secondary

WRITING 44

A Core Writing Framework

NORTH VANCOUVER
SCHOOL DISTRICT
OPPORTUNITY • CHALLENGE • SUCCESS

Foreword

Our schools strive to provide all students with opportunities to succeed in challenging educational programs. To support this goal and to illustrate examples of promising and best practices, our talented and creative teachers and administrators have developed educational resources for the use of educators and students.

I hope that educators will find the materials and resources in *Secondary Writing 44* to be helpful and relevant with instructional planning, classroom management, and decision making.

On behalf of the North Vancouver Board of Education, I extend my appreciation and gratitude to the team of teachers and administrators listed on the following page. This timely instructional resource has been prepared with the support and leadership of Larry Johnson, Assistant Superintendent, and Joanne Robertson, District Principal of Student and Program Services.

John Lewis
Superintendent of Schools

Copyright © 2009 by North Vancouver School District

Acknowledgements

Since the publication and success of *Reading 44* in 1999, many teachers in North Vancouver have dreamed of creating a comprehensive and practical classroom resource for teaching writing to our students. During the summer of 2004, a keen and visionary group of educators began to review current research and educational theory on writing, and to develop a philosophy and structure for *Writing 44*. Since that time many groups and individuals have contributed research, design ideas, and new instructional activities, all of which have helped to shape the 2009 version of the *Secondary Writing 44* document.

Principal Researchers/Writers:

Kerry Henderson
Jordan Peters
Lisa Ottenbreit
Tracey Lloyd
Alanna Brady
Joanne Robertson
Jennifer Wilson
Deb Wanner
Susannah Howick
Susan Williamson
Melisse Adams

Contributing Writers:

Tina Hopkins
Maureen Stanger
Lee Millar
Kat Thomson
Jennifer Tieche
Tracey Hallam
Heather Frechette
Rick Raible
Erin Madsen
Herb Weber

Consultants:

Audrey Van Alstyne
Lyse Guay
George Monkman
Gretchen Tolfo
Rachel Welbourn
Kathryn Peatfield
Shauna Glover
Jennifer MacDonald
Julie McQuade
Sangeeta Gupta

Through meaningful dialogue, collaborative writing sessions, and feedback from classroom teachers and educational specialists in our school district, we have, as authors of *Writing 44,* experienced first-hand the challenges, frustrations, joys, and rewards of the writing process itself.

We hope that teachers will find value and inspiration in our work and that *Secondary Writing 44* will assist you in contributing to our students' success in writing.

Joanne Robertson
District Principal, Student and Program Services
North Vancouver School District

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Foreword 1
Acknowledgements 2
Table of Contents 3
Introduction 4

Core Understandings About Writing Instruction

- Our Beliefs About Writing Instruction 7
- Characteristics of Good Writers 8
- Components of a Balanced Writing Program 9
- Writing to Learn 20
- The Adolescent Learner 22
- Differentiated Instruction in the Writing Class 24

The Writing Process

- The Writing Process 28
- Celebrating Students' Writing 31
- Writing Workshop 34
- Purposes for Writing 36
- Modes of Writing 37

The Eight Writing Skills

- The Eight Writing Skills Graphic 41
- Introduction 42

Generating Ideas

- Ideas Index 52

Drafting

- Creative Writing 80
- Response to Literature and Media 136
- Paragraph Writing 176
- Expository Writing 188
- Persuasive Writing 214
- Narrative Writing 232
- Descriptive Writing 248

Re-thinking, Revising and Editing

- Re-thinking and Revising 263
- Editing 281

Assessment 297

Professional Resources 318

Introduction

"The teaching of writing is extraordinary in its demands – but also in its rewards"

Vicki Spandel (2001)

About this Resource

Teaching students to write well is a complex and challenging endeavour that requires knowledge of writing theory and pedagogy, an understanding of the elements of good writing, and an appreciation of the writing process itself. Effective writing instruction at the secondary level involves the careful organization of explicit instruction that incorporates the components of a balanced writing program, as well as lessons that provide student writers with choice, models, skills, practice and meaningful feedback in order to improve writing ability and increase student success.

In the first section of *Secondary Writing 44 Secondary,* we examine some **Core Understandings About Writing Instruction,** based on current research and our own beliefs about teaching writing. In particular, we present the **Characteristics of Good Writers,** and the importance of implementing the **Components of a Balanced Writing Program** as a means of providing a rich, cross-curricular writing program at the secondary level. The information in **Writing to Learn** recognizes the contemporary approach to writing instruction based on research into cognitive processes within students' writing development (knowledge telling vs. knowledge transforming). As well, we have addressed strategies and techniques in the **Differentiated Writing Instruction** section which provide teachers with guidelines and practical applications for addressing the diverse needs of learners from grades 8-12. We recognize that all students wish to be successful and we offer suggestions for teaching **Adolescent Learners** to write well. Their success with writing for real purposes and real audiences has implications far beyond the classroom.

The next section of our resource explores the various stages of the dynamic, recursive **Writing Process.** Teachers can provide lessons and practice at each stage of the writing process, while focussing on the development of specific writing skills that all students need to be more proficient and confident about their writing. We also present an array of suggestions and opportunities for **Celebrating Students' Writing;** the goal is for students to share their work with a larger, authentic audience.

Ultimately, when teachers can model and encourage good writing in a safe environment, the writing process, structured within a writing workshop model, closely mirrors that of the professional writer/editor experience. Our **Writing Workshop** information provides teachers with ideas of how to structure a classroom environment that balances explicit writing instruction with rich opportunities for writers in any curricular area, and, indeed, within an entire school community. It is our belief that all teachers who assign written work play a critical role in writing instruction.

As current research into writing instruction recognizes that the fully proficient writer needs to adapt to diverse contexts, modes, and purposes, our guidelines for teachers in **Purposes and Modes of Writing** highlight the flexibility that is needed when teaching adolescent learners. Excellent writing instruction goes beyond the focus on the 'five paragraph essay' and strives to build students' skills for a wide variety of forms, genres, styles, and tones for an ever-changing, authentic audience.

Introduction

About this Resource (cont'd)

It is understood that from time to time teachers also require focussed mini-lessons on particular writing skills within each stage of the writing process. The **Eight Writing Skills** identified in *Secondary Writing 44* are common skills that students can develop during authentic writing tasks. When teachers organize their writing program around contextualized process writing, and help students develop the skills necessary to achieve this process, students can become fully proficient writers who readily adapt to different formats, genres, contexts and purposes.

The heart of *Secondary Writing 44* lies in the creative and engaging **Instructional Activities** that have been generated by classroom teachers. From pre-writing to peer-editing, we have provided a variety of useful, unique lessons presented within each of the stages of the writing process. Integrated into this framework are a variety of genres based on introducing students to the structural features of different kinds of writing (narration, exposition, persuasion, description, etc.). The following outlines the presentation of our instructional activities in this resource:

- **Generating Ideas**
- **Drafting**
  - **Creative Writing**
  - **Response to Literature and Media**
  - **Paragraph Writing**
  - **Essay writing: Expository, Persuasive, Narrative, Descriptive**
- **Re-thinking, Revising and Editing**

The instructional activities offered at each stage of the writing process, plus the **Graphic Organizers, Instructional Aids** and **Vocabulary Lists,** provide teachers with creative, yet practical support for cross-curricular writing instruction. The easy-to-follow lessons also include possible extensions and adaptations, as well as teacher tips to enhance the learning experience for students.

Meaningful assessment of students' writing also serves to develop their skills. In the **Assessment** section, we provide ideas for supporting the use of meaningful assessment for/as/of learning so that teachers and students can work collaboratively to set criteria for success. To support students' development in the various stages of the writing process, as well as the various genres they learn at the secondary level, we have created several sample rubrics that teachers can use to adapt to their specific lessons or tasks. Our hope is that teachers will strive to engage their students in the process of creating criteria and expectations in order for students to foster greater ownership in the writing and learning experience.

The **Professional Resources** section includes a bibliography of professional books on the topic of writing instruction, as well as a list of websites to help teachers plan their own writing lessons.

Each website UEL, printed in (colour), has been verified as active as of the publication date. If you notice an inactive link, please contact us by email at ***writing44@nvsd44*.**

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Core Understandings About Writing Instruction

Our Beliefs About Writing Instruction

The writing team of *Secondary Writing 44* was inspired by current research, theory, and our own beliefs about writing instruction. These beliefs helped shape and guide the development of this document.

OUR BELIEFS ABOUT WRITING INSTRUCTION

- Students learn to write by writing; daily practice is important.
- Writing is an interactive, recursive, and often 'messy' process.
- Writing is a powerful tool for communicating thinking and intellectual development.
- Effective writing instruction requires carefully thought out year-long plans that incorporate all components of a balanced writing program.
- A balanced writing program includes a variety of instructional activities and opportunities for different types of writing.
- Students need to write for different purposes and experiment with different modes and forms of writing.
- Writing improves through dialogue. Students need structured opportunities to share their ideas before, during, and after writing.
- Writing and reading are inseparable processes.
- Teaching, feedback, and self-assessment of works in progress are critical aspects of the writing process.
- Teaching and assessing are interconnected; assessing our students' writing should guide our practice.
- Assessment of writing involves sensitive responses to selected aspects of students' writing.
- Students and teachers should co-establish and share a clear understanding of the qualities and criteria of good writing.
- Think-Alouds, models or mentor texts, collaboratively developed criteria, rubrics, and checklists help to build clear expectations.
- Revising for meaning is paramount and should always come before editing for conventions.
- Experiencing success in writing activities fosters further growth and development in writing.

Writing is a craft that can be learned through informed practice in a supportive learning environment. We believe that all students are capable of good writing and that teachers can and do make a difference in helping students achieve the skills they need to become effective writers.

Characteristics of Good Writers

Some students lack confidence in their writing ability and find it especially challenging to write on demand. Part of their anxiety may arise from their lack of understanding of the practices of good writers. The graphic below provides information about strong writing habits and can be used to encourage students to examine their own writing skills in comparison.

A conversation about effective writing skills might start with providing lists of characteristics of good and poor writers. The four questions following the lists below are possible prompts for students to consider as they make changes for greater success to their writing skills.

Poor Writers

- ✔ Do not engage in any pre-writing activities
- ✔ Write as quickly as possible
- ✔ Will try to re-work a piece of writing rather than throwing it away and starting anew
- ✔ Believe that writing is a linear series of steps
- ✔ Focus on form and conventions and avoid examining the content
- ✔ Do not re-read their work for surface or deep revision
- ✔ Believe quantity is more important than quality
- ✔ Write without consideration of the audience
- ✔ Lack a desire to self-assess or improve

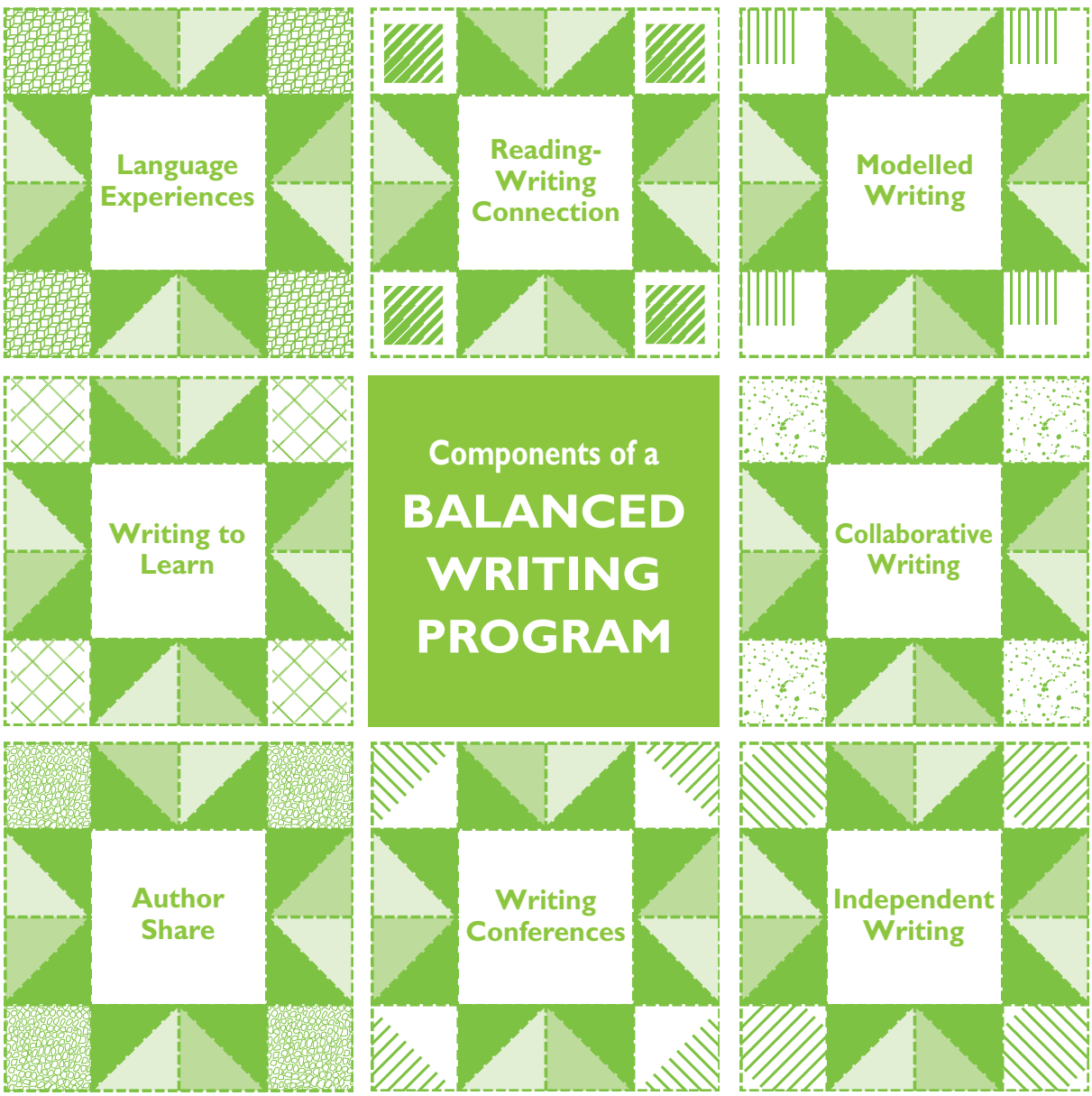
Good Writers

- ✔ Follow their instincts
- ✔ Are not afraid to take risks
- ✔ Concentrate on generating original ideas
- ✔ Experiment by writing several draft copies
- ✔ Discuss their writing with others and ask for feedback
- ✔ Look to other writers for ideas and models
- ✔ Do not allow small errors to interfere with the writing process
- ✔ Revise or even discard while they write
- ✔ Learn from their errors
- ✔ Consider their audience while they write
- ✔ Keep their purpose in mind while they write

Questions for analysis and possible discussion with a partner or teacher:

1. Which characteristics from the above lists apply to your writing practice?
2. Which ones have never applied to you?
3. Which ones will you try to implement in order to improve your writing? How will you do that?
4. Which ones will you not be able to incorporate into your writing practice? Why?

Components of a Balanced Writing Program



Components of a Balanced Writing Program

Students learn to write through a variety of activities across content areas with direct or indirect teacher support. It is important to provide a balanced combination of the following approaches to writing instruction. The following Eight Writing Components are recommended for secondary writing instruction.

Language Experiences

Definition:

Pre-writing or rehearsing is one of the most important components of a writing program. Predictably, generating ideas can also be one of the most challenging tasks for student writers. Exposing students to a wide variety of quality texts will help students to formulate new ideas; however, reading extensively will not guarantee success in writing. Students can also engage in many pre-writing activities to encourage the generation of ideas for writing. Brainstorming, discussing, debating, persuading and influencing others, listening, story-telling, book talks, note taking, researching, role-playing, interviewing and exploring the Internet are ways that teachers can help students in their quest for ideas. As well, concrete experiences such as nature walks or field trips to interesting venues serve to develop the exploration of the senses which, in turn, help to generate language, vocabulary, concepts and ideas (DeBolt, 1998). Teachers need to promote the classroom as a language-rich environment where students can think aloud about their interpretations, hypotheses and perspectives (Pirie, 1997). Students should be encouraged to speak, listen, and read to build their understandings, explore connections and question their experiences in an effort to build a diverse idea bank for future writing purposes.

Rationale:

Oral language development is now considered to be critical for academic and social competence. By providing many opportunities to engage in different kinds of talk, teachers can increase students' literacy skills, students' responses to literature and students' creative writing. Rich, meaningful, multi-cultural language experiences promote discussion, inquiry, and debate about a variety of ideas, perspectives, and attitudes. It follows that by providing opportunities for students to engage in varied speaking, listening, observing, and reading activities, students will build their repertoire of connections, questions, and ideas to write about.

Components of a Balanced Writing Program

Language Experiences

Instructional Practices:

- Use Think Pair Share strategies and small groups to encourage discussion
- Increase the situations where students can use oral language such as speech writing, role-playing or creating film/videos
- Provide opportunities for students to discuss their responses to text (e.g. literature circles, or book clubs)
- Take students on a field trip to make observations of culture, history, arts, and human behaviours
- Build a class chart of the common stories/personal experiences students have to write about
- Have students keep a personal idea bank for future writing
- Invite guest speakers for students to interview

"When we enter a classroom, we cannot leave behind our own lives. To be writing teachers, we must share with students our childhood memories, our parents, a favourite aunt, a cousin we never could tolerate. We must give these favourite parts of our lives to our students on a silver platter and say to them, "This, my dears, is where your writing comes from."

Sandra Worsham, Essential Ingredients

Components of a Balanced Writing Program

Reading-Writing Connection

Definition:

Reading and writing are acts of composing because both readers and writers are engaged in the ongoing, dynamic process of constructing meaning. Reading and writing are also strongly connected: powerful learning opportunities arise whenever teachers link reading and writing in the instructional lessons that they create to help students to explore ideas, clarify meaning, and build knowledge (Vacca, Vacca & Begoray, 2005). The symbiotic relationship between reading and writing highlights the importance for students to be able to use reading and writing for learning in all subject areas.

Rationale:

By simply reading, one does not automatically become a proficient writer. Indeed, it is the coupling of extensive reading with explicit writing instruction that generates effective adolescent writers (Gallagher, 206). By carefully choosing and sharing a wide variety of quality texts, and examining the language, form, style and voice of an author, teachers encourage students to think about, and internalize the things that good writers do. However, research has shown that adolescent students benefit greatly when offered choice in the texts to read, and perspectives to explore as students' meaning making is both a personal and social process (BC Ministry of Education, 2007). Therefore, offering a balance of teacher and student-selected texts is important. Students should be exposed to rich literature before, during, and after the writing process, and while not guaranteeing an improvement in writing, it will help reinforce the reading-writing connection.

Instructional Practices:

Secondary students are required to read a variety of texts across their subject areas. Teachers should strive to expose students not only to classic and contemporary fiction, non-fiction, and poetry but also a wide variety of cultural and social perspectives and attitudes. Furthermore, with the advantage of technology, there are a myriad of opportunities for students to read online texts such as e-zines, blogs, wikis, and websites. However, simply reading model texts is not enough. The true value of the presentation of models comes in the careful examination and analysis of real-world writers and their craft behind the writing (Gallagher, 2006). When teachers work with students to read and explicitly dissect a variety of interesting and relevant models, they serve to reveal, and unravel, the "mystery" of good writing.

Refer to the activities in Response to Literature section for ideas on connecting reading and writing.

Components of a Balanced Writing Program

Modelled Writing

Definition:

Modelled Writing is a relatively simple, powerful strategy that provides an explicit demonstration of any of stages of the writing process. The teacher adopts the role of author by performing the process of turning thoughts into written words using a Think-Aloud approach. This approach can show students not only how to express thinking, but also to develop and improve thinking as well. As the teacher thinks out loud and gives voice to his or her thought processes, students hear what naturally occurs when one drafts, composes, revises, or edits a piece of writing. Modelling can also involve the study of model texts which provide adolescent learners with examples of mentor texts for study, discussion, analysis, and emulation. Often, *Modelled Writing* results in the development of co-established criteria, or rubrics that help to guide students toward success. Students can also provide valuable modelling to each other through collaborative pair or group work.

Rationale:

Writing is personal and risky work. For students who are anxious about how to start writing, or for those for whom writing poses a significant cognitive hurdle, *Modelled Writing* is a means of demystifying the writing process. Teachers can show how to conquer the challenges of writing by composing in front of, or alongside, their students. If teachers want their students to develop their writing skills, they must speak the language of writing to them (Gallagher, 2006). Showing model texts is not enough; in fact, providing students with a "perfect" model of writing often serves to increase their anxiety. Students need to witness the steps to writing, the authentic behaviours appropriate to each stage of the writing process, and the struggles all writers face. Once students have internalized the writing practices being modelled for them, they will gain confidence to write more independently.

Instructional Practices:

Modelled Writing should demonstrate that writing is challenging, that good writing is always the product of multiple revisions, and that continual assessment is key to the process. The following ideas are also important to keep in mind:

- *Modelled Writing* is particularly important in the drafting stage
- Writing that is not for grades will free students to focus on the creative process

Components of a Balanced Writing Program

Modelled Writing (cont'd)

Instructional Practices:

- Oral rehearsal and self-questioning strategies are important for students who struggle or are reluctant to write. These strategies should also be explicitly demonstrated
- Modelling planning for writing, including the use of graphic organizers, will ease students' stress at getting started
- Modelling the revision and editing processes will greatly benefit student awareness
- While students benefit immensely by examining professional writing, ensure that there is a wide variety of genres and formats to engage all learners

"Whatever the writing form or genre, it must be explicitly taught, carefully modelled, and extensively practiced in a safe and supportive writing environment."

Lori Jamison, The Write Genre

"We can't teach students to write in a genre by telling them the quality criteria any more than posting the Ten Commandments will assure that students will not covet their neighbour's iPod. We have to teach by example and by demonstration."

Bob Sizoo, Teaching Powerful Writing

Components of a Balanced Writing Program

Collaborative Writing

Definition:

Collaborative Writing involves creating instructional opportunities for students to work together to plan, draft, revise, and edit their writing. Research has shown that this approach, in which students help each other with one or more aspects of their writing, has a strong, positive impact on the quality of the students' work (Graham & Perin, 2007). The teacher can help to guide this process by supporting pairs or groups of students as they compose a piece of writing. The teacher uses explicit teaching, peer-assessment, and writing frameworks as needed.

Rationale:

When a higher achieving student works with a partner who struggles, the helper student can assist with the meaning, organization, mechanics, and assessment. Throughout this experience, the teacher acts as monitor, and encourager. In small groups, students can also work together to provide feedback to one another, and co-author as well as discuss and evaluate what makes effective writing. With *Collaborative Writing*, students have further opportunity to build language to talk about the writing process. It allows students to further interact and begin to move forward towards independence in writing (Sweeney, 2006). Students need to learn to write in a non-threatening environment where they have daily opportunity to view each other's work, provide meaningful feedback, and work toward the common goal of communicating effectively.

Instructional Practices:

As writing involves risk and some students may be nervous to share their work, there are ways to ensure successful peer collaboration:

- Be aware of classroom dynamics and relationships to make successful pairs and groupings.
- Allow for students to work together regularly in order to become familiar with collaborative experiences.
- Allow for anonymous feedback if students are still uncomfortable.
- Ask students to provide feedback on particular aspects of the writing (e.g. thesis statements or conclusions) so that the collaboration is focussed.
- Alternate between assigning pairs and small groups and allowing for students to select their own collaborative groupings.

For *Collaborative Writing* ideas, please see the various instructional activities for peer revision in the Revision section.

Components of a Balanced Writing Program

Independent Writing

Definition:

Independent Writing is uninterrupted time for students to write on their own. Students should have plenty of opportunities to solidify the skills and processes that they have learned in the *Modelled* or *Collaborative* writing lessons.

Rationale:

As students become more successful with teacher-supported writing activities, increasing student autonomy allows them to take risks and try out new, creative ideas and develop their own voice and style. With increasing independence, students can practice the skills and concepts of writing in order to hone their writing craft. Frequent *Independent Writing* practice gives students control of the writing process and encourages them to make effective choices. It is important to allow for opportunities to write freely and for students to choose their own topics and genres of composition as research confirms that adolescent writers are more engaged with choice. Furthermore, disaffected and struggling writers will benefit from "non-traditional" contextualized writing activities that incorporate media and technology. Technology provides flexible tools for writing and revising, and increases the size and kinds of authentic audiences students can reach with their communication (MacFarlane & Serafini, 2006).

Instructional Practices:

Adolescent learners crave (and need) responsibility in their own learning. When teachers make most of the decisions around learning, they are not allowing students to take ownership of their learning, thinking, choices, time management, self-monitoring and self-regulation (STEPS, 2008). However, some students will need a more gradual transition to independent writing as it may take longer for some students to become successful even after teacher modelling and much guided and collaborative practice. For further ideas for differentiated writing instruction, and to help struggling students become more independent, please refer to the Differentiated Writing Instruction information on p. 24.

Components of a Balanced Writing Program

Writing Conferences

Definition:

A *Writing Conference* is a brief discussion between a teacher and student, or between two peers, that provides immediate feedback about a piece of writing. Either a teacher or student can conduct a conference to discuss the revision of content or the editing of language conventions. These short discussions are meant to provide ongoing, supportive instruction or responses for one or two aspects of writing in one piece of writing prior to the completion of the writing task.

Rationale:

A *Writing Conference*, either with the teacher or with a peer, is an essential part of any writing program. Conferences offer the opportunity for writers to share their work and to have others respond. For the teacher, a *Writing Conference* is an excellent means of providing scaffolding or focussed instruction to enable students who are struggling. For the students, it is a chance to express their needs or confusion. It is essential that students receive constructive feedback on their work during a *Writing Conference*, so that they can make improvements as they work. Teachers must build on the students' unique ideas and skills, highlighting what they have done well, and not imposing their own ideas on the students' writing. In fact, once an assignment is turned in for grades, comments contribute nothing to the quality of the assignment and very little to a student's overall growth in writing (Kropp, 2004). For the student, especially if they struggle, one-to-one explicit instruction can offer a supportive environment for asking questions, confirming concepts, solidifying skills, and setting goals for future writing development.

Instructional Practices:

Ideally, *Writing Conference*s provide brief, individualized, supportive opportunities that balance explicit instruction of writing skills with opportunities for students to write on topics of their choice and to share their writing with others. A conference can focus on revision or editing, but not both. Separate conferences should be held for discussing clarity or effectiveness of communication and conventions or mechanics. *Writing Conference*s can be organized in many ways, but it is critical that they provide opportunities to promote constructive comments, respect, and support for the writer's craft. Students should come to a *Writing Conference* prepared and ready to discuss a particular aspect or focus of their writing.

For more on *Writing Conference*s, see the Assessment section p. 297.

Components of a Balanced Writing Program

Author Share

Definition:
Writing, like speaking, gains meaning from its audience. Writers must be their own first audience, but they also require the genuine response of others. Without a genuine audience, high school students will tire from "fake" writing or practicing writing for an audience that may only consist of the classroom teacher (Jago, 2005).

Rationale:
Sharing student writing at every stage of the writing process helps to build a community of writers so that students feel encouraged and motivated to share their written communication. Although not all classroom writing will end up at the publishing stage of the writing process, there are alternative ways to share student works and celebrate their unique voices. Sharing written work is an exciting part of any writing program, and for some students, this will be the inspiration to write more.

Instructional Practices:
Sharing student writing promotes pride of authorship. Adolescent learners, in particular, need opportunities to do something concrete with their skills and knowledge. They can organize a poetry reading or author's night, publish a class or school journal, act out an original play or musical, design a website, contribute to a blog, send a letter to the editor, etc. For further ideas and suggestions, see Celebrating Student Writing on p. 31.

"Good writing is supposed to evoke sensation in the reader – not the fact that it is raining, but the feeling of being rained upon."

E. L. Doctorow

"All of us write best when we have a purpose for writing and we know someone is going to read what we've written."

Lori Jamison, The Write Genre

Components of a Balanced Writing Program

Writing to Learn

Definition:
Writing in the content areas is a critical part of the learning process for all students. As such, all teachers need to see writing not only as a skill to be taught, but as a "curriculum unifier" (Rothstein & Lauber, 2000). Current research shows the importance of helping students understand the significance of how learning and thinking can be shaped and organized through writing (MacFarlane & Serafini, 2006). Effective teachers know that teaching reading and writing in partnership helps students to work thoughtfully to construct meaning, make discoveries and transform their thinking. The *Writing to Learn* component of a writing program helps students to solidify the reading-writing connection: writing can help them explore, clarify, and think deeply about the ideas and concepts they encounter in reading, viewing and listening.

Rationale:
Every instructor who gives writing assignments is a writing teacher and must assume the challenges for this responsibility. In secondary grades, students are required, in a variety of subject areas, to think and write critically to discuss, assess, persuade, analyze, evaluate and solve problems. Where students are taught by a variety of teachers, coordinated writing instruction across subject areas is important to strengthen and support learning (BC Ministry of Ed, 2008). Students are often required to explain information and elaborate knowledge in content classrooms. Consequently, writing can be seen as a tool of learning content material rather than an end in itself (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Instructional Practices:
Writing will take different forms for each subject area, e.g. persuasive essays, lab reports, research papers, procedures, poetry, summaries, etc. Students can be encouraged to use graphic organizers, writing frameworks, mapping, note-taking, journals, and notebooks to explore subject-specific language, vocabulary, formats, and genres.

See the next page on *Writing to Learn* for more information and further instructional suggestions.

Writing to Learn

Writing is a complex tool for thinking, communicating, and intellectual development; students write to accomplish many tasks such as solving problems, identifying issues, asking questions, clarifying meanings, and exploring viewpoints (MacFarlane, 2006). Furthermore, writing is a means for students to come to understand themselves, their ideas, their culture, their identity, and the world. Through writing, students can also develop a metacognitive awareness of their processes which, in turn, increases their fluency and success. Consequently, explicit writing instruction, and frequent writing practice needs to be implemented across a variety of curricular areas and not be limited to the language arts classroom.

In many content areas, writing is the means by which students show what they have learned. By writing down what students know about a topic, students engage in the process of "knowledge-telling". However, a higher goal would be for students to "transform their knowledge" which requires students to go beyond the telling, and begin to develop new ideas by re-thinking their previous knowledge and experimenting with new ideas and attitudes (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Contemporary research highlights the importance of engaging students in various forms of writing in the content area classrooms where writing can be a powerful tool for learning. Note-taking, short-answer responses to study questions, and worksheet responses have their roles in the learning process, but these non-composing writing activities are limited in the development of effective writing and, ultimately, thinking skills. Students need varied and frequent experiences with writing as a tool for learning (Vacca, Vacca & Begoray, 2002). As such, teachers of every discipline share in the responsibility of showing students how to think and write as historians, scientists, mathematicians, and literary critics do (Vacca, Vacca, & Begoray, 2002).

Below is a list of suggestions for increasing the role of writing/representing in the content area classroom. These writing-to-learn strategies will enhance students' transformation of knowledge:

Brainstorming

- K-W-L charts
- Quick writes

Exploratory Writing:

- Journal writing
- Response journals
- Double-entry journals
- Character journals
- Learning logs
- Writing paragraphs and essay responses
- Unsent/sent letter/email
- Bio-poems
- Dialogues
- Exit/admit slips
- Online Collaborative Communication

(cont'd)

Writing to Learn (cont'd)

Note-taking

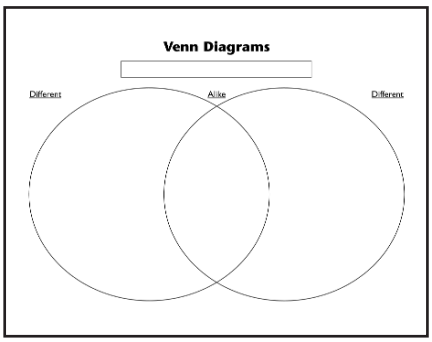
- Summary notes
- Personal responses
- Questions
- Key information
- Learning logs
- May include use of illustrations, diagrams, charts, graphs, index cards, or two column note forms

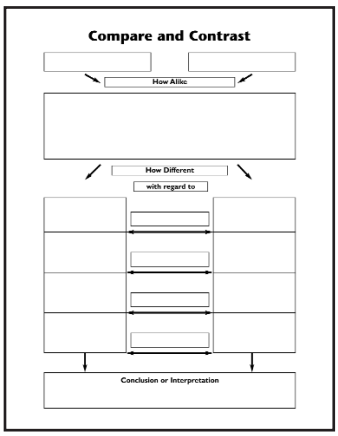
Using Graphic Organizers

- Can be used before, during or after reading, viewing, listening to information
- Series of events chains
- Semantic webs
- Concept map
- Problem-solution outline
- Comparison/contrast outline, etc.
- Venn diagram

Writing Summaries

- Summaries differ from re-telling in that they require students to connect new information to prior knowledge, and put information in their own words
- Students will benefit from oral summary prior to writing





The Adolescent Learner

It is important to recognize that adolescents learn more effectively in a program that is designed specifically for their needs. Students enter secondary school with a wide range of cognitive levels and developmental needs. Teachers should consider the following when planning their writing program:

1. **Create a safe environment for students**
   - Create a supportive environment where students feel liked, trusted and valued.
     i. Students should recognize themselves as stakeholders and help define how they will work together as a group.
     ii. The classroom should be a safe place to form relationships with peers and teachers.

2. **Develop programs that encourage students to make connections**
   - Connect the curriculum to the student's existing knowledge, skills and experiences.
     i. Challenge students to predict/anticipate before new learning begins.

   - Connect family, language, cultural and socio-economic experiences to learning activities.
     i. Students do not leave their life experiences behind when they come to school. The teacher must place them in the foreground of all learning activities.

   - Connect learning across the subject areas.
     i. Learning outcomes improve when teachers work as a team and plan curriculum together.

3. **Find ways to make learning meaningful**
   - Balance the content and processes.
     i. Un-cover rather than cover the curriculum.

   - Contextualize the learning.
     i. Adolescents love to learn things that are part of the real world.
     ii. Provide direct, hands-on lessons.
     iii. Allow time for students to explore, discuss, mind map, brainstorm, or research before writing about a topic.

(cont'd)

The Adolescent Learner

(cont'd)

- Use relevant, engaging and motivational materials.
    i. Adolescent learners want to be part of things that are current or topical.
    ii. Effective classrooms utilize digital/learning technology that engages the interests of adolescents.
    iii. Focus on connections to the larger world rather than on the differences between subjects.

4. Provide explicit feedback

- Make learning relevant.
    i. Adolescent learners need clear reasons for studying or reading about a particular topic.

- Make expectations clear.
    i. Learners should understand the expectations and outcomes and how to reach them at the beginning of a unit or lesson.

- Make the feedback constructive.
    i. Assessment should be formative and on-going to ensure further progress.
    ii. Challenge learners to "think about their thinking".

5. Move students forward.

- Model strategies.
    i. Strategies need to be modelled and explained frequently before students can apply them independently.

- Move students from dependence to independence with the guided release of responsibility.
    i. Select appropriate scaffolding strategies for various student needs.

- Build independence.
    i. Move students towards independence by allowing them to have ownership of their own learning.

Adapted from *Stepping Out, Writing: Constructing and Crafting Meaning.* (2008). Toronto: Pearson Education Canada.

Teacher Tip:

- For further information on research into adolescents' writing skills see the BC Ministry of Education's ELA 8-12 IRP for "The Key Elements of Effective Adolescent Writing Instruction" at ***http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/ela-8-12-2007.pdf***

Differentiated Instruction in the Writing Class

In today's increasingly diverse society, writing is a gateway to success in academia, the workplace, and for the global economy. However, teachers realize that in order to achieve success with writing instruction, it is important to address students' various learning preferences, styles, backgrounds, and complex needs. Faced with the reality of such a wide diversity of learners, teachers understand that one instructional plan will rarely work for all students in the class; hence, differentiation is essential. Addressing the rich diversity of our classrooms honours the uniqueness of each student and is paramount to their success. By differentiating instruction, teachers can examine how well they are providing variety and challenge in learning by identifying the students who are best served by the current instruction and adapting the plans as needed so that more students can be successful learners (Heacox, 2002). When teachers strive to include all students, they build common expectations, with differing amounts of support, different texts, different strategies and a variety of classroom organizational patterns (BC Ministry of Ed, 2007). All adolescent learners deserve a fighting chance in the increasingly demanding world of literacy.

The following list of recommendations could be applied to most students, but especially to students who are at-risk. It is important to consider ways to engage all adolescent learners who are at-risk from disengaging from the writing and learning process.

- Successful writing will only occur in a safe, encouraging environment.
- Writing, like any skill, requires much practice and hard work. Students need to write daily.
- A "universal design for learning" encourages the differentiation of content, process and product.
- If writing is being assigned rather than explicitly taught, students may improve fluency but not their writing skills. Guided support is required for effective writing instruction.
- Struggling writers and second language learners are often asked to write less, or complete worksheets in lieu of writing when, in fact, these students need twice as much writing instruction. No one rises to low expectations!
- Effective grammar instruction occurs in the context of the writing experience. Teachers should create highly specific mini-lessons in context around language conventions and the organization of writing.

(cont'd)

Differentiated Instruction in the Writing Class (cont'd)

- Students are required to write on demand for summative assessment practices such as the provincial exams and other post-secondary entrance requirements. Timed writing should be given the attention it deserves so that students are better prepared for timed writing situations.
- Well-informed writing teachers are the best writing instructors: teachers across all content areas must become familiar with the writing requirements and standards for secondary classrooms. All teachers share the responsibility of promoting literacy skills and helping students develop into successful writers.
- Students are more motivated to write when they have the opportunity to address topics of interest for which they have background knowledge. Offer choice when at all possible so writing assignments are relevant and meaningful.
- When students receive a paper drowning in red ink, they disengage. Teachers must stop making corrections, start providing meaningful feedback and encourage students to take ownership in the learning process. Peer assessment, self-assessment, and co-established criteria are some ways to foster responsibility for student writers.
- Developing effective assessment practices is essential. With better knowledge of when, how, and what to assess, writing instruction will seem less onerous to both the teacher and the student.

Certain approaches to writing instruction will serve to include many students:

- Apprentice approach to instruction using the guided release of responsibility.
- Flexible, cooperative, instructional groupings that foster and promote the social aspect of writing.
- Writer's workshop whereby teachers coach students at different stages of the writing process.
- Open-ended activities that foster student voice and choice in topic, methods of communication, and presentation.
- Presentation of a wide variety of contexts, formats, genres, audiences, and purposes for writing linked to the world outside the classroom.
- Effective integration of technology to improve both the quality and quantity of student writing and to help student writers who struggle: assistive tools reduce the barrier to writing and revising, software programs like *Inspiration* help students generate and organize ideas, and the Internet increases the size and kinds of audiences students can reach with their writing.
- Appropriate text selection so students can read, analyze, and respond while building fluency and comprehension strategies.

(cont'd)

Differentiated Instruction in the Writing Class (cont'd)

Beyond what is already accepted as best writing instructional practice (including a well-balanced writing program, the writing workshop, and guided instruction) the following practical classroom applications may help to support students with specific needs:

- First, know where your students are – determine their academic history, interests, and multiple intelligences (Gardner) through discussions, observations, conferences, pre-assessments, etc.
- Form supportive learning teams or "writing communities" of students with similar/different strengths.
- If necessary, provide extra time for generating ideas and revising.
- Encourage the use of graphic organizers for organizing and planning.
- Ensure the assignment of meaningful, creative, contextualized writing tasks.
- Provide lots of models from a wide variety of genres and formats, but remember that just showing the model is not enough – students will need explicit instruction either through a Think-Aloud or shared writing exercise to see how the writing is constructed.
- Allow for lots of oral support/rehearsal and visuals to build background knowledge and/or confidence about the topic.
- Celebrate small successes for all!

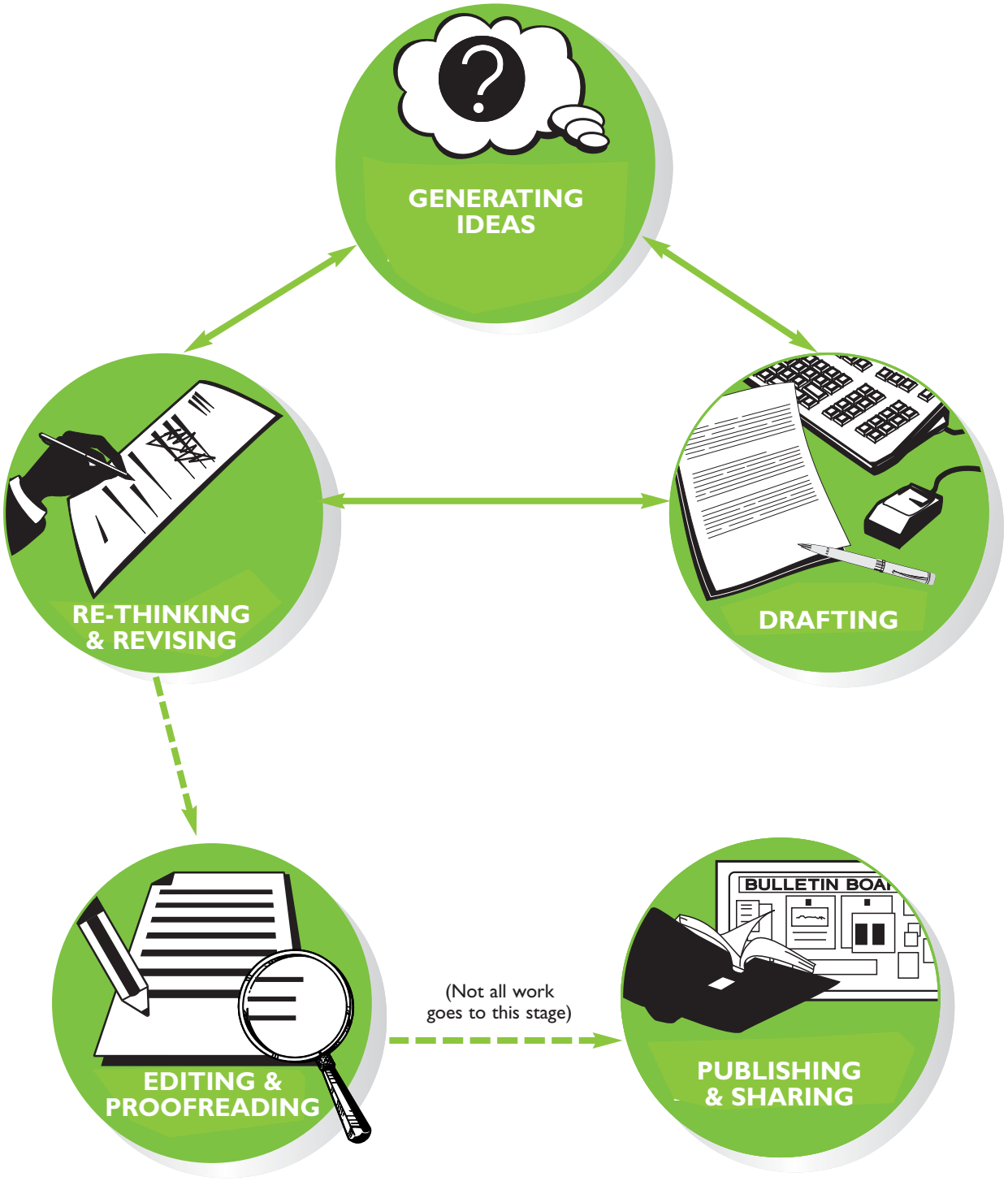
"Everyone can learn to become comfortable putting words and thoughts down on paper. Writing doesn't have to be a struggle."

Peter Elbow and Pat Belanoff, A Community of Writers

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

The Writing Process

The Writing Process



The Writing Process

"Excellent instruction in writing not only emphasizes correctness of forms and conventions, but also instills in writers the command of a wide variety of forms, genres, styles, and tones, and the ability to adapt to different contexts and purposes."

Graham & Perin (2007)

Writing is often viewed as a linear process; however, research substantiates the fact that the writing process is recursive and that the stages of writing are interactive rather than independent of one another. Effective and successful writers do not always move through the writing process in a sequential fashion. Although the writing process is divided into stages, it is not fixed, linear or separate steps. Instead, a good writer may shift back and forth in the writing process. As writers do this, they become more metacognitively aware of their own processes.

THE WRITING PROCESS INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

Generating Ideas

Generating ideas happens as a writer determines there is a reason for writing and begins to explore a topic or text. Purpose is established and audience is identified. The writer may choose to brainstorm and/or collect ideas from a wide variety of sources. Activities may include but are not limited to the following: webbing, note-taking, listing, read-alouds, shared reading, guided reading, individual reading, links to prior knowledge, interviewing, think-pair-share, video viewing, Internet searches.

Drafting Text

After several ideas have been generated, the writer will select those that fulfill the intended purpose and audience. In drafting text, the writer takes these ideas and puts them into a logical format. Writers should be careful not to self-edit at this point, but they may consider sentence structure and word choice. Activities may include graphic organizers, modelled/shared writing, creating a written draft on a word processor, or teacher assistance for individuals or groups.

(cont'd)

The Writing Process (cont'd)

Re-thinking and Revising

The revision stage of the writing process focusses on the meaning of the work. Writers should read for clarity and flow and revise for organization of ideas, sentence structure, and word choice. This is an important step that allows feedback from other sources before the final draft is completed. Activities may include modelled, shared, or guided writing, a review of and revision checklist/guiding questions, peer conferencing, or teacher assistance for individuals or small groups.

Editing and Proofreading

In order to ensure clarity and accuracy of message, it is important for writers to look carefully at conventions of language. A writer must examine their grammar and style, carefully refining and polishing their spelling and punctuation to reduce or eliminate distractions caused by errors. Activities may include modelled, shared or guided writing instruction, a review of an editing checklist/guiding questions, or teacher assistance for individuals or small groups.

Publishing and Sharing

Writers may present, share or display finished or unfinished pieces of writing. The product may exist in a variety of forms designed to match its intended purpose and audience. These forms may include oral presentations, journals, posters, letters, poems, stories, web pages, essays or reports. For a more comprehensive list see Celebrating Students' Writing on p. 31.

Celebrating Students' Writing

"The classroom atmosphere determines the amount and kind of risks taken in writing. Children need to feel support and acceptance from teachers and peers to take the kind of risks involved in the process of producing good writing. When children feel safe from criticism, they become eager to write and to share their writing. The class becomes a community of writers."

Marjorie Simic (1994)

CREATING A COMMUNITY OF WRITERS

Writers must be their own first audience, but they also require the genuine response of others. Students benefit from having their writing read or heard by an audience. In order for students to be encouraged to share their work with their peers, a safe and supportive classroom environment must be established from the beginning of the year. Creating a community of writers requires teachers to:

- explicitly teach appreciation statements
- have a strict 'no put-down' policy in the classroom
- publicly praise students who compliment others' work
- model what it looks like to give positive feedback by providing specific and genuine comments on students' written work
- model and share their own writing
- allow students time to write and avoid interrupting this work time
- introduce a variety of writing genres in their assignments
- quietly encourage those who are struggling
- allow students to share their work in a variety of public and private ways
- allow their own enthusiasm for writing to come through in their teaching

Ways to Celebrate Children's Writing

It is important to share and read students' written work at all stages of the writing process and not just the polished final copies. Celebrate great beginnings, well-chosen words, wonderful sentences, and creative ideas. The following ideas are offered as ways of celebrating students' successes in writing.

1. The *Brilliant Pen*

- The teacher can use the *Brilliant Pen* to highlight parts of a student's writing.
- Students themselves can use the *Brilliant Pen* to highlight the parts of their writing of which they are most proud. A peer partner could also use the *Brilliant Pen* if students wished to share their work with classmates instead of the teacher.

(cont'd)

Celebrating Students' Writing (cont'd)

2. *Author's Chair*

- *Author's Chair* is a strategy that provides opportunities for students to read their compositions to a small group of peers or, if appropriate, to the entire class.
- Listeners react to the writing, ask questions, and offer constructive comments and responses. The process helps to extend the skills of collaborative learning, peer conferencing, and editing. Teachers are encouraged to first model the use of constructive comments.
- *Author's Chair* demonstrates that writing is more than a transaction between the student and teacher; peers are valuable resources during the decision-making processes of revision and editing.

3. *Ghost Writer*

- *Ghost Writer* allows students to write under a pseudonym. This is best done on a computer so no one will be able to identify the writing. Print off and mix up all the stories (or shuffle students between computers) and have students read each other's work. The use of a computer and a pseudonym often helps encourage the reluctant or emergent writer.

4. *Displaying or Publishing Students' Work*

- *Bulletin Board Displays:* Create bulletin board displays with titles such as Wall of Fame, Great Works, Brilliant Ideas, Writer of the Week, or Author of the Month. Feature one or more authors each week or month, displaying their work on a designated classroom or hallway bulletin board. A brief biography and photograph of the author can also be posted.
- *Traveling Words:* Create a celebration sheet that students are invited to attach to one of their writing pieces that travels home and back to the classroom. Parents or other adults/family members write their positive comments on the celebration sheet and these can be shared with the teacher. As an extension, a collection of student work can be assembled into one 'book' and this book can travel between homes, with parents writing their positive comments on a celebration sheet at the front of the book.
- *School Newspaper or Newsletter:* Encourage students to submit their writing to the school newspaper or newsletter for publication. Student writing adds interest to newsletters that go out of the school and students are proud when their work has reached a wider audience.
- *Literary Journals:* Encourage students to submit their work for publication in school or district literary journals.

(cont'd)

Celebrating Students' Writing (cont'd)

5. ***Writing Certificates and Awards***
   - *Author or Illustrator Certificates:* Purchase or create certificates that celebrate students' accomplishments as writers and artists.
   - *School Literary Awards:* Create special school literary awards with custom made gold stickers to honour and celebrate the unique talents of students as writers: *The [school name] Literary Award is presented to Sarah for her use of powerful imagery in the creation of her own folk tale*. Consider displaying these awards and certificates in the school hallway.

6. ***Special Events***
   - *Writers' Festivals:* Invite parents to a Meet the Author Night where students read from their stories. Parents are invited to sit in authors' circles where students share their writing. Literary awards can be presented and authors can sign parent copies of the writing.
   - *Poetry Cafes:* Decorate your classroom as a café and invite parents in for poetry readings.
   - *Video Night:* Videotape students reading their stories to show at an assembly or at a parent night.

