacy learners grow by trying out phonetic boundaries. If a student spells *TRICK* as *TIK*, that demonstrates phenomenal phonemic awareness.

The Fix: Celebrate the communicative success! If you know their intended target, write their exact meaning in conventional text underneath the word without making them erase or change their original work. If their meaning isn't clear, ask if they can use words in their AAC system to explain what they are trying to spell. If their intention still isn't clear, celebrate their spelling attempt and move on.



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