Grandpa and he shows you some of his dried mushrooms, you’ll probably add a new entry. You might write entries related to the seed idea over several weeks or a month before you’re done.

I invite you to try this. Remember: not every entry is a seed idea. A seed idea should be something that interests you enough to live with it over time.

The process of nurturing a seed idea doesn’t always go smoothly. Don’t be surprised when some seed ideas fizzle out.

If you have time, share the published picture book Hello, Harvest Moon with your students. They’ll notice the lines from the author’s notebook that ended up in the finished book.

Conference Questions:
You have many entries in your writer’s notebook. Why did you choose this one as a possible seed idea? What other entries might you write that are connected to this idea?

Often you’ll find that you’re just writing entries, experimenting, and collecting ideas in the writer’s notebook. But at certain times you’ll hit on an idea where you say to yourself: “Hey, I know I can really do something with this idea.” It’s your job to help that idea grow.

When that happens, you’ve got what we’ll call a “seed idea.” It’s your job to help that seed idea grow.

Ralph Fletcher had a seed idea in his writer’s notebook that was related to the harvest moon. Let’s take a look at it.

Ralph Fletcher eventually wrote a picture book about the harvest moon. Do you think he used all these entries in the finished book? Some? Which ones do you think he used?

Let’s hear Ralph Fletcher talk about developing a seed idea.

Play audio segment #4 and discuss as appropriate.

Let’s say you’ve got a seed idea you’re excited about: “Going Mushrooming with Grandpa.” You’re thinking maybe that could be a picture book or a collection of poems. The first thing you’ll want to do is give yourself space in your writer’s notebook. Write that title at the top of an empty page, and then leave the following two or three pages blank so you can continue adding entries about mushrooming.

With a seed idea, you probably won’t write everything down in one sitting. A seed idea is a development over time. As you’re writing, you might also jot down ideas about the characters in the book or the setting. Or you might write down scenes or subplots that you might want to explore later. The idea is to keep on writing and experimenting, adding notes about your idea.

Follow Up Point suggests ways to extend the teaching point and provides realistic advice on what to expect from teaching it.

Exemplars from writers’ notebooks model the concept being taught and show how others have applied a strategy.

Each of the Notebook’s 20 lesson cards provides a complete lesson. The front of each card presents a straightforward lesson in a concise three-part structure. The back of each card presents exemplar text or other lesson-specific teaching resources.

The Author Chats CD supports select lessons with short talks from Ralph on how he uses his notebook to explore different writing strategies. Transcripts of the chats are provided in their entirety in the Teacher’s Guide.
Thank you for sampling this resource.

For more information or to purchase, please visit Heinemann by clicking the link below:


Use of this material is solely for individual, noncommercial use and is for informational purposes only.