7. ***Submitting Students' Work for Publication***
   In addition to local publishing opportunities, teachers can encourage students to submit their written work for publication to a wider audience. There are many writing contests available for students to submit poetry, stories, and essays. There are also online literary journals and magazines that publish students' writing. The following are possible publishing opportunities:

   - **Short Story and Poetry contests**
   - **Poetry Institute of Canada**
     www.poetryinstitute.shawbiz.ca
   - **YouThink Magazine**
     regular writing contests for adolescents with monthly prizes
     www.youthink.ca
   - **Young Poets**
     http://youngpoets.ca
     www.rippleeffect.ca/submissions.htm
   - **Claremont Review**
     www.theclaremontreview.ca
   - **North Vancouver Young Writer's Club**
     www.youngwritersclub.ca
   - **Burnaby Writers' Society Youth Contest**
     www.bws.bc.ca
   - **Surrey International Writers' Conference**
     www.siwc.ca

Writing Workshop

"View writing less as a performance and more as an opportunity to explore, experiment, look inward, and discover what matters."

Atwell (998)

The writing workshop is an organizational structure that enables an instructor to provide instructional support for the class and still honour the individualized needs of the student. The writing workshop classroom is one that balances explicit writing instruction with opportunities for students to write on topics of their choice and to share their writing with others.

In a school that seeks to create a culture of literacy, developing a writer's workshop for staff allows teachers to review, evaluate, and improve their own writing skills.

Creating a writer's workshop with staff members:

- Provide workshops for staff on the writer's workshop model.
- Support print rich classroom environments.
- Provide "mini-lesson" demonstrations for staff.
- Provide time for staff to write and share their writing with one another.
- Encourage a network of professional collaboration.
- Create a staff "writer's club".

Research demonstrates that there are several key factors for a successful workshop model:

- **Safety**
  - Provide students with a safe classroom environment and predictable routines.

- **Mini-lessons**
  - Access student's background knowledge.
  - State an explicit goal for the workshop.
  - Demonstrate a focus writing skill or strategy.
  - Elicit student feedback and have them predict how they might use this strategy in their own writing.

- **Modelled Writing**
  - Teacher drafts, composes or revises a piece of writing in front of the class.
  - Teacher uses a Think-Aloud approach whereby they explain what decisions they are making as they go through the writing process.

(cont'd)

Writing Workshop (cont'd)

- **Shared Writing**
  - Students and teachers work together to create a text.
  - Teacher scribes while students observe and offer suggestions.

- **Guided Writing**
  - Teacher works with a small group of students on a specific writing skill.

- **Reading-Writing Connection**
  - Teacher uses examples of powerful, effective writing from literature.
  - Students analyze and discuss various elements of the writing craft.

- **Independent Writing**
  - Provide daily opportunities for students to practice writing.
  - Suggest meaningful, relevant topics.
  - Provide opportunities for students to write for real purposes and audiences.

- **Responding**
  - Encourages students to share their written work.
  - Encourage students to make suggestions about strategies or techniques.
  - Allows students to model strategies that they have used effectively.
  - Helps students predict how they might use the strategy in their own writing.
  - Provides opportunity to respond as a reader
    e.g. *When I read your introduction, I was intrigued because…*

- **Writing Conference**
  - Allows the teacher to constantly evaluate where the writer is, and where they should be going.
  - Builds a positive, trusting relationship with the teacher.
  - Facilitates an individual or small group focus.
  - Allows the teacher to name, discuss and reinforce the strengths in the student's writing.
  - Helps the student choose a strategy or technique to work on.

Purposes for Writing

WHY WRITE?

Are you a scientist who needs to record the exact steps of an experiment so that others can test your new discovery? Are you an anthropologist who wants to describe how a family in an ancient culture celebrated the seasons? Are you a salesperson trying to create an ad to sell the latest product? Are you a grandmother wanting to share your stories with your grandchildren?

"…as human beings we write to communicate, plan, petition, remember, announce, list, imagine…but above all, we write to hold our lives in our hands and to make something of them."

Lucy Calkins (1994)

If you are any of these things, then you are also a writer. Writers write for many different purposes. They write to:

- record events
- express feelings
- play with words and language
- explain or inform
- hypothesize or present arguments
- persuade
- solicit responses or information
- entertain
- tell a story
- remember information or ideas to use later
- summarize
- comment or give an opinion
- learn new concepts

When writing, students must consider their topic, purpose, and audience. They must decide what they are writing about and for whom they are writing. They must also consider what they want their writing to accomplish. Are they writing to inform, entertain, or persuade others? Or are they simply writing to tell a good story? Students need to understand the skill of organizing their ideas and choosing an appropriate form to express their ideas, based on their purpose for writing.

Please refer to the Purpose and Audience graphic organizer to help students explore the varied purposes and modes of writing on p. 70.

Modes of Writing

While there are many purposes for writing, researchers and educators generally agree that these purposes fit into four "modes" of writing: persuasive, expository, narrative, and descriptive.

After reviewing the topic for your paper, decide on a composition type by considering the following questions:

Does the topic pull on your heart strings? Do you **feel strongly** one way or the other about it? Is your **opinion debatable?** Will you use persuasive techniques to win your audience to your **side?**	Does the topic appeal to your head? Is your approach **unbiased?** Do you analyze the topic from **many sides?**	Does the topic make you think about an event in your life? Did this **event** give you some **insight** into life or yourself?	Do you have a mental picture of the topic? Do you want to take the reader into **the scene?** Will the reader be able to taste, touch, smell, hear and see the object, person, scene or idea?
Persuasive Writing (Convince) • limited topic • defined and debatable position • exposes information	**Expository Writing (Inform)** • limited topic • generally unbiased • purposefully sequenced • tells who, what, where, when, why • gives details that are specific and accurate	**Narrative Writing (Tell)** • follows story structure with details of characters, setting, plot • has a conflict, problem to be solved • details a sequence of events • details are sufficient to tell the story but not repetitive or unnecessary • comes to some resolution	**Descriptive Writing (Picture)** • uses adjectives, adverbs, sensory words and active verbs • uses literary devices such as similes, metaphors, and imagery • word choice is careful and precise • creates mental picture
Write • letter to the editor • editorial • advertisement • book review • sales pitch • movie/book/web page review • advice column • pamphlet • petition • speech • essay	**Write** • report • news article or broadcast • response to prose/poetry • web pages • manual, procedure, recipe, news flash • speech • recipe • game rules • research paper essay • blog, wiki	**Write** • fairy tale • fable • biography • play • myth • diary entry • short story • poem • scripts • memoir	**Write** • eye witness account • poem • travel brochure • menu • product advertisement • postcard • wanted poster list

Modes of Writing

Varieties of Writing Formats

Writing across the Content Areas

Subject			
Language Arts			
Journals	Research	Cheers	Notes
Diaries	Note cards	Raps	Reflections
Critiques	Outlines	Comparisons	Editorials
Summaries	Final reports	Charts	Letters
Procedures	Interviews	Graphs	Emails
Class notes	Analysis	Poems	News flashes
Brainstorming	Opinions	Interpretations	
Manuals	Songs	Statistics	
Ads	Jingles	Observations	
Social Studies			
Data gathering	Timelines	Poems	Emails
Research	Reports	Songs	Brainstorming
Notes	Labels	Ads	History
Interviews	Charts	Historical records	Reflections
Graphs	Notes	References	Graphic organizers
Map labels	Descriptions	Lists	
Statistics	Diaries	Logs	
Math			
Data interpretation	Timelines	Diagrams	Research
Summaries	Charts	Directions	Conclusions
Conclusions	Class notes	Definitions	Rules
Word problems	Labels	Reports	Formulas
Procedures	Graphs	Journals	Guidelines
Science			
Progress report	Graphs	Opinions	Research
Self-evaluation	Interviews	Hypotheses	Inventions
Statistics	Songs	Theories	Graphic organizers
Comparisons	Experiments	Captions	Problem
Brainstorming	Notes	Emails	Procedure
Analyses	Observations	Summaries	Diagnosis
Reflections	Logs	Editorials	Solution
Notes	Reports	Poems	
Data	Definitions	Lists	
Charts	Statistics	Labels	
Uses of Writing			

Modes of Writing

Writing across the Content Areas (cont'd)

Subject			
Visual Arts			
Journals	Interpretations	Invitations	Graphic organizers
Critiques	Research	Editorials	Signs
Summaries	Manuals	Conclusions	Notes
Explanations	Diaries	Emails	Articles
Directions	Logs	Designs	Portfolio
Playbills	Materials	Creations	Captions
Songs	Lists	Inventions	
Poems	Plays	Charts	
Vocational Studies			
Lists	Portfolios	Notes	Brainstorming
Directions	Opinions	Captions	Rules
Inventions	Manuals	Emails	Charts
Interpretations	Labels	Charts	Lists
Explanations	Reports	Recipes	Reflections
Procedures	Summaries	Interviews	Evaluations
Instructions	Conclusions	Designs	
Physical Education and Health			
Rules	Charts	Biographies	Medical advice
Notes	Signs	Plans	Player biographies
Posters	Plays	Analyses	Newspaper articles
Brochures	Outlines	Diagnosis	First-aid directions
Captions	Tips	Applications	Promotions
Cheers	Definitions	Agreements	Game statistics
Instructions	Guides	Contracts	
Diagrams	Handbooks	Game reviews	

Uses of Writing

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

The Eight Writing Skills

The Eight Writing Skills

1

✔ **I generate ideas in a variety of ways.**

2

✔ **I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.**

3

✔ **I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.**

4

✔ **I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.**

5

✔ **I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.**

6

✔ **I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.**

7

✔ **I use my personal style to make my writing unique.**

8

✔ **I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.**

The Eight Writing Skills

In ***Secondary Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework***, we have been influenced by the research and theories of a number of educators and professional writers. Our **Eight Writing Skills** evolved primarily from the work of Paul Diederich, Donald Murray, Lucy Calkins, Vicki Spandel, and Ruth Culham who, through research and practice, have identified key characteristics of good writing. The intention of the Eight Writing Skills framework is to identify for teachers and students what we mean by good, rich, or powerful writing and to establish a common language about writing and the writing process.

A growing body of literature describes the need for students to not only *learn to write,* but also to *write to learn*. Writing is more often than not the medium through which students demonstrate their comprehension or learning of a required content. Writing is a "powerful vehicle to guide student learning" (Pike & Mumper, 2004) and as such can be used to make connections, summarize, draw conclusions, apply new knowledge, transform ideas and reflect on understanding. When students use various forms of writing, for example, with note-taking, double-entry journals, graphic organizers, or mind maps, the focus is on thinking and learning rather than conventions and grammar. Explicit instruction of the Eight Writing Skills should be addressed not only in the English Language Arts classrooms, but across all content areas. This would greatly improve students' understanding of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all eight skills as students strive to understand subject matter and enhance their ability to represent their knowledge.

Within each phase of the writing process, the Eight Writing Skills can be examined in greater depth or detail, depending on the focus of the writing task and the students' needs. Teachers can structure specific writing conferences or mini-lessons to address the specific needs of an individual or group of students and help students develop their writing skills through meaningful, relevant activities.

Individual descriptions of each of the Eight Writing Skills are included on the following pages. After each explanation are lessons and activities that will assist teachers with the building of these skills. As well, for each lesson and activity in this resource, we have clearly identified which of the Eight Writing Skills could be emphasized for further explicit instruction.

Writing Skill 1

I generate ideas in a variety of ways.

Good writers draw inspiration for writing from a variety of sources. They experiment with different strategies and processes to generate many ideas using imagination, research, background knowledge, personal experience, discussions, artifacts, or multi-media.

Writing Instructional Activities

A Baker's Dozen . . . . . p. 53
American Haiku . . . . . p. 82
Beyond Book Reports . . . . . p. 137
Beyond Cliché . . . . . p. 249
Brilliant Brainstorming . . . . . p. 54
Compare/Contrast Writing . . . . . p. 141
Creating Connections p.191
Describing Three-Dimensional Objects . . . . . p. 250
Expository Paragraph . . . . . p. 180
Fib or Fact . . . . . p. 60
Finding the Write Angle . . . . . p. 61
Flashy Fiction . . . . . p. 95
Free Writes . . . . . p. 62
Funnelling Your Writing . . . . . p. 64
Great First Lines . . . . . p. 97
Independent Novel Study: Reader Response Journal . . . . . p. 145
Introductory Interviews . . . . . p. 66
Making Memoirs . . . . . p. 101
Media, Money, and my Choices . . p. 147
Mind Maps . . . . . p. 68
Narrative Storyboard . . . . . p. 236
Organizing Writing . . . . . p. 69
Poetry in a Box . . . . . p. 105
PWIM . . . . . p. 71
Reading as a Writer . . . . . p. 73
Real Life Interview . . . . . p. 259
Research Report . . . . . p. 204
Responding to Prose: Organizer and Outline . . . . . p. 155
Response Journals . . . . . p. 159
Sensory Stretches . . . . . p. 111
Sitting on a Story Blog . . . . . p. 114
Starting from Scrap . . . . . p. 74
Stocking the Refrigerator . . . . . p. 240
Story Bags p.116
Story Grids . . . . . p. 117
Story Nuggets . . . . . p. 120
Story Starts . . . . . p. 242
Story Structure . . . . . p. 121
Summarizing Text . . . . . p. 164
Synectic Character Sketches . . . . p. 166
Synonym Madness . . . . . p. 123
What Makes a Good Narrative? . . p. 245
What's in the Box? . . . . . p. 126
"Write" Talks . . . . . p. 75
Writer's Portfolio . . . . . p. 316
Writing Prompts . . . . . p. 76
You Bean My Friend . . . . . p. 134

Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids

Brainstorming for Media . . . . . p. 148
Cause and Effect Flow Chart . . . . . p. 57
Compare and Contrast . . . . . p. 143
Comparison/Contrast Ladders . . . p. 59
Creating Connections . . . . . p. 193
Description Writing Prompts . . . . p. 252
Essential Aspects of Narrative Form . . . . . p. 246
Interview Grid . . . . . p. 67
Narrative Storyboard . . . . . p. 237
Negative Mandala . . . . . p. 56
Paragraph Organizer . . . . . p. 182
Paragraph Outline: Expository/Persuasive . . . . . p. 183
Paragraph Outline – The Handy Hamburger . . . . . p. 184
Perfect Paragraph Inventory . . . . . p. 185
Poetry Prompts . . . . . p. 106
Positive Cluster . . . . . p. 58
Purpose and Audience Organizer . . . . . p. 70
Response to Prose Organizer . . . p. 157
Response to Prose Outline . . . . . p. 158
Sensory Descriptions . . . . . p. 251
Sensory Stretches . . . . . p. 112
Story Grid . . . . . p. 119
Story Starts . . . . . p. 244
Story Structure Exercise . . . . . p. 122
Writing Funnel . . . . . p. 65

Lists

Character Traits . . . . . p. 168
Descriptive Words . . . . . p. 255

Writing Skill 2

I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.

Good writers are aware of a variety of purposes for writing (e.g. to tell, to describe, to explain, to persuade, to entertain, to inform). They are also cognizant of the audience for whom they are writing (e.g. family, class, adults, teacher, best friend). They choose an appropriate form to express their ideas (e.g. report, poem, letter, essay, story).

Writing Instructional Activities

American Haiku . . . . . p. 82
Beyond Book Reports . . . . . p. 137
Beyond Cliché. . . . . p. 249
Blog Assignment . . . . . p. 140
Comma Concepts . . . . . p. 283
Compare/Contrast Writing . . . . . p. 141
Creating First Impressions . . . . . p. 194
Creative Writing Revision . . . . . p. 265
Describing Three-Dimensional Objects . . . . . p. 250
Descriptive Development . . . . . p. 253
Digesting Semi-colons and Colons . . . . . p. 286
Effective vs. Ineffective Expository Paragraphs. . . . . p. 178
Expository Paragraph . . . . . p. 180
Finding the Write Angle . . . . . p. 61
Fixer-Uppers: Editing Quotations and Citations. . . . . p. 291
Flashy Fiction . . . . . p. 95
Funnelling Your Writing . . . . . p. 64
Historical Poetry . . . . . p. 144
Independent Novel Study. . . . . p. 145
Introductory Interviews . . . . . p. 66
Making Memoirs . . . . . p. 101
Media, Money, and my Choices . . p. 147
Mind Maps. . . . . p. 68
Narrative Essay Outline . . . . . p. 233
Narrative Storyboard. . . . . p. 236
Organizing Writing . . . . . p. 69
Oral Response to Non-fiction . . . p. 149
Paragraph Skeletons . . . . . p. 150
Pick Out The Parts: Language Analysis . . . . . p. 273
PWIM . . . . . p. 71
Real Life Interview . . . . . p. 259
Reconstructing a Story. . . . . p. 238
Research Report. . . . . p. 204
Responding to Prose: Organizer and Outline. . . . . p. 155
Response Journals . . . . . p. 159
Rock and Roll Business Letter. . . p. 229
Sentence Combining and Subordination . . . . . p. 275
Sitting on a Story Blog . . . . . p. 114
Stocking the Refrigerator. . . . . p. 240
Story Bags. . . . . p. 116
Story Grids . . . . . p. 117
Story Starts. . . . . p. 242
Summarizing Text . . . . . p. 164
Using Quotations . . . . . p. 170
What Makes a Good Narrative . . p. 246
Writer's Portfolio. . . . . p. 316
Writing Effective Theme Statements . . . . . p. 173
Writing Variables . . . . . p. 131
You Bean My Friend . . . . . p. 134

Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids

Brainstorming for Media . . . . . p. 148
Cause and Effect Flow Chart. . . . . p. 57
Comma Concepts . . . . . p. 285
Compare and Contrast . . . . . p. 143
Description Writing Prompts. . . . p. 252
Essay Thesis Statements . . . . . p. 200
Essential Aspects of Narrative Form . . . . . p. 246
Exposition: The Keyhole . . . . . p. 196
Expository or Persuasive Essay Outline . . . . . p. 197
Expository Writing Revisioon Checklist. . . . . p. 267
Five-Paragraph Essay Outline 1 . . p. 201
Five-Paragraph Essay Outline 2 . . p. 202
Idea Diagram. . . . . p. 203
Interview Grid . . . . . p. 67
Narrative Essay Outline . . . . . p. 234
Narrative Prompts . . . . . p. 235
Narrative Storyboard. . . . . p. 237
Paragraph Organizer . . . . . p. 182
Paragraph Outline: Expository/Persuasive. . . . . p. 183
Paragraph Outline – The Handy Hamburger . . . . . p. 184
Paragraph Skeleton Outline . . . . . p. 151
Perfect Paragraph Inventory. . . . . p. 185
Pick Out the Parts: Language Analysis . . . . . p. 274
Pondering Pizza. . . . . p. 195
Purpose and Audience Organizer. . p. 70
Reconstructing a Story: Narrative Transitions . . . . . p. 239
Response to Prose Organizer . . . p. 157
Response to Prose Outline . . . . . p. 158
Rock and Roll Business Letter. . . p. 230
Semi-colon and Colon Review Exercise. . . . . p. 288
Sensory Descriptions . . . . . p. 251
Story Grid. . . . . p. 119
Story Starts. . . . . p. 244
Using Quotations: A Model . . . . . p. 172
Writing Funnel . . . . . p. 65
Writing Variables . . . . . p. 132

Lists

Descriptive Words . . . . . p. 255

Writing Skill 3

I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.

Good writers know how to use and can competently manipulate a variety of sentence structures purposefully in their writing. They use simple, compound, and complex sentence types to convey meaning and create effect. These sentence types may include statements, questions, exclamations, and dialogue.

Writing Instructional Activities

2-6-2 Sentence Machine . . . . . p. 277
American Haiku . . . . . p. 82
Blog Assignment . . . . . p. 140
Compare/Contrast Writing . . . . . p. 141
Creating First Impressions . . . . . p. 194
Descriptive Development . . . . . p. 253
Expanding Sentence Toolbox . . . . p. 269
Expository Paragraph . . . . . p. 180
Flashy Fiction . . . . . p. 95
Historical Poetry . . . . . p. 144
Independent Novel Study: Reader Response Journal . . . . . p. 145
Introductions, Hooks, and Leads . . p. 98
Making Memoirs . . . . . p. 101
Pick Out the Parts: Language Analysis . . . . . p. 273
Pitching Punctuation: Persuasive Writing Techniques . . . . . p. 222
Reconstructing a Story: Narrative Transitions. . . . . p. 238
Research Report. . . . . p. 204
Response Journals . . . . . p. 159
Rock and Roll Business Letter . . . p. 229
Sentence Combining and Subordination . . . . . p. 275
Seven Snappy Starters . . . . . p. 207
Sitting on a Story Blog . . . . . p. 114
Stocking the Refrigerator. . . . . p. 240
Story Nuggets. . . . . p. 120
Summarizing Text . . . . . p. 164
Write Like a Writer . . . . . p. 128
Writer's Portfolio . . . . . p. 316

Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids

2-6-2 Sentence Machine Writing Frame . . . . . p. 278
Compare and Contrast . . . . . p. 143
Essay Thesis Statements . . . . . p. 200
Exposition: The Keyhole . . . . . p. 196
Expository or Persuasive Essay Outline . . . . . p. 197
Expository Writing Revision Checklist . . . . . p. 267
Five-Paragraph Essay Outline 1 . . p. 201
Five-Paragraph Essay Outline 2 . . p. 202
Idea Diagram. . . . . p. 203
Introductions, Hooks, and Leads . . . . . p. 100
Paragraph Organizer . . . . . p. 182
Paragraph Outline: Expository/Persuasive. . . . . p. 183
Paragraph Outline – The Handy Hamburger . . . . . p. 184
Perfect Paragraph Inventory. . . . . p. 185
Persuasion Planner . . . . . p. 224
Pick Out the Parts: Language Analysis . . . . . p. 274
Pitching Punctuation: Persuasive Writing Techniques . . . . . p. 223
Pondering Pizza. . . . . p. 195
Reconstructing a Story: Narrative Transitions . . . . . p. 239
Rock and Roll Business Letter . . . p. 230
Seeing Both Sides: Persuasive Paragraph Frame. . . . . p. 225
Seeing Both Sides: Planning Guide . . . . . p. 226
Sentence Toolbox . . . . . p. 271
Write Like a Writer: Style Sample Sheet . . . . . p. 130
Writing Prompts for Persuasive Writing . . . . . p. 227

Lists

Descriptive Words . . . . . p. 255

Writing Skill 4

I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.

Good writers ensure that events proceed logically and are easy for the reader to follow. They experiment with the sequencing of their ideas, they develop a broad repertoire of transitional words and phrases, and they include effective examples and details to support their purpose.

Writing Instructional Activities

2-6-2 Sentence Machine . . . . . p. 277
Comma Concepts . . . . . p. 283
Compare/Contrast Writing . . . . . p. 141
Creating First Impressions . . . . . p. 194
Creating Connections . . . . . p. 191
Digesting Semi-colons and Colons . . . . . p. 286
Effective vs. Ineffective Expository Paragraphs. . . . . p. 178
Expanding Sentence Toolbox . . . . p. 269
Expository Paragraph . . . . . p. 180
Flashy Fiction . . . . . p. 95
Free Writes. . . . . p. 62
Independent Novel Study: Reader Response Journal . . . . . p. 145
Introductory Interviews . . . . . p. 66
Making Memoirs . . . . . p. 101
Paragraph Skeletons . . . . . p. 150
Persuasive Flow . . . . . p. 221
Pick Out the Parts: Language Analysis . . . . . p. 273
Pitching Punctuation: Persuasive Writing Techniques. . . . . p. 222
Reconstructing a Story: Narrative Transitions. . . . . p. 238
Research Report. . . . . p. 204
Response Journals . . . . . p. 159
Rock and Roll Business Letter. . . p. 229
Sentence Combining and Subordination . . . . . p. 275
Sitting on a Story Blog . . . . . p. 114
Story Nuggets. . . . . p. 120
Story Structure. . . . . p. 121
Summarizing Text . . . . . p. 164
Write Like a Writer . . . . . p. 128
Writer's Portfolio. . . . . p. 316

Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids

2-6-2 Sentence Machine Writing Frame . . . . . p. 278
Comma Concepts . . . . . p. 285
Compare and Contrast . . . . . p. 143
Creating Connections . . . . . p. 193
Digesting Semi-colons and Colons . . . . . p. 287
Essay Thesis Statements . . . . . p. 200
Exposition: The Keyhole . . . . . p. 196
Expository or Persuasive Essay Outline . . . . . p. 197
Expository Paragraph Inventory. . . . . p. 185
Expository Writing Revision Checklist. . . . . p. 267
Five-Paragraph Essay Outline 1 . . p. 201
Five-Paragraph Essay Outline 2 . . p. 202
Idea Diagram. . . . . p. 203
Interview Grid . . . . . p. 67
Paragraph Organizer . . . . . p. 182
Paragraph Outline: Expository/Persuasive. . . . . p. 183
Paragraph Outline – The Handy Hamburger . . . . . p. 184
Paragraph Skeleton Outline . . . . . p. 151
Perfect Paragraph Inventory. . . . . p. 185
Persuasion Planner . . . . . p. 224
Pick Out the Parts: Language Analysis . . . . . p. 274
Pitching Punctuation: Persuasive Writing Techniques. . . . . p. 223
Pondering Pizza. . . . . p. 195
Reconstructing a Story: Narrative Transitions. . . . . p. 239
Rock and Roll Business Letter. . . p. 230
Seeing Both Sides: Persuasive Paragraph Frame. . . . . p. 225
Seeing Both Sides: Planning Guide . . . . . p. 226
Semi-colon and Colon Review Exercise. . . . . p. 288
Sentence Toolbox . . . . . p. 271
Story Structure Exercise . . . . . p. 122
Write Like a Writer: Style Sample Sheet . . . . . p. 130
Writing Prompts for Persuasive Writing . . . . . p. 227

Lists

Transition Words . . . . . p. 209

Writing Skill 5

I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Good writers ensure that they have chosen the most effective words to make their meaning precise, to evoke the desired emotional response, and to create visual images for the reader.

Writing Instructional Activities

A Time and A Place: Recognizing When to Avoid 'I' Statements . . . . . p. 189
American Haiku . . . . . p. 82
Beyond Cliché . . . . . p. 249
Blog Assignment . . . . . p. 140
Chiasmus, Metaphor, Pun – Oh My! . . . p. 84
Compare/Contrast Writing . . . . . p. 141
Creating First Impressions . . . . . p. 194
Creating Connections . . . . . p. 191
Creative Control . . . . . p. 89
Denotation/Connotation Ladders . . . . . p. 91
Describing Three-Dimensional Objects . . . . . p. 250
Descriptive Development . . . . . p. 253
Different Types of Theses . . . . . p. 215
Effective vs. Ineffective Expository Paragraphs . . . . . p. 178
Expanding Sentences with the Sentence Toolbox . . . . . p. 269
Expository Paragraph . . . . . p. 180
Fib or Fact . . . . . p. 60
Finding the Write Angle . . . . . p. 61
Flashy Fiction . . . . . p. 95
Free Writes . . . . . p. 62
Funnelling Your Writing . . . . . p. 64
Great First Lines . . . . . p. 97
Historical Poetry . . . . . p. 144
Introductions, Hooks, and Leads . . . . . p. 98
Introductory Interviews . . . . . p. 66
Language Analysis . . . . . p. 273
Making Memoirs . . . . . p. 101
Moving from Topic to Thesis . . . . . p. 217
Oral Response to Non-Fiction . . . . . p. 149
Paragraph Skeletons p.150
Persuasive Flow . . . . . p. 221
Pitching Punctuation . . . . . p. 222
Playing with Mood and Tone . . . . . p. 152
Poetry in a Box . . . . . p. 105
PWIM . . . . . p. 71
Reader Response Journal . . . . . p. 145
Real Life Interview . . . . . p. 259
Reconstructing a Story . . . . . p. 238
Research Report . . . . . p. 204
Responding to Prose . . . . . p. 155
Response Journals . . . . . p. 159
Re-writing Fairy Tales . . . . . p. 86
Rhetorical Devices Poster . . . . . p. 161
Rock and Roll Business Letter . . . . . p. 229
Searching for Style . . . . . p. 107
Sensory Stretches . . . . . p. 111
Sentence Combining and Subordination . . p. 275
Seven Snappy Starters . . . . . p. 207
Show, Don't Tell . . . . . p. 113
Sitting on a Story Blog . . . . . p. 114
Starting from Scrap . . . . . p. 74
Stocking the Refrigerator . . . . . p. 240
Story Nuggets . . . . . p. 120
Story Structure . . . . . p. 121
Summarizing Text . . . . . p. 164
Synectic Character Sketches . . . . . p. 166
Synonym Madness . . . . . p. 123
Using Quotations . . . . . p. 170
Vocabulary Webs . . . . . p. 124
What's in the Box? . . . . . p. 126
Write Like a Writer . . . . . p. 128
Writer's Portfolio . . . . . p. 316
Writing Prompts . . . . . p. 76
Writing Effective Theme Statements . . p. 173
You Bean My Friend . . . . . p. 134

Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids

A Time and A Place: Recognizing When to Avoid 'I' Statements . . . . . p. 190
Cause and Effect Flow Chart . . . . . p. 57
Compare and Contrast . . . . . p. 143
Creating Connections . . . . . p. 193
Creative Control . . . . . p. 90
Denotation/Connotation . . . . . p. 92
Description Writing Prompts . . . . . p. 252
Elements of Persuasive Writing . . . . . p. 216
Essay Thesis Statements . . . . . p. 200
Exposition: The Keyhole . . . . . p. 196
Expository or Persuasive Essay Outline . . . . . p. 197
Expository Writing Revision Checklist . . . . . p. 267
Five-Paragraph Essay Outlines . . . p. 201/202
Idea Diagram . . . . . p. 203
Interview Grid . . . . . p. 67
Introductions, Hooks, and Leads . . . . . p. 100
Language Analysis . . . . . p. 274
Moving from Topic to Thesis . . . . . p. 218
Narrative Transitions . . . . . p. 239
Paragraph Organizer . . . . . p. 182
Paragraph Outlines . . . . . p. 183/184
Paragraph Skeleton Outline . . . . . p. 151
Perfect Paragraph Inventory . . . . . p. 185
Persuasion Planner . . . . . p. 224
Persuasive Paragraph Frame . . . . . p. 225
Persuasive Writing Techniques . . . . . p. 223
Poetry Prompts . . . . . p. 106
Pondering Pizza . . . . . p. 195
Reconstructing a Story . . . . . p. 239
Response to Prose Organizer . . . . . p. 157
Response to Prose Outline . . . . . p. 158
Re-writing Fairy Tales . . . . . p. 88
Rock and Roll Business Letter . . . . . p. 230
Searching for Style . . . . . p. 108
Seeing Both Sides: Planning Guide . . . p. 226
Sensory Descriptions . . . . . p. 251
Sensory Stretches . . . . . p. 112
Sentence Toolbox . . . . . p. 271/272
Story Structure Exercise . . . . . p. 122
Style Analysis Chart . . . . . p. 110
Style Analysis Web . . . . . p. 109
Thesaurus Wheel . . . . . p. 154
Using Quotations: A Model . . . . . p. 172
Vocabulary Ladders . . . . . p. 94
Vocabulary Web . . . . . p. 125
Write Like a Writer . . . . . p. 130
Writing Funnel . . . . . p. 65
Writing Prompts for Persuasive Writing . . p. 227

Lists

Character Traits . . . . . p. 168
Descriptive Words . . . . . p. 255
Terms and Devices in Literature . . . . . p. 162
Transition Words . . . . . p. 209

Writing Skill 6

I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.

Good writers match the tone of their writing to their audience and purpose for writing, which allows the reader to experience more fully the writer's point of view.

Writing Instructional Activities

A Time and A Place: Recognizing When to Avoid 'I' Statements . . . . . p. 189
American Haiku . . . . . p. 82
Beyond Cliché. . . . . p. 249
Childhood Revisited: Re-writing Fairy Tales . . . . . p. 86
Compare/Contrast Writing . . . . . p. 141
Creative Control . . . . . p. 89
Describing Three-Dimensional Objects . . . . . p. 250
Different Types of Theses . . . . . p. 215
Expository Paragraph . . . . . p. 180
Finding the Write Angle . . . . . p. 61
Great First Lines. . . . . p. 97
Historical Poetry . . . . . p. 144
Independent Novel Study: Reader Response Journal . . . . . p. 145
Introductory Interviews . . . . . p. 66
Making Memoirs . . . . . p. 101
Moving from Topic to Thesis . . . . p. 217
Oral Response to Non-fiction . . . p. 149
Organizing Writing . . . . . p. 69
Pitching Punctuation: Persuasive Writing Techniques. . . . . p. 222
Playing with Mood and Tone . . . . p. 152
Real Life Interview . . . . . p. 259
Response Journals . . . . . p. 159
Rock and Roll Business Letter. . . p. 229
Seven Snappy Starters . . . . . p. 207
Sitting on a Story Blog . . . . . p. 114
Story Bags. . . . . p. 116
Story Grids. . . . . p. 117
Summarizing Text . . . . . p. 164
Writer's Portfolio. . . . . p. 316
Writing Effective Theme Statements . . . . . p. 173
Writing Variables . . . . . p. 131

Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids

A Time and a Place: Recognizing When to Avoid 'I' Statements . . . . . p. 190
Compare and Contrast . . . . . p. 143
Creative Control . . . . . p. 90
Description Writing Prompts. . . . p. 252
Elements of Persuasive Writing . . p. 216
Expository Writing Revision Checklist. . . . . p. 267
Interview Grid . . . . . p. 67
Moving from Topic to Thesis . . . . p. 218
Paragraph Organizer . . . . . p. 182
Paragraph Outline: Expository/Persuasive. . . . . p. 183
Paragraph Outline – The Handy Hamburger . . . . . p. 184
Perfect Paragraph Inventory. . . . . p. 185
Persuasion Planner . . . . . p. 224
Pitching Punctuation: Persuasive Writing Techniques. . . . . p. 223
Purpose and Audience Organizer . . . . . p. 70
Re-writing Fairy Tales . . . . . p. 88
Rock and Roll Business Letter. . . p. 230
Seeing Both Sides: Persuasive Paragraph Frame. . . . . p. 225
Seeing Both Sides: Planning Guide . . . . . p. 226
Sensory Descriptions . . . . . p. 251
Story Grid. . . . . p. 119
Thesaurus Wheel . . . . . p. 154
Writing Prompts for Persuasive Writing . . . . . p. 227
Writing Variables . . . . . p. 132

Writing Skill 7

I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Good writers leave an impression on their audience. They play with techniques, word choice, and literary devices to develop their individual writing style.

Writing Instructional Activities

2-6-2 Sentence Machine . . . . . p. 277
A Time and A Place: Recognizing When to Avoid 'I' Statements . . . . . p. 189
American Haiku . . . . . p. 82
Beyond Book Reports . . . . . p. 137
Beyond Cliché . . . . . p. 249
Chiasmus, Metaphor, Pun – Oh My! . . . . . p. 84
Childhood Revisited: Re-writing Fairy Tales . . . . . p. 86
Compare/Contrast Writing . . . . . p. 141
Descriptive Development . . . . . p. 253
Digesting Semi-colons and Colons . . . . . p. 286
Flashy Fiction . . . . . p. 95
Free Writes . . . . . p. 62
Great First Lines . . . . . p. 97
Historical Poetry . . . . . p. 144
Independent Novel Study: Reader Response Journal . . . . . p. 145
Introductions, Hooks, and Leads . . p. 98
Introductory Interviews . . . . . p. 66
Making Memoirs . . . . . p. 101
Narrative Storyboard . . . . . p. 236
Oral Response to Non-fiction . . . p. 149
Organizing Writing . . . . . p. 69
Personal Style Inventory . . . . . p. 103
Persuasive Flow . . . . . p. 221
Pick Out the Parts: Language Analysis . . . . . p. 273
Pitching Punctuation: Persuasive Writing Techniques . . . . . p. 222
Playing with Mood and Tone . . . . p. 152
Poetry in a Box . . . . . p. 105
Real Life Interview . . . . . p. 259
Rhetorical Devices Poster . . . . . p. 161
Rock and Roll Business Letter . . . p. 229
Searching for Style . . . . . p. 107
Sentence Combining and Subordination . . . . . p. 275
Seven Snappy Starters . . . . . p. 207
Show, Don't Tell . . . . . p. 113
Sitting on a Story Blog . . . . . p. 114
Stocking the Refrigerator . . . . . p. 240
Story Bags . . . . . p. 116
Story Grids . . . . . p. 117
Story Nuggets . . . . . p. 120
Vocabulary Webs . . . . . p. 124
What's in the Box? . . . . . p. 126
Write Like a Writer . . . . . p. 128
Writer's Portfolio . . . . . p. 316
You Bean My Friend . . . . . p. 134

Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids

2-6-2 Sentence Machine Writing Frame . . . . . p. 278
A Time and A Place: Recognizing When to Avoid 'I' Statements . . . . . p. 190
Childhood Revisited: Re-writing Fairy Tales . . . . . p. 88
Compare and Contrast . . . . . p. 143
Creative Writing Revision Checklist . . . . . p. 265
Expository Writing Revision Checklist . . . . . p. 267
Interview Grid . . . . . p. 67
Introductions, Hooks, and Leads . . . . . p. 100
Narrative Storyboard . . . . . p. 237
Personal Style Inventory . . . . . p. 104
Persuasion Planner . . . . . p. 224
Pick Out the Parts: Language Analysis . . . . . p. 274
Pitching Punctuation: Persuasive Writing Techniques . . . . . p. 223
Poetry Prompts . . . . . p. 106
Purpose and Audience Organizer . . . . . p. 70
Rock and Roll Business Letter . . . p. 230
Searching for Style . . . . . p. 108
Seeing Both Sides: Persuasive Paragraph Frame . . . . . p. 225
Seeing Both Sides: Planning Guide . . . . . p. 226
Semi-colon and Colon Review Exercise . . . . . p. 288
Story Grid . . . . . p. 119
Style Analysis Chart . . . . . p. 110
Style Analysis Web . . . . . p. 109
Terms and Devices in Literature . . . . . p. 162
Thesaurus Wheel . . . . . p. 154
Vocabulary Web . . . . . p. 125
Write Like a Writer: Style Sample Sheet . . . . . p. 130
Writing Prompts for Persuasive Writing . . . . . p. 227

Lists

Descriptive Words . . . . . p. 255
Terms and Devices in Literature . . . . . p. 163

Writing Skill 8

I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Good writers consistently read over their written work and look for ways to make it better, which may include changing, adding, deleting, or rephrasing and re-arranging words, sentences, and ideas. The focus is to make meaning clear for the reader. After all aspects of communication of meaning are addressed, then conventions of writing (spelling, punctuation, capitals, and grammar) are corrected when the writing is carried through the writing process to sharing with an audience or publication.

Writing Instructional Activities

2-6-2 Sentence Machine . . . . . p. 277
A Time and A Place: Recognizing When to Avoid 'I' Statements . . . . . p. 189
American Haiku . . . . . p. 82
Beyond Cliché. . . . . p. 249
Comma Concepts . . . . . p. 283
Compare/Contrast Writing . . . . . p. 141
Creative Writing Revision Checklist . . . . . p. 265
Describing Three-Dimensional Objects . . . . . p. 250
Digesting Semi-colons and Colons . . . . . p. 286
Editing Etiquette . . . . . p. 289
Expanding Sentence Toolbox. . . . . p. 269
Expository Paragraph. . . . . p. 180
Fixer-Uppers: Editing Quotations and Citations. . . . . p. 291
Flashy Fiction . . . . . p. 95
Independent Corrections. . . . . p. 292
Independent Novel Study: Reader Response Journal . . . . . p. 145
Making Memoirs . . . . . p. 101
Narrative Storyboard. . . . . p. 236
Personal Style Inventory p.103
Pick Out the Parts: Language Analysis . . . . . p. 273
Real Life Interview . . . . . p. 259
Research Report. . . . . p. 204
Rock and Roll Business Letter. . . p. 229
Sentence Combining and Subordination . . . . . p. 275
Show, Don't Tell . . . . . p. 113
Sitting on a Story Blog . . . . . p. 114
Write Like a Writer p.128
Writer's Portfolio p.316

Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids

2-6-2 Sentence Machine Writing Frame . . . . . p. 278
A Time and A Place: Recognizing When to Avoid 'I' Statements . . . . . p. 190
Comma Concepts . . . . . p. 285
Compare and Contrast . . . . . p. 143
Creative Writing Revision Checklist. . . . . p. 265
Description Writing Prompts. . . . p. 252
Essay Assessment . . . . . p. 308
Expository Writing Revision Checklist. . . . . p. 267
My Spelling Gremlins . . . . . p. 294
Narrative Storyboard. . . . . p. 237
Paragraph Organizer . . . . . p. 182
Paragraph Outline: Expository/Persuasive. . . . . p. 183
Paragraph Outline – The Handy Hamburger . . . . . p. 184
Perfect Paragraph Inventory. . . . . p. 185
Personal Style Inventory. . . . . p. 104
Pick Out the Parts: Language Analysis . . . . . p. 274
Rock and Roll Business Letter. . . p. 230
Sample Rubric – Compare/Contrast Essay . . . . . p. 310
Semi-colon and Colon Review Exercise. . . . . p. 288
Sensory Descriptions . . . . . p. 251
Sentence Toolbox . . . . . p. 271
Student Correction Log. . . . . p. 293
Write Like a Writer: Style Sample Sheet . . . . . p. 130

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Generating Ideas

Generating Ideas

Activity Page

A Baker's Dozen: Pre-writing Reflections 53
Brilliant Brainstorming 54
- Negative Mandala 56
- Cause and Effect Flow Chart 57
- Positive Cluster 58
- Comparison/Contrast Ladders 59

Fib or Fact? 60
Finding the Write Angle 61
Free Writes 62
Funnelling Your Writing 64
- Writing Funnel 65

Introductory Interviews 66
- Interview Grid 67

Mind Maps 68
Organizing Writing 69
- Purpose and Audience Organizer 70

PWIM: What's in a Picture? 71
Reading as a Writer: Finding Fabulous Quotes 73
Starting from Scrap 74
"Write" Talks 75
Writing Prompts 76

- Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids included

A Baker's Dozen: Pre-writing Reflections

Asking students to write their learning goals down is an effective way to include a critical element to the learning (and writing) process. Asking students to "think about their thinking" helps them to set expectations and plan strategies for success. With this exercise, students are encouraged to self-talk and reflect in an effort to understand where they are and where they are going with a particular assignment.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.

Teaching the Activity

Before writing action begins, ask students to complete the following reflection inventory:

1. My writing task is _____
2. I need to _____
3. The topic of my writing will be _____
4. When I consider this topic, I realize I already know _____
5. The best genre to use to communicate my ideas is_____
6. I could gather more information from _____
7. My reader or audience will be _____
8. My purpose for this piece of writing is _____
9. I may have a problem with _____
10. The hardest part of this writing task is _____
11. The easiest part of this writing task will be _____
12. When I write, I _____
13. Thinking about my writing helps me to _____

Variations/Extensions

Brainstorming isn't the only way to get started. Here are ten other ways:

1. Talk the piece through.
2. Sketch the ideas in pictures or diagrams.
3. Make an outline.
4. Take notes and organize them.
5. Use graphic organizers.
6. Respond to another piece of writing: get mad and get writing!
7. Pick key words out of the question or prompt.
8. Keep a writer's journal to record new ideas.
9. Interview people (family or friends) and find out what they like to read.
10. Use sentence starters to get going.

Adapted from Chapman, C. & King, R., 2003, Differentiated Instructional Strategies for Writing in the Content Area. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Brilliant Brainstorming

Students often find brainstorming in partners and small groups easier than on their own. As the saying goes, "None of us is as smart as all of us." Brainstorming with grids, charts or clusters encourages students to come up with ideas and support on their own in an organized way. They can use the graphic organizers for comparing and contrasting, searching for causes of a particular effect, researching an essay, structuring support for a thesis, gathering reasons, etc. However, the focus of this activity is pre-writing discussion; this will allow for all students to sound out their ideas before putting them down. For ELL students or struggling writers, this type of scaffolding activity is an excellent means of pre-writing support.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.

Teaching the Activity

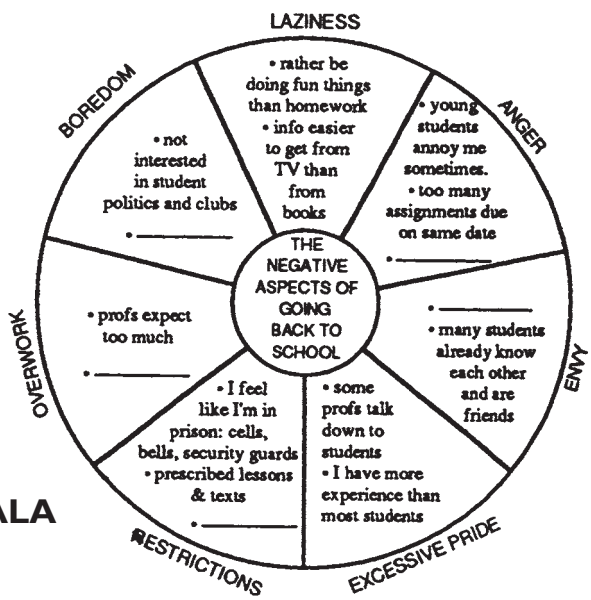
1. Arrange students in pairs or groups of three. Give them a copy of a graphic organizer that is partially completed and ask them to add information to the existing brainstorming notes.
2. Provide time for students to discuss and compare their notes with other groups.
3. Have students construct their brainstormed ideas into a written piece.

Variations/Extensions

- Make up blank graphic organizers for those students who need less scaffolding with information.

Partial Brainstorming Graphics

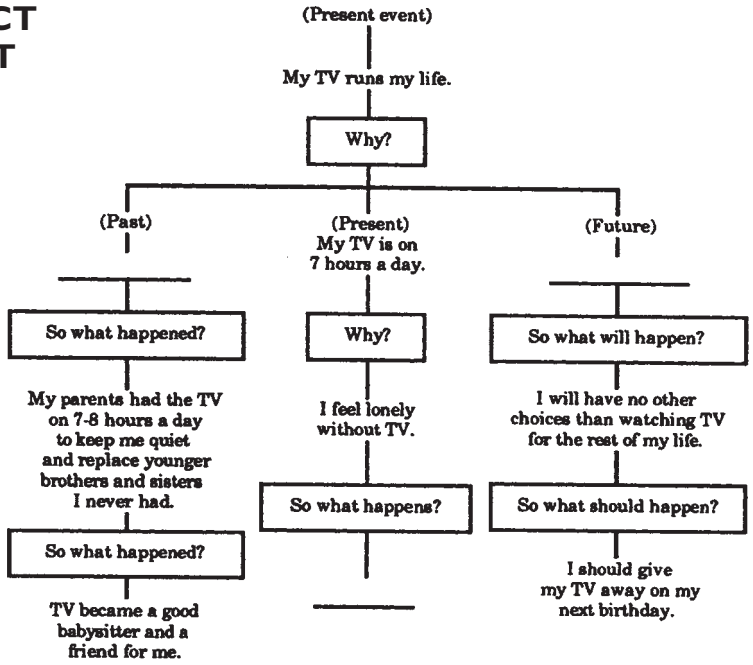
- *Teacher Preparation:* Develop your own partial brainstorming graphic organizer or use one of the following examples.



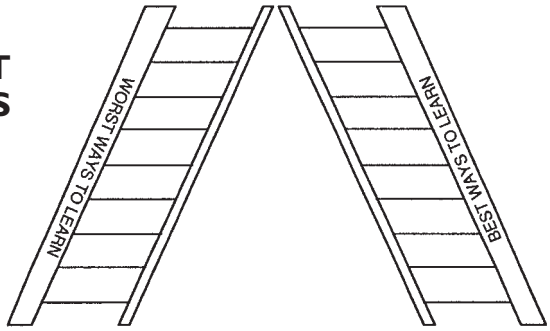
NEGATIVE MANDALA

Brilliant Brainstorming (cont'd)

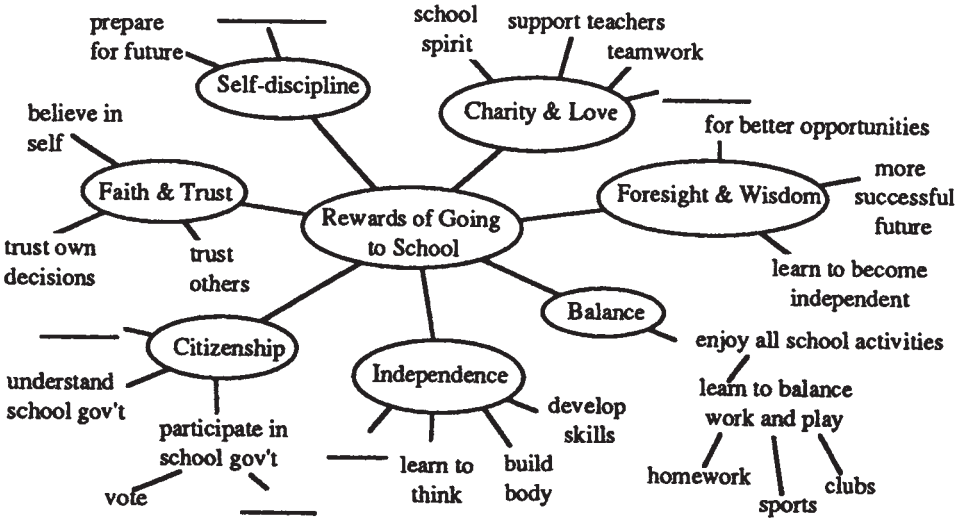
CAUSE/EFFECT FLOW CHART



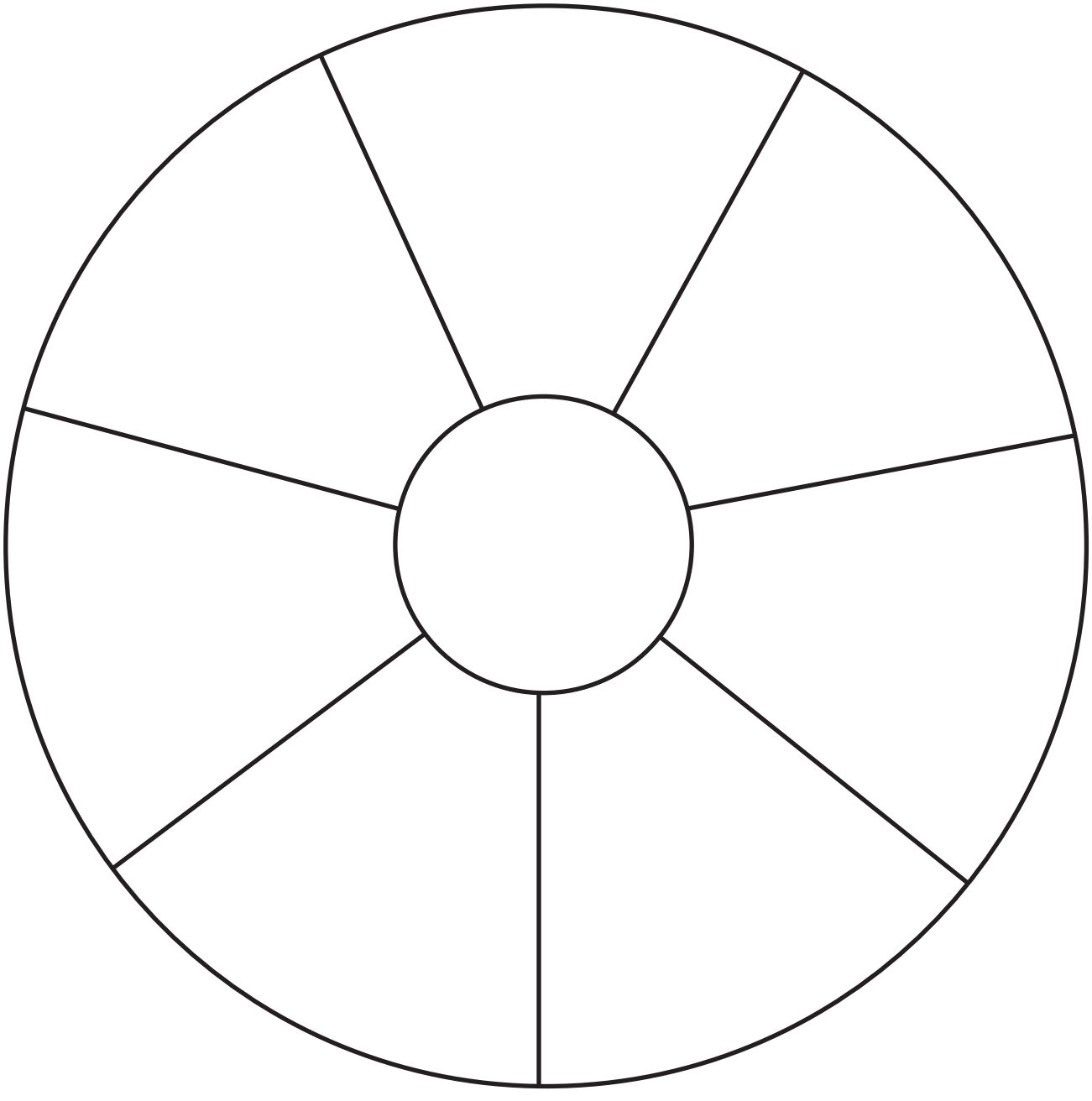
COMPARISON/CONTRAST LADDERS



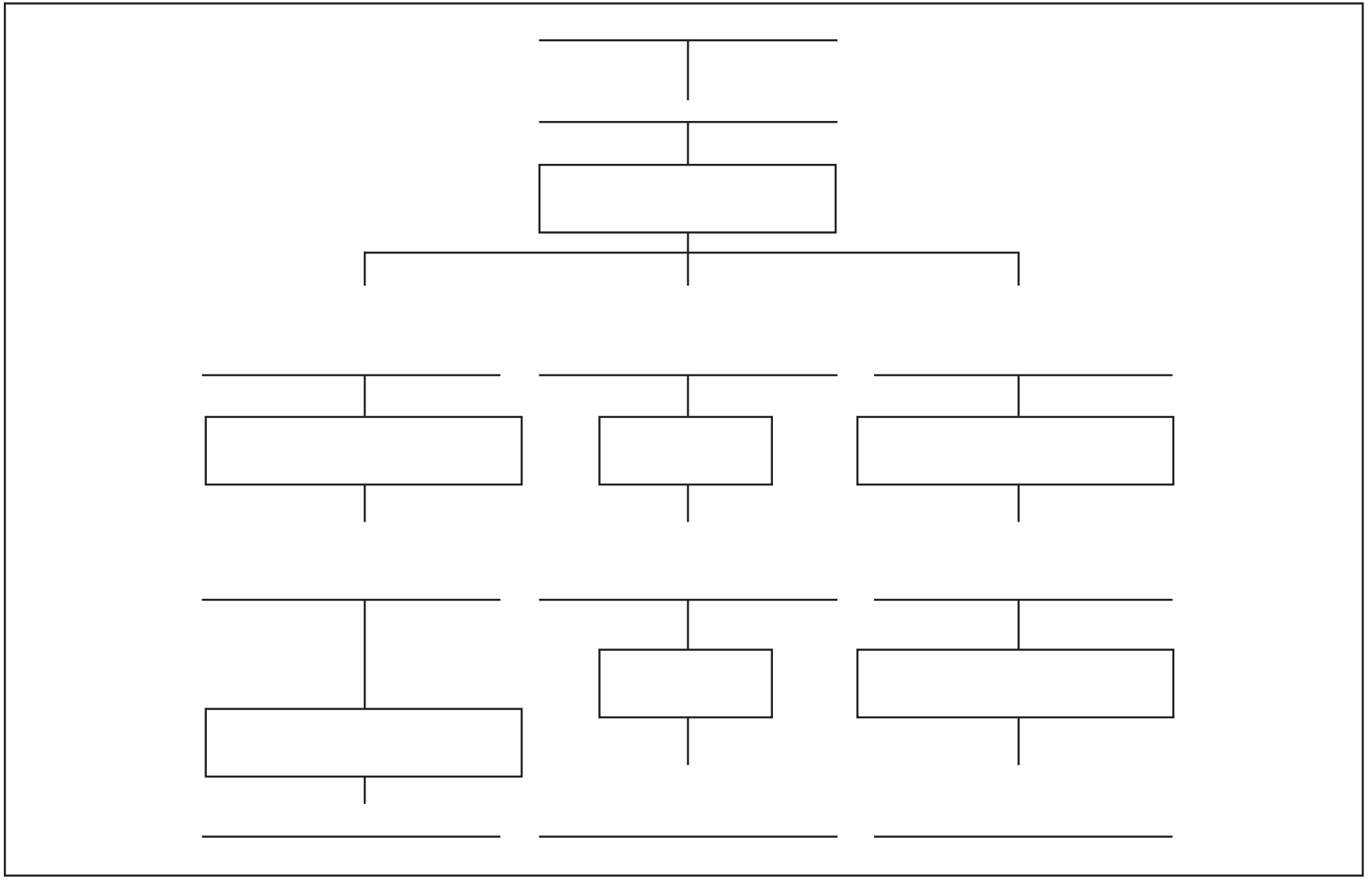
POSITIVE CLUSTER



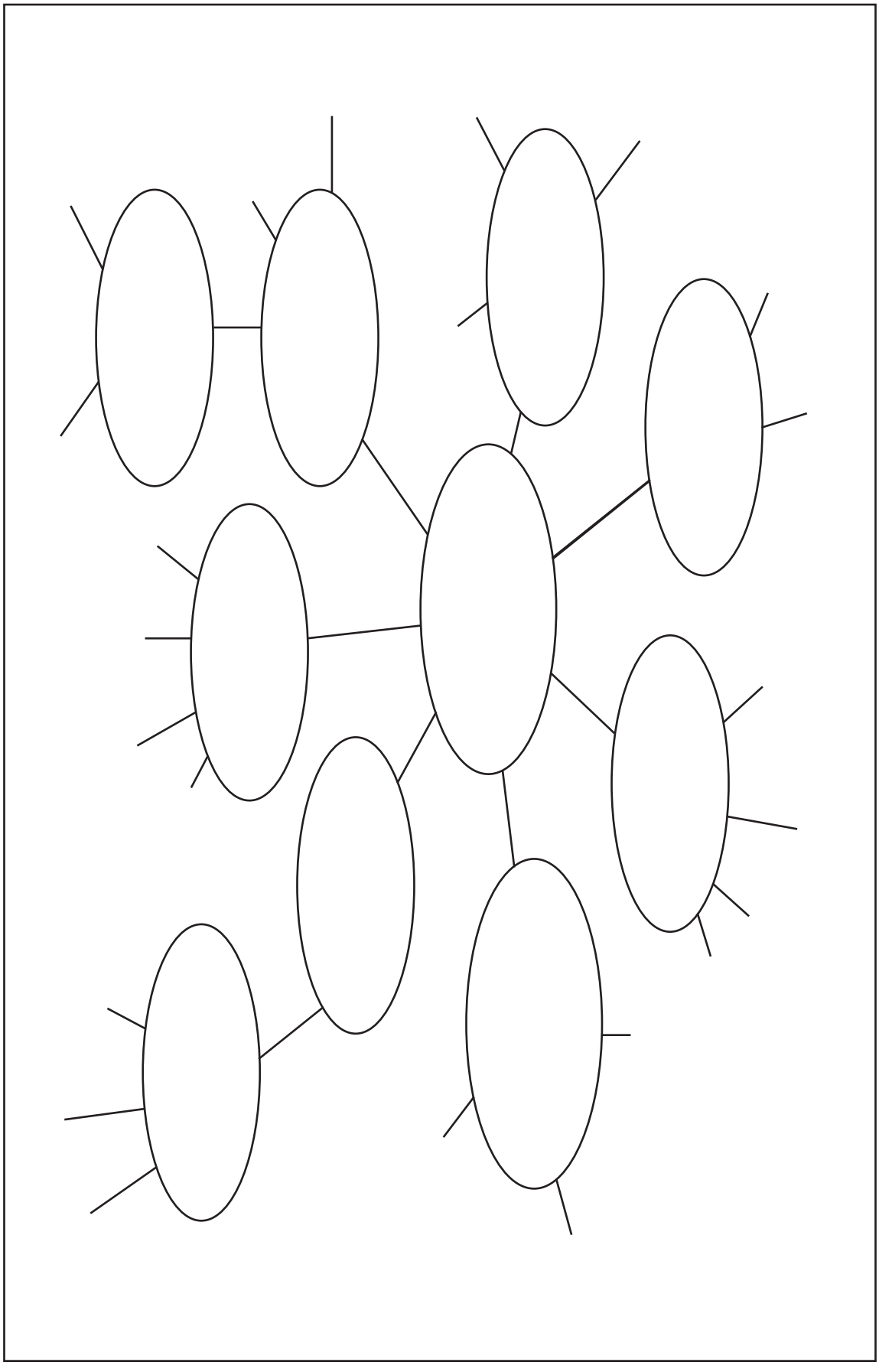
Negative Mandala



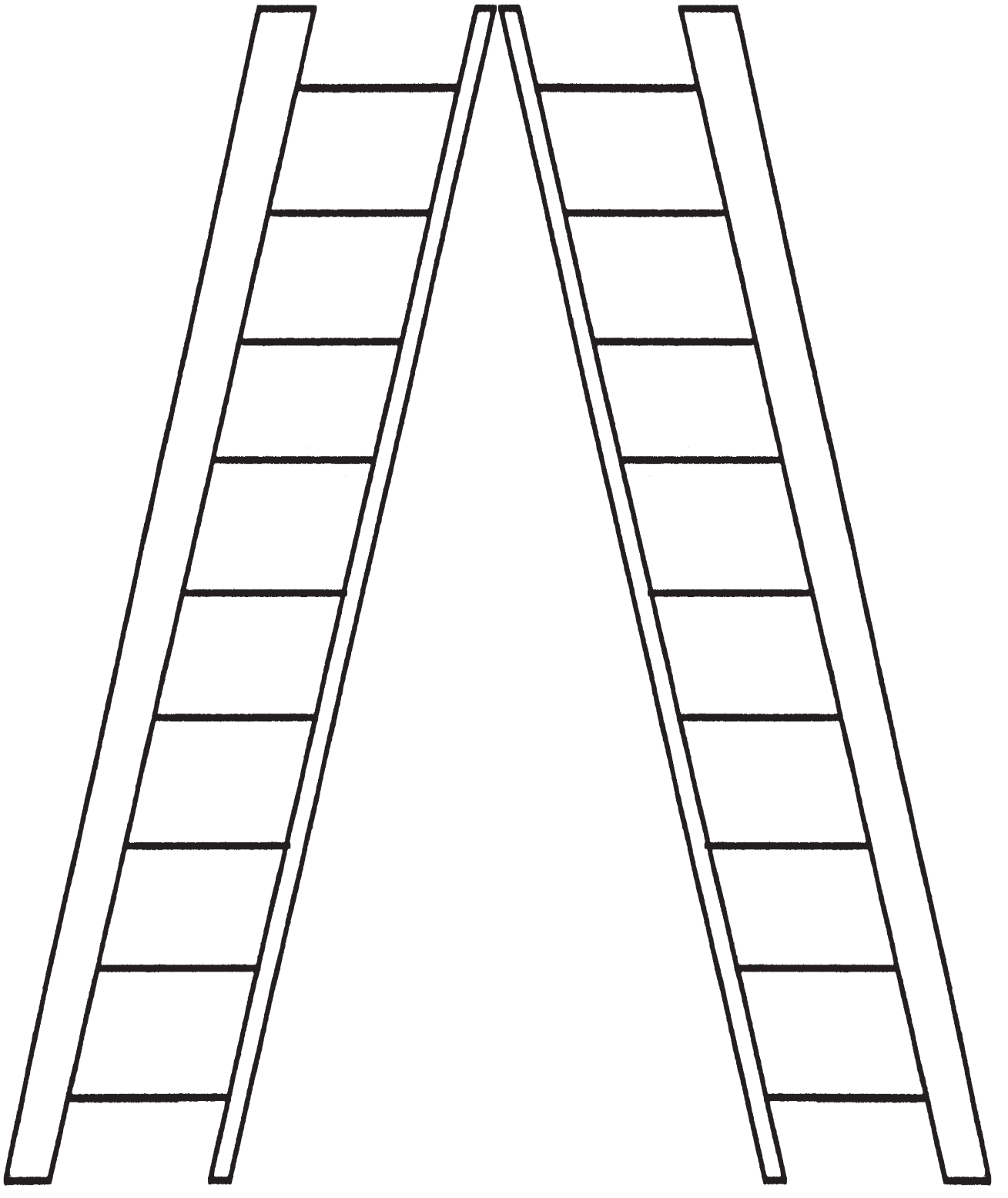
Cause and Effect Flow Chart



Positive Cluster



Comparison/Contrast Ladders



Fib or Fact?

The purpose of this activity is to help students realize they have real-life experiences that can be translated into meaningful stories, essays, etc. Having students review their life events, either big or small, can give validation to their personal narrative and encourage them to share their unique stories.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

1. The teacher creates a list of personal experiences to share with students. Only one of the experiences should be a "fib".

   e.g. - I have been blessed by a Buddhist monk.
   - I have danced at a discotheque in Italy.

2. Share a list of 5-10 specific experiences with the students and tell them that only one of the statements is false. It is the students' task to figure out which statement is the 'fib'. After reviewing all the statements the teacher reveals which statement was the 'fib'.
3. Invite the students to ask questions about the 'fact' statements and the stories behind them. Allow for class discussion and story-telling.
4. Ask the students to create their own list of 5-10 personal statements that will be shared with a partner; one statement must be a 'fib'.
5. Students share their statements in partners. This sharing of stories and experiences will help to increase students' ideas and for future writing.

Variations/Extensions

- Have a daily "fib or fact" session at the beginning of class that highlights one student who shares their 'fib or fact' list with the entire class. This process honours the importance of personal experience. and helps to highlight the variety of situations upon which students can draw for writing ideas. This also supports struggling students in the class by helping them to create further additions to their own 'fib or fact' lists.

Finding the Write Angle

This activity helps students to gain insight into an array of possible angles on a given topic. In essence, it is a free write exercise as students are asked to write without inhibition. However, the various topic statements are provided by the teacher with the intent to have students discover their focus for a more formal piece.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.

Teaching the Activity

1. Provide the students with a statement about a topic (see examples below).
2. Give the students five minutes of free writing in response to that statement.
3. Provide the students with a second statement about the same topic.
4. Give the students five minutes of free writing in response.
5. After a third attempt, invite the students to create their own statement about the topic. Again, they will have a timed free write.
6. Have students repeat this process until they can't think of another thing to write about.
7. Have students consider their generated ideas and select the best statement as a focus for a writing piece. Their chosen statement becomes their thesis.
8. Have students construct their brainstormed ideas into a written piece.

Examples:

Topic: Computers

1. Computers make life/work/communication easier
2. Computers connect the world
3. Computers are good tools for students
4. Computers make information more accessible
5. Computers can _____

Teacher Tips:

- Allow students to research the effect of computers on society to build their background knowledge prior to generating ideas for writing
- Do this as an oral exercise in partners or small groups to generate further ideas

Free Writes

"Freewriting is a way of thinking on paper, a way of letting words surprise the writer. What often happens in freewriting is that the conscious mind loses some of its control, and suddenly memories that have been long forgotten call out, and connections between events that have been little understood emerge, and emotions that are often suppressed laugh and cry out. Above all, freewriting is a way of tapping into the energy of words and word-making".

C Leggo (2000)

"Free" writing opportunities are one of the most important activities for developing writers. This kind of writing should be practiced daily, in 5-10 minute writing exercises that are not used for assessment or evaluation. This writing is rarely taken beyond the first draft, but is an essential activity that requires the student to brainstorm, play with language and put their ideas down on paper without the fear of being evaluated or judged. If appropriate, these short writing exercises may be followed by an invitation for students to share their writing with others.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Characteristics of free write activities:

- The topics are open-ended and experimental
- The writing topics are often selected by the students
- The focus is on taking risks and growing as writers, NOT on assessment
- Comments made are only positive, never critical, because these pieces are about ideas and process, not product
- Free write activities can be initiated with or without a writing prompt (see Writing Prompts for further ideas)

The following are possible Free Write ideas:

- **One Word Memory Associations**
  Give students a single word prompt (e.g. *blue, sand, ice cream, etc.)*. Allow them to write down all the memories or thoughts they associate with that word.
- **Random Word Associations**
  Write a list of 5-10 random words on the board. Invite students to write down a word or phrase that they associate with each word.
- **The Longest Sentence in the World**
  Students are told to write without using any punctuation except one period at the end of the timed write.

(cont'd)

Free Writes (cont'd)

- **One-Word Sentences**
  This is the opposite of the Longest Sentence activity. Start with three-word sentences and work down to one-word sentences. Model a few examples which incorporate a variety of uses of punctuation (e.g. Who are you? Who is asking? What's the problem?) Students are encouraged to write down as many one-two-three word sentences as they can think of within a specific time frame. Invite students to write their one-word sentences "graffiti-style" on the board as a way to share their ideas.
- **Stream of Consciousness Writing**
  Students are asked to simply write without stopping allowing any and all thoughts to be recorded. The goal is to keep writing – anything goes!
- **Single Syllable Writing**
  Students write using only one-syllable words. The next day students could try writing with mainly multi-syllable words. In the second version, some single syllable words (a, the, is…) should be written on the board to help students link the multi-syllable words into sentences.
- **Observing Behaviour**
  Students take their journal outside to observe other students in action. Have students sit a respectable distance from the subject being observed. Instruct students to write down all the actions of the one student they have selected to observe within a five minute time period. Alternatively, if there is a game going on, students could write a play-by-play. Students should keep their subject anonymous if they choose to share their writing with others.
- **Alliteration Writing**
  A letter is selected (or students choose their own letter) and the requirement is that most of the words in their writing have to start with that letter.
- **Silent Conversations**
  Students work with a partner. One student starts a written conversation and the other student responds in writing on the same page. Absolutely no talking is allowed. Student partners should sit next to each other, where they can easily lean in, and should use different coloured pens so their 'voices' in the writing are visually distinct. The writing should flow like a conversation. Students write in first person without the use of quotation marks. These are often fun to share aloud using a Readers' Theatre approach.
- **A List of Questions**
  The questions may start out relating to a particular topic or theme, but often quickly diverge and become less related to one another. This activity could be extended by having students trade lists of questions and respond in writing to each other's questions.
- **A List of Worries**
  Students write a list of 15-20 things to worry about. This could also be adapted to other themes (e.g. a list of things to be thankful for, a list of pet peeves, a list of favourites, etc.)

Funnelling Your Writing

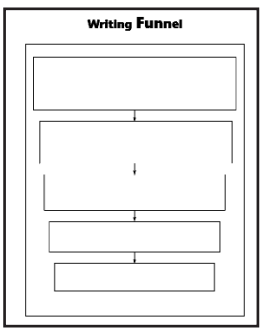
On any given writing task, students should get in the habit of narrowing down their topic or focus in order to be more successful. Students need much practice on narrowing down a topic for writing. Ralph Fletcher, in *What a Writer Needs* (1993), argues that the "smaller" a student writes, the more interesting a piece of writing becomes. As being specific is challenging for many students, asking them to go through the process of "funneling their writing" during the pre-writing stage may avoid later frustrations.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

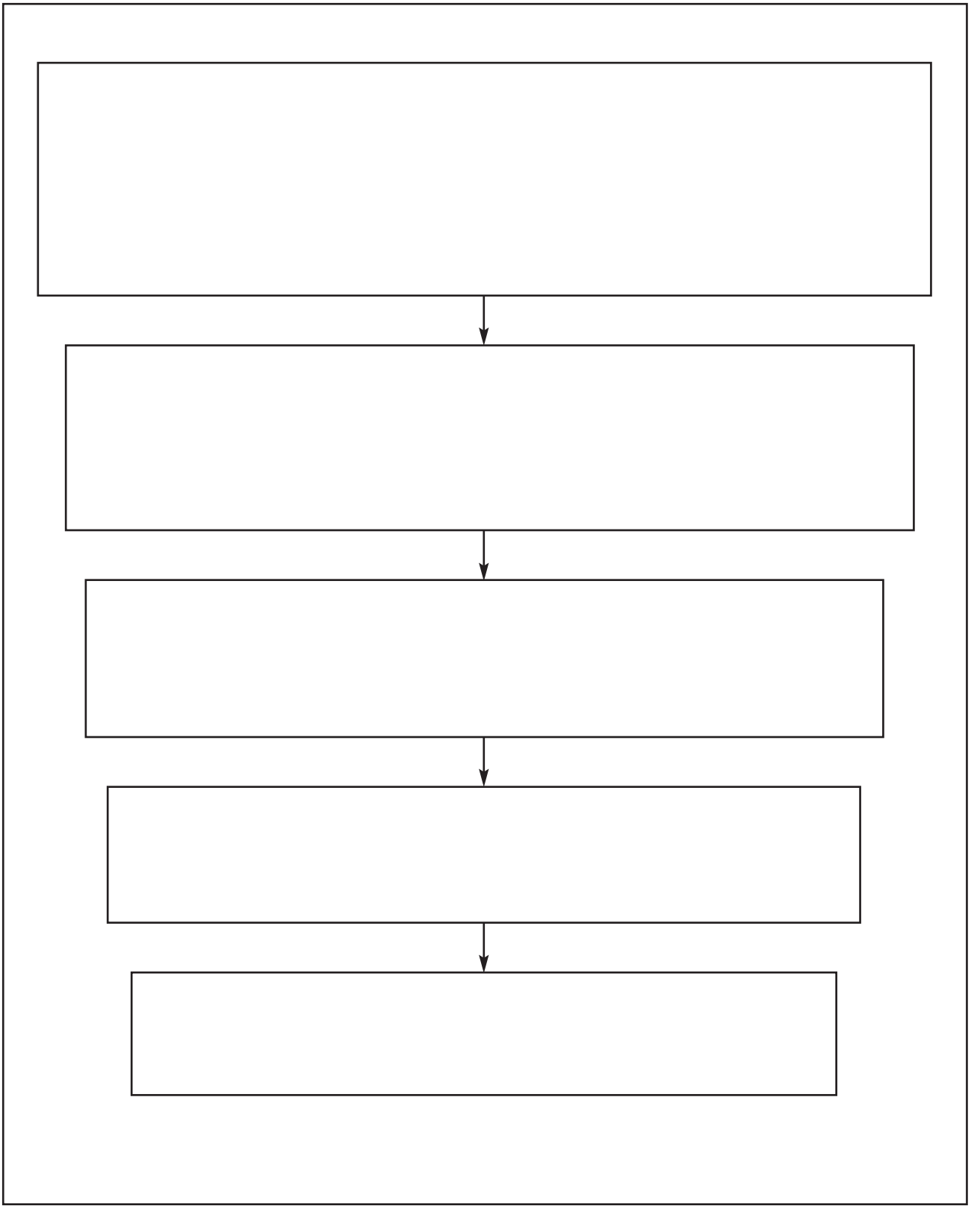
Teaching the Activity

1. When students are generating their ideas for writing, provide them with the graphic organizer Writing Funnel so they can become practiced in narrowing down their ideas to a manageable place from which to write successfully.
2. Have students work in partners or small groups to "orally rehearse" their ideas. Discussion allows students to work out their thoughts and hear from others from whom they may be inspired.



Adapted from Gallagher, K. (2006). Teaching Adolescent Writers. USA: Stenhouse Publishers.

Writing Funnel



Introductory Interviews

This is a great oral/writing activity to start the school year. In this activity, students emphasize oral language by interviewing another student in the class and presenting their partner to the class. The "introductory" aspect of the activity also provides an excellent means of building community for the class.

Writing Skills

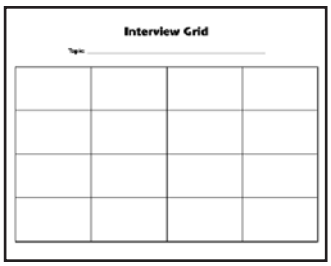
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. Model the expectations of the format by reading a mock interview or write-up about yourself that was "published" in *Vogue, Macleans,* or another suitable magazine genre. Alternatively, read a real interview article of a relevant celebrity.
2. Outline the characteristics of a great interview. Ask students what makes an interview interesting. How do interviewers get their subjects to give up juicy details?
3. Assign the task: students will interview a partner and then write it up for a class publication. To give focus to the activity, suggest a topic:

    - Work/What are you going to do with your life?
    - Family/The things we love and hate about our family.
    - Summer/How much do you dislike being back at school?

4. Students should brainstorm 10 questions to ask their interviewee. Remind them to go after the interesting and juicy details!
5. Ask students to sit next to someone who they don't already know, or who went to a different elementary school, is born in the same month, etc.
6. Partners interview one another, recording as many details as they can.
7. Instruct students to write about their subject in one paragraph, trying to "capture" their partner's character as best they can. The main purpose is to reveal the interviewee's true character.
8. Have students introduce their partner to the class by reading their interview paragraphs. This also allows for the opportunity to set out expectations regarding presentations, active listening, applause, etc.
9. Take digital pictures on the first day and extend this into a visual display for the wall.


Interview Grid

Interview Grid

Topic: _____

Mind Maps

Mind Maps are a creative way to represent ideas or information about a topic, a concept or even a unit of study before beginning to write. Students are encouraged to think of symbols for their topic or graphic images that could represent the subject being mapped. Related ideas are brainstormed and added to the map with lots of colour, graphics, symbols and key words. The related ideas are connected to the topic with lines and key words radiating out from the centre of the map. Mind Maps can help students during the drafting stage of the writing process.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.

Teaching the Activity

1. Select a topic or use vocabulary associated with a topic and have students identify a central image or visual that represents the subject or topic being mapped.
2. Brainstorm all the related themes or ideas about the central topic, individually or in groups. Students then identify graphics or visuals that go with these ideas and represent them radiating like branches from that central image.
3. Add and connect key words with lines to the central image. Encourage the use of colour.
4. Add new ideas that flow out of the related themes and ideas with pictures and symbols, key words, and then the connecting lines. The use of colour improves understanding, interest, and memory.
5. Use information from the Mind Map as a planning or drafting tool for writing. By mind mapping first, students are encouraged to develop their writing beyond one or two ideas.

Variations/Extensions

- Use *Inspiration* software for students to create Mind Maps on the computer. With this program, Mind Maps are easily turned into outlines and can be transferred to word processing programs for further writing, revising, and editing. Many templates are included.

Organizing Writing

Students benefit from organizers that aid in their brainstorming efforts and help guide their thinking. Helping students to plan the various elements that are important to the writing process, such as audience or purpose, will serve to heighten their awareness and understanding of the considerations that all writers need to make.

Writing Skills

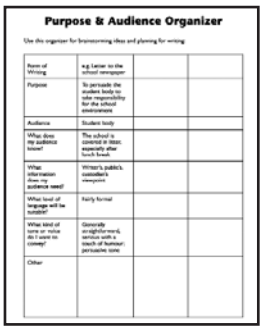
1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. Give each student a copy of the graphic organizer on the following page to help them generate their ideas for a given writing assignment.
2. Provide time for students to fill in the blanks, and discuss and compare their notes with a partner or small group.
3. Have students construct their brainstormed ideas into a written piece.

Variations/Extensions

- Make up blank graphic organizers for those students who need less support; conversely, filling in other ideas will help those students who need more scaffolding in order to get started.



Purpose & Audience Organizer

Form of Writing	e.g. Letter to the school newspaper		
Purpose	To persuade the student body to take responsibility for the school environment		
Audience	Student body		
What does my audience know?	The school is covered in litter, especially after lunch breaks		
What information does my audience need?	Writer's public caretaker's viewpoint		
What level of language will be suitable?	Fairly formal		
What kind of tone or voice do I want to convey?	Generally straightforward, serious with a touch of humour; persuasive tone		
Other			

Purpose and Audience Organizer

Use this organizer for brainstorming ideas and planning for writing:

Form of Writing	e.g. Letter to the school newspaper		
Purpose	To persuade the student body to take responsibility for the school environment		
Audience	Student body		
What does my audience know?	The school is covered in litter, especially after lunch break		
What information does my audience need?	Writer's, public's, custodian's viewpoint		
What level of language will be suitable?	Fairly formal		
What kind of tone or voice do I want to convey?	Generally straightforward, serious with a touch of humour; persuasive tone		
Other			

PWIM: What's in a Picture?

PWIM, developed by Emily Calhoun (Calhoun, 1999), stands for Picture Word Inductive Model. It is an inquiry-based literacy strategy that uses curriculum-based, high-interest pictures to elicit words from students' expressive vocabulary. The process is highly engaging and promotes inductive thinking, classification, phonemic awareness, knowledge of language conventions, writing, and more.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

Part One: Generating the Words

1. Choose a picture that would elicit conversation. The picture could be linked to a theme that is being studied, but this is not a requirement.
2. Have the students look closely at the picture, without talking. If necessary, allow the students to come up in small groups to view the picture more closely.
3. Once the students have had a chance to see the picture, rest the picture on the board ledge. A large board is needed for writing the words that the students generate.
4. Ask the students to take turns calling out words for the things they see in the picture. As the words are called out, write the words on the board. It does not matter in what order the words are written on the board.
5. Encourage the students to fill the board with words. Review the list of words to determine which language convention or theme can be highlighted. The concept could be a theme, or parts of speech, etc. Students could copy some/all of the words onto paper. The words, however, should stay on the board for future use and reference.

Part Two: Sorting the Words

1. Once the target concept has been decided, illustrate this concept by circling 'yes' examples with one colour and 'no' examples with another.
2. After providing each yes and no example, have the students privately write down what they think the words have in common. If they have a theory and it gets proven wrong as the activity progresses, they are encouraged to change their theory. It's important that they note how their thinking changes as more and more examples are given.

(cont'd)

PWIM: What's in a Picture? (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

Part Two: Sorting the Words (cont'd)

3. Once six or more examples are provided, ask the students to come up to the board and circle a word that they feel fits the concept. Students can take turns testing their theory.
4. Provide a tester word. Once it seems like the students have an understanding of what the concept is, they can be invited to copy several of the words onto their papers and divide them into yes and no columns. They can then add more examples of their own, even if they aren't noted on the board.
5. Discuss the concept with the class.

Variations/Extensions

- Direct students to generate sentences, using the words on the PWIM. These sentences could then be classified. Model placing these sentences into a paragraph.
- If PWIM is used for an ELL class, draw lines from the words to the objects they are describing within the picture.

hungry poor
starving needy
bleak outraged destitute poverty-stricken angry
wrathful shocking distraught
woeful
troubled sorrowful
unhappy broke wounded
displaced forlorn
lonely melancholy
dispossessed cheerless

adrift ruined discreditable heartbreaking
dismayed impoverished gloomy
discontent penniless famished bankrupt insolvent
vagrant modest

Reading as a Writer: Finding Fabulous Quotes

In order to improve their writing, students need to read and recognize good writing. Writers often record the words or phrases from literature that interest them or spark their imagination. For this activity, students will be encouraged to keep a journal or writer's notebook that helps them collect rich writing that can then be used as prompts or topics for future ideas. This is an on-going activity that can continue throughout the year or the course.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.

Teaching the Activity

1. Each student creates a notebook called "Fabulous Quotes".
2. The teacher models finding a fabulous quote by selecting a book with rich language, reading it aloud, and choosing a quote that could be recorded in the notebook. The quote might be a powerful example of imagery, alliteration, description or emotive writing.
3. The teacher models how to cite the source by recording the title, author, and page number of the quote. Keeping a reference allows students to practice this important skill and to find the source again if needed.
4. Students are directed to find quotes, phrases, sentences, words that they deem rich, descriptive and memorable in the works that they read during the course. Students might even be asked to find a certain number of quotes a week.
5. This collection of fabulous quotes becomes a resourceful reference for generating ideas for future writing.

Variations/Extensions

- When students are working on revising their own writing, they could look back in their notebook and use some of the collected models for use in their own work. The quotes will encourage them to enhance the language in their writing.
- Students should be encouraged to include impressive sentences or phrases of their own work or others' works
- Students should keep a section in their writing binder named "choice vocabulary" that could be a collection of powerful words for use in their own writing
- One possible outcome of this activity is the complaint that students "can't find" any "fabulous quotes" in the book they are currently reading. They may arrive at the conclusion that the book is not necessarily well written. Discuss the evaluation of good writing – what works and what doesn't?
- Have students share their collections of fabulous quotes

Starting from Scrap

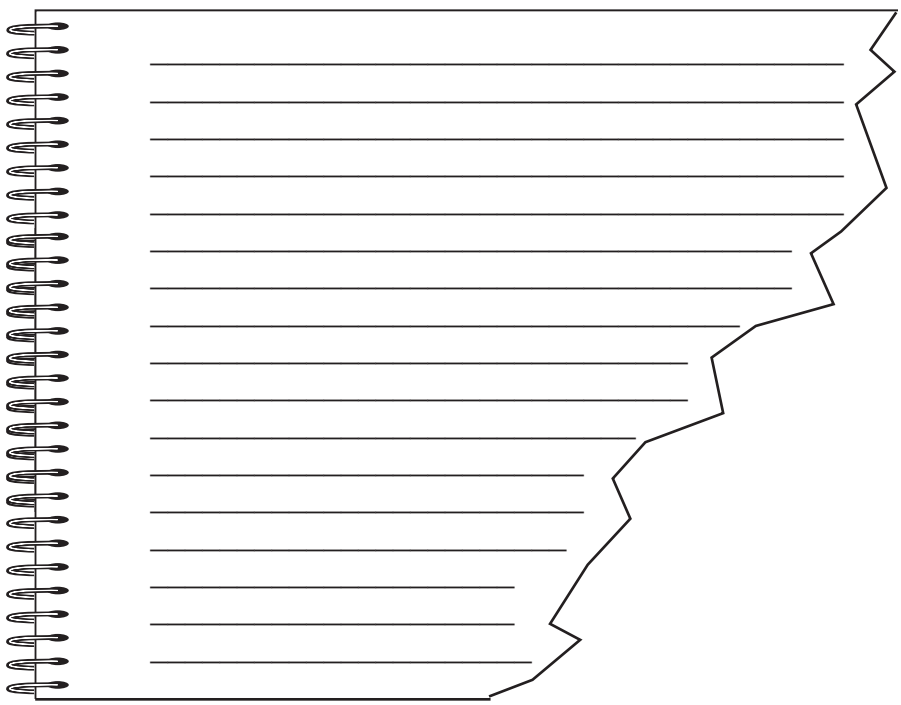
Providing students with a framework for writing often helps them to generate new ideas. In this activity, students are given a scrap of torn paper that has sentences that have been partially ripped away. The sentence fragments that remain on the paper are meant to guide the students to create an imaginative piece for a warm-up activity. Students can also make up their own scraps for others to push each others' imagination and creativity.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

1. Create a ripped up note that leaves ample room for students to use their imagination to complete (see below for an example).
2. Invite students to complete the scrap note by using
   - the best their imagination can offer
   - less predictable images or ideas
   - some compelling and lively vocabulary
3. Have students share their ideas in groups or volunteer to share their scraps with the whole class.
4. Have students create a story from their ideas generated from the scrap note.



"Write" Talks

This activity entails role models visiting the classroom to discuss ways they use writing in authentic contexts. When these adult speakers conduct "write" talks, students can see how people around them use writing for a variety of authentic, valuable reasons.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.

Teaching the Activity

1. Begin by asking students to identify and discuss adults they admire in order to create a list of "real writers" from the community. "Real writers" are people who write in authentic contexts for real purposes, and who are involved in the students' everyday lives.
2. Invite several of these adults to give write talks in the classroom or arrange for a video-conference. Ask the guests to share a sample of the writing they have done to show to the students and to detail the purpose for this writing, and the reasons why this writing is important to them. For example, an athlete might bring an example of a web page he wrote for presenting game schedules, a musician might share the lyrics she wrote for a song, and an older brother at college may bring the notes he wrote to remember the material from a class.
3. Have students generate a list of questions to ask the guest speaker. Example questions might include the following:
    - What writing process did you follow when writing this text?
    - Who was your intended audience?
    - How often do you write for your job?
    - How important is writing in the workplace?
    - What are your methods for revision and editing?

    By hearing adults give write talks, and asking them additional questions about their writing processes, students will come to understand that writing varies according to the purpose and context, yet is a very vital form of communication.
4. Ask students to write thank you notes to the write talk guests.
5. Use the writing samples throughout the curriculum, for example, showing the lyrics from a guest speaker/ musician during a poetry unit to make the connections for students between writing in the classroom and writing in the real world.

Teacher Tip:

- It would be impossible to invite enough guest speakers to talk about the myriad of writing contexts which exist, but endeavour to ensure that there is enough of a variety to represent the diversity of your classroom or community.

Adapted from *Motivating Young Writers Through Write-talks: Real Writers, Real Audiences, Real Purposes* by Amy Alexandra Wilson, The Reading Teacher, vol. 61, No. 6, March 2008

Writing Prompts

Students often complain that they don't have any ideas to write about. Providing them with ways to generate ideas is an important part of the writing journey. Remember to keep writing prompts simple, open-ended, age appropriate, and of interest to students. The following prompts will help to get students started writing for a variety of different purposes and genres.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

To introduce the use of prompts, the teacher needs to use a modelled writing approach. It is also important that the teacher allow for discussion with pairs or small groups, as it is often through the oral process that further ideas come to mind. The following are suggestions for teaching the use of writing prompts.

1. Write 3-5 writing prompts on the board. No single prompt is likely to inspire all students, so a variety should be presented.
2. Use a Think-Aloud approach to demonstrate the selection of a writing prompt.
3. Have the students select a prompt that seems suitable.
4. Have students discuss their ideas with others before writing.
5. Have students write individually using their chosen writing prompt to develop a composition.

Ideas for writing prompts

Personal memories and thoughts…

1. The best advice I ever received was…
2. I attempt to make the world a better place by…
3. A day I will never forget is…
4. One bad habit I have is…
5. A product I wish I'd invented is…
6. A person knows they are an adult when…
7. My generation is similar/different from my parents because…
8. Technology is important in my life because…
9. An important skill I need in the world today is…
10. Music/TV/movies are important to me because…
11. I was really angry when…
12. The person from history I would most like to meet is…
13. The most important quality in a friend is…
14. The most significant event of the 20th century was…
15. The best way I learn is…
16. My best vacation ever was…
17. The most embarrassing moment of my life was…
18. If everything was perfect I would…
19. My most effective strategies for managing stress are…
20. A special place for me is…

(cont'd)

Writing Prompts (cont'd)

Ideas for writing prompts (cont'd)

Single word prompts…

1. Pizza
2. Ridiculous
3. Sand
4. Money
5. Popularity
6. High School
7. Technology
8. Money
9. Future
10. Celebrity

"If" prompts…

1. If you could have been someone in history, who would you have been?
2. If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?
3. If you were five years older, what would you be doing?
4. If you could have the perfect job, what would it be?
5. If you could do whatever you wanted right now, what would you do?

"I Wish" prompts…

1. I wish I had enough money to…
2. I wish my family could…
3. I wish everyone had…
4. I wish I didn't have to…
5. I wish I could change…
6. I wish the environment could…
7. I wish the community had…
8. I wish there really was…
9. I wish all adults did…
10. I wish the world could…

"Visual" prompts…

1. Show a powerful photograph that evokes an emotion or provokes a question.
2. Show a short scene of a film or documentary that leaves the students wondering.
3. Show a slide show or PowerPoint that invites commentary.
4. Read a post-modern picture book.
5. Watch a TV advertisement that elicits discussion.
6. Show a YouTube video that calls for action.
7. Show an arresting newspaper headline and photo.
8. Use any image that generates ideas for writing!

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Drafting

Creative Writing 80

Response to Literature and Media 136

Paragraph Writing 176

Expository Writing 188

Persuasive Writing 214

Narrative Writing 232

Descriptive Writing 248

Creative Writing

Drafting

CREATIVE WRITING

Activity Page

Tips for Unleashing Your Creativity . . . 81
American Haiku . . . 82
Chiasmus, Metaphor, Pun – Oh My! . . . 84
Childhood Revisited: Re-writing Fairy Tales . . . 86
- Re-writing Fairy Tales . . . 88

Creative Control . . . 89
- Creative Control . . . 90

Denotation/Connotation and Vocabulary Ladders . . . 91
Denotation and Connotation/Vocabulary Ladders Graphic . . . 92
- Denotation and Connotation . . . 93
- Vocabulary Ladders . . . 94

Flashy Fiction . . . 95
Great First Lines . . . 97
Introductions, Hooks, and Leads . . . 98
- Introductions, Hooks, and Leads . . . 100

Making Memoirs . . . 101
Personal Style Inventory . . . 103
- Personal Style Inventory . . . 104

Poetry in a Box . . . 105
- Poetry Prompts . . . 106

Searching for Style . . . 107
- Searching for Style . . . 108
- Style Analysis Web . . . 109
- Style Analysis Chart . . . 110

Sensory Stretches . . . 111
- Sensory Stretches . . . 112

Show, Don't Tell . . . 113
Sitting on a Story Blog . . . 114
Story Bags . . . 116
Story Grids: Building a Good Story . . . 117
- Story Grid . . . 119

Story Nuggets . . . 120
Story Structure . . . 121
- Story Structure Exercise . . . 122

Synonym Madness . . . 123
Vocabulary Webs . . . 124
- Vocabulary Web . . . 125

What's in the Box? . . . 126
Write Like a Writer . . . 128
- Write Like a Writer: Style Sample Sheet . . . 130

Writing Variables . . . 131
- Writing Variables . . . 132
- Writing Variables (selecting) . . . 133

You Bean My Friend . . . 134

- Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids included

Tips for Unleashing Your Creativity

1. **BE TRUE TO YOU**
   Use your own, original ideas. If you're thinking of borrowing ideas from books, films, TV, or the Internet, DON'T. Use others' ideas as a launch pad for your own creativity. Think for yourself and write from your own life experiences. You are unique, and your ideas are too!

2. **TAKE TIME TO REFLECT**
   Have you ever imagined life on another planet? What it would be like to be invisible? To be one inch high? Let your ideas sit in your brain for a while as you reflect and really consider them. Sometimes it is necessary to take a break from writing and let the ideas reverberate in your head while you are doing something completely different. Ask yourself: How would life be if…? Don't answer too quickly. Let the answers come to you a little at a time.

3. **THINK THINGS THROUGH**
   Think your ideas through all the way. If you create a new world for your reader, you've got to make all the necessary changes that go with it and to answer all the questions that the reader is likely to have. If you turned into a cockroach tomorrow, you probably wouldn't care about hockey or MSN or fashion. Think it through: what would a cockroach worry about? Would you understand the people around you? What would be your primary focus? If you haven't thought your idea through to this extent, then you haven't thought about your story or topic enough.

4. **AVOID EXAGGERATION**
   Things don't have to be weird or zany to be interesting. Your characters don't have to have one eye or have superpowers to intrigue the reader. Imagination sometimes allows for time travel, but other times, it solves simple problems. Imaginative people invent liquid paper and iPods. They write poetry and films. They use herbs to make medicines. They take the NEXT STEP. They think. They go beyond what others have done. Using your imagination is simply using your mind in new ways.

5. **TAKE RISKS**
   The world of imagination is a world of adventure, allure, and surprise. Try something new. Do you have an unusual character or idea living in your head? Try it out. If it doesn't work, you can try something else next time. Don't hold back; take a chance. Readers love things they haven't heard before. Avoid using tired tales that are familiar to all and tell your own stories. Make up your own characters. Be daring and original!

American Haiku

It is well known that Japanese Haiku is a highly structured form of poetry which has 17 syllables (5,7,5), three lines, and strives to create a strong image or impression about an aspect of nature. However, "American Haiku" poetry has very different rules. The following parameters make up the essence of American Haiku:

- Its topic is usually gritty or startling
- It's almost **never** about nature
- It has three lines
- The syllabic pattern is more loosely structured, e.g. 4-6/6-8/4-6
- Its imagery is sometimes shocking and it leaves a lasting impression

It is from this more loose form of haiku structure that the following activity was inspired.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Model writing an original American Haiku by using objects around the classroom for inspiration, e.g. liquid paper, coffee, phlegm on the cement outside the school.
2. Write the haiku on an overhead for the class. Provide a Think-Aloud for students to follow along with the creative process.

   Examples:

   Stark white liquid paper
   Erasing mistakes I make
   Except in real life

   Hot and bitter juice
   Lifeblood of my generation
   Sweet drug in a cup

   Putrid piles of warm
   Clear gooey runny monstrous
   Spit makes my stomach heave

(cont'd)

American Haiku (cont'd)

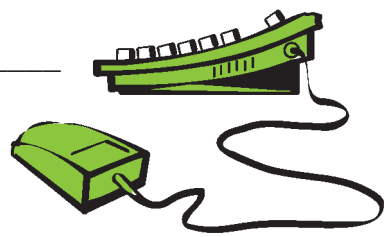
Teaching the Activity

3. Ask the students to join in and write some gritty haiku following American Haiku 'rules'.
   The intent is to share creativity and focus on how poets must choose their words carefully for effect.
4. Have students share their Haiku with others or on the board.

Variations/Extensions

- Create a class anthology of American Haikus or hold a poetry reading of American Haikus.

Writer's Notes



Chiasmus, Metaphor, Pun – Oh My!

Students will enjoy this literary romp through creating clever chiasmus, making their own menagerie of metaphors, and putting together silly puns.

Writing Skills

5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

Chiasmus

Definition: A verbal pattern in which the second half of an expression is balanced against the first but with the parts reversed.

Show examples of chiasmus (or have students find some examples) before asking students to create their own:

e.g. When the going gets tough, the tough get going.
Fair is foul, and foul is fair.
Never let a kiss fool you, or a fool kiss you.

Metaphor

Definition: comparisons that show how two things that are not alike in most ways are similar in one important way.

Show examples of metaphors (or have students find examples) before asking students to create their own:

e.g. A murder of crows, a school of fish, a bevy of beauties

A _____ of paper
A _____ of trees
A _____ of computers
A _____ of buildings
A _____ of students

A _____ of politicians
A _____ of shoes
A _____ of video games
A _____ of teachers

(cont'd)

Chiasmus, Metaphor, Pun – Oh My! (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

Pun

Definition: Puns are a form of word play, a phrase that deliberately exploits confusion between similar-sounding words for humorous or rhetorical effect.

Show examples of puns (or have students find examples) before asking students to create their own.

e.g. When the first telephone rang, it was Alexander Graham's bell.
I wondered why the baseball was getting bigger. Then it hit me.

Variations/Extensions

- Students may enjoy having a competition for the funniest chiasmus, metaphor, or pun.
- Students could create posters or other visual representations of their ideas.

Teacher Tip:

- These forms of literary device are challenging for ELL learners. Allow for them to work in partnership with other students for support.

Childhood Revisited: Re-writing Fairy Tales

By re-writing an excerpt from a fairy tale, with tongue firmly placed in cheek, students can experiment with their own voice and the use (or misuse!) of stylistic devices. This creative writing exercise naturally lends itself to exaggeration and humour.

Writing Skills

5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. Students may choose one of the following options for this lesson:
   a) Select a brief excerpt from a popular children's book or fairy tale and rewrite a dialogue using ONE of the four style choices below:
      - Archaic/mock-Shakespearean
      - Slang/colloquial
      - Overly wordy/jargon
      - Trite/clichéd

      Your dialogue should be constructed to create a five minute, one-act play. e.g. Compare the opening scene from *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White and the following re-writes:

   b) Re-write a fairy tale or fable from the point of view of a character in the story other than the current protagonist. You may choose the antagonist or another character. Consider how a different point of view may result in a different ending – get creative! These new versions could also be told in digital format using iMovie or Comic Life software programs, and uploaded onto YouTube. Web 2.0 communication tools such as Voice Thread, Animoto, or Xtranormal are creative means for having students share their work online.

   c) Many fairy tales have been passed down for hundreds of years; therefore, these tales have become outdated and do not adhere to modern standards. You will choose a fairy tale or fable and rewrite a modern-day version. Consider things like gender roles, people with disabilities, the rights and responsibilities of children and adults, etc. This new version could be made into a children's book.

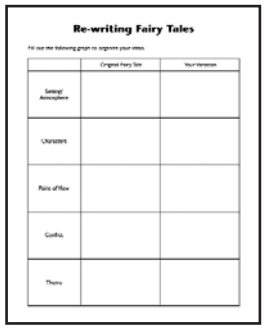
2. Students can brainstorm their ideas using the chart following on p. 87.
3. Have students share their rewritten fairy tales with their classmates, other students in their school, or a neighbouring elementary school.

(cont'd)

Childhood Revisited: Re-writing Fairy Tales (cont'd)

Variations/Extensions

- Each of the options can be represented in a variety of formats including: performance, cartoon, film, slide show, children's book, etc. There are endless creative possibilities.
- Hold a "fairy tale showcase" where students read, show or act out their rewritten fairy tale.


Re-writing Fairy Tales

Teacher Tips:

- For further examples of fractured fairy tales for adolescent learners, see the references below:

SurLaLune Fairy Tales features 47 annotated fairy tales, including their histories, similar tales across cultures, modern interpretations and over 1,500 illustrations.

http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/

Fairy tale novels: Familiar tales with unique twists

Black, Holly	Tithe: *A Modern Faerie Tale* (2004), *Valiant: A Modern Tale of Faerie* (2005), *Ironside: A Modern Faery's Tale* (2007)
Dokey, Cameron	*Beauty Sleep* (2002), *The Storyteller's Daughter* (2002), *Golden* (2006), *Before Midnight: A Retelling of Cinderella* (2007)

Fairy tale novels: Familiar tales with unique twists (cont'd)

Haddix, Marg Peterson	*Just Ella* (2002)
Napoli, Donna Jo	*Beast* (2002), *Zel* (1998), *Spinners* (2001), *Breath* (2005)
Stewart, Sean	*Nobody's Son* (2001)
Yolen, Jane	*Briar Rose* (2002), *Troll Bridge* (2006)

Re-writing Fairy Tales

Fill out the following graph to organize your ideas.

	Original Fairy Tale	Your Variation
Setting/ Atmosphere		
Characters		
Point of View		
Conflict		
Theme		

Creative Control

This activity asks students to focus on the specific types of language and words needed for particular emotions and situations. Part of the fun of this activity comes in the different ways students can creatively fill in the story behind the listed details. While the emotions listed for each sentence are meant to match the situation, they can also be interchanged, sometimes for a humourous result.

Writing Skills

5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.

Teaching the Activity

1. To illustrate the need for using the right words in the right ways, ask students to list the kinds of language that would be used in a suspense story, and the kinds of language that would be used in a romance story (e.g. What would happen if one used romance language for the suspense story?).
2. Next, the following ten sentences are used to elicit appropriate language for the given situation. Even though there are many possibilities here, students are striving to maintain a consistent tone through word choice.

Variations/Extensions

- Also, the construction of this particular exercise also lends itself well to a review of the parts of speech. Before making up the words to fill in the blanks, students could be asked which part of speech is called for. For example, a blank before a noun like house is likely calling for an adjective.

Adapted from The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1996

Creative Control

CREATING THE WORDS

1. (fear) When Karl _____ towards the _____ house, he heard a _____ noise coming out from under the _____.

2. (excitement) _____ with _____, the _____ players _____ after _____ the trophy.

3. (disbelief) Although John had _____ the _____ himself, he _____ to get another _____ to be sure.

4. (confidence) Feeling like a _____, Mary _____ up to the counter and _____ the _____.

5. (joy) _____ was the _____ moment in Lisa's _____ so far, despite the fact that _____ had once perfectly _____ .

6. (annoyance) The _____ _____ outside the _____ drove Stephen to _____ the _____ and _____ the _____.

7. (suspicion) _____ what might happen to the _____, the group of children _____ over to _____ and _____ly _____ the scene.

8. (happiness) The _____ couple, who once _____ on a _____, looked back on the _____ with a sense of _____.

9. (anger) Unable to _____ly _____ the _____, the driver of the _____ car _____ the _____ from the _____ and _____ away.

10. (attraction) Feeling an incredible _____ the _____ atoms _____ around the _____ like a _____ who_____ a _____.

Denotation/Connotation and Vocabulary Ladders

While this activity is in fact two tasks, they work well together. The Denotation/Connotation activity helps students to develop richer vocabularies by illustrating that all words not only have a dictionary definition (denotation), but also a series of associations or connotations. Vocabulary Ladders allow students to develop a bank of synonyms for common vocabulary words, and help to visualize the progression of different meanings for each. For each synonym of a selected vocabulary word, students have to think of how the meaning is changed, and what the connotations of the new word are. As a result, students are able to develop a far more precise repertoire of word choice for written compositions.

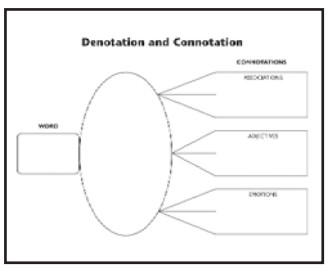
Writing Skills

5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

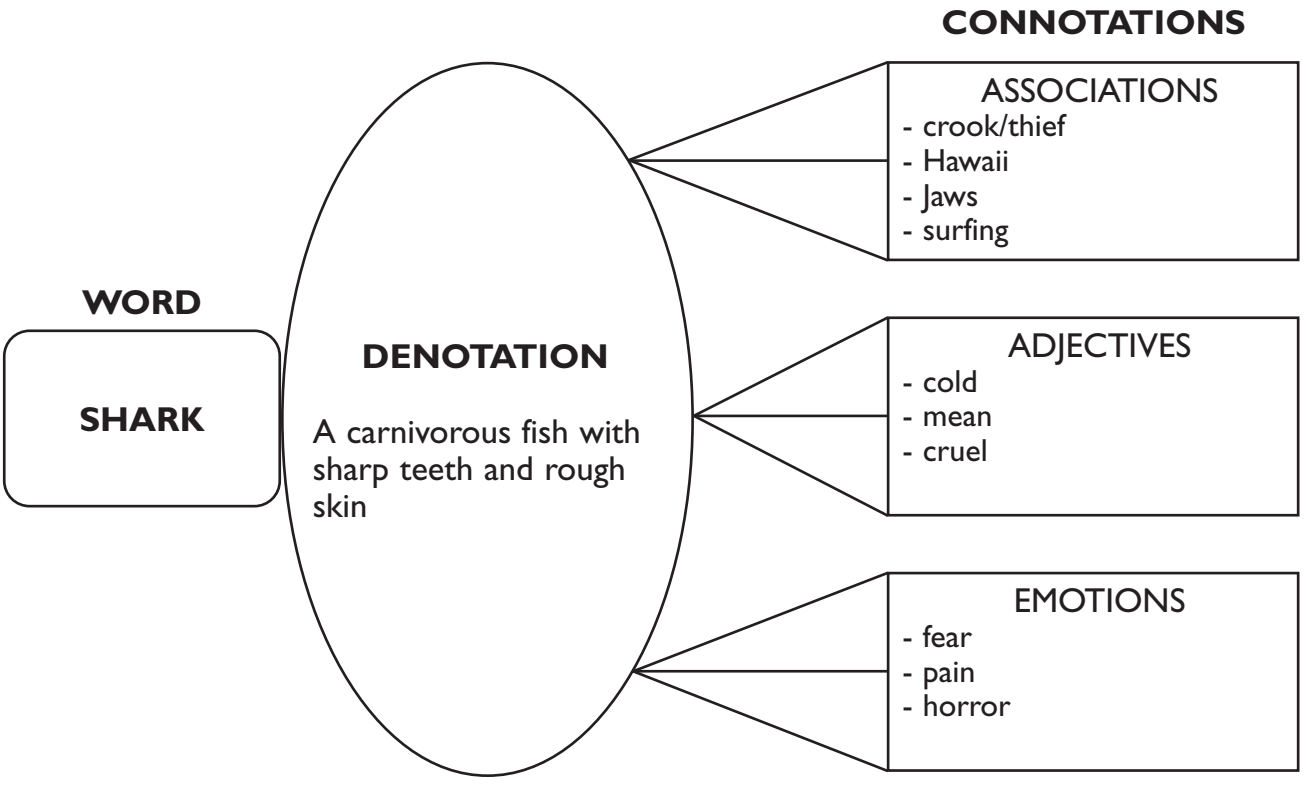
1. Provide students with the Denotation and Connotation graphic organizer.
2. As an introduction to the idea of connotation versus denotation, have students come up with a definition for shark as it might appear in the dictionary. This is the denotation.
3. Next, have students think about all the other words that come to mind when they think about shark. This can include adjectives that might be used to describe a shark, emotions associated with sharks, and any associations students have with the word. Connotations are purely subjective, while the denotation is the objective description that everyone can agree on.
4. Next, provide students with the Vocabulary Ladders graphic organizer.
5. As an example, have students think of all the synonyms for friend and then arrange them along the ladder in order of closest meaning to friend to furthest meaning. This is best done in partners.
6. Students then have to think of how each word is different from all the others, and what the connotations for each are.

Variations/Extensions

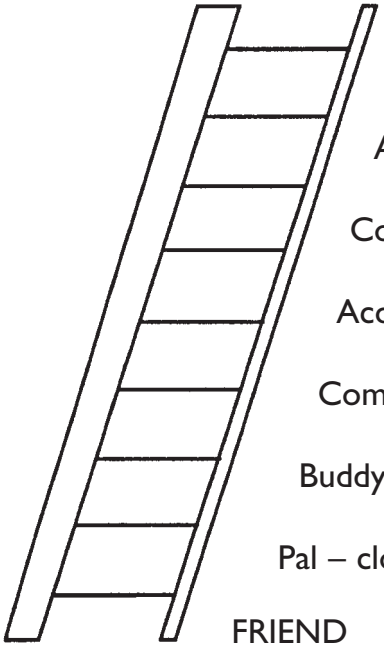


- For lower grades or lower level learners, the bank of synonyms for the vocabulary word can be provided directly, without having the students brainstorm the words themselves. Students must then arrange the words along the ladder from "nearest" synonym, to the one with the least relation to the original word.

Denotation and Connotation

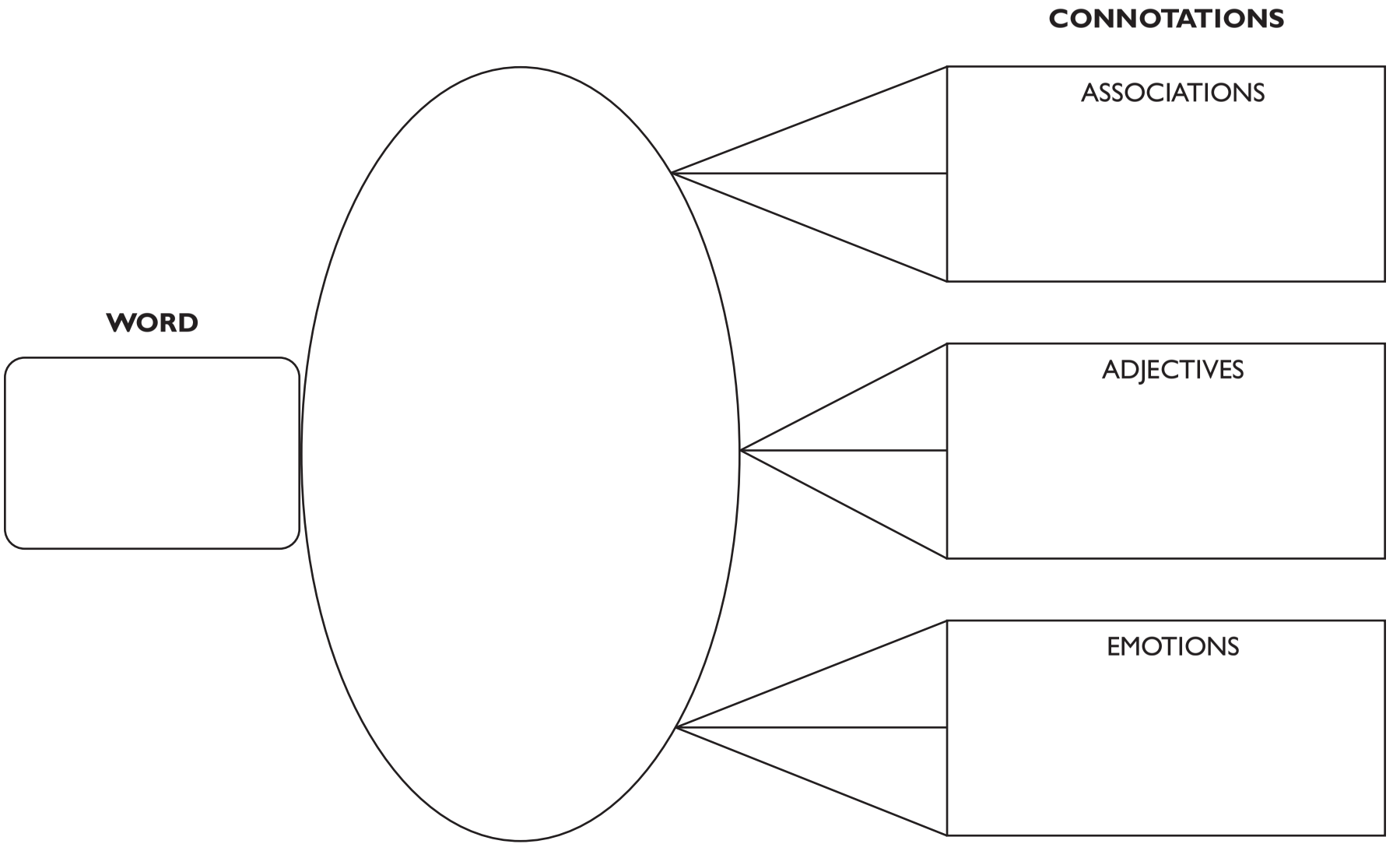


Vocabulary Ladders

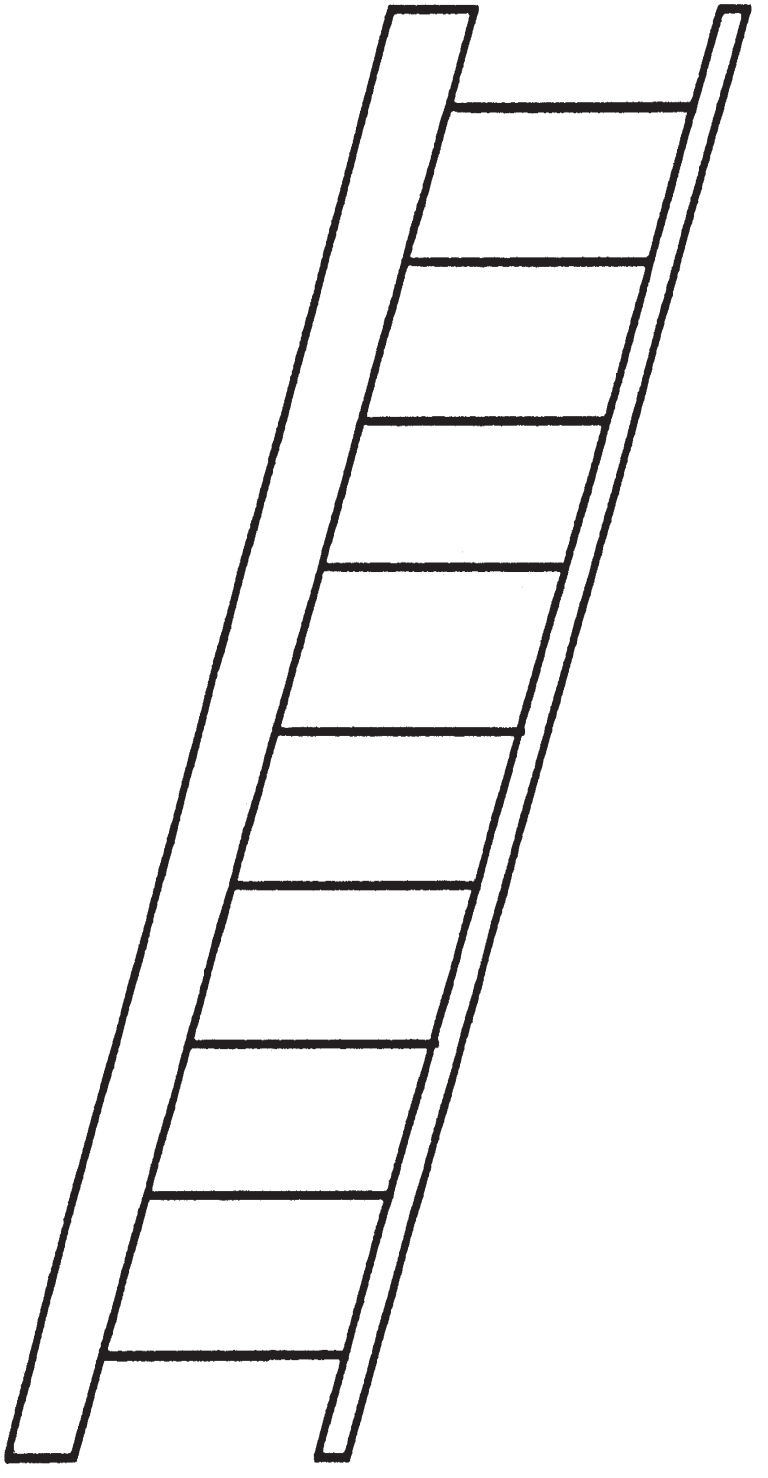


WORDS	DENOTATION/ CONNOTATIONS
Accomplice	someone involved in a crime;
Comrade	someone involved in an army; impersonal
Acquaintance	someone known through business
Companion	possibly a romantic relation
Buddy	very close friend, any age
Pal	close friend, children more than adults
FRIEND	

Denotation and Connotation



Vocabulary Ladders



WORDS

DENOTATION/
CONNOTATIONS

Flashy Fiction

"Flash fiction", characterized by its extreme brevity, has roots going back to *Aesop's Fables* (Thomas, 2006). Chekhov, Kafka, and Bradbury practiced this form of short story with less than 1,000-2,000 words.

Flash fiction differs from a vignette in that flash fiction work contains classic story elements such as protagonist, conflict, and resolution. Other names for flash fiction include sudden fiction, micro-fiction, micro-story, and postcard fiction. With the Internet's demand for short, concise works more easily read on a computer screen, there is a resurgence of interest in this intensely creative form.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Introduce the concept of flash fiction by reading aloud from published text such as *Flash Fiction: 72 Very Short Stories* by James Thomas, Denise Thomas and Tom Hazuka, (1992) or Canadian literary magazine *NFG Magazine* which features a section of flash fiction in each issue.
2. Ask students if they are familiar with this form of writing or if they have seen it online or in print magazines. Discuss.
3. Present the class with a collection of postcards and tell them they are going to write a flash fiction that must fit onto the postcard. You can determine an exact word count or allow for students to simply work with the space of the card.
4. Students can use the picture on the post card for inspiration or work from an original idea.
5. Provide students with several strategies for writing flash fiction. Used alone or in combination, these will help students to focus their story to one brief, interesting event:
   - Go for smaller ideas of a larger, complex issue. It takes a novel to discuss the complex relationship between parents and children. Write about what kids do in the car when they're bored, or a bad report card.
   - Bury the "pre-story" in the opening. Find a way to briefly provide necessary background information and then move on.
   - Start in the middle of the action.
   - Don't describe any more details than are needed; the reader can fill in the rest.

(cont'd)

Flashy Fiction (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

- Focus on one powerful image, e.g. a war-torn street or an empty apartment. Paint a picture with words.
- Make the reader guess until the end. A little mystery will lure the reader into reading until the finish, and there should be pay off for sticking until the ending.
- Use a twist. The story should "pack some punch" at the end.

6. Have students share their "flashy fiction" in a class read aloud or reader's theatre.

Variations/Extensions

- Create a flash fiction contest by giving an award to the student with the most effective fiction written with the lowest number of words.
- Ask students to write a nanofiction (complete story with at least one character and plot with exactly 55 words) or a drabble (story with exactly 100 words).

Technology Connections

- ***http://www.nfg.ca/*** Canadian literary magazine *NFG Magazine*
- ***http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.11/sixwords.html*** *Wired Magazine*
- *Awww! An Essay on Flash* by Randall Brown
  http://smokelong.com/features/012605.asp
- *Flash Fiction: A Thumbnail History* by Tom Hazuka
  http://wwwenglish.ucdavis.edu/spark/issue3/thflash.htm

Teacher Tips:

- The brevity of this flash fiction forces some of the elements of the story to remain unwritten or implied in the written storyline.
- To illustrate to students, share Ernest Hemingway's self-proclaimed "best story" of six words: *For Sale: baby shoes, never worn.*
- Check out G.W. Thomas's micro-story *Nano-Hunk* that won the Zine Guild Award for best Science Fiction Micro Fiction in 2000.

Great First Lines

The purpose of this activity is to get students to search for and collect great first lines in stories, and thus have them consider how carefully selecting words can influence a reader to read. This will heighten students' awareness of the importance of a great "opening" , and their own beginnings to stories or essays may sharpen.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. Ask students to decide on three favourite first lines of stories they know (see suggested list below or search on the Internet).
2. Have students share their favourite first lines with a partner, in a small group or with the class. Challenge the students to find three better first lines for next class.
3. The next class, gather all of the first lines for students to review.
4. Students choose their top ten favourite first lines from all of the books. As a class, students defend why they like their first lines (or see variation)
5. Students write their own better first line to a book they've read (e.g. *Harry Potter, Cinderella, The DaVinci Code*).

Variations/Extensions

- When students come together to debate which opening lines are the best, have students first work in pairs, then in groups of four, then in groups of eight. Remind students that they aren't able to simply give in; they need to provide reasons why they chose their favourite lines and defend their reasons. Be ready to teach co-operative communication and debate etiquette if things become heated.
- See further ideas for leads in the "Leads and Connections" section on p. 98.

Teacher Tip:

• Look to these great authors for examples of great first lines:
- James Joyce, *Ulysses*
- Charles Dickens, *Christmas Carol*
- F. Scott Fitzgerald, *Great Gatsby*
- George Orwell, *1984*
- Franz Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*
- Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*
- E.B. White, *Charlotte's Web*
- Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird*
- Albert Camus, *The Stranger*
- J.M. Barrie, *Peter Pan*

Introductions, Hooks, and Leads

When given a writing assignment, many students complain that they "don't know how to start"! Students need practice in creating catchy introductions, hooks, and lead sentences. In this activity, students are given the task to to write interesting new introductions, hooks and leads to a familiar or modern fairy tale.

Writing Skills

3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. Briefly review the storyline of the popular movie *Shrek* with students. Ask them to share familiar fairy tale hooks (e.g. "Once upon a time…").
2. Explain to students that authors can use different introductions, hooks or leads to make their story more appealing or unique.
3. Ask students to work in pairs of small groups to work on variations of introductions, hooks and leads for a different fairy tale, legend or familiar tale of their choice (see Introductions, Hooks, and Leads p. 100).

Variations/Extensions

- This activity can easily be turned in a "snowball" activity or game. Arrange students in a large circle. Ask them to write a creative 'hook' for a fairy tale of their choice on a small piece of paper. Students may use one of the variations practiced during the previous lesson, but they should not identify the title of the story for their hook on the piece of paper, or share their idea with anyone. Have students crumple their papers and toss them into the centre of the room. Students then find a 'snowball' and have a seat in a circle. Ask students to read the hook they have found and try to identify the story.

Introductions, Hooks, and Leads

Title: _____

Choose familiar fairy tale or story and rewrite the beginning using the following variations

Variations	Examples
Start with a short, four or five word, movement-filled sentence.	
Start with an interesting metaphor or simile.	
Start with an interesting question for the reader to wonder.	
Start with a subordinate clause or other complex sentence form.	
Start with a riddle.	
Fill in these blanks "_____ was the kind of _____ who/that _____."	
Capture a feeling or emotion.	
Use a string of adjectives.	

(cont'd)

Introductions, Hooks, and Leads (cont'd)

Introductions, Hooks and Leads for *Shrek*

"Once upon a time there was an ogre that lived in a swamp."

There are more interesting ways to start off this modern fairy tale. Below are eight variations to consider:

Variations	Examples
1. Start with a short (four-or-five-word maximum), effective sentence.	He is a large, terrifying ogre.
2. Start with an interesting metaphor or simile.	Shrek is a lone wolf, who avoids all that cross his path.
3. Start with an interesting question for the reader to ponder.	Who would have thought that a beautiful princess, a hyperactive donkey and a terrifying ogre would find acceptance together?
4. Start with a subordinate clause or other complex sentence form.	Though the road to acceptance is long, Shrek, Donkey and Fiona embrace the journey.
5. Start with a riddle.	Who is green, lives in a swamp and has chronic flatulence?
6. Fill in these blanks: "_____was the kind of _____ who/that _____."	Shrek was the kind of ogre who felt judged by others.
7. Capture a feeling or emotion.	You might be surprised to learn that Shrek became a recluse only after failing to find acceptance from others.
8. Use a string of adjectives.	Large, green, terrifying and with the smell of gas following him, Shrek entered his house.

Introductions, Hooks, and Leads

Title: _____

Choose familiar fairy tale or story and rewrite the beginning using the following variations	
Variations	**Examples**
Start with a short (four-or-five-word maximum), effective sentence.	
Start with an interesting metaphor or simile.	
Start with an interesting question for the reader to ponder.	
Start with a subordinate clause or other complex sentence form.	
Start with a riddle.	
Fill in these blanks: "_____ was the kind of _____ who/that _____ ."	
Capture a feeling or emotion.	
Use a string of adjectives.	

Making Memoirs

A memoir is a story about a writer's life. It is different from an autobiography because autobiography reports events from birth to the present; a memoir has a much narrower focus and often tries to capture a meaningful highlight or special moment in a writer's life. The memoir provides a glimpse into someone's life and is a way of learning more about another and gaining insight into the many collective stories of our lives. It is a means of sharing the human experience.

Characteristics of a Memoir:

- Narrative in nature (contains elements of story including setting, plot, characters and theme)
- Reads like fiction, even though it is true
- Explores an event or series of events that remain lodged in memory
- Describes events and then shows, either directly or indirectly, why they are significant
- Captures a particular focus in time; does not cover a great span of events in time (that is autobiography)
- Centres on a problem or conflict, its resolution, and on the understanding of why and how the resolution is significant to the writer's life

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Tell students they will be writing a memoir and presenting it to the class. Introduce the concept of a memoir by reading aloud several examples of published works to model powerful memoir. (e.g. *Becoming Canadian: Memoirs of an Invisible Immigrant* by Michiel Horn, 1999 or *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* by Ishmael Beah, 2007)
2. Ask students to bring personal artifacts or photos that represent them as a person and to support them in their presentation.

(cont'd)

Making Memoirs (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

3. Have students consider these possible topics:
   - Happy/sad moments in life
   - Life changing moments
   - Personal thoughts on how you want to live your life
   - Family and friends
   - Interests and hobbies
   - Achievements
   - Wishes, hopes and dreams
4. Students brainstorm, and draft their memoirs and share them with a partner for feedback. Revision should ensue after getting feedback.
5. If willing, students can share their pieces with the class. Ensure that students who share are comfortable with this and that there is respect for the reader and the process.

Variations/Extensions

- Students may wish to tell their story with a visual representation using movie, film, slide show, photo essays, etc. For further ideas about bringing a story to life digitally, refer to District 44's *Digital Expression* teacher resource, or see ***www.nvsd44.bc.ca/digex***.

Teacher Tips:

- Writing memoirs is a great way to build community in the language arts classroom. It can be an effective way to learn about the challenges and joys that your students face in their everyday lives.
- Students will typically share private parts of their lives and so this writing exercise must follow some work in creating a safe, trusting classroom environment. Tell the students "What happens in English class, stays in English class!"
- Students may enjoy interviewing a relative to tell their story if they feel uncomfortable telling their own.

Personal Style Inventory

For students to become reflective about their personal writing style, a checklist or inventory can help them focus their thinking. Helping students to develop a personal style may be addressed at any point in the writing process. Teachers can support students in developing their writing style by focussing on the use of figurative language and rhetorical devices during class lessons and Read-Alouds. Exposure to published authors who exhibit stylish techniques will help to model the significance of style. Furthermore, teachers can ask a few guiding questions in the feedback that they provide to students during student-teacher writing conferences or in formative assessment sessions during the writing process.

Writing Skills

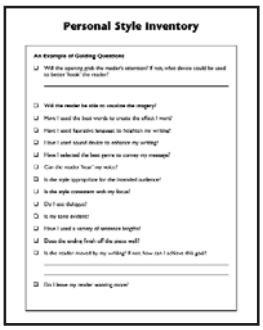
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Personal Writing Style is determined by:

- Diction
- Audience
- Tone
- Point of View
- Sentence Types and lengths
- Genre
- Flow
- Figurative language
- Poetic devise
- Rhetorical device

Teaching the Activity

1. Choose one of the elements of the list above to teach in a mini lesson.
2. Provide students with rich examples from literature to help build understanding of particular elements of style.
3. Model writing with the whole group, or ask students to do a shared writing activity that emphasizes style in their writing. Students may then share examples of their writing with other writing students.
4. Use the guiding questions provided in the Personal Style Inventory Checklist to help students develop their personal style during conferencing. Students could also be encouraged to use the questions independently to guide reflection about their writing.


Personal Style Inventory

Personal Style Inventory

An Example of Guiding Questions

- ❑ Will the opening grab the reader's attention? If not, what device could be used to better 'hook' the reader?

  _____

  _____

- ❑ Will the reader be able to visualize the imagery?
- ❑ Have I used the best words to create the effect I want?
- ❑ Have I used figurative language to heighten my writing?
- ❑ Have I used sound device to enhance my writing?
- ❑ Have I selected the best genre to convey my message?
- ❑ Can the reader 'hear' my voice?
- ❑ Is the style appropriate for the intended audience?
- ❑ Is the style consistent with my focus?
- ❑ Do I use dialogue?
- ❑ Is my tone evident?
- ❑ Have I used a variety of sentence lengths?
- ❑ Does the ending finish off the piece well?
- ❑ Is the reader moved by my writing? If not, how can I achieve this goal?

  _____

  _____

- ❑ Do I leave my reader wanting more?

Poetry in a Box

This writing activity is intended to help students generate ideas for creating a free-verse poem. Students will be asked to write creatively about everyday objects and then build a poem from their ideas. The beauty of free-verse poetry is that it is generally free of structure and rhyme.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. Collect a number of interesting everyday objects that have relevance to the students in the class (e.g. cereal, magazine, stuffed animal, iPod, etc.). Put 10-12 of these objects in a non-descript box.
2. Tell students they will be writing a poem about how everyday objects hold meaning in their lives, but don't reveal the objects.
3. Have one student come to the front and select an object to display for the class. The objects should range from silly to serious and be age-appropriate.
4. Ask students to write two to three creative, descriptive sentences about how the particular object plays a role in their life. Students should consider the appeal of the senses when they write.
5. Repeat this process three to five times. Each time, the students must generate interesting sentences about the chosen object even if they have never used or seen such an object.
6. After the students have generated 10-15 sentences, have the students read their work and select their most creative and effective sentences by highlighting them with a coloured pen or pencil.
7. Have each student share their work with two more people and ask them to highlight each other's favourite sentences.
8. Students retrieve their work, review the feedback and choose their one best sentence from their selection.
9. Using this sentence, students will generate a free-verse poem about the particular object being described and its importance in their lives. This sentence can be used at any point in the poem; it does not have to start the poem.
10. When the activity is finished, ask students to volunteer to read their individual poems from a chair at the front of the class like a real poetry reading.

Variations/Extensions

- Create a whole-class poem by choosing only one object that everyone writes about and combining everyone's various sentences in a creative way.

Poetry Prompts

Students will often benefit from the prompting of ideas using the suggestions below or with ideas generated from pair, small group, or class discussions.

Prompts for writing poetry

1. Set a specific time limit and list all the memories and associations connected with a particular colour. Select the most significant ideas and shape the words into a poem.
2. Write all the words connected with a favourite activity and shape the words into a poem like a collage.
3. Write questions without considering the answers and compile the most interesting questions into a poem.
4. Make a list of everything you like and dislike and then arrange them into a poem.
5. Listen to the lyrics of your favourite song and then write your own lyrics.
6. Compose a poem which shapes or organizes language so that its design illustrates the subject of the poem.
7. Select a published poem and write it as prose.
8. Follow poetic forms like haiku, cinquain, or limerick and write your own.
9. Complete sentence stems like below, and compose a poem from the prompts:

   Love is…

   War is…

   A family is…
10. Cut headlines and bits of text and pictures out of a magazine and shape them in an order to show a theme, such as bullying or poverty.
11. Write a poem about hanging off a cliff.
12. Write a poem about a large/wild animal being in your bedroom/kitchen.
13. Write a poem about riding an animal (real or imaginary) to school.

Variations/Extensions

- For further ideas on getting students started, see activities in the Generating Ideas section (see p. 52)
- Use ***http://www.creativewritingprompts.com/*** for further ideas to get students writing.

Searching for Style

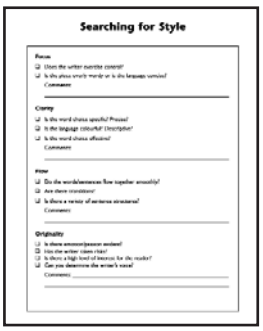
Style is what makes writing distinctive. A writer's style includes a variety of components that help to give the writing flair: the focus, clarity, originality, word choice, use of literary device, vitality, syntax, flow and more all contribute to the overall effect. Students need constant exposure to a wide variety of quality literature to determine the power of different writers' styles and their influence on others. Students should also have support and frequent practice to help develop their own, unique style.

Writing Skills

5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. To introduce the activity, ask the students What defines style? Who has style? (not only in writing, but in any aspect like fashion, interior design, film, etc.)
2. Use the Style Analysis Web to illustrate the various attributes that influence style. Alternatively, ask students to brainstorm these ideas first and then show them the handout.
3. Provide a number of passages from a wide variety of published authors to provide authentic models of distinctive style. The following is a list of possible authors:


Searching for Style

- Charles Dickens
- Danielle Steel
- Martin Luther King
- Dave Eggers
- Margaret Atwood
- JD Salinger
- Stephen King
- Douglas Coupland
- Evelyn Lau
- Carol Shields

4. Provide students with a number of articles, horoscopes or editorials from magazines or newspapers. This style of writing is also worth noting.
5. Have students select six different passages and complete the Style Analysis Chart.
6. Discuss the differences of these writers/forms in pairs, small groups or as a class.
7. Have students take a piece of their own writing from a journal or writer's notebook and conduct the same exercise. Encourage students to work with a partner and provide each other with constructive feedback for improving the style of their piece. Use Searching for Style as a guideline for self- and peer-assessment.
8. Examples are provided in Write Like a Writer on p. 130.

Searching for Style

Focus

- ❑ Does the writer exercise control?
- ❑ Is the piece overly wordy or is the language concise?

Comments: _____

_____

Clarity

- ❑ Is the word choice specific? Precise?
- ❑ Is the language colourful? Descriptive?
- ❑ Is the word choice effective?

Comments: _____

_____

Flow

- ❑ Do the words/sentences flow together smoothly?
- ❑ Are there transitions?
- ❑ Is there a variety of sentence structures?

Comments: _____

_____

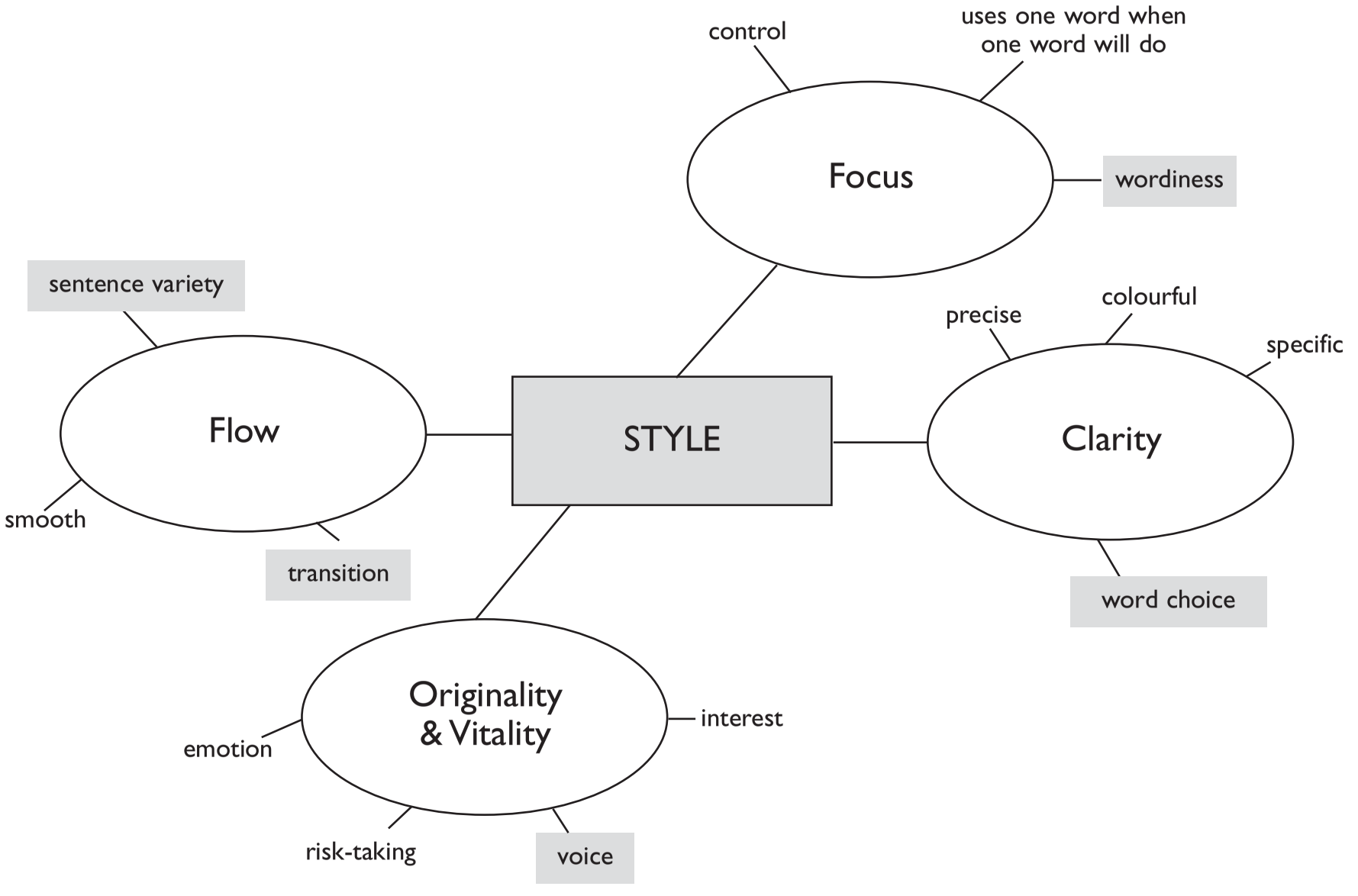
Originality

- ❑ Is there emotion/passion evident?
- ❑ Has the writer taken risks?
- ❑ Is there a high level of interest for the reader?
- ❑ Can you determine the writer's voice?

Comments: _____

_____

Style Analysis Web



Style Analysis Chart

Make accurate, sophisticated observations on the six style paragraphs provided.
Write point form comments under the following categories:

AUTHOR'S TONE	DICTION (Word Choice)	SENTENCE STRUCTURE	FIGURES OF SPEECH AND RHETORICAL DEVICES
EXAMPLE 1			
EXAMPLE 2			
EXAMPLE 3			
EXAMPLE 4			
EXAMPLE 5			
EXAMPLE 6			

Sensory Stretches

The way to a stronger vocabulary is to develop the practice of considering different words to convey the same meaning. Students will explore the myriad of ways to describe the senses, and, over time, develop a richer vocabulary bank while they strengthen their creative thinking. This activity is meant to be a quick warm-up writing exercise to be done on a fairly regular basis in order to get students thinking and creating on demand.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

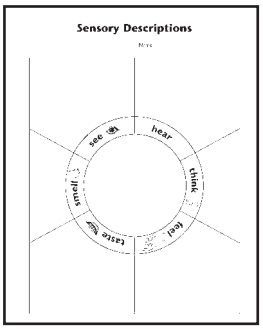
Teaching the Activity

1. Using the chart below, students fill out as many words as possible to describe each of the five senses, but, to make it more interesting (or challenging), implement certain restrictions, such as:

   • Use only words that start with a particular first letter
   • Use any words except those starting with S (for example)
   • Use only colloquial words (slang)
   • Use only three syllable words, etc.

2. Have students work in pairs or small groups. Give out 'prizes' to the groups who can elicit the most words in 3 minutes.
3. Encourage students to employ these words in their various narrative writing and poetry tasks.
4. Discuss which words create the most punch, e.g. good vs. stupendous.

Variations/Extensions



- Have students share their words to create a larger class list or word wall for future reference.
- Have students discuss '5 cent words' vs. '50 cent words' – weak words or powerful words.
- Used as a competition, students could challenge others to see how many words they can come up with within a limited time.
- As an individual exercise, students could include completed lists of in their writer's notebooks for use with future writing assignments.

Sensory Stretches

Fill out one word to describe each sense. The first set is done as an example.

touch:	amorous	touch:		touch:	
taste:	acid	taste:		taste:	
sound:	annoying	sound:		sound:	
sight:	awesome	sight:		sight:	
smell:	aromatic	smell:		smell:	

touch:		touch:		touch:	
taste:		taste:		taste:	
sound:		sound:		sound:	
sight:		sight:		sight:	
smell:		smell:		smell:	

touch:		touch:		touch:	
taste:		taste:		taste:	
sound:		sound:		sound:	
sight:		sight:		sight:	
smell:		smell:		smell:	

touch:		touch:		touch:	
taste:		taste:		taste:	
sound:		sound:		sound:	
sight:		sight:		sight:	
smell:		smell:		smell:	

touch:		touch:		touch:	
taste:		taste:		taste:	
sound:		sound:		sound:	
sight:		sight:		sight:	
smell:		smell:		smell:	

Show, Don't Tell

Effective writers strive to 'show' their readers what they are trying to convey through powerful description that appeals to the senses. Using a concept attainment instructional strategy, this activity invites students to examine the difference between writing that shows and writing that tells. Students can then practice using supporting details to enhance their own writing.

Writing Skills

5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. This activity provides students with examples of writing that show or tell (shown below). The "yes" examples demonstrate showing, and the "no" examples demonstrate telling. Further data sets could be created as needed.
2. First, create strips of paper with yes and no examples. Mix them up and pass them out to students.
3. Ask the students to work in pairs to sort out their data set. Have them use further testers to solidify their knowledge of the concept.
4. Once students have determined the attributes of writing that shows or tells, have them select a few "tell" examples and re-write them so that they show the meaning.
5. Have the students share out their examples with the class.
6. Display some of the examples around the class.

'TELL' EXAMPLES - (NO)

It was raining.
The dog was afraid.
She was jealous.
He is a really good basketball player.

'SHOW' EXAMPLES – (YES)

Sweat dripped off Lauren's glasses.
He turned pink.
Dirk's voice sounded funny.
She ran out grinning from ear to ear.

TESTERS

She blushed crimson.
The old lady screamed.
Stubbornly, he shoved his brother.
Snake-like they wove their car through the streets of Toronto.
Miriam's voice rose to a high-pitched squeak.
They had arrived, at last, in sunny Florida.

Sitting on a Story Blog

Municipal parks are filled with benches that are dedicated to loved ones and special memories. Each of these benches has a potential story to explore. This creative writing lesson requires students to select a dedicated bench in any park and respond to it in a variety of ways using online technology.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Students will be asked to blog this assignment. Teachers may need to provide a mini lesson on how to set up a blog using ***blogspot.com*** or another blog provider.
2. Students are asked to visit a park, choose a bench, explain their choice and describe the bench.
3. Students will respond to this bench, using these questions as guidelines:
   - From the bench, what do you see, what do you feel, what do you think, what do you want?
   - If a bench were dedicated to you, where would you like the bench, and what would you like the inscription plate to say?
   - If you dedicated a bench to someone, where would you like the bench and what would the inscription say?
   - Write a journal response about your trip to the park.
   - Choose a poem that suits your bench, and explain your choice. Explain how your poem selection connects to your personal philosophy of life. Include a copy of the poem.
   - Discuss the purpose of a park. What are your personal thoughts about parkland and/or green spaces?
   - Write an original poem reflecting upon your bench experience.
4. Once the blogs have been created, students will be also responsible to read and critique 3-4 other students' blogs.

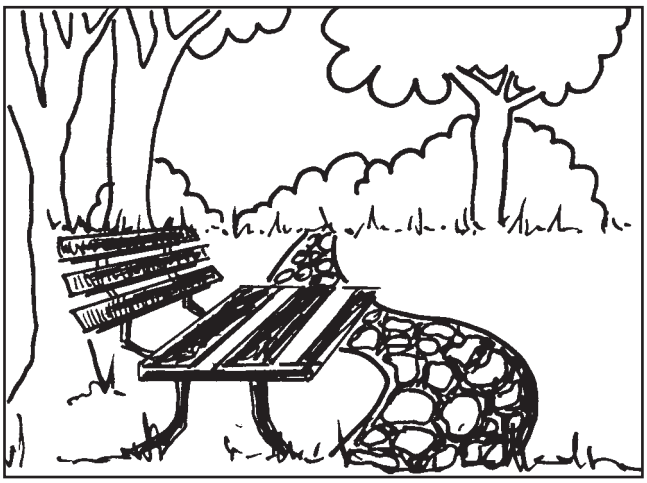
(cont'd)

Sitting on a Story Blog (cont'd)

Teacher Tips:

- The use of blogs for writing assignments increases a writer's audience. Students will be highly motivated to write for this larger, authentic audience.
- There should be clear guidelines for students who are creating school-related blogs. No personal information (last names, contact information, pictures, etc.) should be included anywhere in a blog.
  - Information and ideas on the blog should only be on school-related topics. More specifically, blogs are not places to socialize or meet other people.
  - All students - and teachers - should be careful and conscious about what they write because a blog exists on the Internet, which is a public domain. Only post what is appropriate for the world to know. This means that all writing should be school-appropriate, respectful, and free from harmful, hateful, or offensive language.
  - Students and teachers have the right to delete any comments posted by someone else on their blogs that they do not feel comfortable with. Students can also restrict the settings on their blog to prevent comments if they feel it is necessary.
  - For more guidelines around on the topic of information literacy see the BC Teacher Librarian Association (BCTLA) ***http://psas.bctf.ca/bctla/infolit.html***
- For further information for creating blogs for school assignments, refer to the BCTLA website ***http://psas.bctf.ca/bctla/infolit.html#Blogs***
- Three user-friendly sites for creating blogs include: ***blogspot.com, blogger.com*** and ***wordpress.com***.

This activity was inspired by a Vancouver documentary *Sitting on a Story,* 1997 about the search for healing after a loved one's death.



Story Bags

Story Bags is a fun, creative, dramatic exercise that can be used during or after a short story unit to highlight the importance of all aspects of plot.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. In preparation, ask each student to bring a random object to class. The teacher brings enough bags to house the items in groups of 5-6. It is best if the student cannot see the items. (Keep some items on hand to add to the bags in case students forget. Doing so also provides more for students to work with).
2. As students enter the room, have them drop their items into the bags in no particular order.
3. Divide the students into groups of 4-5 (or have them choose their own groups) and provide a bag of objects to each group.
4. The students are to use all the items in the bag to create a skit of no more than 5 minutes. The skit must include a setting, characters, conflict, climax, and resolution.
5. The students have the majority of the class to work on the skits, which they then present in the last portion of the class.

Variations/Extensions

- The teacher can provide a common plot element(s).
- The piece can be written as a script or as a short story and then revised.

Technology Connections

- The students can film their skits/screenplays, edit, and master them.
- The students can create comic strips using the comic creator at ***www.readwritethink.org*** or Comic Life software.

Teacher Tip:

- This exercise is particularly useful in getting students to understand the importance of climax/conflict in their creative short story writing.

Story Grids: Building a Good Story

This activity will give students some freedom in their writing experience, while reinforcing the key elements of short fiction. Good timing for this would be at the beginning of a short fiction unit, or during a creative/narrative writing unit.

Before you begin, ask the students to remember their favourite stories from childhood. Have some discussion around these stories and see if, at this point, they can come up with any reasons why they identified these stories. What makes them memorable? Bring in a few favourite children's books to read to the class.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. Divide students into pairs or groups of three.
2. Each group receives a blank Story Grid (see p. 119).
3. In about twenty minutes students need to fill in all the blank spaces. They can use characters or conflicts they are familiar with, but encourage them to include original material. After all, they don't want to tell a story that has already been told.
4. At this point, the teacher calls out random numbers. Have the students circle the box the number represents.

For example:

Heroine	2	Conflict	3
Hero	4	Place	1
Villain	8	Time	7

5. Now that students have the elements for their story, it is time to create. Give each group one piece of chart paper. Working as a writing team, they create a story following closely the ideas of exposition, rising action, climax and resolution. Also, they need to consider including the elements they feel help make a good story.
6. Have students review their stories and think of a way to present it orally. It is also fun to have them include some tableau images that support the content.

(cont'd)

Story Grids: Building a Good Story (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

7. During their presentation each group should also be able to identify elements that they chose to make their story appealing (e.g. humour, action, realistic characters, etc.).
8. At this point you can launch into a discussion of elements of fiction or begin your first short fiction story. Continue to have students evaluate the stories they study.

Variations/Extensions

- Students can rewrite a version of the story the group created, or they can select different items from their story grid and write a new story.

Story Grid

Heroine	Hero	Villain	Conflict	Place	Time
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					

Story Nuggets

This is a creative writing activity to help students write stories with pre-determined elements. Students can randomly choose one number, three different numbers, or the teacher can "bingo" the numbers out to create a cross-selection from the character, setting, and event columns. Students should write for fifteen minutes, using all three elements in their writing.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

Use the character, setting, and event which correspond with the three numbers you choose (the first number gives you a character, the second a setting, and the third an event). Write for fifteen minutes, using all three elements in your writing.

Character	Setting	Event
1. a monk	1. a garden	1. an argument
2. a clown	2. a taxicab	2. a fist fight
3. a professor	3. a church	3. crying
4. a secretary	4. a studio	4. laughter
5. a writer	5. a police station	5. an accident
6. a doctor	6. a hospital	6. an idea
7. a photographer	7. a kitchen	7. a mystery
8. a priest	8. a cave	8. a discovery
9. a mother	9. a mother	9. a meeting
10. a father	10. a dungeon	10. an interrogation
11. a teacher	11. a circus	11. a rescue
12. an unemployed labourer	12. a study	12. a performance
13. a knight	13. a stable	13. cleaning up
14. a wizard	14. a store	14. a theft
15. a dog	15. a car	15. an investigation
16. a horse	16. a barn	16. an interview
17. a boy	17. an office	17. a creation
18. a girl	18. a riverbank	18. a scare
19. an alien	19. a forest	19. a surprise
20. a deliveryman	20. a jungle	20. a kiss
21. a lumberjack	21. a train	21. an invention
22. a fisherman	22. an airplane	22. a delivery
23. a farmer	23. a jail	23. a proposal
24. a politician	24. a living room	24. a rejection
25. a store clerk	25. a bathroom	25. a crime
26. a lawyer	26. a barnyard	26. a mistake
27. a prisoner	27. a bus station	27. a disappointment
28. a personal trainer	28. a garden maze	28. a phone call
29. a painter	29. an opera	29. a computer glitch
30. a computer geek	30. a movie	30. a loan

Story Structure

This activity scaffolds the writing of a story as the teacher provides either the beginning, middle, or end of a story and the students must create the rest. It is also a great exercise for instruction/discussion of the significance of plot line and story development. This activity is best done in pairs or small groups so students have the opportunity to discuss the story and its elements and develop the missing components.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

1. Assemble the students into partners or small groups.
2. Hand out the story with either one part missing, or two. It is fun if there is a combination of different handouts across the class so that different groups are working on different parts of the same story.
3. Have students write the missing part(s) of the story.
4. Once completed, have the students read the stories aloud.
5. Compare how the stories differ and discuss what worked and what didn't.

Variations/Extensions

- Have students write individual stories with missing parts and then exchange them with a partner or (within a small group) to complete.
- Make this a story writing contest – prizes could go to best, scariest, most outrageous stories/beginnings/middles/ends.

The story on the following page is printed with permission from author Jen Sookfong Lee.

Story Structure Exercise

With your group, write the missing component – a beginning, middle or end – in the following short story. When finished, each group will read out their components.

THE BEGINNING

There was once a little boy who lived in a small house that was just outside a small town. He was very sad and he spent his days looking out the window at the fields and trees and clouds. You see, this little boy had lost his little dog, the same dog who used to run through the fields and up the trees to try to catch the clouds in the sky. So, the boy never left his house and looked out the window, hoping his dog would one day come back. One day, as the boy was watching one large cloud break up into many little ones, he heard a knock. Excited, he ran to open the door, hoping to see his little dog with his tongue hanging out. Instead, he opened the door to find an old, old woman.

She was very small; in fact, she was barely taller than he was. Her hair was bright white and her cheeks almost as red. She wore a green dress and smiled at the boy so nicely that he forgot, for just one moment, that he was very, very sad.

"Have you lost something, my boy?" she said in a golden, musical voice.

The boy looked down at his shoes and remembered.

"Well," she continued, "perhaps I could help you look for it."

THE MIDDLE

She turned around and headed across the nearest field at great speed, not even bothering to look back to see if the little boy was following her. The boy looked around for a moment, confused as to what he should be doing. Finally, just as the old woman was disappearing over the hill, he shook his head and ran after her.

When he caught up with her, the old woman was standing on the tallest hill that the boy had ever seen and looking at a giant tree that stretched right up to the sky and was so green that the boy's eyes hurt just looking through its branches.

"Isn't it lovely, dear?" said the old woman, craning her neck this way and that as she looked upwards. The boy saw the green of the tree and the blue of the sky and the tallness of everything beyond his outstretched arms. He was, suddenly and quietly, happy.

He thought, "Oh, if only my little dog could see this." And then he remembered.

He dropped his arms and looked back down at his shoes, his eyes growing sadder by the second.

"Well," said the old woman, enough is enough. Let's keep going!"

She took him to the great cave, where, in the darkness, he saw huge, jagged rocks that glowed green. She took him to the lake, where he dipped his hand in the cool water and drank. She took him to the meadow of wild horses, where he ran against the wind, trying to touch the great black mare that danced just beyond his reach.

And every time he stopped to think, he remembered his little dog and grew sad again.

Finally, the old woman took him to the great, empty field IN the very far north. By this time it was already dark, and the old woman had to hold the little boy's hand so he would not stumble. He was very, very tired and sad again. They had been everywhere and still his little dog could not be found.

THE END

Then, the old woman pointed at the sky and said, "Look!"

In the sky were great swathes of colour: blue, pink, purple. They danced across the darkness, changing shape, colour and movement. The little boy stared and stared, watching the purest colours he had ever seen light up the black sky.

He said to the old woman, "I am so glad I am here. I hope my little dog, wherever he is, can see this too."

And this time, he was not sad.

She put a hand on his shoulder and said, "I think, my dear, you have found what you were looking for."

The old woman smiled and, after the lights faded, took him home.

Synonym Madness

This activity is a quick synonym blitz for students to find as many alternate meanings for words as possible. This is a good activity for a partner/group contest on a high energy Friday afternoon!

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

1. Provide students with the Synonym Madness writing frame and instruct them to find as many synonyms as possible for the underlined words. Students can work individually or with others.
2. Find as many synonyms for the underlined words as you can!
3. Give 'prizes' to the student with the highest number of creative synonyms.

The	large	animal	crept along the	road where the tall	trees	grew.
1.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____.
2.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____.
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____.
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____.
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____.
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____.
7.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____.
8.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____.
9.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____.
10.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____.

Vocabulary Webs

Vocabulary webs allow students to create a network of relationships and connections surrounding a vocabulary word, and provide a far deeper level of comprehension than a simple list of definitions. This activity is best used with the *Inspiration* software (which has the graphic organizer built in), but it can also be used without. There is a cooperative component to this activity, but it can also be done individually. Dictionaries that provide derivation information in their definitions are needed for this activity.

Writing Skills

5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

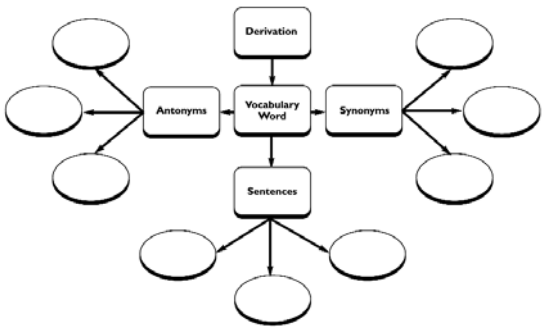
Teaching the Activity

1. This activity is best used in conjunction with a reading passage, short story, or novel chapter. Students/teacher identifies a key vocabulary word that is then placed at the centre of the web.
2. Arrange for use of the school's computers, or provide students with the Vocabulary Web graphic organizer. Students then fill in the information in the surrounding bubbles.
3. While it is a good skill for students to provide their own synonyms and antonyms wherever possible, it may be necessary to use a thesaurus for more difficult vocabulary words.

Variations/Extensions

- Students can use the *Inspiration* computer program to generate their own banks of vocabulary webs over the course of a unit.
- Create a word wall that can remain as a constant reference for students.

Vocabulary Web



Vocabulary Web

What's in the Box?

This writing activity is intended to help students generate ideas for creating a free-verse poem. Students will be asked to write creatively about everyday objects and then "build" a poem from their ideas. The beauty of free-verse poetry is that it is generally free of structure and rhyme. It is meant to convey the poet's attitude, or emotions through the description of the subject.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. Collect a number of interesting everyday objects that have relevance to the students in the class. (e.g. cereal, magazine, football, iPod, etc.). Put 10-12 of these objects in a box.
2. Tell students they will be writing a poem about how everyday objects hold meaning in their lives, but don't reveal the objects.
3. Have one student come to the front and select an object to display for the class. The objects should range from silly to serious, and be age appropriate for the students.
4. Ask students to write 2-3 creative, descriptive sentences about how the particular object plays a role in their life. Students should consider the appeal of the senses when they write.
5. Repeat this process 3-5 times. Each time, the students must generate interesting sentences about the chosen object even if they have never used or seen such an object. This will challenge their imagination!
6. After the students have generated 10-15 sentences, have the students read their work and select their most creative and effective sentences by highlighting them with a coloured pen or pencil.
7. Have each student share their work with two more people and ask them to highlight each others' favourite sentences.
8. Students retrieve their work, review the feedback, and choose their one best sentence from their selection.

Example:

Football: Softened leather made smooth by generations of hands passing pigskin through the crisp, fall air.

(cont'd)

What's in the Box? (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

9. Using this sentence, students will generate a free-verse poem about the particular object being described and its importance in their lives. This sentence can be used at any point in the poem; it does not have to start the poem.
10. When the activity is finished, ask students to volunteer to read their individual poems from a chair at the front of the class like a real poetry reading.

Variations/Extensions

- Create a whole class poem by choosing only one object that everyone writes about and combining everyone's various sentences in a creative way

Teacher Tips:

- The opportunity for students to read each others' work will help those students who lack ideas
- Students who have difficulty choosing one sentence may prefer to choose two or more if it helps them to write
- Free-verse poetry is free of rhyme or structure, but if students wish to rhyme, they can do so. This poetry activity should be free-flowing and free of "rules"!

Write Like a Writer

These two activities involve the use of both published and unpublished text as models of a wide variety of writing styles. An excerpt from any text is a possible source, depending on the focus of the instruction (horoscopes, romance fiction, graphic novels, formal speeches, fairly tales, poetry, professional literature). By analyzing the style of these excerpts, students quickly see how writers experiment with genre, purpose, tone, sentence structure, and diction to communicate and create meaning. The adaptations and variations of this activity are almost limitless.

Writing Skills

3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Provide each student with a copy of Write Like a Writer Styles and Samples and the Style Sample Sheet (see following pages).
2. Organize students into six groups and assign one style sample passage to each group. Using the accompanying sheet as a guideline, students record their point-form observations about genre, purpose, tone, sentence structure and vocabulary use, as found in their sample.
3. Each group then chooses a reader to present their passage to the class. The class is invited to analyze the stylistic components of the piece (as consciously manipulated by the passage writer) and a group member records these observations on an overhead.
4. Finally, ask students to continue one of the style sample passages by mimicking its style, paying close attention to diction, tone, and sentence structure. Emergent writers will appreciate having already-written material to build upon, and the highly creative and experienced writing student will enjoy the opportunity to experiment with imagery and language. Students can be asked to write their favourite sentence that they have written on the board, or they can share their work with partners or their group.

Write Like a Writer:
Style Sample Sheet

Variations/Extensions

- Ask students to create their own excerpt of 4-5 sentences in an entirely new style. Suggestions might include an excerpt that is largely composed of slang and colloquial language, or a passage written in archaic 'Shakespearean' style.
- See Childhood Revisited: Re-writing Fairy Tales on p. 86 for more fun with re-writing and style.

(cont'd)

Write Like a Writer (cont'd)

Styles and Samples

A. Be strong today. Friends will try to distract you but remain focussed. Work needs your full attention or you will regret being distracted by outside forces. There will be time to enjoy the fruits of your labour next week. Keep your hand on your wallet though.

B. "I will always love you, Clarissa. Like the vine cleaves to a stately mansion, I am meant to be near you. I need you more than air, more than water, more than life itself. Without you, I am as nothing – a mere tadpole in a dried-up pond. You have rejuvenated me and given me life."

C. Our time is now and victory shall be ours. We will reign over the land. We will reign over the seas. We will reign over the darkest corners, and in the morning, we will reign over the coming of the light. We shall not succumb to thoughts of defeat. We shall not succumb to thoughts of fear. We shall not succumb to the enemy.

D. The methodological purpose of this activity is readily apparent to the experienced pedagogue. Students will actively construct, by using a scaffolding technique, a variety of didactic markers that will further elucidate their learning achievements in response to a fixed set of outcome indicators or Ministerial performance standards.

E. Once upon a time there was a big brown marmot named Clint that lived in a big brown tree. Clint felt very alone, because all the other marmots lived happily below the ground in very dark holes. But Clint was too scared to live in a dark hole. Clint was also scared to be alone when the dark came, however, and he cried out to the owl, "Mr. Owl, will you come share this branch with me?"

F. Slowly and almost rhythmically, Cynthia slid down the wall, slipped into oblivion, fell into her place of rest. Her hair was a carpet of tangles, a mat of unforgiving dirt, a weaving of poverty. The faceless throngs of the involved, the occupied, obliquely passed her by on the pitiless pavement, leaving her to wallow in her sense of desperation and fragility. Her soul was a barren patch of earth, ephemeral dust.

Write Like a Writer: Style Sample Sheet

	Genre/format of writing style sample	Apparent purpose of writing style sample	Authorial tone found in writing style sample	Observations about sentence structure	Observations about vocabulary use or figurative language
A. "Be Strong Today"					
B. "I Will Always Love You"					
C. "Victory Shall Be Ours"					
D. "The Methodological Purpose"					
E. "Clint the Muskrat"					
F. "Ephemeral Dust"					

Writing Variables

Students can improve their writing skills if they consider the many variables that will affect their unique style. Variables such as topic, audience, purpose, format, and voice all contribute to the final written product. Thinking about the way these elements interact in a piece of writing helps the writer maintain a focus throughout the drafting process.

Adolescent writing students should be challenged to consider even further writing variables. This will help them to make their writing more specific, meaningful, and interesting. Even if choosing fictitious variables, students need to determine their focus and clarify how they are going to approach the writing task.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.

Teaching the Activity

1. Make a copy of the following grid and ask students to predict which set of writing variables will most likely produce the best product.
2. Discuss how and what would have to be considered in order to create a piece for each of the different directions above.
3. Have students try to write one of the pieces suggested above in a free-write exercise.

Writing Variables

TOPIC	AUDIENCE	PURPOSE	FORMAT	VOICE
Fear of failure	My teacher	To get a credit for an assignment	Expository paragraph	My own
Fear of failure	My friend	To tell him I don't want to play on the team	Letter	My own
Fear of failure	My boss	To tell her that I don't want to take a greater role of responsibility	email	My own
Fear of failure	My grandmother	To describe a story that I recall from my youth	Narrative	Me, at six

Variations/Extensions

- Have students make up their own set of writing variables for a creative writing assignment using the same topic. This practice will require them to consider how their writing can be influenced by various aspects.
- Have the class write on the same topic, but provide a twist to each of the writing variables and see how the different stories compare.
- Make a 'bingo card' out of blank writing variables chart (see Writing Variables p. 132) and have students call out unique ideas to fill in the blanks. Then have students play a game of bingo to randomly determine which of the writing variables they will have to use in an assigned free write.
- Use the checklist on p. 133 for further discussion on writing variables or as a self-reflection checklist for students to consider as they draft.

Writing Variables

Topic	Audience	Purpose	Format	Voice

Writing Variables

Selecting Writing Variables

TOPIC:	AUDIENCE:	PURPOSE:	VOICE:
❒ Is the topic limited enough to fit the assigned length of my piece of writing? ❒ Do I know enough about the topic or do I have to do more research? ❒ Should I brainstorm with a few peers or with my computer? ❒ Should I write more notes? Make an outline?	❒ Which audience am I writing to: a teacher, friend, family member, school newspaper, etc. ❒ Which imaginary audience might I write to: a celebrity, historical figure, character from a novel, alien from afar, nature, etc. ❒ How much does my audience already know about my topic? ❒ Why would my audience want to read my work? ❒ As a result of the above considerations, what do I need to include/ exclude in my work? ❒ How will my audience determine my word choice, sentence length, and voice?	❒ What is my purpose for writing to my specific audience – to explain? Argue? Entertain? ❒ How is my purpose going to narrow my focus/topic?	❒ Will I use my own voice as the narrator of this writing? ❒ Will I choose a voice other than my own? ❒ How will my format change depending on the voice I choose?

You Bean My Friend

This is a fun, at times silly, activity designed to take some of the apprehension away from writing poetry. It also gives students some practice working with literary device.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. Each student receives a lima bean. Tell them that this lima bean is their new friend. They cannot lose or abuse their friend.
2. Students will write a poem about their new friend. The requirements for this poem may vary due to the level of complexity the teacher wishes to develop.

The framework for the poem may look something like this:

Content:

- Introduce your friend
- Expose their strengths and weaknesses
- Tell what they do with their time
- Tell why you cannot live without them
- Try to have your friend realize something new

Literary Devices to be used (this will vary)**:**

- one simile
- one metaphor
- one hyperbolic statement

3. Conduct a Gallery Tour so that students can share the poems with each other. Students should have their bean friends attached to their sheet. Encourage students to be creative and present their poems in a visually attractive way.

Variations/Extensions

- Use a pencil as an object to be the "friend".

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Response to Literature and Media

Drafting

RESPONSE TO LITERATURE AND MEDIA

Activity Page

Beyond Book Reports 137
Blog Assignment: In the News 140
Compare/Contrast Writing 141
- Compare and Contrast 143

Historical Poetry 144
Independent Novel Study: Reader Response Journal 145
Media, Money, and My Choices 147
- Brainstorming and Note Taking for Media Project 148

Oral Response to Non-fiction 149
Paragraph Skeletons 150
- Paragraph Skeleton Outline 151

Playing with Mood and Tone 152
- Thesaurus Wheel 154

Responding to Prose: Organizer and Outline 155
- Response to Prose Organizer 157
- Response to Prose Outline 158

Response Journals 159
Rhetorical Devices Poster 161
Terms and Devices in Literature (List) 162
Summarizing Text 164
Synectic Character Sketches 166
Character Traits (List) 168
Using Quotations 170
- Using Quotations 172

Writing Effective Theme Statements 173

Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids included

Beyond Book Reports

A traditional book report typically requires students to create a collection of written responses to a novel or selection of novels. However, classroom diversity and differing learning styles require a wider variety of strategies that challenge students beyond the book reports of the past. The following suggestions offer a means of differentiating for various types of learners. However, as with all differentiated instruction, it is important that the learning intentions and approaches to assessment are clear. Ideally, with the following activities, students will arrive at the same essential understandings of their texts, but this list offers a range of options from which students can choose to represent their understandings.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Interrupted Book Report

This strategy is a thirty-second oral book report that provides:

- an oral language experience
- a quick reading assessment
- an opportunity to generate interest in recreational and extended reading

Students stand in circle. Each has thirty seconds to highlight a book. A timer interrupts at exactly 30 seconds to signal the next student to begin. The process continues until all students have shared.

Literary Report Card

In the literary report card, fictional characters get A to F grades. The Literary Report Card is designed to evaluate characters after a reading. Students form groups to determine several criteria by which to judge characters, such as bravery, honesty, and influence. Each character is evaluated in each category. Each group ranks the characters in the text, assigning them grades from A-F. Each set of characters must get the full range of grades. No set of characters will ever get the same grade. Each group supports its grades, orally. The class need not come to consensus.

Now You're Cooking!

Students appeal to their classmates' stomachs by making an edible book report! They will locate a recipe for a food dish that plays a role in a book or one that represents the setting of the book. When they share the food with their classmates, students will explain how the dish relates to the book read.

Before-and-After Book Reports

Students write a brief report about what they think a book will be about – based on the book's cover – before they actually read it. After reading the book, students write a brief explanation of the book as it actually is.

(cont'd)

Beyond Book Reports (cont'd)

Videotape Book Report
Students create a "commercial" for a book they read. Set up a video camera in the classroom, provide brief instruction on how to use it, and have each student videotape himself or herself presenting a 30-second "commercial" for the book read. In the first 30 seconds of the commercial, students should tell what is good about the book. The next 2 minutes will feature the student reading a favorite passage from the book – a passage that might motivate others to want to read the book. You might make a few copies of the video and send it home with a different student each night so parents can view the work and gather ideas for books to give as gifts!

Reporting "Live" from the Scene
Students write a script presenting one of the major events in a book as a real event. Have them create a simple background or use a local setting as the backdrop for a "Live at 11" news report. Student-reporters present their on-the-scene reports in front of the video camera.

Share a Book Report.
Students share book reports with students in the same grade in a neighboring school or school district. Pair up with another class in the community and encourage students to share book reports throughout the year. Plan to have students read some of the same books and some different ones. It would be nice if one or two of the book reports students shared during the course of the year were video book reports – so students could get to know one another better. Better yet, arrange for a meeting of the students for the purpose of book sharing either as a culminating event at the end of the year, or both at the start *and* end of the school year.

Book Report Recipe
Students write a "recipe" for a good book. Provide students with a "recipe card" format for their book reports. Each book report should include 1 cup of plot, 2 teaspoons of characters, 2 tablespoons of excitement, 1/2 cup of opinion, etc.

Birth Sign Book Report
Students explore characters and the signs of the Zodiac. Provide students with a simple explanation of some of the personality characteristics of the Zodiac/Horoscope Signs or the 12 animal birth signs of the Chinese Zodiac. Then have students select a character from the book read. As they read the character traits of the birth signs, they should consider under which sign the selected character was born. Their book report will explain why they came to that conclusion.

Book Blog/Wiki
Students can create a blog or wiki about their favourite book and invite others to read or contribute their ideas or comments by posting their responses. Inviting a larger audience to share their views about a novel will motivate adolescents and engage them beyond the classroom walls.

(cont'd)

Beyond Book Reports (cont'd)

Technology Connections

- Check out the sites below for more ideas and information on response strategies for book reports and beyond:

Book Report Ideas at Web English Teacher is the place to start. It offers a must see list of links to alternate ways of doing "book reports."
www.webenglishteacher.com/bookreports.html

Global Book Club: A Collaborative Reading Experience for Middle School Students highlights an online response site. It shares three outstanding young adult novels each month. It is hosted by teachers who offer teaching suggestions for each book.
www.ncsu.edu/globalbookclub/home.html

See ***www.nvsd44.bc.ca/writing44*** for updated links for further book report ideas.

Writer's Notes

Blog Assignment: In the News

For this activity, students will blog their responses to current events over a period of time determined by the teacher. Students are required to read print or online newspapers, respond to a variety of issues, events and articles and accurately cite their sources.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

1. Students will be asked to blog their responses to the news. Teachers may need to provide a mini-lesson on how to set up a blog using ***blogspot.com*** or another blog provider. See Sitting on a Story Blog p. 114 for tips about using weblogs.
2. Students will be asked to read two articles a week for the length of the assignment (usually 4-6 weeks) for a total of 8-12 articles. The articles should cover a diverse array of topics, issues, local/national/international news, letters to the editor, etc.
3. Students will be expected to create weekly blog responses to their topics and discuss the significance of their responses.
4. The blog responses should be 250-300 words in length and include information from the 5 Ws plus direct and indirect references to text.
5. Each response must identify the source of the article along with the title, date, page number and author. Using images from online sources is also encouraged.
6. Assessment of this lesson will include number of responses, attention to detail, and critical thinking skills such as synthesis, and analysis.

Teacher Tips:

- Students should be encouraged to read for issues they care about or that affect them; issues related to literature being addressed in class; issues being focussed on in opinion columns, letters to the editor, etc. (Younger students should be required to determine the difference between fact and opinions.)
- Saturday editions of newspapers contain the highest number of stories.

Compare/Contrast Writing

Comparison/contrast response to literature is a common form of writing process at the secondary level. This task is a challenging one for some students as it requires the writer to analyze more than summarize. The writer must look at two different ideas, arguments, characters, novels, etc. and find the similarities and/or differences of both. This type of response is also commonly required for summative assessments as it requires higher level thinking skills such as analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Discuss practical reasons for comparing and contrasting. Students should know that this practice has an authentic context outside of the realm of school: a manager of a company may need to present two products to a potential buyer, an engineer may need to propose two different environmental building strategies, etc.
2. Have the students brainstorm the similarities and differences of their subjects using a Venn Diagram or the Compare/Contrast chart on p. 143.
3. Students will need to, first, identify whether the focus of the piece is to compare – look at the similarities, contrast – examine the differences, or both. This will determine the way the student gathers information, brainstorms possible responses, and organizes her paper.
4. The most important feature of the comparison/contrast paper is structure. There are two primary ways to organize: the divided pattern or the alternating pattern. To follow the divided pattern, give all the supporting details for subject A and then give all supporting details for subject B. To follow the alternating pattern, alternate the details from one side of the comparison or contrast to the other. If students are writing a compare AND contrast paper, they would follow the divided pattern by first providing all similar points, then providing all differing points (To alternate between comparisons and contrasts is difficult for the reader to follow).

Divided Compare/Contrast (or Both)	Alternating
AAA BBB	ABABAB

5. Students should identify the strongest connections and begin to construct their thesis statement.

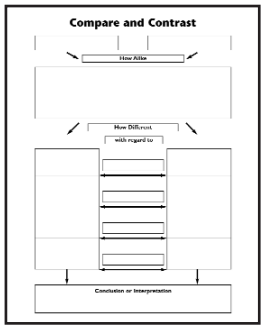
(cont'd)

Compare/Contrast Writing

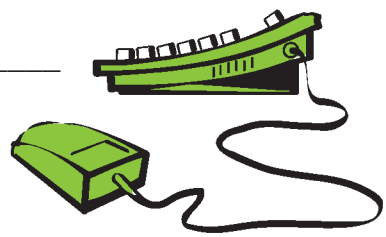
(cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

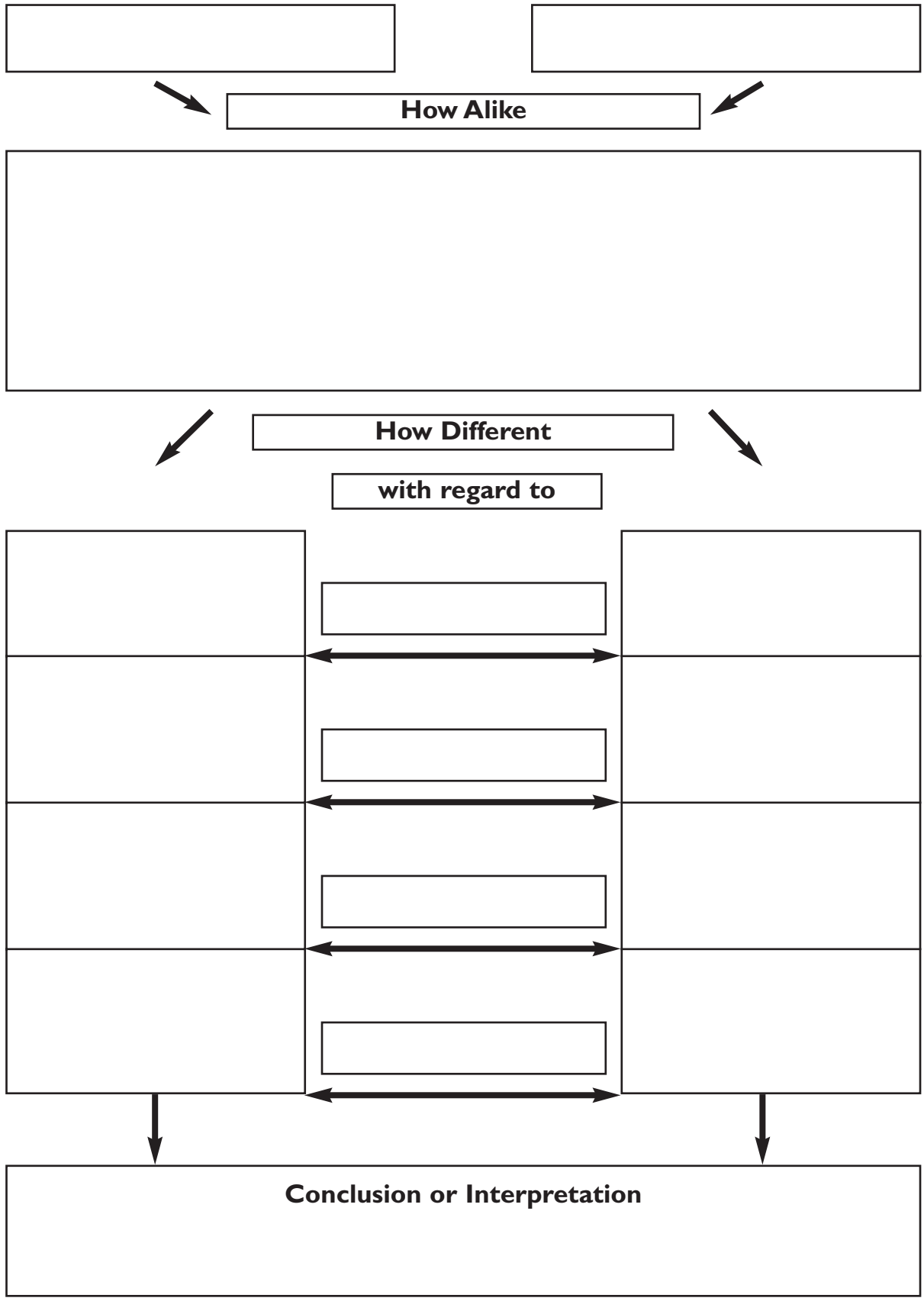
6. The introduction of the piece should include mention of both of the subjects and whether the purpose is to compare, contrast or both.
7. The conclusion of the paper should include final correlations about the two subjects and a restatement of the thesis.
8. See the Assessment section p. 297 for a sample rubric for Expository Writing.



Writer's Notes



Compare and Contrast



Historical Poetry

This activity involves responding to literature from either a language arts or social studies course in a highly sophisticated way. In order to write a dynamic poem about an historical era, students will need to synthesize the information they have learned to effectively convey their understanding of a particular era. There are endless possibilities for creative expression with this assignment.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. This activity is best done in partners or small groups to encourage discussion and collaboration.
2. Students are given a particular era to focus on, e.g. The Middle Ages, or The Renaissance.
3. Provide criteria for a successful poem:
   - Reference to at least four aspects of the era
   - Use of at least five poetic devices
   - Use of visuals, multi-media, etc.
   - Assessment rubric and marking guide

Example: Middle-Ages Poem

Content: Include detailed reference to at least four of the following:

- Feudal hierarchy
- 3 F's (fief, fealty, faith)
- 3-field system
- Knights
- Guilds
- Witches
- Trials and Courts
- Lords and vassals
- Manor
- Battle tactics and weapons
- The Crusades
- Bubonic Plague/Black Death
- The Church

Poetic Device: Use at least five of the following:

- Rhyme scheme
- Consonance
- Simile
- Oxymoron
- Stanza
- Assonance
- Allusion
- Alliteration
- Metaphor
- Hyperbole

Format: This will depend on the instructional focus and purpose of the lesson.

Independent Novel Study: Reader Response Journal

The independent novel study is typically a culmination activity for students to demonstrate their level of engagement with a text of their choice and their learning and thinking throughout their reading. In this activity, students are given the opportunity to choose a novel that interests them and to respond creatively using both written text and visuals. The response journal offers students the chance to respond personally, to wonder, to predict, and to reflect. The goal is to encourage students to show depth in their synthesis of ideas, their analysis of the novel's themes and characters, and their critical thinking skills about the reading and writing processes.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Students will independently choose a novel they have never read before from a grade appropriate list. If there are students who wish to choose a novel that is not on the list, they should have the novel approved by the teacher.
2. Explain that students will create a response journal to clearly show their engagement with and understanding of their text. The journal will include both written and visual components.
3. The following options cover a wide variety of types of responses. These are merely guidelines and can be adapted, or changed to suit. Offering students choices as well as the opportunity to include one or two original responses is recommended. The teacher will decide how many responses are required.
4. All work should be revised and edited proficiently.
5. Evaluation will be based on the quality of thought, development of ideas, analysis of text, organization, language conventions, and visual presentation.

(cont'd)

Independent Novel Study: Reader Response Journal (cont'd)

Possible forms of responses:

- Divide the novel into four sections and write four reading responses using the template provided below. Choose one of the responses to write in essay format.
- Select a poem or song that reflects an important theme in the novel. Include a copy of the poem/song and an analysis of how this poem or song is relevant.
- Create a character profile of the protagonist. Choose ten words to describe his/her characteristics and find ten quotes to support the descriptors. Present this creatively.
- Use multi media to create a PowerPoint or video that focusses on one aspect of the novel such as theme, symbol, irony, etc.
- Write an essay that compares the novel to your own personal experiences or to global issues/themes.
- Describe the conflicts in the novel and how they were resolved.
- Write a review of the novel.
- Write a letter to one of the characters or the author of the novel.
- Create a biography of one of the characters.
- Write a poem about one of the central characters of the novel.
- Identify and describe ten literary techniques that were used effectively in the novel.
- Create a blog or wiki to discuss the novel.
- Create a visually appealing cover that reflects ideas, characters, settings, etc. in your novel. The cover should include the title and author of the novel.

Divide the novel into four sections. Analyze and discuss each of the following sections of the novel using the following guiding questions:

Character: Describe one character in detail that you found interesting in the section that you read.

Personal Connections: How does this section of the novel remind you of your own personal experiences?

Global Connections: Does this section of the book remind you of something that has happened or is happening to the world? Describe.

Themes: What big ideas or important issues is the author dealing with in this section of the novel?

Feelings: How do you feel after reading this section and why?

Media, Money, and My Choices

This is a brainstorming activity to engage students in responding to the influences of media on their lives. The initial activity will help to activate students' prior knowledge about media influences on teen spending. The research project that follows will confirm and extend student awareness of advertising strategies used to target their dollars and how they can educate themselves to be informed consumers. Each small research group will investigate a particular type of product/service (e.g. clothing, food, cosmetics, music, etc.).

Using a partially completed brainstorming graphic helps students to practice thinking sequentially while conducting their research.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.

Teaching the Activity

1. Arrange students in pre-selected groups of three. Introduce the research project: its focus, process, and objectives.
2. Give students one copy of the partially completed brainstorming graphic and provide time for groups to use a round robin approach to add more information, starting at the top of the graphic (MP3 Players), working their way down, extending beyond the map if more space is needed.
3. Ask each group to share one or two ideas generated. Follow with a class discussion of possible conclusions for informed buying of this product.
4. Explain that this exercise will be repeated for a new product (randomly selected from an envelope of choices) that their group will research online in the library the next week.

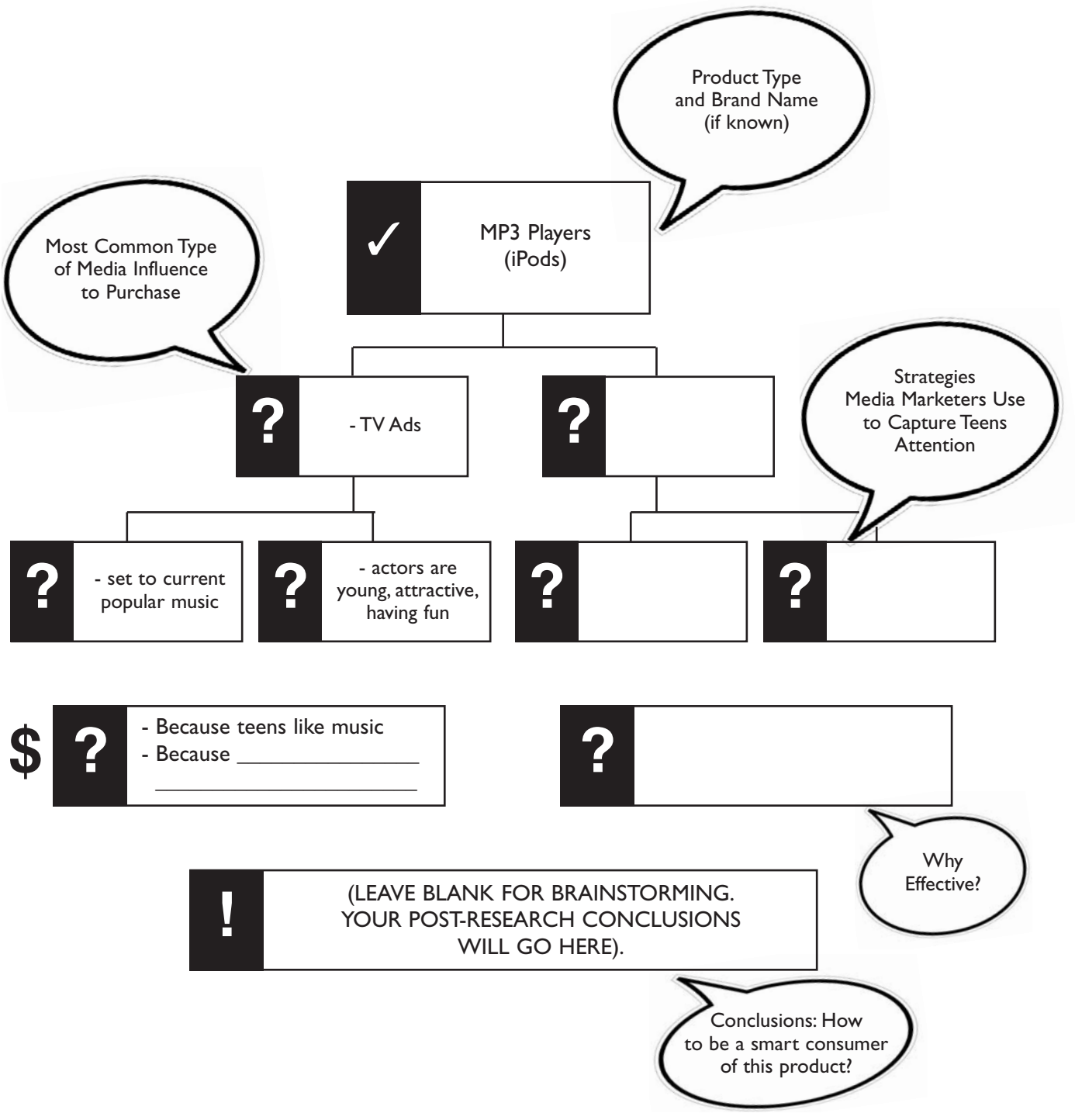
Technology Connections

- Students will conduct all research online with starting points possibly provided by teacher.
- Findings will be presented as slideshows with separate bibliographies. (Conduct separate instruction for evaluating websites, distinguishing primary and secondary sources, creating effective slideshow presentations.)
- For information on evaluating websites refer to ***www.nvsd44.bc.ca/wic*** to see *Web in the Classroom*.

Teacher Tips:

- The same template is used as a guide for organizing/sequencing note taking.
- To check for understanding and effort, have groups submit clearly labeled/organized notes with a working bibliography, after two days of information gathering.
- For another lesson on writing a research report see p. 204 (Research Report).

Brainstorming and Note Taking for Media Project



NOTE: THE SAME TEMPLATE WILL BE USED TO ORGANIZE YOUR RESEARCH NOTES.

Oral Response to Non-fiction

Students are often asked to hand in written responses to non-fiction in the form of a summary or critical analysis. This lesson incorporates analysis in the form of an oral presentation and an activity for the class.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. Assemble students into groups of 3-4.
2. Provide students with a non-fiction text such as *The Poverty of Affluence* by Jacinta Goveas, *Hardball* by Margaret Atwood, *Shoot that Puck, Grab that Suitcase* by Harry Bruce, *My Body is My Own Business* by Naheed Mustafa, etc.
3. Tell students they will be responsible for preparing and presenting a 20-minute summary and an engaging lesson for their classmates that will highlight the important details in the essay.
4. Requirements for the lesson may include:

    - A dramatic (rehearsed) reading of the article for the class
    - A description of the type of essay
    - An analysis of the thesis
    - A description of the writing style, techniques and devices
    - A creative visual to depict the essay
    - An activity for the class to participate in (e.g. writing task, game, debate, brainstorming session, etc.)
    - A handout of the presentation for the class

5. This activity can be assessed using peer and teacher evaluation. Creativity, insight, depth of analysis, and audience engagement are key criteria for assessment.

Paragraph Skeletons

For many students, the process of summarizing information from a novel, story, or text is a time-consuming and often frustrating experience. It is not always evident what information is important and what is merely interesting, especially if the student lacks necessary background information about the content of the text. This cooperative activity requires students to create a "skeleton" outline of a paragraph, and then retell the events to a partner based on the outline of the paragraph they created.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

1. Assemble students into partnerships and provide each partner with a copy of Paragraph A and Paragraph B.
2. Each student will read his or her paragraph and choose three words for each line of the paragraph that best explain that line. Those three words are then recorded on the first blank line of the corresponding Paragraph A or B handout. Students proceed through the entire paragraph, summarizing each line of the paragraph with 2-3 words, and writing them on their sheets.
3. The last line of the handout requires the student to identify and record 2-3 words (possibly from their collection of words already recorded) that summarize the main idea of the entire paragraph.
4. After students have created their skeletal outlines, consisting of key words, have them use this information to retell their paragraph to their partner.
5. Students take turns retelling their paragraphs referring ONLY to their paragraph skeletons. This action of retelling the information from only their chosen key words will help students decide which information is important for conveying the original intent of the author.

Teacher Tip:

- Further practice can be found with the activity Summarizing Text on p. 164.

Paragraph Skeleton Outline

Paragraph Skeleton Outline

A

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Main Idea Words: _____

B

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

Main Idea Words: _____

Playing with Mood and Tone

Students need to understand the importance of developing mood or tone in their writing, especially when writing a specific genre like mystery or an opinion piece. Allowing students to explore the impact of mood and tone in a story, play, or film will increase their awareness as readers and writers of creative prose or non-fiction text.

Writing Skills

5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. Play with Language
   Use a Thesaurus Wheel p. 154 to demonstrate the effect different adjectives have on the mood of a story. For each word students put in the centre of the wheel, they need to find synonyms for the word that would emphasize a specific mood (scary, romantic, joyful, etc.) This is a fun way to have students explore the richness and power of language prior to engaging in the writing process.

2. Provide Models of Mood/Tone
   - Select a passage of text with an obvious mood. (Dickens, King and Poe are great "mood" writers.) Replace some of the mood-creating adjectives with blanks, and instruct students to fill in the blanks with words to create a different mood. Afterwards, students can read out their creations to the class, and other students can "guess the mood". Finish this mini-lesson by reading aloud the original text.

   - Show short clips or scenes from movies or TV shows that highlight a variety of moods. Have students identify the type of mood and what contributed to create that feeling (music, setting, dialogue, etc.)

   - Collect 3 short non-fiction texts that have distinctly different tones (e.g. serious, sarcastic, nostalgic). Read these aloud to the students. Have students create three charts to categorize the different tones. Finally, ask students to read the texts with a partner and determine the words or phrases from each article that help to create the tone of each piece.

(cont'd)

Playing with Mood and Tone (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

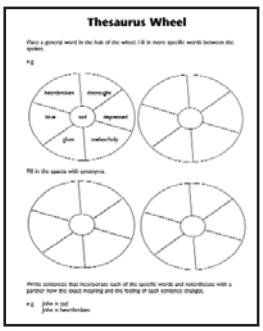
3. Write!
   Have students decide on a tone or mood that they wish to focus on and generate a list of possible words they may want to incorporate. The Thesaurus Wheel may help students to generate ideas. Invite students to write a one page scene where they develop a specific mood, or a one page article where they explore the use of a distinctive tone. Have the students share their work and elicit feedback from their peers.

Variations/Extensions

- Ask the students to write a creepy mystery. Mysteries require a suspenseful, tense mood in order to be effective. Invite the students to read their stories aloud in a classroom lit only by candlelight which heightens the mood of the experience.

Technology Connections

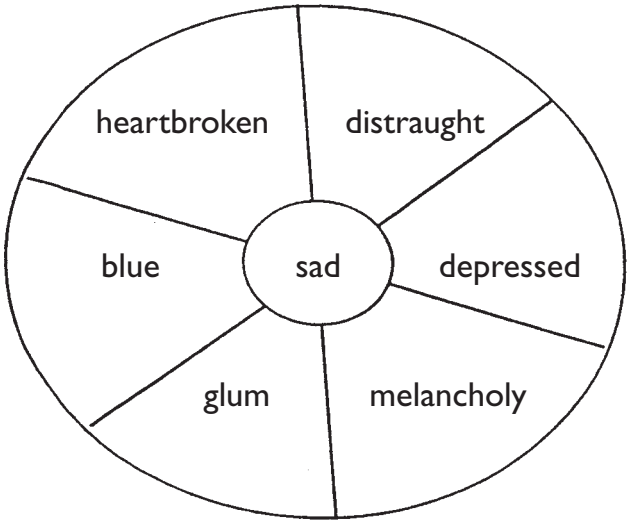
- Students can also explore the effect of mood by creating an iMovie that incorporates visual imagery, setting, dialogue, and action that contribute to the desired effect.

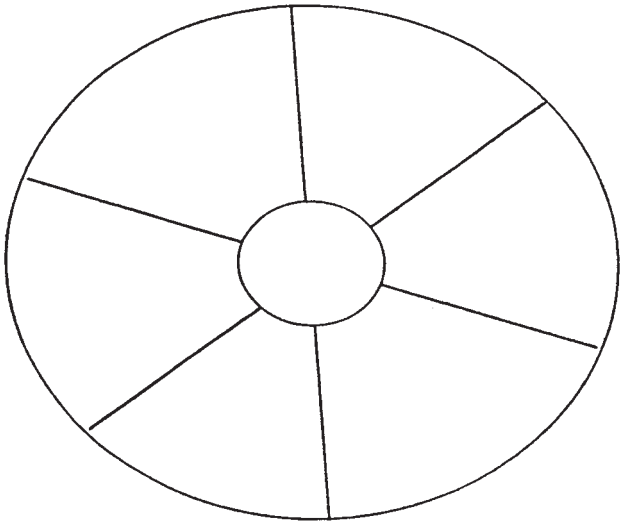

Thesaurus Wheel

Thesaurus Wheel

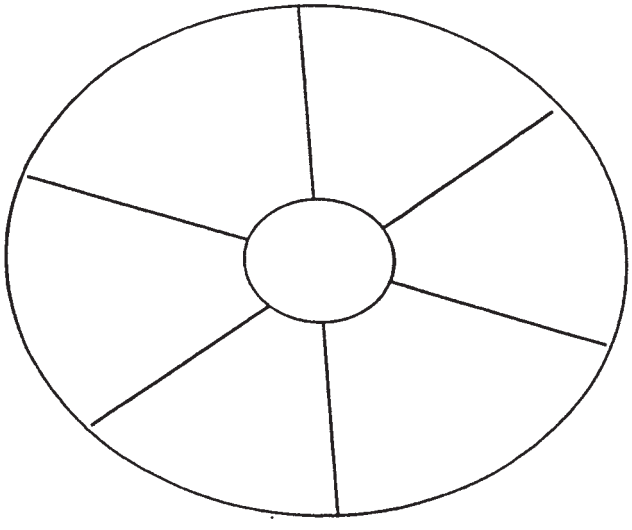
Place a general word in the hub of the wheel. Fill in more specific words between the spokes.

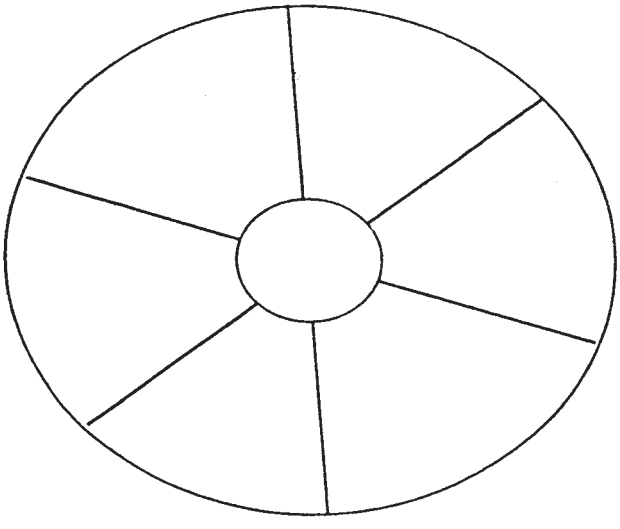
e.g.





Fill in the spaces with synonyms.





Write sentences that incorporate each of the specific words and note/discuss with a partner how the exact meaning and the feeling of each sentence changes.

e.g. John is <u>sad</u>.
John is <u>heartbroken</u>.

Responding to Prose: Organizer and Outline

This lesson should be a part of any introduction to a unit on responding to literature. It will help students generate ideas, identify relationships, and make connections among ideas and information of a given text. It will also provide students with a framework for outlining their response to the selected text. It can be used for many purposes of analysis (e.g. determining character, theme, symbol, irony).

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

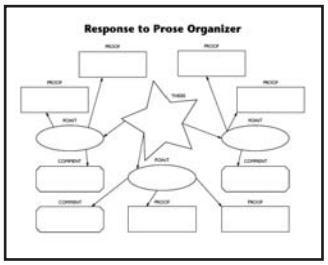
1. Model or conduct a Think-Aloud to show students the effective pre-writing strategy of generating ideas by drawing a web on the board or by using *Inspiration* software. The central *idea* (or thesis statement) is placed in the centre of the web. Explain to students how the thesis is usually an answer to the question. Next, the *points* generate from the center; there should be 3-5 depending on the required length of the written response. The *proof* generates from each point and should be represented by a different shape. It is through the textual evidence that the point is sound. Finally, the *comments* should also generate from the point but should be represented by a different shape. These comments are a synthesis of the students' understanding of the thesis, the points and the proof, with a further look to the "big picture" of life (see example).
2. Note: Some students may start with a thesis and then look for proof; others will develop their points first to come up with the central idea or thesis; still others may work from the textual evidence. Each writer will be unique in his/her approach.
3. Ask students to refer to their text to brainstorm ideas on the topic or topic question and highlight quotes from the text that provide proof for their points and comments. Have the students use the Response to Prose Organizer (see p. 157) to guide them.
4. Once students have identified their *points,* and gathered *proof* from the text, hand out the graphic organizer Response to Prose Outline (see p. 158).
5. Select one of the students' thesis statements (or create one) and model how to fill in the outline. The students' points should be outlined in order of increasing significance, with the final point being the most important.
6. Have students practice outlining their ideas several times prior to fully developing their pieces.

(cont'd)

Responding to Prose: Organizer and Outline (cont'd)

Variations/Extensions

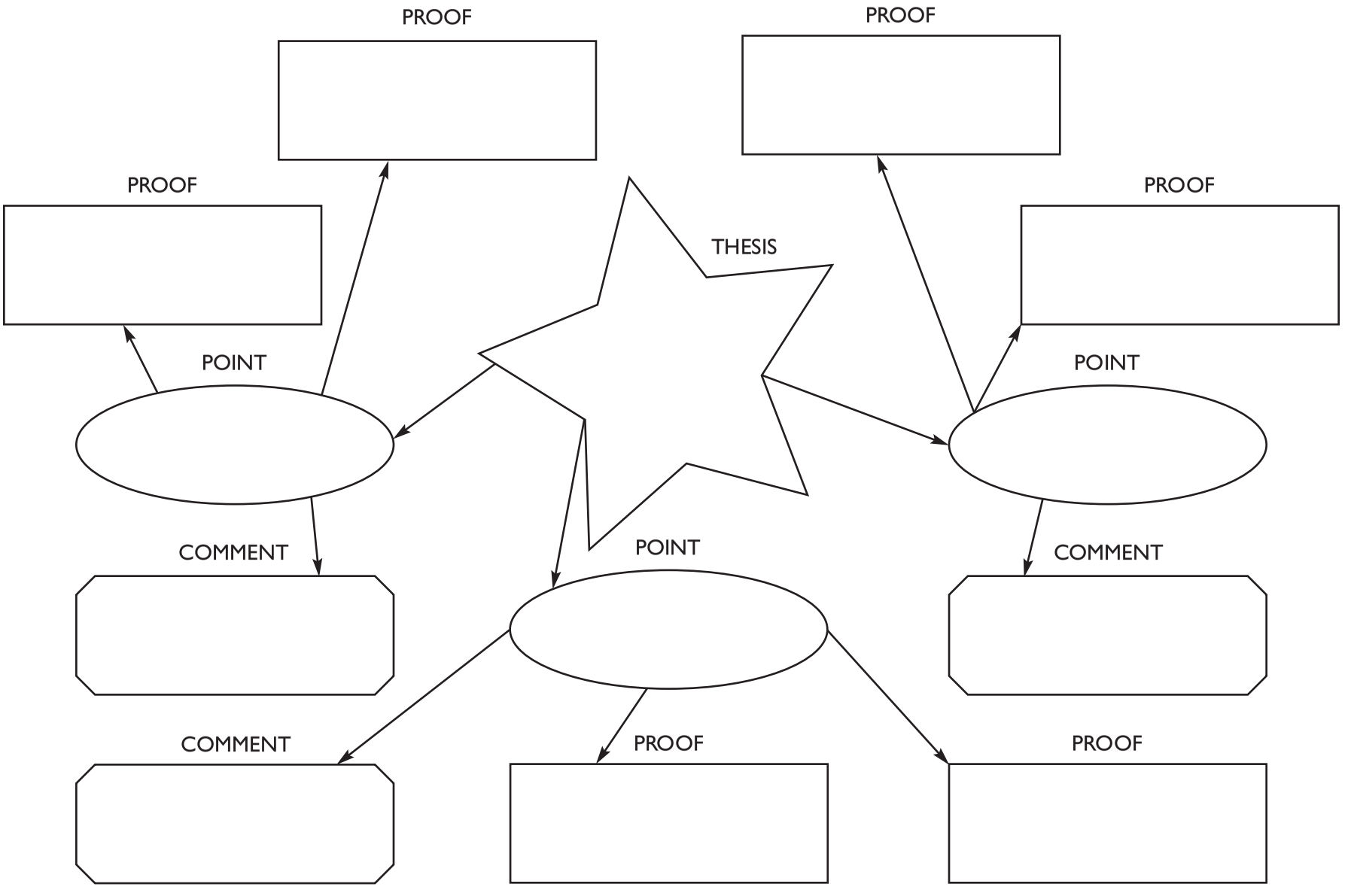
- When moving to the next step of developing the written piece, please refer to the lesson Using Quotations on p. 170.
- For further ideas for writing expository genre, please refer to the paragraph/essay section.
- For a sample rubric for Expository Writing see p. 267.



Teacher Tips:

- Discuss with students how the topic statement should be a reply to the question.
- Explain that points require convincing proof – either explicit or implicit.
- Discuss with students that a comment should summarize/synthesize both the point and the proof and make a meaningful link to the bigger picture of life or the human condition.
- Practice this activity several times using characters from familiar movies until students gain confidence for taking a stand, collecting evidence, and providing commentary.

Response to Prose Organizer



Response to Prose Outline

Topic Sentence	
#1 Point	
#1 Proof	
#1 Comment	
#2 Point	
#2 Proof	
#2 Comment	
#3 Point	
#3 Proof	
#3 Comment	
Closing Sentences	

Response Journals

Teachers use a variety of strategies to encourage students to reflect, react, and respond to literature through writing. Writing about what they're reading helps students to deepen their comprehension while making their thinking explicit. Writing in a reader response log, online weblog or response journal offers an opportunity for students to connect to a piece of writing without having to worry about making the "right" interpretation of a text.

Response journals or blogs require the students to enter into the world of text and to frame their own unique responses. Journals can either be a private free-writing log which creates a safe place for students to express their thoughts and ideas, an online environment that allows for multiple readers (and subsequent responders) or an instructional tool for teachers to conduct informal dialogue with their students about their reading experiences. Teachers can offer informal comments or thought provoking questions related to a student's entry that can further extend the student's reading and thinking. Teachers may also wish to make the process more formal by asking their students to create a journal with a required number of responses plus a variety of types of text, artistic interpretations or multi media renderings.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.

Check out the following web sites for further information on response journals and learning logs for responding to literature.

Read Write Think offers various ways to teach and encourage response journals, from daily response journals, double-entry journals, to shared journals.

www.readwritethink.org

Visual Journaling is a powerful way to move beyond words in daily writing practice. This site offers ideas and suggestions with links to even more ways to use pictures in journals to gain deeper insights ourselves and the world around us.

www.visualjournaling.com/

(cont'd)

Response Journals (cont'd)

Suggested Sentence Starters:

- In this chapter/section, I was surprised/impressed by…
- I noticed…
- I wonder about…
- I like/dislike how…
- I predict that…
- I did not understand…
- I disagree with…because…
- I experienced a similar situation to…when…
- An interesting word or phrase from the text is…because…
- I found a similarity between this text and…because…
- Questions that were not answered were…
- Something I appreciate/don't appreciate about a character/event is…

Writer's Notes

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Rhetorical Devices Poster

Writing in media and advertising is filled with rhetorical devices – some used brilliantly, and some used atrociously! This activity allows students to explore the complexity of language in a variety of media, both online and print, and to create a poster that presents examples of these stylistic devices in an interesting, visual format.

Writing Skills

5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. Students are to search for use of rhetorical devices in popular media. Students may use print formats such as magazines, newspapers, or junk-mail, or online text found in advertisements, websites, etc.
2. Students may focus on 10-15 different stylistic devices but no more than 2 examples per term and no more than 20 examples in total.
3. Possible terms to select:

• Jargon	• Cliché	• Chiasmus	• Alliteration
• Simile	• Neologism	• Euphemism	• Euphony
• Allusion	• Metaphor	• Slang	• Cacophony
• Repetition	• Hyperbole	• Metonymy	• Synecdoche
• Paradox	• Colloquialism	• Pun	• other

See the following page for a comprehensive list of terms and devices.

4. Students are marked on the number and effectiveness of the examples of rhetoric devices and the visual effort put into presenting the information.

Variations/Extensions

- Students may work in pairs, but small groups are not recommended.
- Students will need time to research and find examples – this cannot be done effectively overnight!

Terms and Devices in Literature

A
active voice
allegory
alliteration
allusion
analogy
antagonist
anti-climax
antithesis
apostrophe
anecdotal evidence
archaic language
aside
assonance
atmosphere
audience
autobiography

B
ballad
ballad stanza
bias
biography
blank verse

C
cacophony
caricature
case study
catastrophe
cause and effect
character
characterization
character foil
chronological order
cliché
climactic order
climax
colloquialism
colloquial language
comedy
comic relief
compare and contrast
comparison
conflict
connotation
consonance
contrast
couplet

D
denotation
dénouement
descriptive essay
dialect
dialogue
diary
diction
didactic
dilemma
direct presentation
dissonance
drama
dramatic irony
dramatic monologue
dramatic form
dynamic character

E
editorial
elegy
emotional appeal
epic
epiphany
epigram
epitaph
euphemism
euphony
expert testimony
exposition
expository essay
extended metaphor
external conflict

F
fable
falling action
fantasy
farce
figurative language
first-person point of view
flashback
flat character
foreshadowing
form
formal language
free verse

G
genre
graphic text

H
hero
historical reference
hyperbole

I
iambic pentameter
idiom
image
imagery
indeterminate ending
indirect presentation
informal language
interior monologue
internal conflict
internal rhyme
irony

J
jargon
juxtaposition

L
legend
limited omniscient
point of view
literal language
lyric

Terms and Devices in Literature

M
melodrama
metaphor
metre
monologue
mood
mystery
myth

N
narrative
narration
narrator

O
objective (language tone, etc.)
objective point of view
octave
ode
omniscient point of view
onomatopoeia
oxymoron

P
paradox
parallelism
parody
passive voice
pastoral
pathos
personal essay
personification
persuasive essay
persuasive technique
plot
point of view
pro and con argument
prologue
propaganda
protagonist
proverb
purpose
pun

Q
quatrain
question and answer

R
refrain
repetition
research
resolution
rhetorical question
rhyme
rhyme scheme
rhythm
rising action
round character

S
sarcasm
satire
sestet
setting
simile
slang
soliloquy
sonnet
speaker
stanza
stream of consciousness
static character
stereotype
stock/stereotyped character
style
subjective (language tone, etc.)
surprise ending
suspense
symbol
symbolism

T
theme
thesis
thesis statement
third person point of view
tone
tragedy

U
understatement

V
voice

W
wit

Summarizing Text

The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with practice in summarizing and synthesizing information from a text. Students will also practice their active listening skills as they hear a text read aloud by the teacher and strive to summarize and synthesize the salient ideas and connections prior to writing their summary.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.

Teaching the Activity

1. Have students rip a piece of paper into ten pieces.
2. Ask students to listen as you read aloud a selected text to them.
3. Ask students to write down one word that is interesting or relevant to the text on each of the ten pieces of paper.
4. Next, ask students to display their ten key words in front of them and eliminate two words from the group of ten (words that are repetitive or less relevant).
5. Have the students select one of the words from the remaining eight that best reflects the general idea or gist of the text. Ask students to place this one key word in the centre and place the remaining seven words around it. Explain that the students will create a summary of the text and that this central word is the prompt for the title of their piece. Ask students to write a catchy title to grab the reader's attention.
6. Have students look at the remaining words that surround the title and ask them to write a sentence for each of the words. These sentences must also connect to the focus of the title.
7. Once completed, students will have the components of a draft paragraph summary. Students will then sequence/organize their sentences and build in transition words to increase the cohesion of the piece. (Please refer to the Transition Words list, p. 209.)

Variations/Extensions

- Visual learners may benefit from viewing a short video clip or scene from a movie rather than listening to text read-aloud.
- Students may prefer to work in pairs in order discuss their ideas and decisions.

(cont'd)

.

Summarizing Text (cont'd)

Emphasizing Synthesis Versus Summary

Most teachers have had the experience of receiving a literary assignment composed of seemingly nothing but plot summary. The initial response is to assume that the student did not know enough of the work in question to offer any sort of analysis, and ended up producing a plot summary as a sort of "last ditch" survival tactic. But who is to blame if it was not brutally clear that literary assignments require the writer to provide authoritative commentary? Gallagher (2006) uses the analogy of sports commentators to illustrate this concept to students: in any given sports game, there is a commentator who provides a play-by-play description of the events of the game, and then there is the colour commentator who, like the writer of a literary paper, seeks to provide the explanations of player's actions, the interpretations, the consequences, and the greater implications.

Students at the senior level are required to provide synthesized ideas, but as this is a higher order cognitive process, modelling, guidance, and practice is required. Showing students the difference between "re-tell" and transformative thought in well-written model texts will give them a clearer expectation and understanding of this task.

Teacher Tips:

- Select an interesting, engaging text that is no longer than two pages in length.
- Use this opportunity to teach the concepts of introductory and concluding sentences so that students can add these to their paragraphs.

Synectic Character Sketches

Synectics (Gordon, 1961) is an approach to creative thinking that "depends on understanding together that which is apparently different". Its main tool is analogy or metaphor. For example, how is personal inclination like a poem or political party?

This kind of thinking allows students to brainstorm fresh ideas and to extend their thinking and challenge concepts. As a writing activity, this exercise requires students to go beyond the typically assigned character sketch: students are asked to use synectics to create extended similes or metaphors that insightfully/creatively describe a fictional character. (e.g. How is Lady Macbeth like a body of water?)

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

1. Prior to writing day:
   - Review the concepts of extended simile and metaphor.
   - As a class, brainstorm a list of everyday items and a list of different types of people.
   - In pairs, have students randomly select one item and one person from each list to form a T-chart.
   - Starting with the item side, let pairs brainstorm as many characteristics as they can. Then moving to the person side, have them look for listed characteristics of the item that could be interpreted in "human" terms, and record these. Decide a minimum of three convincing, shared characteristics (for further lists of characteristics, see p. 168).
   - Have volunteers share their unusual metaphors/similes and then explain three ways in which their comparison makes sense. Example: "How is a dancer like a fish?" Example: Both a dancer and a fish move their bodies gracefully.
   - Review the basic components of a well-developed paragraph.

2. Writing day:
   - Give the class a list of common objects. Ask each student to choose one to compare to a character from a current novel study in an extended simile or metaphor. Individual students will follow the steps of the day before to arrive at three shared characteristics.

(cont'd)

Synectic Character Sketches

(cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

- Students will then write a well-developed persuasive paragraph that explains how/why the character is (or "is like") the object chosen. For each character trait discussed, students must include one quotation from the play that provides evidence of that trait.

Variations/Extensions

- This assignment could be adapted to a full essay format.

(Sample Student Paragraph for Synectic Character Sketches)

More Than Meets the Eye

When asked to describe Lady Macbeth, one might think of using words such as evil, ruthless, and cruel. However, there is a lot more to this complex character than these obvious traits; she could in fact be compared to a large body of water that has many more qualities than may seem apparent. For example, a large body of water is capable of killing those who venture on it unprepared, just as Lady Macbeth plots to kill "the unguarded Duncan" in her castle "when he is asleep" (1.7.61,70). Also, a large body of water, such as a sea, can appear calm one moment and become completely out of control the next. Lady Macbeth exhibits the same powerful behaviour in an instant by saying it is "But a thing of custom…" (3.4.97). Later, though, she exhibits a total loss of control when she tries to wash out "the damned spot" of guilt on her hands without any awareness of her actions (5.1.38). And lastly, this same sea can be tainted and once it is, might never be restored. Lady Macbeth's mind is polluted by the consequences of her ambition and greed, and never heals. Regard Lady Macbeth not as simple evil and cruelty but more like a vast pool of water, unpredictable and dangerous.

Teacher Tip:

- The use of transitions, the integration of quotations, and use of formal language have already been practiced in essays before this assignment.

Gordon, W.J.J. (1961). Synectics. New York: Harper & Row

Character Traits

A
able
active
adventurous
affectionate
afraid
alert
ambitious
angry
annoyed
anxious
apologetic
arrogant
attentive
average

B
bad
blue
bold
bored
bossy
brainy
brave
bright
brilliant
busy

C
calm
carefree
careful
careless
cautious
charming
cheerful
childish
clever
clumsy
coarse
compassionate
conceited
concerned
confident
confused
considerate
cooperative
courageous
cowardly
creative
cross
cruel
curious

D
dainty
dangerous
daring
dark
decisive
demanding
dependable
depressed
determined
disagreeable
discouraged
dishonest
disrespectful
doubtful
dreamer
dull
dutiful

E
eager
easygoing
efficient
embarrassed
encouraging
energetic
evil
excited
expert

F
fair
faithful
fancy
fearless
fierce
fighter
foolish
fortunate
foul
fresh
friendly
frustrated
fun-loving
funny

G
gentle
giving
glamorous
gloomy
good
graceful
grateful
greedy
grouchy
grumpy
guilty
gullible

H
handsome
happy
hard-working
harsh
hateful
healthy
helpful
honest
hopeful
hopeless
humble
humorous

I
ignorant
imaginative
impatient
impolite
impulsive
inconsiderate
independent
industrious
innocent
intelligent
inventive

J
jealous
joyful

K
keen
kind

L
lazy
leader
light
light-hearted
lively
lonely
lovable
loving
loyal
lucky

M
mannerly
mature
mean
messy
mischievous
miserable
musical
mysterious

(cont'd)

Character Traits (cont'd)

N
naughty
neat
nervous
nice
noisy

O
obedient
obnoxious
obsequious
observant
obstinate
old
opinionated
optimistic

P
patriotic
peaceful
pensive
persevering
persistent
pessimistic
petulant
picky
pitiful
plain
pleasant
pleasing

Q
quarrelsome
quick
quiet
quixotic

R
rambunctious
rash
rational
refined
reliable
relieved
religious
reserved
resourceful
respectful
responsible
responsive
restless
retiring
rich
risk-taking
rough
rowdy
rude

S
sad
safe
sarcastic
satisfied
saucy
scared
scornful
secretive
secure
sedate
self-centered
self-confident
selfish
self-reliant
sensitive
serious
sharp
short
shrewd
shy
silly
simple
sincere
skillful
slovenly
sly
smart
sneaky
snobbish
sociable
sorry
spoiled
steady
stingy
stolid
strange
strict
strong
stubborn
studious
stupid
suave
successful
sullen
supercilious
superstitious
surly
suspicious
sweet

T
taciturn
tactful
talented
talkative
tall
tasteful
tenacious
tense
terrified
thankful
thoughtful
thoughtless
thrifty
thrilling
timid
tired
tireless
tolerant
touchy
trusting
trustworthy

U
ugly
uncontrolled
uncouth
unfriendly
unhappy
unruly
unscrupulous
unselfish
upset
useful

V
valiant
versatile
vivacious
vulgar

W
warm
warm-hearted
weak
whimsical
wicked
wild
wise
witty
worried
wrong

Y
young

Using Quotations

An essential skill for students to learn is how to incorporate quotations effectively into their written work. This lesson gives them some practice identifying excellent and problematic examples of incorporated quotations.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

1. It is always a good strategy to find out what your class knows about using quotations before you begin the lesson. Have them quickly write out (a) what they know, (b) what they think they know, and (c) what they would like to know. Review these ideas with them.

2. Use the following ideas to review/teach tips for using quotations.

Incorporating Quotations
General Tips: BLIF

- Your quotation should be as ***brief*** as possible. Use your own words and ideas and choose a quotation that supports them.
- Introduce the quotation in your own words. There must be some ***link*** between your idea and the supporting quotation.
- ***Integrate*** your quotations within your sentences.
- ***Format*** your quotation to fit your sentence.

3. A strategy to teach format is to show students a chart like the one following. Individually, have students circle the problem in the Problematic Examples. The idea is that they will come up with some of the formatting rules themselves, prior to explicit instruction.

(cont'd)

Using Quotations (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

Data Set

Problematic Examples	Excellent Examples
"We want to have fun. And we want to be rescued." Is a perfect example of how Ralph thinks they should be lead, meanwhile, "I ought to be chief, because "I'm chapter choirister and lead boy" prove Jack truly thinks for himself.	One way Ralph satisfies the group is by giving false hope, by telling them that above all they "want to have fun…and be rescued."
Jack thinks that hunting is the most important objective and it will lead them to survival. Hunting is all he talks about, "I thought I might kill."	As a leader, Jack wants things done his way, whereas Ralph would rather please everyone. He tells the younger children that it will be "like in a book."
Ralph has more order than Jack, from the quote "for a person to speak when another person has the conch, they have to put up their hand like in school". This shows the reader that Ralph wants to know what the other kids have to say.	Jack continually restates some of the immediate needs, and gives concrete solutions like "(needing) an army – for hunting, hunting pigs."

Golding, William The Lord of the Flies. Faber and Faber: London, 1954.

4. Provide students with a sheet for MLA or APA in-text references depending on your preference.
5. Give students practice finding the formatting errors. Using several sentences with formatting errors is a good approach, especially if they have recently read the text. You can gauge understanding by showing the group different quotations and asking them to decide whether the quotation is correct or incorrect. (Have students who think it is correct put their thumbs up, students who think it is incorrect put their thumbs down, and those that are unsure use a neutral signal. If there is little understanding, use this as a cue for further in-depth instruction).
6. Allow for practice in using quotations by providing students with a passage that has had the quotations removed. Students then have to determine where the quotes most accurately fit. This exercise will reinforce the formatting rules and show students how they can create flow within their own paragraphs or essays. See the example on the following page.

Using Quotations

A Model

Through descriptions of Roger's physical appearance, speech, and behaviour, Golding clearly depicts Roger as an uncivilized force in the novel *The Lord of the Flies*. To begin with, Roger is physically described as having _____. Besides being described as _____ and _____, Roger is also described as having swarthy skin under which crept _____. Both these quotes refer to the darkness of Roger's skin and hair and, thus, through association of dark and black things with evil, suggest that evil - _____ – lurks under Roger's skin. The idea that Roger is evil is further suggested through the things he says. For example, when Ralph chastises Roger and Jack for rolling rocks destructively off a cliff while they are supposed to be searching for the Beast in an effort to disprove its existence and destroy the destabilizing fear of the boys, Roger's response is that _____. Obviously, helping to stabilize the island society does not hold as much interest for Roger as does participation in destruction. However, _____, and the greatest proof of Roger's evil exists in the multiple examples of his violent behaviour. Significantly, Roger is notably present and commented upon by Golding in many of the novels most disturbing events. He is one of the first boys to challenge his civilized upbringing by laughingly destroying the _____ sandcastle and by calculatedly throwing rocks towards Henry in an effort to test the barriers of societal values that at that point, still hold Roger under control. During the hunt in which a female sow is killed, in one of the most barbaric ways imaginable – by ramming a spear into her _____. Through all Golding's characterization of Roger, Roger is depicted as a sadistic individual who delights in acts of violence and the discomfort and pain of others. Clearly, in a novel in which human nature is closely examined and questioned, Roger represents the _____ that works within men's souls and, ultimately, causes destruction both on the island and the adult world at large.

Incorporate the following quotations into the paragraph.

1. "a darker shadow"
2. "Beast"
3. "gloomy"
4. "shock of black hair…(that) seemed to suit his gloomy face and made what seemed at first an unsociable remoteness into something forbidding"
5. "actions speak (even) louder than words"
6. "littluns"
7. "till he was leaning with his whole weight…and the terrified squealing became a high pitched scream"
8. "forbidding"
9. "(the boys) have plenty of time"

Golding, William. The Lord of the Flies. Faber and Faber: London, 1954.

Writing Effective Theme Statements

The purpose of this activity is to teach students how to write an effective theme statement. This lesson assumes that the teacher has already completed lessons on understanding and locating theme in pieces of literature.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.

Teaching the Activity

1. Assign a story or have a small group choose a story to read from an anthology.
2. Before they begin working on generating a theme statement for their story, it would be useful to review what theme is NOT. This is successfully accomplished by using a concept attainment activity whereby students review a data set and then check their understanding.

An example of this is as follows:

Concept Attainment: Theme Data Set	
Yes	**No**
Friendship is an important part of life. Appearances can be deceiving People often assume that other people's lives are better than their own. Love is stronger than hate. Humanity's relationship with technology is fraught with difficulty. Power corrupts people.	Friendship's importance. Appearances. The grass is always greener on the other side. Romeo and Juliet's love overcomes their families' hate. Technology. Power always corrupts people.

(cont'd)

Writing Effective Theme Statements (cont'd)

Concept Attainment: Sample Theme Testers

1. Black and white.
2. Acceptance is important to people.
3. Friendship is a flower that blooms forever.
4. Don't count your chickens before they hatch.
5. Humans have become enslaved to technology.
6. Greed.
7. Identity is an important part of life.

3. Using the story they have read, students can go through the following process to help them locate theme. This activity can be done individually, in pairs, or in small groups.

   - Write a plot summary of approximately 30 words.
   - Identify and note the conflicts in the story.
   - Choose one word that summarizes the topic of the story.
   - Write one question about this topic.
   - **Answer** the question as you think the author would.

4. Use the above **answer** and have students check this statement against the following criteria. If it does not meet the criteria, the student(s) should rethink and revise. In the end, they should have a completed theme statement for their story.

   - Is your theme statement one full sentence?
   - Does your theme avoid generalizations? (always, never, all, etc.)
   - Does your theme statement reveal a universal idea, topic or experience? (love, war, fear, etc.)
   - Does it reveal something about human nature? (Appearances can be deceiving.)
   - Do you avoid mentioning story specifics? (title, character, setting, etc.)
   - Do you avoid clichés? (All you need is love.)
   - Does your theme statement make sense for your story?

5. Write some theme statements on the board and have the class review and critique them in relation to the specific story.

Paragraph Writing

Drafting

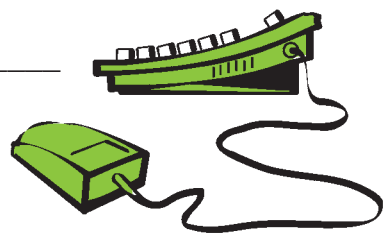
PARAGRAPH WRITING

Activity Page

Paragraph Writing (Tips) 177
Effective vs. Ineffective Expository Paragraphs 178
Expository Paragraph 180
- Paragraph Organizer 182
- Paragraph Outline: Expository/Persuasive 183
- Paragraph Outline The Handy Hamburger 184
- Perfect Paragraph Inventory 185

- Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids included

Writer's Notes



Paragraph Writing

Tips for writing paragraphs:

1. **Think carefully about what you are going to write**
   - Ask yourself: What question am I going to answer in this paragraph? How can I best answer this question? What is the most important part of my answer? What facts or ideas can I use to support my introductory sentence? Where can I find more facts on this topic?

2. **Collect facts related to your paragraph topic**
   - Write down the facts that will help you to answer your question. Use a double entry note-taking strategy by forming two columns on a piece of paper. Separate information that is critical from information which is simply interesting. Ask yourself: Is this information relevant and will it help me to answer the question?
   - DO NOT just write down everything you know about the topic. Answer the question.

3. **Write down your own ideas**
   - Ask yourself: What else do I want to explain to/convince the reader about this topic? Why is this topic important?
   - However, do not use first person, or "I" in a paragraph.

     e.g. ~~I think~~ Champlain was the father of New France because he…

4. **What's your point? Find the main idea of your paragraph** (answer the question)
   - Choose the most important point you wish to present. If you cannot decide which point is the most important, just choose one point and stick to it throughout your paragraph.

     e.g. Good: Champlain was the father of New France because he …

     Bad: Champlain both was and wasn't the father of New France for many reasons. Also, the First Nations could be considered the parents of New France.

5. **Organize your facts and ideas in a way that develops your main idea**
   - Once you have chosen the most important point in your paragraph, you must find the best way to explain to/convince the reader. Look at the facts you have written and your own ideas on the topic. Decide which facts and ideas will best support the main idea of your paragraph.
   - Once you have selected the most pertinent facts and ideas you plan to use, carefully consider the order in which to include them in your paragraph. Usually, one builds in importance from beginning to end, concluding with the most impressive facts and ideas last.
   - Draft your ideas in an outline to see how they flow.

6. **Have you answered the question?**
   - How do you know? Have you used enough examples to PROVE to the reader that you have understood the question and have answered it appropriately?
   - Ask yourself: Have I proved my opinions and statements with factual evidence? Have I stayed focussed on my topic? Have I completed the task of answering the question effectively?

Effective vs. Ineffective Expository Paragraphs

Students benefit greatly from the use of models in writing class. This lesson allows students to review models of good and poor writing to facilitate their understanding of the criteria for successful paragraph writing.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

1. Ask students how they know if a paragraph is effective or ineffective. Create a list of criteria for an effective information paragraph on the front board. (This could be a useful formative assessment for determining what students know and what needs to be taught/reviewed.)
2. Provide students with the two paragraphs below, either on an overhead or as a handout to read. Students work in pairs to discuss why one paragraph is effective and the other is weak.
3. Ask students to revisit the class-generated list of criteria for an effective paragraph and to add any new ideas.
4. If appropriate, ask the students to suggest improvements for the weaker paragraph following the criteria and guidelines for effective paragraph writing and revise it with a partner. Share and discuss.

Teacher Tip:

- This activity could be taught as a Concept Attainment activity where the teacher provides a data set of further examples of good and bad paragraph writing and allows students to determine the necessary characteristics of the former.

(cont'd)

Effective vs. Ineffective Paragraph Writing (cont'd)

"To what extent did the Jesuits cause the destruction of Huronia?"

The Jesuits caused the destruction of Huronia in many ways. The first thing that happened to the poor Huronians was that they were introduced to a new disease called Small Pox that they had no immunity to. Small Pox killed thousands of Huronians, weakening their advantage against other tribes like the Iroquois. The view of Christianity did not have pity for the simple ways and traditions of the Natives. Their ways and beliefs were told to be forgotten and to follow the Jesuits instead. The Hurons that did convert to Christianity were considered traitors to the other natives who did not want to forget their ways, and thought the Jesuits were dangerous because of the small pox and the scary pictures of Judgement Day, which they didn't understand. The outcome of this was that the Hurons were now split into two groups making them even more vulnerable to attack; and the Iroquois took advantage of this, killing almost the rest of that nation. The Jesuits really did cause the destruction of Huronia.

"To what extent did the Jesuits cause the destruction of Huronia?"

When the Jesuits went to Huronia, lots of things changed. The Hurons thought the Jesuits were crazy because they didn't understand what they were saying (different language), and they only understood simple, non descriptive terms. When Jesuits arrived, they brought with them pictures of the final Judgement. These pictures showed pain, suffering, and torture. They also showed some happy people going up to heaven. Hurons didn't know what these pictures meant, and thought the Jesuits believed in suffering. The Hurons also thought that the restricting robes worn by the Jesuits were dark and strange. It could have been any of these reasons that caused the destruction of Huronia.

Expository Paragraph

An information or expository paragraph is an objective presentation of facts and information on a given topic with the purpose of informing or educating the reader. Taking the time to teach students the structures and processes of informational writing through explicit modelling and guided practice will result in well-crafted writing. Teaching students to write an effective information paragraph can also be integrated with content-area instruction. This exercise will lay the groundwork for later instruction in multi-paragraph essays.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Provide the students with a topic to write about or have students generate their own topics according to a current event or topic of study. Students may need support in defining and refining their topic for the purpose of writing a paragraph. (See Funneling Your Writing on p. 64.)
2. Hand out the instruction sheet How to Write an Information Paragraph and discuss the importance of effective research (see the BC Teacher Librarian Association for specific guidelines for Research Quest at ***http://www.lib.retsd.mb.ca/rbl/focus/quest.html***).
3. Provide students with models of effective information paragraphs so they have a clearer sense of what they are trying to achieve. Discuss the criteria for a successful paragraph or have students determine the criteria on their own using the models of effective paragraphs as guidelines.
4. To begin the writing process, students should collect relevant facts to support their ideas. If using the Internet for facts, ensure that students understand the importance of effective research (see above). Use any of the following paragraph outline graphic organizers to help students organize information.
5. Students should write a draft copy of their paragraph first. They should write a topic sentence that identifies the main idea of the paragraph or answers the question.
6. Students should organize their supporting notes/ideas/facts into order of importance with the most important idea presented last. Students should use effective transition words to connect their ideas and sentences for a more cohesive paragraph. (Refer to the Transition Words list on p. 209.)

(cont'd)

Expository Paragraph (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

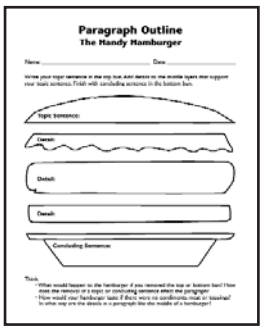
7. Students should write a concluding sentence that restates the topic sentence in a different way.
8. Use the Perfect Paragraph Inventory on p. 185 to guide revision.

Variations/Extensions

- Many students may prefer to use *Inspiration* software to organize their ideas.
- For further ideas on writing effective leads, see the Introductions to Hooks and Leads activity.

Paragraph Organizer

Paragraph Outline: Expository/Persuasive


Paragraph Outline
The Handy Hamburger

Perfect Paragraph Inventory

Teacher Tips:

- Students will benefit from seeing the teacher explicitly model this process prior to doing it individually. Write alongside the students to demonstrate the process.
- Adolescent are motivated to write better when they care about what they write. As much as possible, allow for choice with topics as even small opportunities for choice gives students a greater sense of autonomy.
- Using the "cut and paste" tools of a word processor makes it all too easy for students to use a few Web sites and then paste together a report. The strategies of conducting effective, accurate research are an important instructional focus.

Paragraph Organizer

Template

Topic Sentence		
Order	Point	Supporting Details
Concluding Sentence		

Paragraph Outline: Expository/Persuasive

Hook

Topic Sentence

Point #1 – Explanation

Specific Proof

Transitional word or phrase

Point #2 – Explanation

Specific Proof

Transitional word or phrase

Point #3 – Explanation

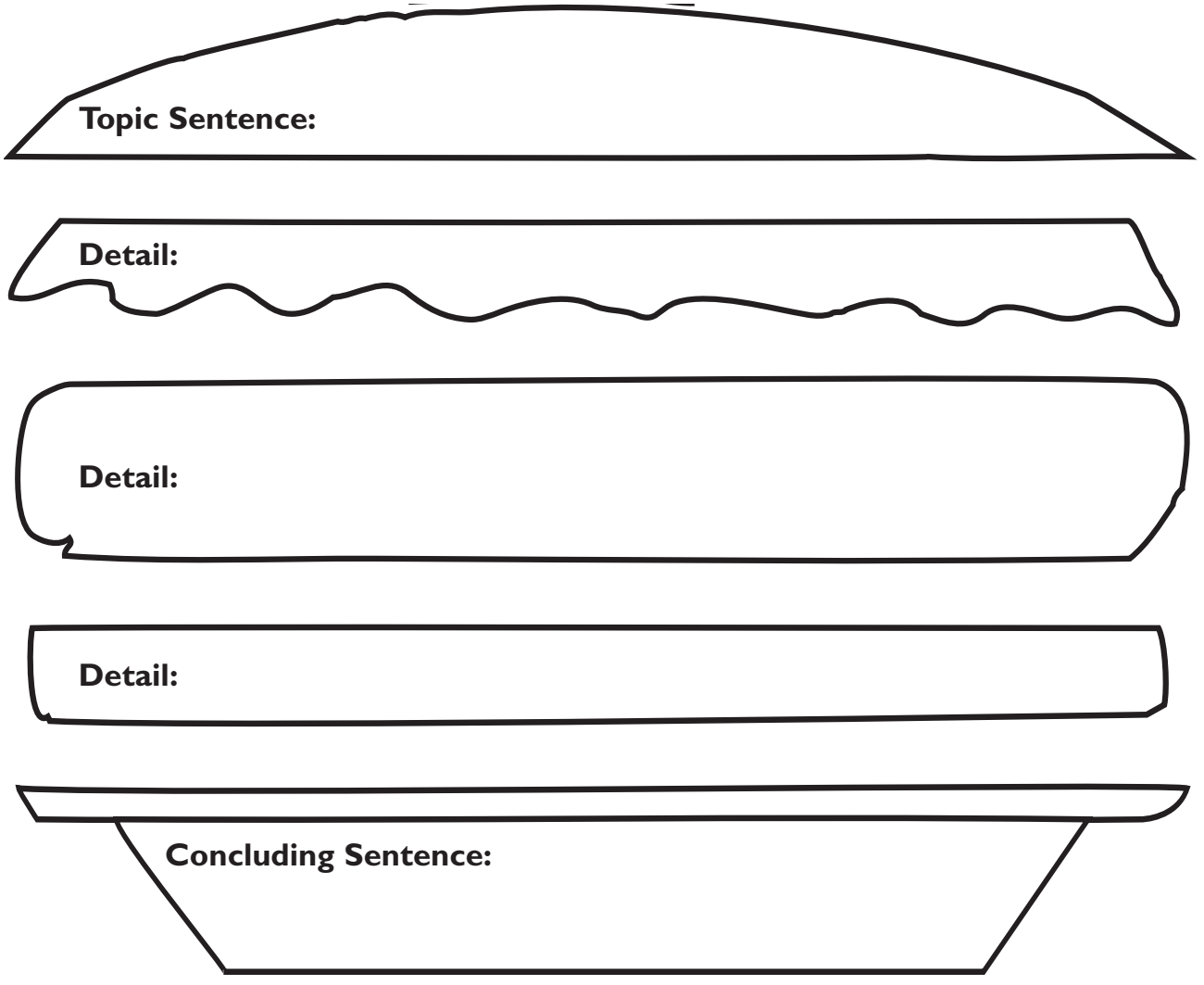
Specific Proof

Concluding Statement/Clincher

Paragraph Outline
The Handy Hamburger

Name: _____ Date: _____

Write your topic sentence in the top bun. Add details to the middle layers that support your topic sentence. Finish with concluding sentence in the bottom bun.



Think:

- What would happen to the hamburger if you removed the top or bottom bun? How does the removal of a topic or concluding sentence effect the paragraph?
- How would your hamburger taste if there were no condiments, meat or toppings? In what way are the details in a paragraph like the middle of a hamburger?

Perfect Paragraph Inventory

Name: _____ Title: _____

Main Idea

- ❒ The topic sentence is in the first part of the paragraph.
- ❒ The main idea remains consistent throughout the piece (e.g. one aspect).
- ❒ The main idea is restated in the final sentence.
- ❒ Supporting details are chosen from the original selection.

Supporting Details

- ❒ At least three supporting details are included.
- ❒ Supporting details are clearly related to the main idea.

Organization

- ❒ Connecting words are used between ideas and sentences.
- ❒ There are at least three clear parts in the paragraph: introductory sentence, body with supporting details, and concluding sentence.

Audience and Purpose

- ❒ Level of language and tone are appropriate for audience and purpose.

Mechanics

- ❒ Sentences are complete and correct (verbs agree with subjects, pronouns agree with antecedents, verb tense is consistent).

Spelling

- ❒ Spelling is checked using spelling patterns, rules, and resources.

Punctuation

- ❒ Punctuation is used correctly (e.g. period, question mark, exclamation mark, comma, dash, apostrophe, colon, quotation mark, parentheses, ellipses).

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Writer's Notes

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Expository Writing

Drafting

EXPOSITORY WRITING

Activity Page

A Time and A Place: Recognizing When to Avoid 'I' Statements 189
- A Time and A Place: Recognizing When to Avoid 'I' Statements 190

Creating Connections 191
- Creating Connections 193

Creating First Impressions: Essay Introductions 194
- Pondering Pizza 195
- Exposition: The Keyhole 196
- Expository or Persuasive Essay Outline 197
- Essay Thesis Statements 200
- Five-Paragraph Essay Outline 1 201
- Five-Paragraph Essay Outline 2 202
- Idea Diagram 203

Research Report (using Research Quest) 204

Seven Snappy Starters 207
- Seven Snappy Starters 208

Transition Words (List) 209
- Writing Prompts for Expository/Persuasive 211

- Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids included

A Time and A Place: Recognizing When to Avoid 'I' Statements

The purpose of this activity is to help students recognize when it is inappropriate to include personal pronouns such as 'I' in writing.

Writing Skills

5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Tell the students that certain types of writing are meant to be formal and therefore cannot contain personal information such as personal pronouns.
2. Place two different written versions of an event on the overhead, side-by-side. One version should use the Objective Point of View, and one version should use the First Person Point of View. Using a section of a newspaper article is effective for Objective POV. Rewrite this objective piece to include personal references to the author which will create the First Person example. Have students tell you the difference between the two pieces of writing.
3. Prompt students with questions such as "What are the differences between the two passages?", "Which piece is focussed more on the writer than the event?", or "Which piece is more appealing to you and why?"
4. Tell the students that the questions or writing topics they need to respond to give clues as to whether personal pronouns are acceptable or not. Briefly model this response activity using examples such as these:

   - Discuss the theme of the poem.
     - Does this statement mention you? If not, do not include 'I' in the writing.

   - Discuss a challenge that you have faced and how it affected you.
     - Does this statement mention you? If yes, include 'I' in your writing.

5. Have students complete Part A of the handout A Time and A Place: Recognizing When to Avoid 'I' Statements" using the Think Pair Share activity. Students will generate their own answers, then share them with a partner, and finally discuss their thoughts with the class.
   - Discuss the type of topics that do not include 'I' statements and determine whether there is a pattern to these topics (often they involve analyzing literature or figurative devices, for instance).
6. Finally, have students practice eliminating 'I' statements from a series of sentences in Part B of the worksheet. Review the answers as a class.

A Time and A Place: Recognizing When to Avoid 'I' Statements

PART A: For each statement or question below, write 'Y' if the response should include an 'I' statement, and write 'N' if the response should not include an 'I' statement.

1. _____ Based upon your personal experience, are the best gifts the simplest ones?
2. _____ Is love stronger than hate in *Romeo and Juliet?*
3. _____ Analyze the character of Ralph from *Lord of the Flies*.
4. _____ Design a family crest and explain its significance to you and your family.
5. _____ Who has had the greatest influence on your life?
6. _____ Did the Treaty of Versailles lead to World War II?
7. _____ Childhood is the best time of life.
8. _____ Be it resolved that the death penalty be abolished in all countries.
9. _____ Assess the evidence for global warming and climate change.
10. _____ Write a description of your bedroom.

PART B: Using your best judgment, determine which of the following sentences need to be rewritten to eliminate 'I', and rewrite.

1. I will discuss Shakespeare's theme that love is stronger than hate in *Romeo and Juliet.*
2. My broken leg was a huge challenge to overcome, but I did overcome it with patience, strength, and the support of my family.
3. I will prove that World War II really had two main causes.
4. Travelling through Thailand was more relaxing than I had ever believed possible.
5. Showers are better than baths, I believe, because of important environmental factors.

Creating Connections

The focus of this fun exercise is creating connecting links between topics using transition ideas and words, much like the links that have to be made between the body paragraphs in an essay. As such, the created connections are much like the outline of an essay. This lesson offers practice for planning essays on topics that do not always provide students with easy links between body paragraphs. It also emphasizes the importance of using appropriate transitions between ideas.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

1. Before beginning, select three phrases, things, or ideas that are somehow linked.
2. Hand out the following Creating Connections graphic organizer on p. 193 and have students write the three topics in the large circles.
3. Now, students have to identify the one thing that unites the three topics and write it in the central bubble.
4. Next, students have to come up with sentences to link each of the three topics. Instruct them to write the connections in complete sentences; to be effective links, these transitional sentences must refer to both of the topics being linked.
5. Ask students to then think of how the topics and relations could be made into an effective essay outline. At this point teachers may wish to use one of the Essay Outlines in the following section to help outline a possible essay.

Example:
Topics: 1. Television 2. Computers 3. Books

Way(s) the topics are related: All are ways of communicating ideas and information.

Connecting Sentence between 1 and 2
- Even though TV and computers both show video, people can type on computers.

Connecting Sentence between 2 and 3
- While computers allow people to read stories, books allow people to read in places where there isn't electricity.

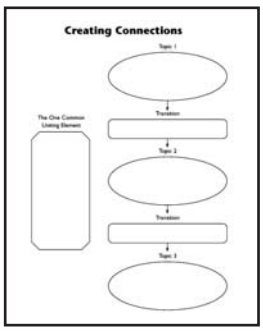
Connecting Sentence between 3 and 1
- Both TV and books can tell stories, but TV shows people the story without them having to do anything.

(cont'd)

Creating Connections (cont'd)

Variations/Extensions

- This activity can be made into a group contest whereby the teacher (or students) can suggest three topics and the group that makes the connections quickest wins. Alternatively, student groups can create their own linkages between topics or phrases, and then challenge another group to identify the connections.
- From various connections/outlines, students can then pick one on which to write an actual essay.
- Use *Inspiration* software to create the connections visually.



Teacher Tip:

- Refer to Transition Words list on p. 209.

Writer's Notes

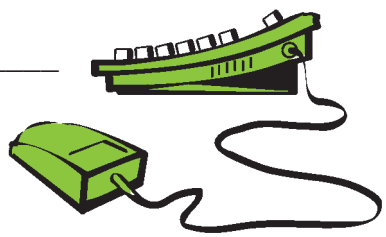
_____

_____

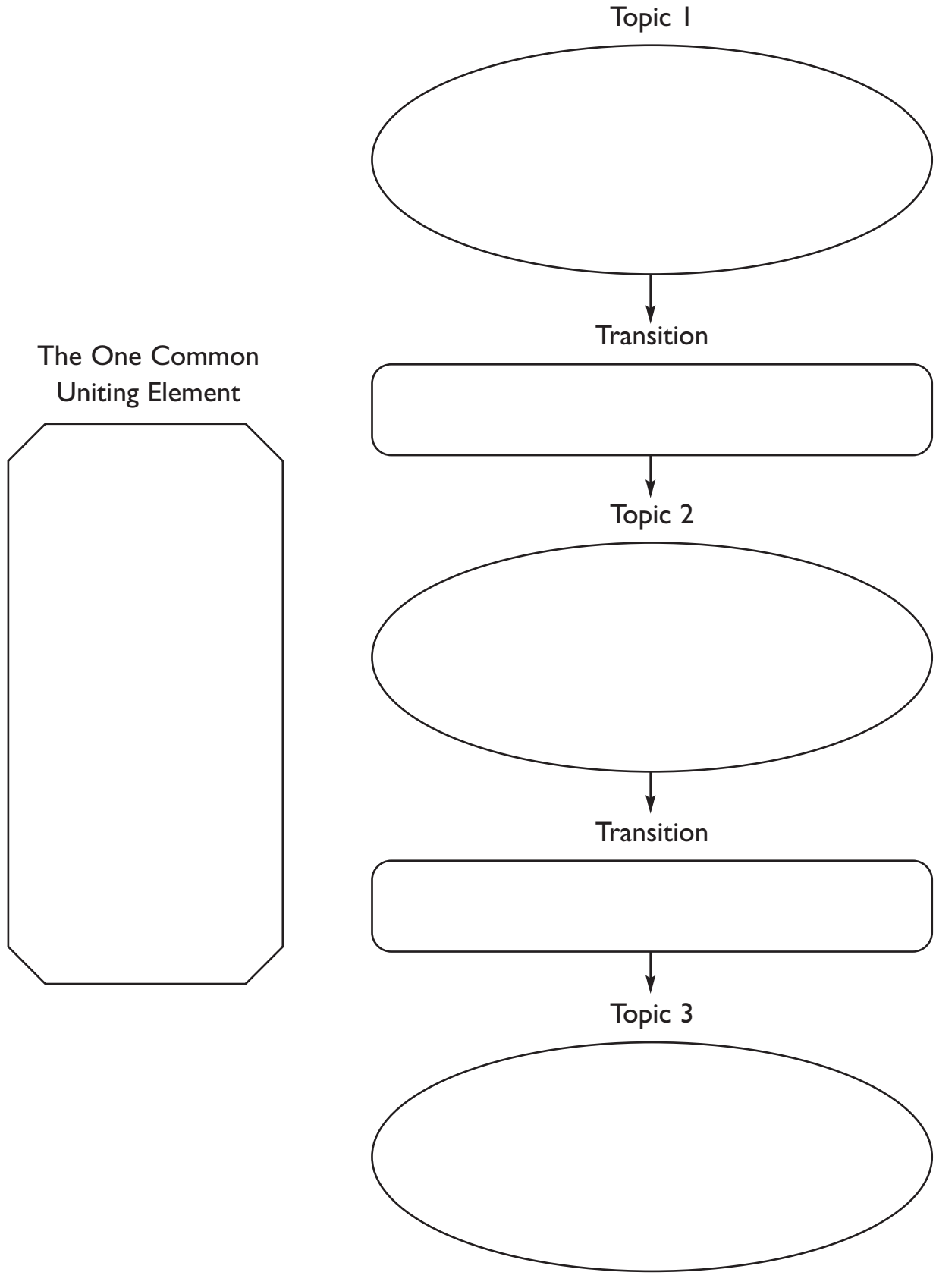
_____

_____

_____



Creating Connections



Creating First Impressions: Essay Introductions

Using sentence strips is an effective and creative way for students to actively construct introductory paragraphs for an essay. By deciding which sentences stay, which go, and in what order they need to be arranged, students must synthesize their knowledge of how to write a strong essay introduction.

Writing Skills

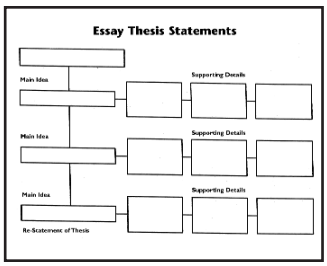
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

1. Cut the lighthearted sentences of Pondering Pizza into strips and place them into envelopes. There should be one set of sentence strips for every two students. (Store these envelope sets. The sentences strips can be used year after year.)
2. Preface this activity with a review of Exposition: The Keyhole (Baker) on p. 196, emphasizing the movement from general lead statement, through key supporting points, to specific thesis statement.
3. Have students reassemble the sentence strips to create the most effective introductory paragraph possible. (Note that the strips are alphabetized to make a discussion of 'the ideal introduction' easier once the activity is finished.)
4. By copying the sentence strips onto an overhead and cutting them up, students can manipulate the strips on a screen so all can see while talking through the thought process they went through to create their introduction.

Variations/Extensions

- In the envelope, include the sentences on the bottom of Pondering Pizza sheet that are irrelevant to an effective introduction. Decide whether you wish to tell the class that there are irrelevant sentences in this mix, or if you would rather they deduce this through the process of composing their introduction.
- Add a competitive aspect to the activity by challenging the students to be the first pair finished with the most effective order. (Suggested order: L, A, M, B, J, E, G, K, F, N, and D. Irrelevant: H, C, and I).
- This activity can easily be done in a computer lab, with students editing their introduction using cut and paste techniques.
- This activity could also be used to teach paragraph writing, with the thesis statement now becoming the opening topic sentence.



Pondering Pizza

Directions: Cut these lighthearted sentences into strips and have students reassemble them to create the **most effective introductory paragraph.**

L. Is there anyone who doesn't like to eat a warm, gooey slice of pizza?

A. Everyone has a favourite topping combination, ranging from the popular pepperoni and mushroom to the more unusual goat cheese and pine nuts.

M. In particular, ham and pineapple pizza is extremely popular in North America.

B. Yet

J. Ham and pineapple pizza is not truly pizza in the Italian sense of the word.

E. The yellow pineapples clash with the reddish pink tones of the ham.

G. The sweet pineapple doesn't mix well with the savoury tomato sauce.

K. Finally

F. The juices from the fruit can make the crust too soggy.

N. Clearly

D. Ham and pineapple pizza is disgusting and should be abolished.

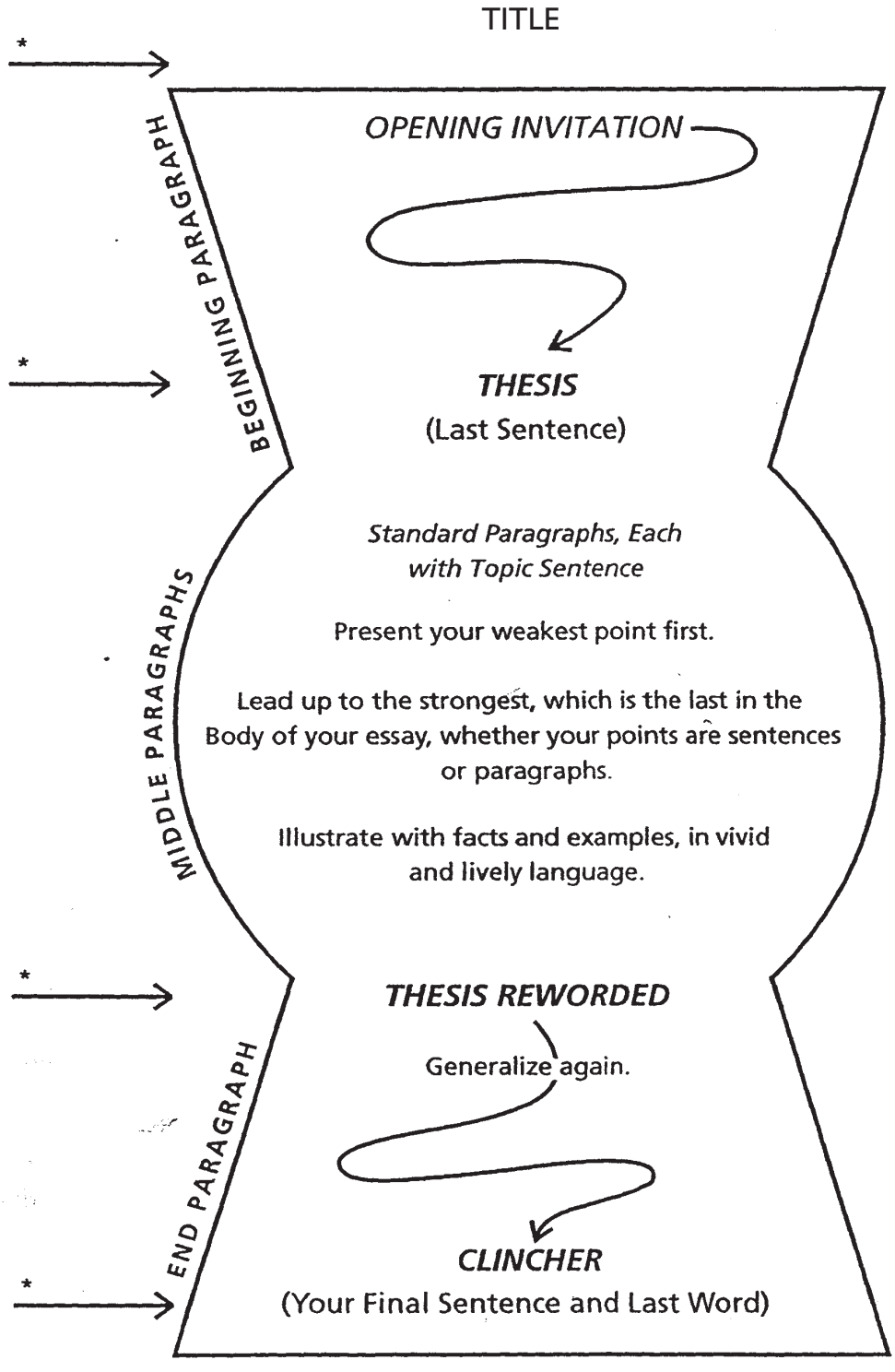
Include these sentences to add challenge to the activity, even though they're irrelevant to an effective introduction.

H. Chocolate cake is another favourite food of people around the world.

C. Deep dish crusts make better pizza.

I. Four billion, two hundred slices were eaten last year.

Exposition: The Keyhole



* Focal Points

Expository or Persuasive Essay Outline

An essay is a reflection of an engaged intellect.

Name: _____ Striking Essay Title: _____

INTRODUCTION (Beginning Paragraph)

Compelling lead statement: _____

_____

THREE main points you will use in the body of your essay to support your thesis (write out in full):

1. _____

   _____

2. _____

   _____

3. _____

   _____

Your THESIS statement (write out in full):

_____

_____

- is your title and opening lead statement engaging and not predictable?
- have you used the appropriate punctuation for the title of your literary work and mentioned the author's name?
- does your thesis statement come at the end of your introductory paragraph?
- is your thesis statement debatable/ 'meaty'?
- does your introductory paragraph go from general to specific in structure (like an inverted triangle)?

BODY PARAGRAPH (First Middle Paragraph)

Topic Sentence (write out in full): _____

_____

Evidence (usually textual proof) to support your topic sentence (write out in point form):

1. _____

   _____

2. _____

   _____

3. _____

   _____

Quotation(s) from text to support your topic sentence (if required):

_____

_____

Transitional word or phrase: _____

- are your topic sentences debatable (not a fact, question, or quotation)?
- if applicable, are your quotations smoothly integrated into your own sentences and have you referenced your source?
- is your choice of vocabulary sophisticated, vivid, and engaging?
- In your body paragraphs, do you present your weakest points first and build up to your strongest points (this is whether your points are sentences or paragraphs)?
- do you support your topic sentences with facts, examples, anecdotes, and opinions?
- do you support your topic sentences with facts, examples, anecdotes, and opinions?
- do you use transition words or phrases to move your reader from one paragraph to another?

Expository or Persuasive Essay Outline

BODY PARAGRAPH (Another Middle Paragraph)

Topic Sentence (write out in full): _____

_____

Evidence (usually textual proof) to support your topic sentence (write out in point form):

1. _____

   _____

2. _____

   _____

3. _____

   _____

Quotation(s) from text to support your topic sentence (if required): _____

_____

Transitional word or phrase: _____

BODY PARAGRAPH (Another Middle Paragraph)

Topic Sentence (write out in full): _____

_____

Evidence (usually textual proof) to support your topic sentence (write out in point form):

1. _____

   _____

2. _____

   _____

3. _____

   _____

Quotation(s) from text to support your topic sentence (if required): _____

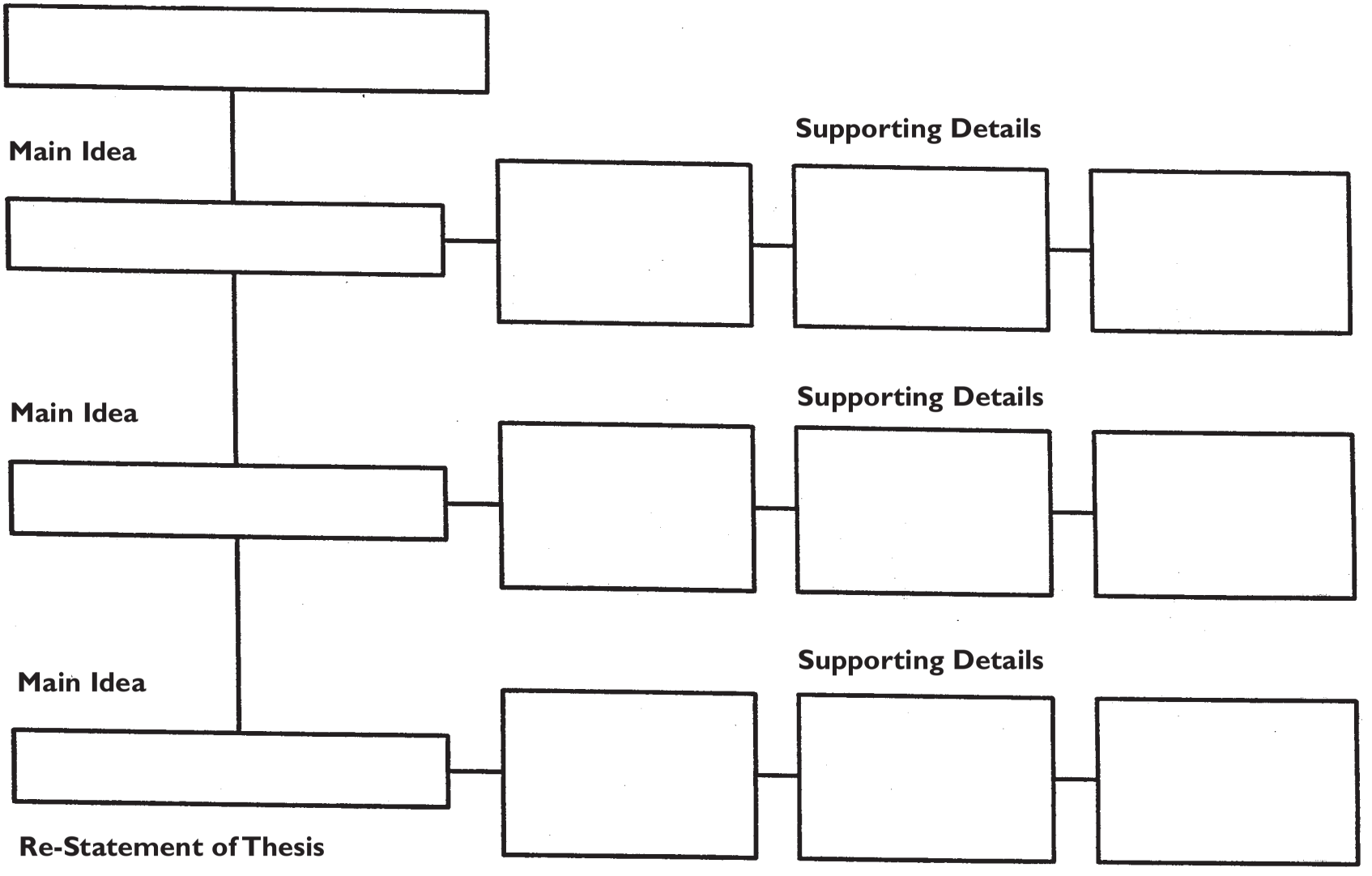
_____

Transitional word or phrase: _____

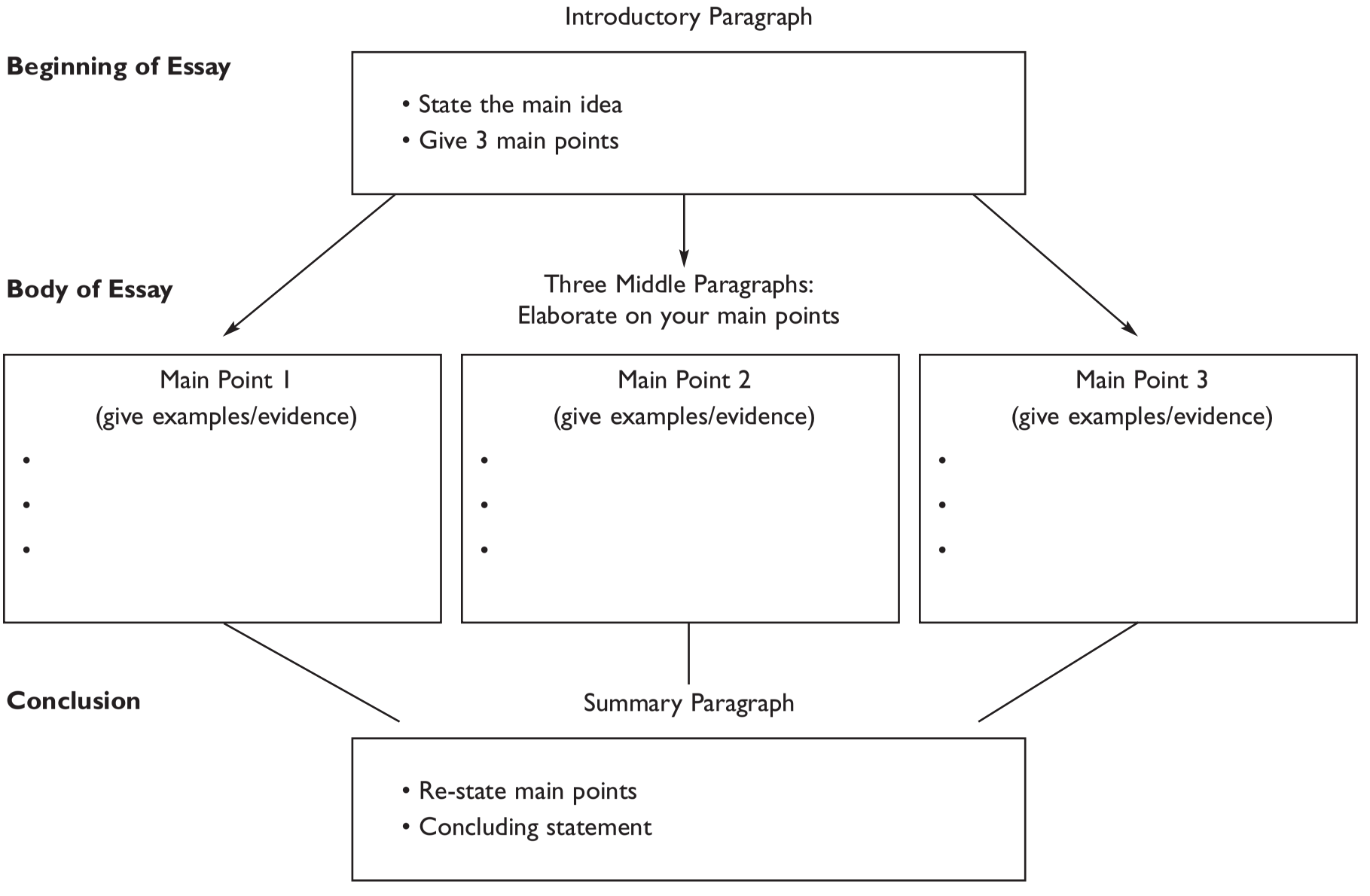
Expository or Persuasive Essay Outline

CONCLUSION (End Paragraph) Restate THESIS in a new and original way (write out in full): _____ _____ _____ _____ Statement of relevance/significance: _____ _____ _____ _____ A memorable 'zinger' of a concluding sentence: _____ _____ _____ _____	• do you restate your thesis in a new or original way in your conclusion? • have you made sure that you've introduced no new ideas/ support in your conclusion? • have you included a statement of relevance that leaves the reader thinking of any connections between your thesis statement and the world beyond your essay? • have you tied your key ideas together and drawn a final conclusion? • do you leave your reader with a lasting image in your concluding sentence?

Essay Thesis Statements



Five-Paragraph Essay Outline 1



Five-Paragraph Essay Outline 2

Paragraph 1: Introduction

'Hook' to catch the reader's interest: _____

_____

General topic: _____

_____

Thesis statement: _____

_____

Paragraph 2

Transition word/phrase: _____

Topic sentence: _____

First supporting detail or example: _____

Second supporting detail or example: _____

Third supporting detail or example: _____

Concluding sentence: _____

_____

Paragraph 3

Transition word/phrase: _____

Topic sentence: _____

First supporting detail or example: _____

Second supporting detail or example: _____

Third supporting detail or example: _____

Concluding sentence: _____

_____

Paragraph 4

Transition word/phrase: _____

Topic sentence: _____

First supporting detail or example: _____

Second supporting detail or example: _____

Third supporting detail or example: _____

Concluding sentence: _____

_____

Paragraph 5: Conclusion

Summary Statement: _____

_____

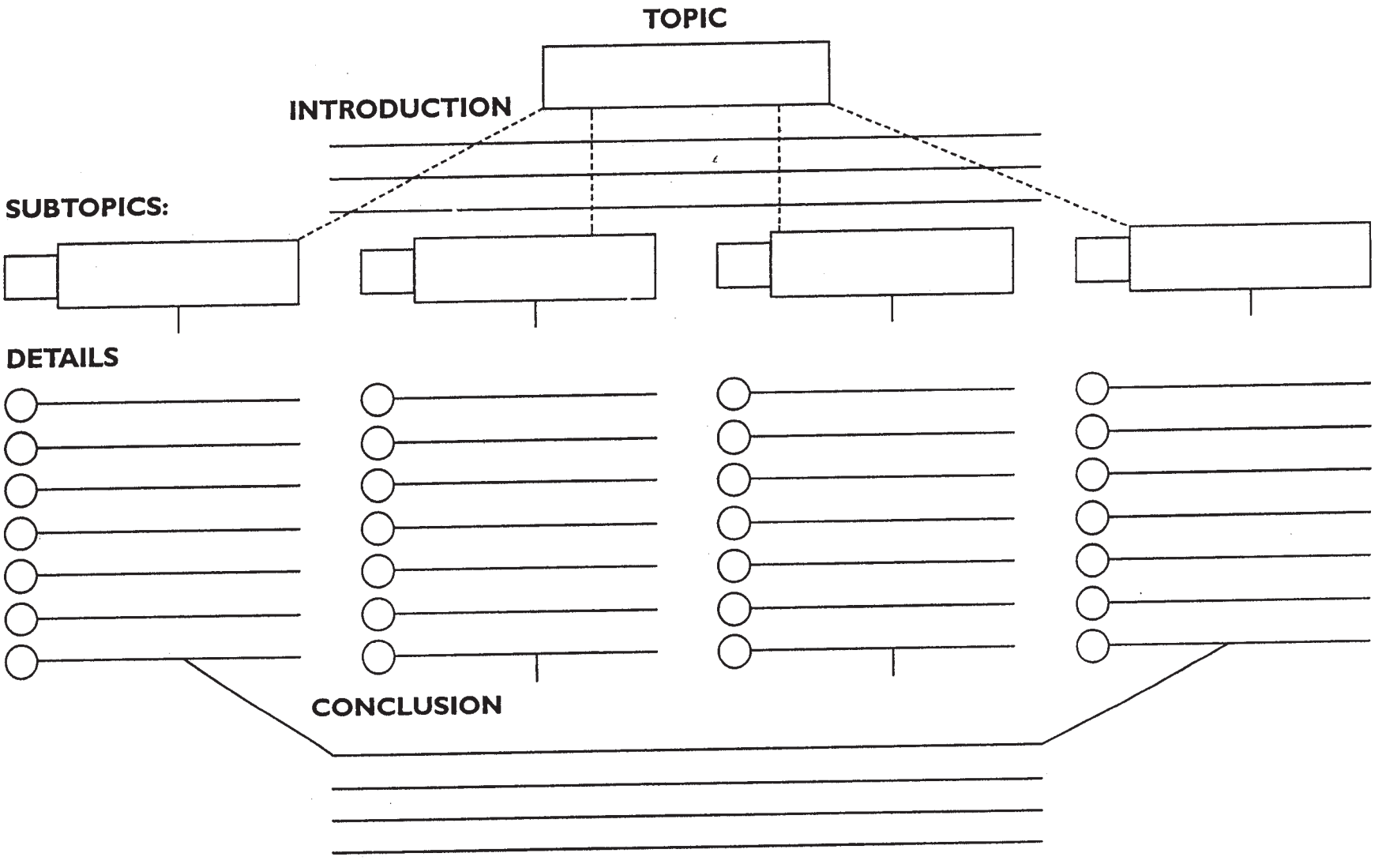
Restate main points of the essay: _____

_____

Topic extension or future prediction: _____

_____

Idea Diagram



Research Report (using Research Quest)

A research report presents research findings from outside sources rather than from a person's own knowledge or experience. The purpose of research reports is to help the reader understand more about a particular topic by presenting or summarizing/synthesizing factual information and experts' opinions in a clear, concise manner. Engineers, scientists, and managers write research reports to communicate the results of research, field work, and other activities. With research reports, it is important to consider clarity, organization, and content.

Writers of research reports must gather information from a number of reliable sources. The challenge for students is not how to obtain information, but how to select from, and organize the large amounts of information available. The accessibility of information has created a greater need for critical thinking skills; the student is responsible for evaluating the credibility, accuracy and reasonableness of information sources. "Students need to know how to develop research questions, plan, find and select information, and to work with the information by interpreting, recording and organizing it to construct new meanings" (BC Ministry of Education, 2003).

The Research Quest model, developed by the BC Teacher-librarians' Association is a guideline for integrating information literacy skills and knowledge into the research process. For more information about the Research Quest framework, please see ***http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/technology/documents/resquest.pdf***

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. As students crave writing assignments that are relevant and meaningful, ensure that there is an element of choice with this lesson. Allow students to decide which topic to research. If suggestions are necessary, consider the following possibilities:

   - The history of…
   - A person you admire
   - An occupation that interests you
   - An invention or an inventor
   - A disease that affects someone you know
   - A topic related to a current event
   - A place you would like to visit
   - The life of a favourite author

(cont'd)

Research Report (using Research Quest) (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

2. Ask students to make a T-chart with the following headings: What do I already know? What do I want to know? Ask them to fill in the two columns. The second column should be a list of questions that require answers. In this way, students can begin to focus their research question. At this stage they should browse through a wide variety of print materials (books, journals, magazines, newspaper, encylopedias, etc.) and multi-media sources (CD-ROMs, the Internet, film, television, etc.) to get a better sense of the topic. They may come up with further questions that will guide their search. It is also appropriate to discuss ideas with the teacher of peers. This stage of the research quest is about determining the critical questions, the purpose of the report and the intended audience.
3. Once a research topic and focus statement has been determined, students should **find and filter** their information sources. For online information, review the following guiding questions that will help students to identify suitable, accurate and credible resources:

    - In which domain is the site listed? Educational sites (.edu), government sites (.gov), and the organizational sites (.org) usually contain more authoritative information.
    - Who is the author? What authority or special knowledge does the author have?
    - Is a bibliography included? Are there links to other reliable sources?
    - Is the site factual, or does the site indicate bias or slant?
    - How long ago was the site produced? When was the site last revised?
    - Is the discussion of the topic comprehensive? Are supporting materials given? Are there links to other resources on the topic?

    Students may find that their research question needs revision once they have located more appropriate, filtered information.
4. Once the students have gathered their most suitable sources of information, they must **work with the information.** Students should read, view, listen, interpret, record and organize the information they have found. At this stage, it is important for students to look for patterns and connections within the collected information. They will need to also document their sources both within the report (as footnotes or in-text citations) and at the end of the report (in a bibliography), so provide explicit instruction as well as models of the format of documentation required. Remind students to keep track of the sources they will need to cite.

(cont'd)

Research Report (using Research Quest) (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

5. When students are ready to write, model the structure of a research report by providing effective samples. (See the section on Writing Paragraphs and Essays for further activities). Struggling writers may benefit from the teacher modelling the organizing of information, the integration of quotes (see Using Quotations activity on p. 170 for more practice) and possibly even the writing of a part of the report.
6. For a clear understanding of expectations, collaberatively discuss and develop the **criteria** for an effective research paper.
7. As students work to **communicate** their ideas, review the structure of research reports which typically:
   - begin with a "catchy" introduction with a clear thesis statement
   - are written in the third person and in present tense
   - contain paragraphs with topic sentences followed by details that support the topic sentence
   - documents both the primary and secondary sources of information used by the author
   - concludes with a summary of important points or restates the main idea

8. Encourage students to share their draft copy with a peer for feedback prior to completing a final copy. Time should be provided for students to review, revise, organize and edit with a partner or small group. Writing conferences may be necessary for students who require further support.
9. Once students have completed their final draft, have reviewed the criteria for an effective research report, and have handed it in for evaluation, invite students to **reflect** on the research process:
   - What did they learn about the topic they chose?
   - What worked/didn't work?
   - What would they do differently next time?
   - What did they learn about research?

Variations/Extensions

- Offer multi-media options so students can communicate the information they have researched with PowerPoint, slide shows, wikis, etc.
- If students are to complete this research report with a partner, they will find the free web-based Google Docs useful. Students can share and collaborate on a given writing project online and in real time.

Seven Snappy Starters

Excellent paragraphs and essays capture a reader's attention from the very first line by using engaging and exciting devices. "Tricks" like these can turn ordinary paragraphs and essays into writing that sounds confident and convincing. While snappy starters centre on the topic of writing, they should not be confused with the thesis or argument of the paragraph or essay.

Writing Skills

3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. Provide students with the Snappy Starters information sheet on the following page.
2. Go over the example in which a sample paragraph topic is given seven alternate ways of beginning.
3. Have students pick one of the alternate topics and create 3 or 4 possible snappy starters for a paragraph about that topic.
4. Have students write a full paragraph on one of the given topics.

Variations/Extensions

- This activity can also be used at the editing stage after a paragraph on any topic has been written. This step can be incorporated into a checklist for self or peer assessment, and is the first step of the Personal Style Inventory checklist on p. 104.
- Combine this activity with the paragraph writing exercises (see p. 178/180) or the essay writing activity (see p. 194).

Seven Snappy Starters

Seven Snappy Starters

Excellent paragraphs and essays capture a reader's attention from the very first line by using engaging and thought-provoking ideas.

Here are some exciting ways of beginning a paragraph or essay:

1. Start with a question.
2. Start by considering the opposite point of view.
3. Start with a fact or statistic.
4. Start with a definition important to your topic.
5. Start with a quotation.
6. Start with an analogy.
7. Start with a brief narrative or anecdote.

Sample topic: *Exercise is an important part of our lives.*

Now, some examples of snappy starters for the topic:

1. Question:
   Is exercise the main component of being healthy?
2. Considering the opposing point of view:
   While some people might say that eating well is essential to a healthy lifestyle, exercise is the most important component.
3. Fact or Statistic:
   In North America today, the vast majority of adults are not physically active.
4. Definition:
   Exercise is pushing your body to do what it normally would not.
5. Quotation:
   My grandfather used to say, "A healthy body will make a healthy mind."
6. Analogy:
   Exercise is an activity that is just as essential to well-being as thinking.
7. Narrative or anecdote:
   Right from kindergarten, we learn the importance of exercise in our lives.

Now create snappy starters of your own for one of the following possible topics:

1. Every country needs an army to defend itself.
2. Our society does not take care of the environment.
3. Violent TV shows make people violent in life.

Transition Words

Transition words perform several critical functions. They help the reader move from one key idea to the next and they show relationships between main ideas and events. Ultimately, they create a sense of flow.

Sequence

After	Earlier	Finally	At least
At first	At the beginning	Later	As soon as
Initially	At once	Next	Then during
Then	After	Before	
Proceeding	Immediately	Following	

Compare/Contrast

However	Likewise	As well as	Otherwise
In contrast	Although	Besides	Neither
In spite of	Whereas	Also	Neither….nor
On the contrary	Yet	Similarly	Just as surely
Nevertheless	Opposite to	Instead	
Differences	Differences	On the other hand	
In addition	In common	In spite of	

Spatial/Location

Nearby	Under	Close by	Next to
Behind	Inside	Beside	Opposite
In front of	Outside	Over	Around
Above	Among	To the side of	On top of
In between	At the center of	Across	

Cause/Effect

Because	On account of	So	In order to
Consequently	As a result of	Accordingly	Since
Thus	Therefore	As long as	So that
For that reason	Hence	If…then	Therefore

(cont'd)

Transition Words (cont'd)

Words to Show Example

For instance	To illustrate	For example	Specifically
Of course	After all	In fact	
To demonstrate	In this case	In addition	

Words to Show Equal Ideas

Additionally	Besides	Likewise
Also	In addition to	Moreover
As well as	In like manner	Similarly

Words that show certainty

Certainly	Despite the fact that	Without a doubt	In fact
Indeed	Yet	Clearly	It is clear that
Obviously	Undoubtedly	Without question	

Words used in conclusion

As stated earlier	Thus	Consequently	To conclude/
Finally	To summarize	In other words	summarize
Therefore	As we have seen	On the whole	
In conclusion	To sum up	Therefore	

Time

Soon	Before	Quickly	Since
Not long after	Until	At this point	Occasionally
At length	At present	A few minutes later	Henceforth
At last	Immediately	Formerly	Then
Finally	Instantly	Yesterday	Meanwhile
Some time ago	At this instant	Later in the day	Thereupon
Later	Suddenly	Since then	In the meantime
Afterwards	Now	When	Sometimes
Presently	Without delay	Whenever	In a moment
From this time on	In the first place	Next	Shortly
From time to time	Forthwith	As	Whereupon
After	Straightaway	Once	

Writing Prompts for Expository/Persuasive

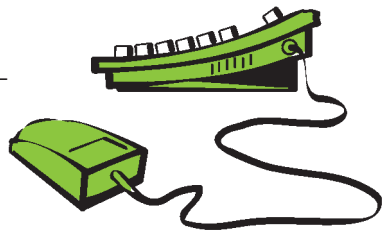
While many adolescent learners prefer writing on topics of their own choice, others will benefit from a choice of writing prompts that can help them get started.

Prompts for writing exposition

1. Write a letter to the prime minister, the richest person in the world or a military personnel on tour of duty. Write letters of complaint, thank, compliment or concern.
2. Write a TV commercial or magazine ad.
3. Compose a greeting card of celebration or sympathy.
4. You are one of a dozen people stranded on a desert island that can only support six people. Write an explanation of why you should stay.
5. Write the directions to making the perfect sandwich.
6. Write about life on another planet.
7. Define love, evil, hope or glory.
8. Write an account of a school event, e.g. dance, sports championship, play.
9. Write a letter to citizens of the future that could be included in a time capsule.
10. Write a ten minute speech to the world.
11. The school board has the money to spend on a new cafeteria or to install a new elevator. What should be done?
12. Pretend that a friend is angry with you. You can write a note that is limited to 100 words. What would the words be?
13. Think about an argument that you lost. Rewrite the argument so that you won.
14. Write a letter to a character in your favourite movie.
15. Write all the ways you can say "I love you".

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Writer's Notes



Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Persuasive Writing

Drafting

PERSUASIVE WRITING

Activity Page

Different Types of Theses 215
- Elements of Persuasive Writing. 216

Moving from Topic to Thesis 217
- Moving from Topic to Thesis 218

Persuasive Writing Techniques 219

Persuasive Flow. 221

Pitching Punctuation: Persuasive Writing Techniques. 222
- Pitching Punctuation: Persuasive Writing Techniques – Five Easy Steps 223
- Persuasion Planner 224
- Seeing Both Sides: Persuasive Paragraph Frame. 225
- Seeing Both Sides: Planning Guide 226
- Writing Prompts for Persuasive Writing 227

Rock and Roll Business Letter. 229
- Rock and Roll Business Letter 230

- Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids included

Different Types of Theses

The thesis is the main idea, statement, or insight in a piece of writing; it is more than just a guiding topic in the sense that it takes a specific angle, argument, or point of view on a subject. For many students the development of a proficient thesis is a challenging task, especially at the higher levels of English when interpretation of challenging texts is often an involved undertaking in itself.

This activity shows the range of arguments that a thesis can take, and asks students to rank the depth and specificity of the argument being presented.

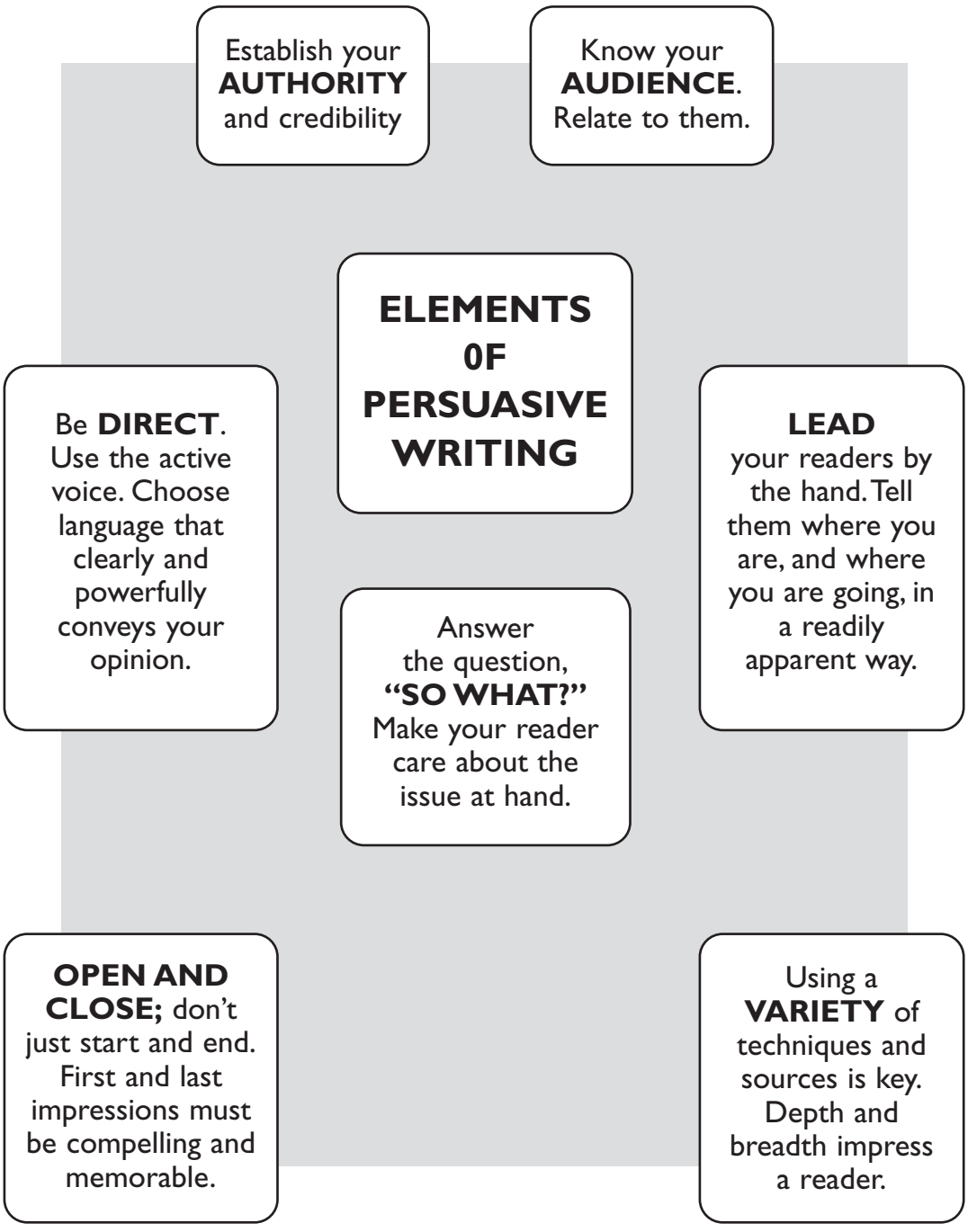
Writing Skills

5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.

Teaching the Activity

1. As an example, have students rank the following arguments in terms of level of insight:
   - The poem "Second Coming" contains allusion.
   - Winston Smith changes from a bitter person to a caring partner, and finally ends as a reformed political prisoner.
   - Shakespeare shows the myriad emotions of Hamlet's adolescence as he progresses through feigned madness, crazed humour, and finally self-regret.
2. Illustrate that there are three categories of theses here:
   - The first is a static or simple thesis, which focusses on one literary element.
   - The second is an example of a dynamic thesis, which documents change in a literary work.
   - The third is an example of an integrated thesis, which explains the interaction between the parts, focusses on theme, and/or reveals the author's purpose. It is the highest level of argument.
3. Next, give students the following theses to categorize according to the three categories:
   - Macbeth's descent into madness occurs at a much later point in the play than his wife's, but it is much more gradual decline as he remains self-deceptive until the end.
   - *Lord of the Flies* features many character types.
   - In *The Outsiders,* Pony comes to realize that things are tough all over and that family is the bond that holds him together.
4. Finally, students can take simple theses and develop them into dynamic or integrated ones. These theses could be created for whichever work of literature is being studied. The following questions are useful in narrowing and strengthening these arguments: Why is the character portrayed in this way? Why do the images change? How does character reveal the theme? Does setting complement the theme?

Elements of Persuasive Writing



Moving from Topic to Thesis

This activity helps students to narrow a writing topic down into a specific argument or thesis. For many students, this is a critical step: asking the appropriate questions about the topic can help in identifying a specific opinion suitable for writing.

Writing Skills

5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.

Teaching the Activity

1. To begin this activity, it is often useful to illustrate for students the difference between a topic and a thesis, and to talk about the way that excellent writing does not just recap or summarize information, but provides unique insights and observations about the work in question.
2. Provide students with the Moving from a Topic to a Thesis graphic organizer, located on the following page and review the example provided.
3. Have students pick another topic from a selected list.
4. Students then work towards narrowing the topic into a workable thesis.

Other examples of topics that could be narrowed down into theses:

- Environmental destruction
- Maturity
- Friends
- Community

Variations/Extensions

- After a thesis has been identified, students can use the paragraph or planning outlines to being pre-writing.
- Refer to Funnelling Your Writing on p. 64 for further practice in focussing a topic or thesis.

Moving from Topic to Thesis

EXAMPLE:

Moving from Topic to Thesis

EXAMPLE:

General	The role of technology in our lives
	Ask an interesting question about the topic
Narrowing	Does technology play a positive or negative role in our lives?
	Choose one side of the question
More Specific	Technology has a negative impact on our lives.
	Think about why this is
Thesis	Technology has a negative impact on our lives because we no longer have to interact with other people.

General	Topic: _____
	Ask an interesting question about the topic
Narrowing	_____
	_____?
	Choose one side of the question
More Specific	_____
	_____
	Think about why this is
Thesis	_____
	_____

Persuasive Writing Techniques

1. **Talking to the Heart:** Writers appeal to a reader's feelings – often those of fear, doubt, guilt or pleasure – to influence their audience.

2. **Word Choice (Diction):** Writers support their arguments by choosing words which will influence their reader's perception of the issue. A company needs to "downsize to maximize shareholder profit." This sounds more persuasive than "fire people in order to save money."

3. **Rhetorical Questions:** Writers ask a question where they do not expect an answer. They imply that this answer is obvious, and that the reader must agree with the writer's assumptions. "Would you allow your frail grandmother to stay in an unlicensed care facility?"

4. **Repetition:** When used judicially, repetition leaves a lasting impression. Martin Luther King and Winston Churchill were masters of this technique. Words, phrases, or entire sentences may be repeated.

5. **Analogy/Simile/Metaphor:** Persuasive writers know the power of an apt comparison. Strong writers often use figures of speech or comparisons (simile, metaphor, analogy) for desired emphasis. A comparison can convey a great deal of information in a short space of time because of the effects of connotative language.

6. **Appeal to Authority/Testimonial:** Writers may 'name drop' an important event or person into their work to lend importance or credibility to their argument. This follows the line of reasoning that "if so-and-so said it or thought it, it must be true."

7. **Hyperbole:** Almost all persuasive writers feel the need to slip in a hyperbole or two into their writing. This is one of the more honoured persuasive techniques. It involves completely overstating and exaggerating your point for effect: "Everywhere you go, people say that Canadians are the most polite people in the world."

8. **Irony:** Irony is present if the writer's words contain more than one meaning. This may be in the form of sarcasm, gentle irony, or a pun (play on words). It can be used to add humour or to emphasize an implied meaning under the surface. The writer's "voice" becomes important here.

(cont'd)

Persuasive Writing Techniques (cont'd)

9. **Bandwagon:** Though many readers might say they want to be seen as unique, people often are persuaded to feel, think, or act a certain way if they believe that many others are feeling, thinking, or acting the same way. "If others are doing it, it must be right."

10. **Positively Vague:** Writers can gloss over negative ideas by focussing on vague positives. Here, writers speak in glowing, vague terms about their subject, yet offer little specific evidence to support it. They completely avoid dealing with competing arguments.

11. **Name Calling:** Writers deliberately set out to denigrate those who disagree with them, and in doing so, try to make themselves look better.

12. **Plain Folk/Let's Get Real:** In this persuasive technique, writers try to suggest they're just 'down home folk' telling you a simple truth. They imply that if you disagree with them, you must think you are better than everyone else.

13. **Card Stacking:** By definition, persuasive writing largely tells only one side of the story. Here, writers generally tell the facts for one side only.

Persuasive Flow

This activity guides students in constructing a coherent piece of persuasive writing through the use of key persuasive transition words. In effect, this exercise also helps students to see the multifaceted nature of many issues, and to realize that a good piece of persuasion takes into consideration others' points of view and is not just a one-sided stance.

Writing Skills

4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

1. To illustrate the need for effective persuasion, ask students to brainstorm the best ways to ask for the use of the family car. Inevitably, students will say that parents respond better to reasoned and balanced arguments than to whiny and emotional pleading! Explain that persuasive writing works the same way: effective persuasion is well-balanced, thoughtful, and considers other sides of the issues.
2. In partners or individually, students then select one of the following topics and respond to the prompts that follow.
3. At the end, students can then share their persuasive arguments and rate the responses on the effectiveness and balance of the persuasion.

Topics: Choose one of the following persuasive topics and fill in the blanks. It is important to be as specific as possible.

1. The _____ are the best sports team right now because they _____.
2. If I could spend a single day with one person, I would spend it with _____ because _____.
3. Graduating from high school is important because _____
4. My most important personality or strength is _____.
5. The best movie I have seen is _____ because _____.
6. Schools should/should not adopt dress codes because _____.

Teacher Tip:

- Please refer to the Transition Words list on p. 209.

Pitching Punctuation: Persuasive Writing Techniques

Words are power and persuasion is influence. Mastering the art of persuasion gives students power, both within and outside the classroom. In this activity, students use persuasive writing techniques to sell a piece of punctuation to the class. The exercise becomes an effective word challenge activity, while teaching students that subtlety matters when winning an audience to their side. Because imagination is required in this activity, these oral commercials often lend themselves to humour.

Writing Skills

3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

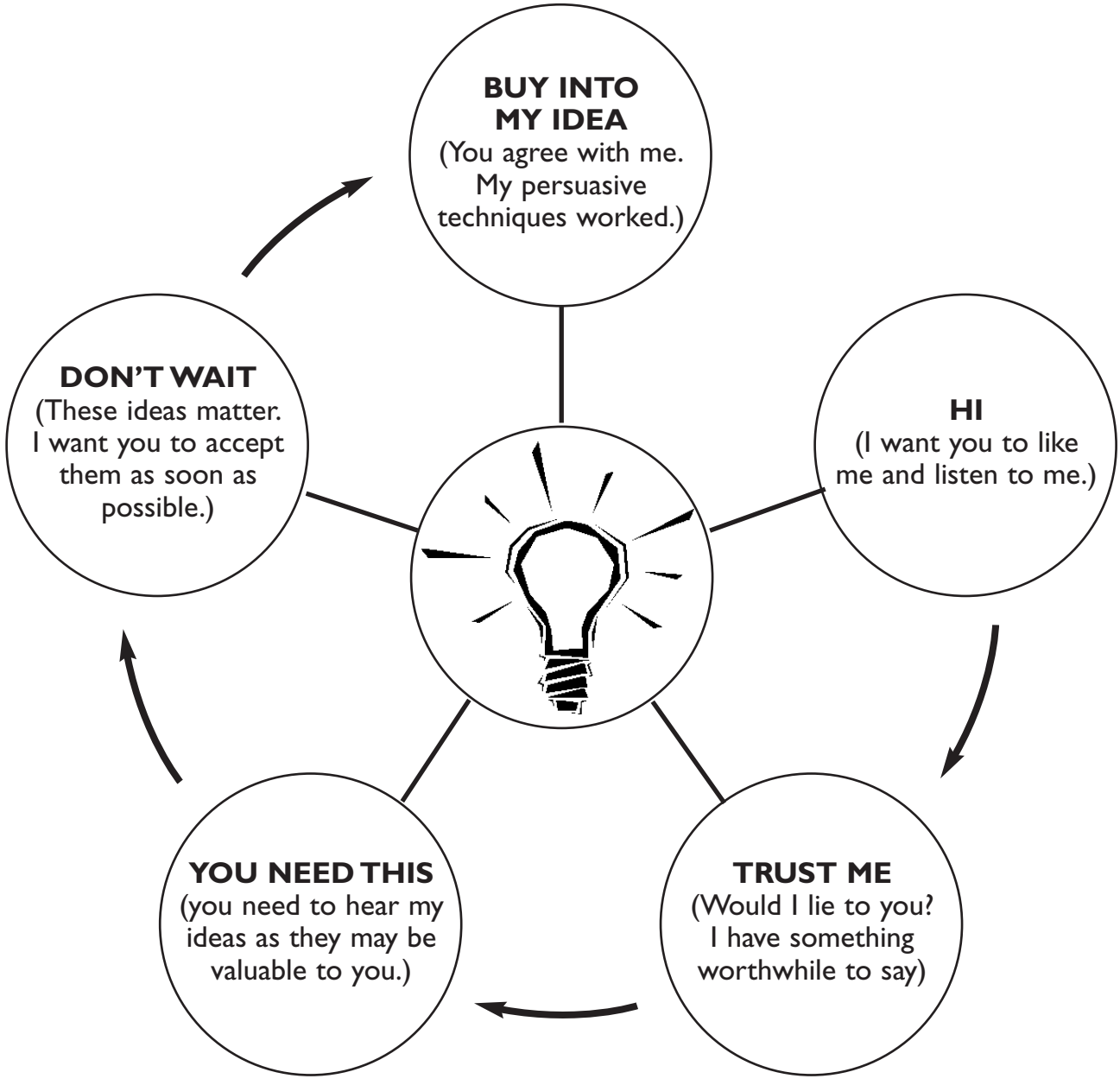
1. Working in pairs, students choose a punctuation mark that they will orally sell to their audience in 30 seconds (a commercial) to 2 minutes (an infomercial). The teacher may wish to attach a personality to these punctuation marks to get the students thinking: e.g. "Semi-colons are sexy. A dash has flash. Colons are domineering."
2. Briefly, students review the rules of use for their punctuation mark.
3. Next, distribute the collection of the most powerful Persuasive Writing Techniques used by writers on p. 219.
4. As a class, go over the key techniques used in persuasive writing, soliciting examples from the class of where they've seen these techniques used currently (students will likely draw their examples heavily from the world of TV and advertising).
5. Tell students that they must use at least five persuasive techniques in their commercials. After each presentation or at the end of all, discuss which techniques were used most frequently, most memorably, and most persuasively.
6. This activity leads naturally into the Persuasive Essay. By practicing the use of persuasive writing in a light-hearted context, students are often more confident in bringing these techniques to a more literary persuasive essay.
7. See p. 227 for further writing prompts for persuasive writing.

Variations/Extensions

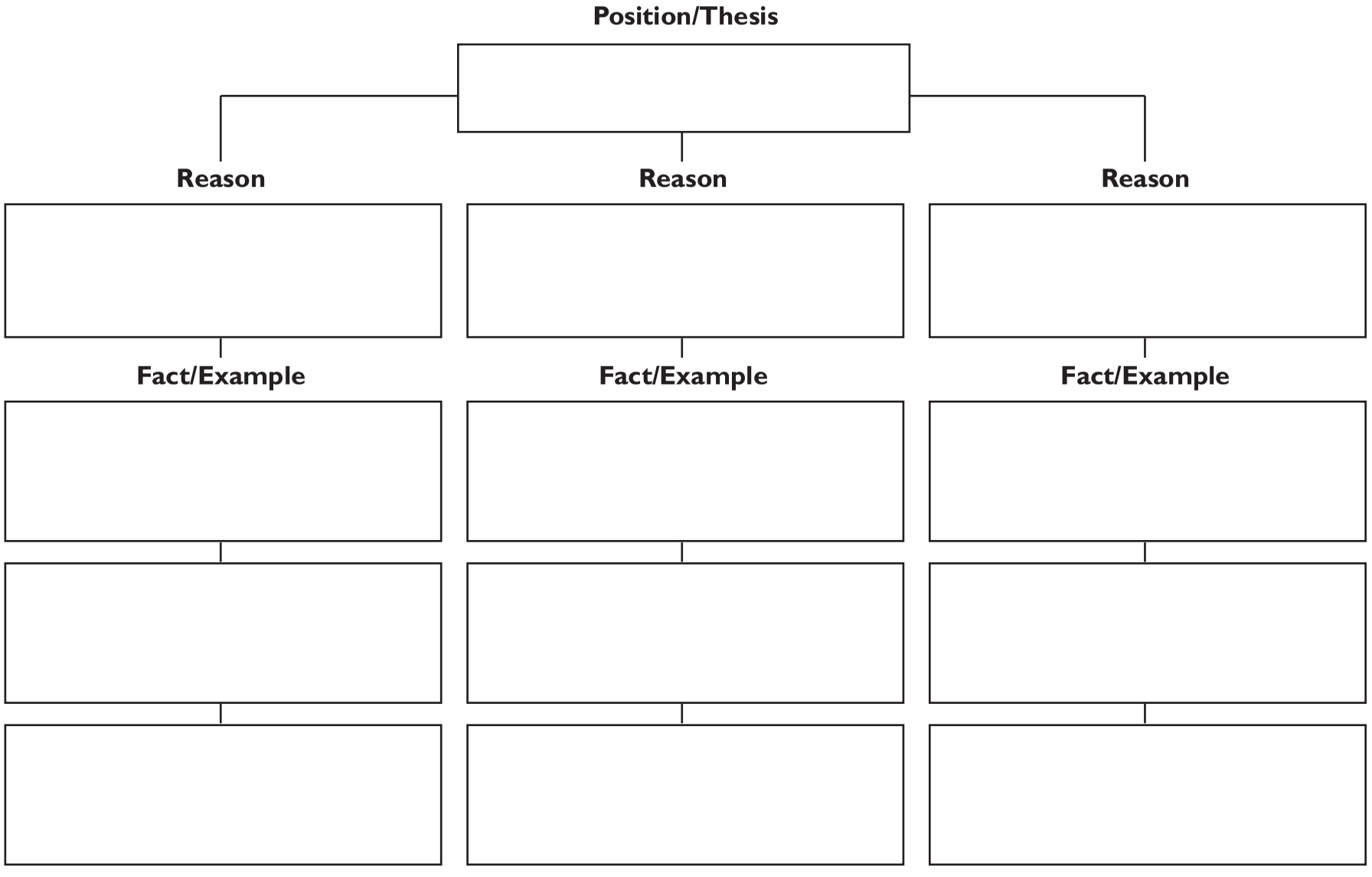
- Persuasive techniques could also be used to sell other things:
  - most useful household item (toaster, bobby pin), best colour (noble purple, mellow yellow), best word, most useless piece of clothing, etc.
- See the following persuasive writing organizers, planners, and writing prompts for further use in persuasive writing instruction.

Pitching Punctuation: Persuasive Writing Techniques

PERSUADING YOUR READER IN FIVE EASY STEPS



Persuasion Planner



Seeing Both Sides
Persuasive Paragraph Frame

Opinion

Reason 1

Examples

Reason 2

Examples

Reason 3

Examples

Conclusion

Seeing Both Sides Planning Guide

'Yes' Evidence		'No' Evidence
	Question	
	Decision	

Writing Prompts for Persuasive Writing

1. **School Dances**
   There has been a problem in local schools with discipline at social events. Your school board has decided to institute a no-dance policy in order to cut down on these problems, based on the positive examples that they have seen with other school districts. What is your position on this issue?

2. **Locker Searches/Personal Searches**
   The principal at your school has instituted random locker and backpack/bookbag searches to check for drugs, knives, and other suspect items. Anyone caught with these items will be immediately suspended. The principal argues that the random searches will not only guard against illegal objects at school but also will help students feel safer. What is your position on this issue?

3. **Litter**
   A litter problem has developed on your school's campus. Students are throwing trash on the ground, leaving empty soda cans and bottles outside on benches, and dropping napkins and other trash on the cafeteria floor rather than carrying them to the trash can. Your principal has asked students to take more care, but the litter problem persists. The principal has reacted by cancelling all after-school activities until the problem is taken care of. What is your position on this issue?

4. **New Highway Exit**
   The city has created a plan to add a second highway exit to help shoppers access a busy shopping mall. The only problem is that the new exit will move the access road 500 yards closer to a nearby elementary school. Teachers and parents at the school complain that moving the road closer will increase noise at the school and provide unnecessary distractions. The municipal planners have included privacy fences to help cut down on the problems, but the protesters are unsatisfied. What is your position on this issue?

5. **Computers in the Classroom**
   As part of a new technology initiative, your local school district is increasing the number of computers in every school. The district plan provides for two computers in every classroom. Teachers at your school are lobbying instead to place all the computers together, creating two computer-based classrooms so that all students in a class can work at the computers together, rather than only one or two students at a time. The district is worried about the additional cost of creating and maintaining these special classrooms and is concerned about how access to the classrooms can be provided fairly and efficiently. What is your position on this issue?

(cont'd)

Writing Prompts for Persuasive Writing (cont'd)

6. Online Schools

The Ministry of Education has provided extra funding for a provincial e-school. All the classes will take place on the Internet, using email, online chat, and the world wide web. The students taking classes at this new online school will never meet each other face-to-face. They will only interact online with each other and with their teachers. The Ministry is hoping this program will provide fairer educational access to students in outlying, rural areas. Opponents of the program argue that because of their lack of interaction with other students in a traditional classroom, the students who attend this online school will not develop the social skills that should be a component of their education. What is your position on this issue?

Rock and Roll Business Letter

This activity provides students with an engaging topic and gives them the opportunity to write a business letter. The goal of this activity is to convince the selection committee at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame that an artist or musical group deserves to be inducted.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. In preparation, students should think about a music artist or group they believe deserves to be in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Information on the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductees can be found at ***www.rockhall.com***
2. Individually, or with a partner, students should generate all the information that they know about this particular artist or group. Students will generally be more successful if they are given some research time.
3. Individually, or with a partner, have students think and record of all the reasons why this artist or group should be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.
4. Individually or using a shared writing technique, students should draft a letter to convince the selection committee that their artist/group deserves to be in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Variations/Extensions

- This activity could easily be adapted to a persuasive paragraph or essay assignment.

Rock and Roll Business Letter

Rock and Roll Business Letter

A properly formatted business letter should include the following:

Date
Student/school address

The recipient's name/title
The recipient's full mailing address

Dear Recipient's Name,

Introduction – Explain why you are writing to them and what you want. Be sure to name the music artist/group you want the committee to induct.

Paragraph #2 – Describe the performer and their music. Use your research in this section, but choose only the important details.

Paragraph #3 – Discuss and explain the reasons why the musician should be inducted. You may want to elaborate on awards they have received, the number of albums they have sold, or any charitable donations they have made or philanthropic organizations they have supported.

Conclusion – Wrap up your letter and restate your main points.

Closing – Choose from Yours Truly, Sincerely, Thank you for your consideration,

Signature – handwritten

Your name typed

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Narrative Writing

Drafting

NARRATIVE WRITING

Activity Page

Narrative Essay Outline 233
- Narrative Essay Outline 234
- Narrative Prompts 235

Narrative Storyboard 236
- Narrative Storyboard 237

Reconstructing a Story: Narrative Transitions 238
- Reconstructing a Story: Narrative Transitions 239

Stocking the Refrigerator: Creating a Personal History 240

Story Starts 242
- Story Starts 244

What Makes a Good Narrative? 245
- Essential Aspects of Narrative Form 246

- Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids included

Narrative Essay Outline

The idea behind using an outline is that we solve potential writing problems before they start. An outline also forces students to think about their writing task before they begin. In that way they can plan and eventually monitor their success as they continue through the process. An outline provides an opportunity for teachers to conference with their students before the writing task begins.

Writing Skills

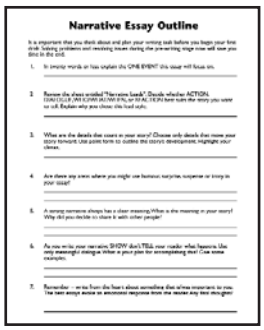
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.

Teaching the Activity

1. After finishing either Story Starts or What Makes a Good Narrative? have students begin to map out their ideas using the following outline (see Narrative Essay Outline). While the outline is written in a conventional way, it could be adapted for a mind map.
2. After students are finished, it is critical to conference with them in order to provide informative feedback. Initially, teacher conferences are best in order to model the process, but when students become more proficient with outlines teachers should release responsibility to students so they can begin to conference with each other.

Variations/Extensions

- Use *Inspiration* software so students can web or mind map their ideas.


Narrative Essay Outline

Narrative Essay Outline

It is important that you think about and plan your writing task before you begin your first draft. Solving problems and resolving issues during the pre-writing stage now will save you time in the end.

1. In twenty words or less explain the ONE EVENT this essay will focus on.

_____

_____

2 Review the sheet entitled "Narrative Leads". Decide whether ACTION, DIALOGUE, WHO/WHAT/WHEN, or REACTION best suits the story you want to tell. Explain why you chose this lead style.

_____

_____

3. What are the details that count in your story? Choose only details that move your story forward. Use point form to outline the story's development. Highlight your climax.

_____

_____

4. Are there any areas where you might use humour, surprise, suspense or irony in your essay?

_____

_____

5. A strong narrative always has a clear meaning. What is the meaning in your story? Why did you decide to share it with other people?

_____

_____

6. As you write your narrative SHOW don't TELL your reader what happens. Use only meaningful dialogue. What is your plan for accomplishing this? Give some examples.

_____

_____

7. Remember – write from the heart about something that is/was important to you. The best essays evoke an emotional response from the reader. Any final thoughts?

_____

_____

Narrative Prompts

Provide the following narrative prompts to help students get started.

Prompts for writing narration

1. Eavesdrop in a public place and write a story from the dialogue you hear.
2. Imagine an argument between two people and write their exchange.
3. Observe a person in a public space and write the person's thoughts or life story.
4. Write a short story that can fit into the space of a postcard.
5. Tell the story of your dreams.
6. Create a character who is completely different from you and then write a dialogue between you and this imaginary character.
7. Imagine that you are wrongly accused of a crime and write about how you would feel.
8. Imagine you have spent twenty years in prison and now you are on the outside.
9. Choose a historical figure, research the stories of that person and then write an episode from his/her life.
10. Interview a relative and write a story about their life.
11. Predict a different ending to a famous story.
12. Watch a television program and conjecture how the next episode will follow.
13. Observe someone at school/work and write a story about their life.
14. Create a conflict between a parent and a child that begins with "You don't understand me".
15. Speculate on what would happen if you found a cougar in your bedroom.
16. Write a letter to an imaginary boyfriend/girlfriend.
17. If your pet could talk, what story would they tell?
18. Rewrite a fairy tale or myth with contemporary characters, places, and experiences.
19. Write a story about a person on a talk show.
20. Tell the story that you want the world to know.

Narrative Storyboard

Many visual learners find drawing to be a useful way to organize their ideas. Storyboards provide an organizational skeleton for preparing a beginning, middle and end to a story (or narrative essay). It serves as a visual outline to keep students focussed on the essential elements needed.

Writing Skills

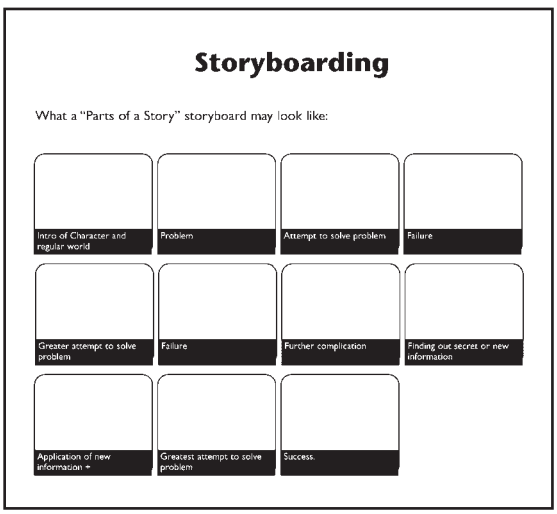
1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Review the essential parts of a narrative essay or story. Discuss how each part supports the whole.
2. Discuss the topic that students will write their story or essay on.
3. Have students use a storyboard to generate ideas or draft their narrative outline.
4. Have students share their idea with one student or more.

Variations/Extensions

- Use the Macintosh program Comic Life to create a ready-to-use storyboard.
- Have students create a comic strip instead of a narrative. Comics hold a wide appeal for teens.



Narrative Storyboard

Create a storyboard using the graphic organizer below to help focus your ideas for a narrative piece.

Reconstructing a Story: Narrative Transitions

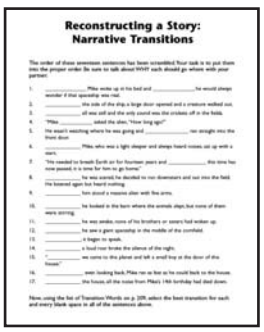
The purpose of this activity is to reconstruct a scrambled story and then insert transitional words to link each detail of the story. Use the list of Transition Words on p. 209 for this activity.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.

Teaching the Activity

1. First, write the following sentences on the board and ask students in groups of 2-3 to arrange them into proper order. Students should write the appropriate number for each sentence to the left of the bullet. This will start to get them using transitional language on their own before they are given the words.
2. After numbering the sentences in the proper order, students need to then write appropriate transitions next to the sentences using the list of Transition Words on p. 209.


Reconstructing a Story:
Narrative Transitions

Reconstructing a Story: Narrative Transitions

The order of these seventeen sentences has been scrambled. Your task is to put them into the proper order. Be sure to talk about WHY each should go where with your partner.

1. _____ Mike woke up in his bed and _____, he would always wonder if that spaceship was real.
2. _____ the side of the ship, a large door opened and a creature walked out.
3. _____ all was still and the only sound was the crickets off in the fields.
4. "Mike _____ asked the alien, "How long ago?"
5. He wasn't watching where he was going and _____ ran straight into the front door.
6. _____ Mike, who was a light sleeper and always heard noises, sat up with a start.
7. "He needed to breath Earth air for fourteen years and _____ this time has now passed, it is time for him to go home."
8. _____ he was scared, he decided to run downstairs and out into the field. He listened again but heard nothing.
9. _____ him stood a massive alien with five arms.
10. _____ he looked in the barn where the animals slept, but none of them were stirring.
11. _____ he was awake, none of his brothers or sisters had woken up.
12. _____ he saw a giant spaceship in the middle of the cornfield.
13. _____, it began to speak.
14. _____ a loud roar broke the silence of the night.
15. "_____ we came to this planet and left a small boy at the door of this house."
16. _____ even looking back, Mike ran as fast as he could back to the house.
17. _____ the house, all the noise from Mike's 14th birthday had died down.

Now, using the list of Transition Words on p. 209, select the best transition for each and every blank space in all of the sentences above.

Stocking the Refrigerator: Creating a Personal History

A good narrative essay remains faithful to life events. Often students find it difficult to choose an event from their life that has all of the good elements of a narrative: conflict, building of tension and deeper meaning. Teachers need to help students see that even small adventures/events in their lives can make good stories. This activity is designed to 'stock their refrigerator' with events from their past that they may draw from in order to write a narrative essay.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

Explain to students that right now they have an empty refrigerator. Their task is to fill up their refrigerator with events from their lives that they may select from at any point to write a narrative essay. (For students writing B.C. English provincial exams, it may help to tell them that these narrative essay ideas will be helpful when addressing the original composition prompt on the exam.)

Part A - This is a quick activity that should not take more than fifteen minutes. Have students take out some blank paper. Tell students they should not be selective about their events at this point. They are trying to write down as many events as they remember. Also, tell them they are in no way obligated to discuss or write down anything they would rather keep private.

1. Have students draw a timeline. Within five minutes they should write as many events that they remember from birth to present. They should not be concerned with exact dates, but should try to be faithful to what came first, second, third, etc.
2. Next, have students quickly sketch three significant places in their life. This may include a school, a cottage, a hockey rink, etc. Within five minutes they should list as many events as they remember around those places (they can also web this).
3. Then have students write as many of these events as possible under general themes: high moments, embarrassments, surprises, disappointments, etc.
4. Finally, have students organize the various ideas, memories, events and life experiences into three categories or "shelves in their fridge": stories that are quick to tell on the top shelf, stories that are a little more involved on the middle shelf, and lengthier or more complex stories on the bottom shelf.

(cont'd)

Stocking the Refrigerator Creating a Personal History

(cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

Their refrigerator is now stocked with events. Some discussion should take place around these ideas.

Part B - From all the events they have listed, have students choose the five events from their refrigerator that could not be left out of their life story.

1. Organize students into small groups (no more than three). Each student has five minutes to tell the others about these five events (one minute/event). At the end, the other group members will tell the speaker which event was most intriguing to them and may be a good choice for writing.

2. Have students do some narrative free writing. They should write their recollection of the event from start to finish.

Variations/Extensions

- The obvious extension is to have students write a narrative essay about one of the best or "richest dishes" from their refrigerator. It would be wise to review narrative form (see What Makes A Good Narrative activity on p. 245). Once students are clear about what makes a good narrative essay, have them generate an outline (see p. 246 Essential Aspects of Narrative Form handout) and conference with the teacher after they complete their first draft.

Story Starts

This is a good activity at the beginning to a narrative essay unit. It will help students to generate ideas for a narrative paragraph or essay. The story starts are designed to spark the reader's curiosity about what happens next.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.

Teaching the Activity

1. Give students a list of story ideas. Have them read them quietly, or read them aloud as a class and then have them look back and review. (see next page)
2. Ask students what three stories they would be most interested in knowing about. Have them put a star beside the story start. They can discuss why they find the beginning intriguing and the course they think the story might take.
3. Remind students that they have events in their lives that would make a good narrative.

4. Here are some questions you might put up to prompt student writing:

    - What experiences have made you feel really good about yourself?
    - What experiences in your life were the most challenging?
    - When did you feel the most embarrassed?
    - When did you realize that you have an important connection to another person?
    - What were the most difficult times in your life?
    - What experiences made you laugh hysterically?
    - When did you feel the most ashamed of yourself?

5. Save these 'story starts' for the next class. Allow students to add to their free writes when they come in the next day.
6. Have students share two of their 'story starts' with a small group. The group should ask the student questions about their story. After reviewing the handout supplied by the teacher, they should decide on key areas that will need further explanation once the narrative paragraph/essay begins and record their observations on the sheet. Each student should walk away from this exercise with some constructive feedback. (See Revision section p. 264).

(cont'd)

Story Starts (cont'd)

Variations/Extensions

- The logical course is to have students begin to draft their narrative paragraph/essay following the suggestions of the group. Alternately, teachers can use this as a practice session and have students complete the narrative outline and then conference with them about the strengths/weaknesses of the story content to this point.
- Have students free write as many 'story starts' from their own lives.

Story Starts for Students

1. At school that day, I had no idea the truth that would be revealed. A few days earlier things were as they should be. I was the 'queen' of my troop and she was just a lowly servant in my court. Where did she find the power to do what she did?

2. His greasy bangs fell across his face as he leaned on the brick wall. Though he felt like this was going to be a day like all others, he was mistaken. Over the last few days, time had been plotting against him. He pushed off the wall and swaggered to the street corner. It was there that he saw her.

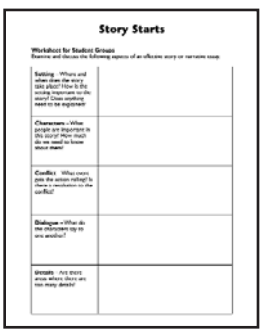
3. When I was twelve I lived for the roller rink. It was the social hub of the neighborhood. With confidence, my friends and I would burst through the doors to enter a disco heaven. This haven from our suburban boredom would lead us down a path we never expected.

4. I was never very good at failure. Most things in life came fairly easily to me so when I decided to take this risk outside of my comfort zone, I was to learn the hard way how important risky experiences are.

5. I loved Christmas more than anything. We would visit my grandmother's house and would leave with two green garbage bags full of gifts. The anticipation almost killed me. Christmas for me was all about the gifts. Later one year, I saw something that made me rethink the importance of this holiday.

Teacher Tips:

- Further ideas for writing narratives can be found on p. 235 with Narrative Prompts.


Story Starts

Worksheet for Student Groups

Story Starts

Worksheet for Student Groups
Examine and discuss the following aspects of an effective story or narrative essay.

Setting – Where and when does the story take place? How is the setting important to the story? Does anything need to be explained?	
Characters – What people are important in this story? How much do we need to know about them?	
Conflict – What event gets the action rolling? Is there a resolution to the conflict?	
Dialogue – What do the characters say to one another?	
Details – Are there areas where there are too many details?	

What Makes a Good Narrative?

As teachers, we often 'tell' our students what good writing looks like. This activity is designed to let students decide what makes a good story.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.

Teaching the Activity

1. Choose two narrative essays of similar length that you believe have both strengths and weaknesses. Two good choices are *The Cinderella Syndrome* by Beth Sirett and *When Boy Meets Girl* by Erik Savas. These two essays deal with the hazards of dating from two different perspectives.
2. Read aloud the first essay. Use a Think Pair Share activity. Have students make note of what they liked or did not like about the essay. Tell them to focus as much on the way the story was told as on what the story was about. Have them share their ideas with a partner.
3. Read aloud the second essay. Repeat the above process.
4. As a large group, lead students in a discussion of what worked or did not work in the two essays. Students should be identifying parts of any good story:

focus on one central event	use dialogue	use humour, suspense, surprise and/or irony
show don't tell events	introduce a conflict/builds toward a resolution	has meaning

5. Have students break down the two essays using an outline similar to the one they will use for their own essay (see Essential Aspects of Narrative Form on the following page).

Variations/Extensions

- Have students write some dialogue that might occur between two people in the story. They can do this independently or with a partner. Have them practice proper dialogue format as they are doing this. Students can share their pieces orally.

Essential Aspects of Narrative Form

Use or adapt the following worksheet with the activity "What Makes a Good Narrative?"

Examining Essay #1 _____ and **Essay #2** _____

	Essay #1	**Essay #2**
What is the **conflict,** tension or problem to be solved?		
What **style of lead** does the author use to begin their essay?		
What are the most dominant/effective **descriptions** that add to the mood of the essay?		
What are the **key events** in the rising action? What is the climatic turn towards resolution?		
What is the **meaning** of the story?		
List the reasons why you feel essay #1 is **effective.**		
List the reasons why you feel essay #2 is **effective.**		

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Descriptive Writing

Drafting

DESCRIPTIVE WRITING

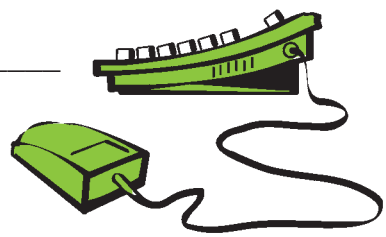
Activity Page

Beyond Cliché 249
Describing Three-Dimensional Objects 250
- Sensory Descriptions 251
- Description Writing Prompts 252

Descriptive Development 253
Descriptive Words (List) 255
Real Life Interview 259

- Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids included

Writer's Notes



Beyond Cliché

Whereas writers try to use original language to describe something common, advertisers often reduce their ideas or characters to instantly recognizable stereotypes. This activity focusses on the difference. Students will be asked to describe someone by their actions rather than their obvious traits.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Begin by discussing how traits of a character are sometimes left up to the reader to figure out because the effective writers strive to avoid clichéd, common descriptors. Instead of labelling a person as 'nervous', or 'confident', a writer can describe what **action** the person is doing which makes them seem nervous or confident (refer to activity Show, Don't Tell on p. 113 for more ideas).
2. Play a commercial, a segment from a political debate, a segment from a talk show, or hold up a glossy magazine ad that showcases a famous person. Have the students write 5 to 10 words that describe the famous person.
3. Ask students to share their list or words and record them on the front board in one column. If there is one word that more than five students call out, record this word in a second column titled cliché.
4. After students have discussed the most commonly used words, or clichés, and why these words were used by so many in the class, tell the students they are now to write about that same person, but the challenge is NOT to use any of the words in the cliché column.
5. Once completed, students should discuss their writing experience. Ask students how it felt to stretch their imagination (and vocabulary!) in order to present a well-known person in a new, or inventive way.

Describing Three-Dimensional Objects

This writing activity is intended to work on the students' powers of observation and give them an opportunity to write descriptively about a small object.

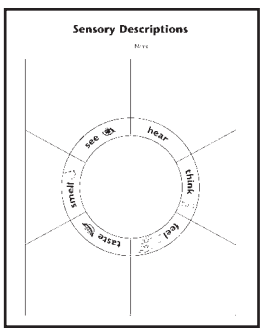
Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Prior to this exercise, provide students with examples of effective descriptive writing. Writers such as Dickens, Austen, Hemingway, Woolfe, and Rowling are 'masters' of description and may provide students with inspiration.
2. From home, bring a variation of small, strange things (e.g. an old top, a glass candlestick holder, a giant eraser, a stick of incense, a wooden fish on a keychain, a stone from the beach, a hippo figure from Africa, a fortune from a fortune cookie.) Display them on a table at the front of the classroom.
3. Have each student take one item from the tray and take it to their desk.
4. Let students know they may use 4 of their 5 senses to describe the object. They may notice the weight and density of the object and they also may get a sense of what has happened to the object, just by taking notice of it (use graphic organizer Sensory Descriptions to brainstorm ideas)
5. Students write for 5 minutes about their object. After describing their object in their paragraph they should either: a) let the reader know what they think happened to the object in the past, or b) let the reader know where the object is going in the future.
6. In the editing process, students should look at their word choice carefully and see if they can replace vague words with specific words that evoke the reader's senses.
7. For a comprehensive reference list of descriptive words, see p. 255.
8. For ideas or further writing prompts for descriptive writing, see p. 252.

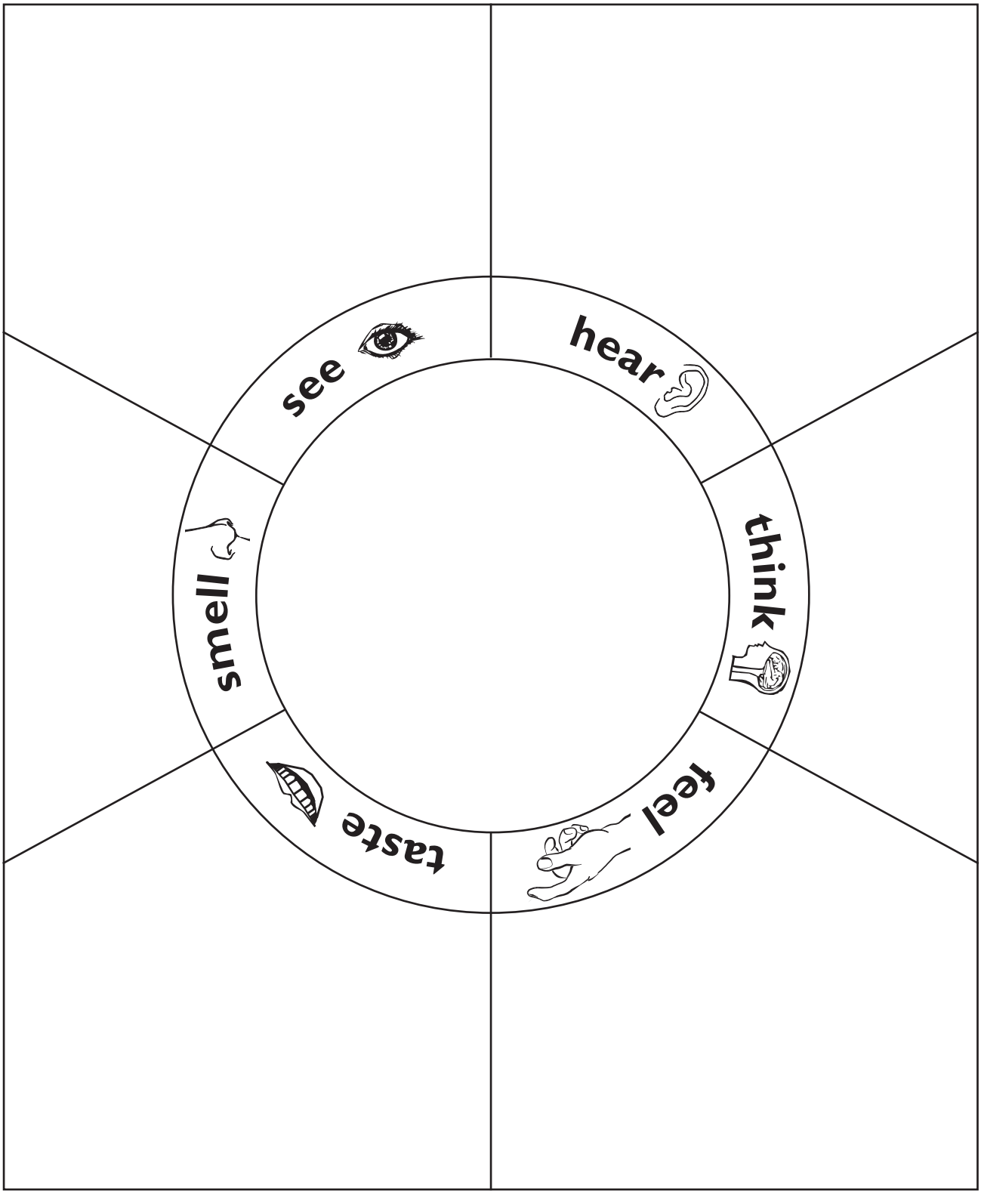
Variations/Extensions



- The ending sentence could be more specifically about how the object:
  - saved a person's life.
  - ruined a person's life.
  - calmed a person down.
- Read out the description of the ring in *Lord of the Rings* and have students set a similar scene for their own object.

Sensory Descriptions

Name: _____



Description Writing Prompts

Students who require help with getting started will benefit from choosing from this list of descriptive writing ideas.

Prompts for writing description

1. Describe a small object like a fingernail or pine cone.
2. Record the smells, sounds, sights and textures of your immediate surroundings.
3. Change your normal viewing position – what do you see?
4. Describe a park from the perspective of an old man who lost his son and a young man in love.
5. Translate music into words.
6. Describe snapshots of yourself at different ages.
7. Create a travel advertisement of your favourite vacation destination.
8. Describe the movement of a person or thing.
9. Concentrate on an object and describe what you see in your peripheral vision.
10. Describe what is beyond the walls of the room.
11. Recall your last visit to a shopping mall/concert/sports event and describe the experience.
12. Describe the face of a loved one.
13. Describe a bathroom of a celebrity.
14. Describe a bedroom to show that its owner is a bachelor, war veteran, new infant or unhappy housewife.
15. Describe your community in the future.

Descriptive Development

Using incidents or ideas with a "bizarre" twist often encourages adolescent writers to think more creatively. These story starters come from current events, news items, issues, or strange tales of the past. Students are given the beginning of a story with which to start and then asked to develop further descriptive details.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.

Teaching the Activity

Use a news event to spark writing ideas

1. Start with a current news event that has a bizarre element, such as an incident where a newborn baby was found at a city bus stop by commuters.
2. Relate the events of the story, but stop half way through, not getting to the end.
3. Keep the students 'hanging', ask them to write one paragraph describing what they think happens next. Discuss.

Use the Internet to research strange international occurrences

1. Have students search for strange, historical events such as the phenomenon of fish raining down in Australia, or UFO sightings.
2. Have students imagine the regular day in the life of someone living in the place and time of the occurrence and imagine what they saw.
3. Ask students to write a descriptive paragraph, create a comic strip or interview with the person who witnessed the event.

Use a discrepant idea to spark discussion and story ideas

1. In pairs, have students choose and discuss one of the following ideas:
   - Which came first, the chicken or the egg?
   - Pull yourself up by your bootstraps.
   - Dig yourself out of the hole you're in.
   - You need a job to get experience, but you need experience to get a job.

(cont'd)

Descriptive Development

(cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

2. Have one pair of students join another to share what they have discussed.
3. Ask students to consider problems associated with these situations. How could those problems be solved? Could it possibly lead to further problems?
4. Students work in pairs, or individually, to write down a descriptive scene related to their statement.

Use literature as a launch for descriptive writing

1. Have students finish the ending of a story that has never had an ending, such as *The Lady and the Tiger* by Frank Stockton (1882) – available on the Internet.
2. Have students write the stories prompted by pictures in Chris vanAllsburg's *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*.
3. Have students write alternative endings to well-known tales. (See Childhood Revisited: Re-writing Fairy Tales for further lesson ideas.)

Use emotion as a means of exploring descriptive writing

1. Create a number of slips of paper with an emotion written on each.
2. Ask students to select an emotion word from a box. They will work with the emotion word they choose or they can exchange their selection with another student.
3. Provide students with a scene and tell them to rewrite the scene adding the emotional attitude they have chosen.

> She walked into the room and saw people standing around. She went over to the table and poured a drink. Then she turned to the man next to her and asked if she could use his cell phone.

1. Discuss the importance of showing rather than telling (e.g. Her hands were shaking vs. She was scared).
2. Have students share their work, paying close attention to which descriptive details add impact to the scene.
3. Ask: How does injecting the scene with emotion help the writer imagine what is happening to the character?

Teacher Tip:

- For a list of descriptive words, please see the Descriptive Word vocabulary lists on the following pages.

Descriptive Words

Description

ablaze
ancient
arched
balanced
beautiful
bent
blinding
blurred
bottomless
bright
brilliant
circular
clean
clear
cloudy
colourful
contoured
cracked
crinkled
crooked
crowded
crystalline
curved
cute
dark
dazzling
deep
deformed
diagonal
dim
dirty
distinct
dull
dusty
elegant
faint
fancy
fiery
filthy
flashing
flat
flickering
fluffy
fluorescent
foggy
fuzzy
glamourous
glaring
gleaming
glimmering
glistening
glittering
glossy
graceful
grotesque
hazy
high
hollow
horizontal
indistinct
invisible
light
luminous
misshapen
misty
motionless
muddy
murky
narrow
opaque
oval
pale
polished
pyramid
quaint
radiant
rectangle
reflection
round
rugged
shadowy
shady
shallow
shapeless
shattered
sheer
shiny
skinny
smashed
smoggy
sparkling
spiral
splintered
spotless
square
steep
stormy
straight
strange
symmetrical
transparent
triangle
twinkling
twisted
ugly
unlit
unsightly
unusual
upright
vertical
visible
wavy
weird
wide
willowy
wiry
wizened

Taste/Smell

acrid
antiseptic
appetizing
aroma
bitter
choking
clean
delicious
fragrant
fresh
hot
juicy
luscious
medicinal
mild
musty
nutty
overpowering
peppery
perfume
pungent
ripe
rotten
salty
savory
scented
sharp
smelly
smoky
sour
spicy
stale
sticky
strong
stuffy
sweet
tangy
tart
tasteless
tasty

(cont'd)

Descriptive Words (cont'd)

Sound

bang
booming
buzz
call
chant
clamour
clang
clash
clatter
cooing
crash
creak
crunch
crying
deafening
din
earsplitting
explosion
echo
faint
groan
growl
harsh
high-pitched
hiss
hoarse
howl
hushed
husky
loud
melodic
moan
muffled
murmur
mute
noiseless
noisy
purring
quiet
raspy
resonant
ring
roar
rumble
scream
screech
shout
shriek
shrill
silent
sing
slam
snarl
snort
sob
soft
sound
soundless
splash
squeak
still
tap
thud
thump
thunder
thunderous
tinkle
tranquil
voiceless
wail
weep
whimper
whine
whisper
whistle

Touch

arctic
baking
blazing
blistering
blunt
boiling
breezy
brittle
bumpy
burning
chilly
clammy
cold
cool
creepy
crisp
crumbling
cuddly
curly
cushiony
damp
dirty
downy
drenched
dripping
dry
dusty
filthy
fine
firm
flaky
fluffy
fluttering
freezing
frosty
furry
fuzzy
glossy
gooey
greasy
grubby
hairy
hard
hot
icy
jagged
loose
lumpy
melted
moist
oily
silky
slick
slimy
slippery
slushy
smooth
soaked
sodden
soft
solid
spiky
spongy
springy
sticky
steaming
sweating
thick
thin
tight
uneven
velvety
warm
waterlogged
waxen
wet
wooden
wrinkled
yielding

Weather

blizzard
breeze
changeable
clear
cloudburst
clouds
cloudy
damp
dew
downpour
drenched
dripping
drizzle
dry
dull
fine
fog
frost
moist
overcast
rain
rainbow
shower
sleet
snow
soaked
storm
sunny
thunder

(cont'd)

Descriptive Words (cont'd)

Colours

anasilver
basic hues
bright
chroma
complementary
cool hues
dark
dull
expressive
hue
intensity
light
monochromatic
opaque
primary colours
prism
secondary colours
shade
spectrum
symbolic
tertiary colours
tint
tone
transparent
value
warm hues

Colour Families

Red	Violet	Grey	Green	Yellow	
cerise	grape	charcoal	apple	amber	lemon
cherry	lavender	dove	avocado	apricot	mustard
coral	lilac	gun metal	emerald	canary	orange
crimson	mauve	pewter	forest	chartreuse	peach
magenta	orchid	smoke	grass	flame	saffron
scarlet	purple	steel	kelly	gold	straw
				golden	tangerine

Feelings

POSITIVE FEELINGS

Intense

loved
adored
idolized
alive
wanted
lustful
worthy
pity
respected
empathy
awed
enthusiastic
zealous

Strong

enchanted
ardour
infatuated
tender
vibrant
independent
capable
happy
proud
gratified
worthy
concerned
appreciated
consoled
delighted
eager
optimistic
joyful
courage
hopeful
valiant
brave

Moderate

liked
cared for
esteemed
affectionate
fond
excited
patient
gay
inspired
anticipating
amused
yearning
peaceful
appealing
determined
pleased
excited
jolly
relieved
glad
adventurous
peaceful
intelligent

(cont'd)

Descriptive Words (cont'd)

Feelings

POSITIVE FEELINGS

Mild

friendly	relaxed	alert	warm	interested
regarded	comfortable	approved	amused	
benevolent	content	untroubled	daring	
wide awake	keen	graceful	comfortable	
at-ease	amazed	turned on	smart	

NEGATIVE FEELINGS

Mild

unpopular	dismal	impatient	self-conscious	mixed-up
listless	discontented	unimportant	edgy	sullen
moody	tired	regretful	upset	
lethargic	indifferent	bashful	reluctant	
gloomy	unsure	puzzled	timid	

Moderate

suspicious	bored	resigned	nervous	alarmed
envious	forlorn	apathetic	tempted	annoyed
enmity	disappointed	shy	tense	provoked
aversion	wearied	uncomfortable	worried	
dejected	inadequate	baffled	disdainful	
unhappy	helpless	confused	contemptuous	

Strong

disgusted	sad	hopeless	bewildered	vengeful
resentful	depressed	forlorn	frightened	indignant
bitter	sick	rejected	anxious	mad
detested	dissatisfied	guilty	dismayed	torn
fed-up	fatigues	embarrassed	disturbed	
frustrated	worn-out	inhibited	antagonistic	

Real Life Interview

Writers use closely-noticed details to make their writing come alive. In this activity, students take the role of magazine journalist while writing a paragraph about a live speaker.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Bring in examples of newspaper articles and feature magazine articles. Discuss the differences between the brief generic description of a person in a newspaper article (e.g. *The Vancouver Sun* or *The Globe and Mail)* and the rich description of a person in a feature article in a magazine (e.g. *The New Yorker, The Walrus,* etc.)
2. Have students read over a few feature articles in current magazines and highlight details in the article that make the person come alive.
3. Invite an interesting person into your classroom or arrange for a video conference using Skype and have the guest speaker talk for 15 minutes about a journey they've been on. They can bring things to display, but the primary focus is the oral storytelling.
4. While the person is speaking, students take "publishable" notes on the person's appearance, mannerisms, clothing, the facial expressions, tone of voice, and finally, what is said.
5. Once the guest speaker has finished, students have 30 minutes to craft a feature article about the person. This article is more about who the person is than about the facts that they spoke about in their story. Who is this person?
6. Have students read each other's work, once again highlighting rich or specific detail about the person.
7. For a comprehensive reference list of descriptive words, see pages 255-258.

(cont'd)

Real Life Interview (cont'd)

Variations/Extensions

- Read over some political articles about people. In which ones do you feel the reporter has captured the candidate or sports hero?
- Have students write about sports heroes. Discuss how the words used slant the way the person is presented/viewed.
- Use John Updike's short stories as models of character sketch. Have students create a character, discuss the details with a partner and then compare to Updike's work. Have students examine Updike's ability to describe characters with a minimum of words.
- Have students do another character sketch independently on
  - someone they see on a bus/park/mall
  - someone they know, taking an objective look at this person
  - a dog/bird/cat
- Have students rewrite the same paragraph putting a different slant on the person/animal they focussed on. Write the description with a weak or negative light instead of strong or positive. Discuss where this is found in the media (e.g. politics, etc.).

Writer's Notes

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Re-thinking, Revising and Editing

Re-thinking and Revising 263
Editing. 281

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Re-thinking and Revising

Re-thinking, Revising and Editing

RE-THINKING AND REVISING

Activity Page

Revision: Deleting, Adding, Substituting, and Reflecting 264
- Creative Writing Revision Checklist 265
- Expository Writing Revision Checklist 267

Expanding Sentences with the Sentence Toolbox 269
- Sentence Toolbox 271

Pick Out The Parts: Language Analysis 273
- Pick Out The Parts: Language Analysis 274

Sentence Combining and Subordination 275

2-6-2 Sentence Machine 277
- 2-6-2 Sentence Machine Writing Frame 278

- Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids included

Revision: Deleting, Adding, Substituting, and Reflecting

The purpose of revision is to improve and polish the content and meaning of a piece of writing. Writers' revision efforts can make a significant difference to a resulting piece of writing. The meaning of the word "revising" is to see again; the process of revisiting one's writing occurs prior to the editing process. Every time an author rewrites, he or she is trying to get closer to what he or she truly wishes to communicate. However, revising is hard work and students will often avoid the necessary 're-thinking' that is also required at this stage. Many students need encouragement to read over their writing and take the time to re-think and make revisions before the editing process to improve their topic, focus, word choice, content, sequence, or flow.

Teachers in all content areas need to model revision practices that include reviewing writing, asking others to respond and provide feedback to what has been written, as well as rephrasing sections, deleting repetitive or unnecessary content, or re-writing the text entirely. Teachers can model these behaviours with a piece of their own writing so that students can see these processes as authentic and important. In an active writing classroom, everyone is a writer.

In order to facilitate success with revision practices, use the following Creative Writing Revision Checklist or the Expository Writing Revision Checklist to guide students in their revision efforts. Remember: revision can affect single words, whole phrases, entire sentences, and complete paragraphs. Students need to be reminded that they will be deleting, adding, substituting, and reflecting to improve the meaning of their written communication.

"Words are sacred. They deserve respect. If you get the right ones, in the right order, you can nudge the world a little."

Tom Stoppard

Creative Writing Revision Checklist

1. What genre best describes this piece? _____

2. Who is your intended audience? _____

3. This piece is for: personal feedback/writing portfolio (assessment) _____
   marks (evaluation) _____

4. What is the intended mood or feeling you want your reader to experience? _____

5. Which of the five senses have you appealed to most in this piece? _____

6. Have you avoided generalities and instead provided concrete details to appeal to these senses? Provide 3 examples of where you have used a variety of interesting details to make your descriptive writing 'come alive':
   ** Note: Examples of concrete imagery include detailed phrases "I heard Mom slowly pulling back my faded denim curtains"*

   i)

   ii)

   iii)

7. If this piece is a story, identify its necessary central conflict _____

   _____

   **Note: Conflict can range from inter-galactic warfare to telling a friend you don't wish to help them cheat on a final exam. Whatever the conflict, there should be a realization or change/shift in the viewpoint of the central character.*

8. How engaging is the opening of your piece? Have you used compelling vocabulary and created a 'fresh' image? Are you avoiding clichés like "It was a dark and stormy night"?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat

   How effective is the ending of your piece? Does your reader experience an 'ah hah' moment of recognition? Do they experience a sense of satisfaction or enjoyment at its conclusion? ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat

10. Have you consciously organized your writing to serve your purpose? Are paragraphs built in to help tell your story or put across your point of view?
    ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat

11. Does your author's voice match your purpose for writing?
    ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat

    ** Note: For instance, a character in a novel may speak conversationally about a divorce, while a lawyer might say the same message using a much more formal delivery.*

(cont'd)

Creative Writing Revision Checklist (cont'd)

12. If you're writing poetry, do you capture the essence of a particular moment (or event) in time? Have you consciously chosen to use vocabulary that is 'musical'?
❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat

** Note: if a poem's topic is angry in tone, consider using words containing hard sounds like the letters G, D, R, or K.. More gentle poetry often uses the softer sounds created by S, W, or F.*

13. Does your authentic voice come through to your reader? Do you take risks?
❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat

** Note: Often, when you write about what you know, your interest and enthusiasm for your subject will be contagious for your readers and will engage them in your work.*

14. What should I take out? _____

Have I repeated myself? Have I added unnecessary or distracting detail? Have I been overly wordy? ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat

15. What should I add? Do I need to make my point clearer or my story more compelling? Do I need to add dialogue or more sensory imagery?
❑ Yes ❑ No

16. List your 3 favourite lines from your piece, and explain why you like them:

i)

ii)

iii)

17. List 3 sentences that you are struggling with and hope to improve:

i)

ii)

iii)

18. Self and Peer Evaluation of this writing piece:

❑ Writing piece is fully revised and a 'clean' copy may be submitted as final draft
❑ Some minor revisions are still necessary before final draft completed
❑ Some important revisions are still necessary before final draft completed
❑ Major revision is still needed before final draft is completed

Expository Writing Revision Checklist

THINKING ABOUT 'THE BIG PICTURE'

1. Explain the purpose of your piece (think like a writer!) _____
2. Who is your intended audience? _____
3. Is this piece for personal feedback/writing portfolio (assessment) _____ or marks (evaluation) _____
4. Have you included (if required) a title for your piece that is engaging? _____
5. What kind of impression do you wish to leave with your reader? Have you achieved it?
6. Is the order of your piece logical? Have you organized your material appropriately to suit your writing purpose?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
7. Is your choice of vocabulary sophisticated, vivid, and compelling?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat

THINKING ABOUT YOUR INTRODUCTION

1. Is your opening statement engaging and not predictable? Do you 'hook' your reader?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
2. If writing an essay, does your introductory paragraph move from general to specific in structure (like an inverted triangle)?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
3. If writing a literary essay, have you used the appropriate punctuation for the title of your literary work and mentioned the author's name?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
4. Does you thesis statement appear at the end of your introductory paragraph?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
5. Is your thesis statement debatable and 'meaty'?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
6. Have you mentioned (but not developed) your three key ideas that you will further explore in your body paragraphs to defend your thesis statement?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat

(cont'd)

Expository Writing Revision Checklist (cont'd)

THINKING ABOUT YOUR 'BODY' PARAGRAPHS

1. Do all your body paragraphs start with a debatable topic sentence (not a fact, question, or quotation)? Does this topic sentence clearly support your overarching thesis statement?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
2. Do your support your topic sentences with your most persuasive facts, examples, anecdotes, opinions, and arguments?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
3. If applicable, are your quotations smoothly integrated into your own sentences and have you referenced your sources correctly?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
4. Have you thought carefully about the order of your body paragraphs to achieve your purpose? *[You may choose to present your weakest point first and then build up to your strongest point. You might also choose to place your weakest point in the middle and begin and end with your strongest point.]*
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
5. Do you use specific transition words or phrases to move your reader between paragraphs?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
6. If writing a literary essay, have you included significant textual proof to support your topic sentences and not just included personal opinion?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat

THINKING ABOUT YOUR CONCLUSION

1. Do you restate your thesis in a new or original way in your conclusion?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
2. Have you made sure that you have not introduced any new ideas in your conclusion?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
3. Have you included a statement of relevance that leaves the reader thinking of connections between your thesis statement and the world beyond your writing piece?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
4. Have you tied your key ideas together and drawn a final conclusion?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat
5. Do you leave your reader with a lasting image or 'memorable zinger' in your concluding sentence?
   ❑ Yes ❑ No ❑ Somewhat

SELF AND PEER EVALUATION

❑ Writing piece is fully revised and a 'clean' copy may be submitted as final draft
❑ Some minor revisions are still necessary before final draft completed
❑ Some important revisions are still necessary before final draft completed
❑ Major revision is still needed before final draft is completed

Expanding Sentences with the Sentence Toolbox

Students are often surprised to learn that writing can be measured, and although there are many definitions of quality, there are common measurements of complexity. For instance, you can look at the number of words per sentence, or the number of clauses per sentence. This activity can be used to give students the tools to expand their sentences and make them more complex with each written assignment.

Writing Skills

3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

The Sentence Toolbox

1. Why? – Because…
2. Vital Verbs
3. Amazing Adverbs
4. Astronomical Adjectives
5. Confident Clauses: who/which/when/while/where/as/since/if/although

Teaching the Activity

1. Hand out the Sentence Toolbox Graphic Organizer. Have students create the simplest sentence possible about a dog. The teacher should also do this on the board. Everyone can have a different sentence and possible responses to the steps. e.g. "The dog barked."
2. Then, go through each of the five steps for adding detail to the sentence. Each step builds on the previous one. With each step, the teacher should solicit for student answers to check for understanding.
    i. *WHY? – Because…*
    The dog barked because he was hungry.
    ii. *Vital Verbs*
    The dog howled because he was hungry.
    iii. *Amazing Adverbs*
    The dog howled incessantly because he was hungry.
    iv. *Astronomical Adjectives*
    The lazy, filthy dog howled incessantly because he was hungry.
    v. *Confident Clauses*
    Although he had just been fed, the lazy, filthy dog, which belongs to Mike, howled incessantly because he was hungry.

(cont'd)

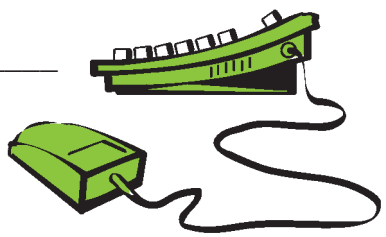
Expanding Sentences with the Sentence Toolbox (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

3. After students have taken their simple sentence through each of the five Sentence Tools, the next logical step is to have them rewrite a simple paragraph using each of the five tools at least once. Have them underline each tool as it is used. There will obviously have to be an element of creativity to the paragraphs as new information is added.

Sentence Toolbox

Writer's Notes



Sentence Toolbox

Write an example of an extremely simple sentence about a dog:

_____

_____

Now, add information to your simple sentence in each of the steps below. After each step, write your new sentence on the space that follows. Each step builds on the previous one.

1. Why? – Because…

_____

_____

_____

2. Vital Verbs

_____

_____

_____

3. Amazing Adverbs

_____

_____

_____

4. Astronomical Adjectives

_____

_____

_____

5. Confident Clauses: who/which/when/while/where/as/since/if/although

_____

_____

_____

Sentence Toolbox

Rewrite the following paragraph using each of the five Sentence Tools at least once. You may combine sentences using the tools, or you might add new information with them. Underline each tool as you use it.

The bald eagle lives all over North America. They live in large nests at the top of trees. When they are born they have brown feathers all over, and don't develop the white head feathers for another few years. Their wingspan is approximately 2 metres across. They eat fish, rodents, and other small birds. It was once a very endangered animal. The bald eagle was nearly killed by the use of DDT. The chemical was used to control mosquitos. Today, there are about 100,000 bald eagles, but in the 1960's there were only about 500.

Pick Out The Parts: Language Analysis

This activity is an excellent way to raise students' awareness of the different components of writing style. From an analysis of writing technique can then come an inquiry into an author's purpose, and whether the piece is effective (or what else could be added/changed to make the piece even more effective). Students will need a basic knowledge of the terms of grammar, so this is a good activity to do in conjunction with grammar lessons.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. This activity can work with either a work of fiction, or a piece of informational text such as a newspaper article. Photocopy a selection that includes a good variety of style and sentence types. It is helpful to have line numbers written on the side of the piece for easier reference.
2. If this is a new piece of writing, have students first read the piece once over to gain familiarity with the subject matter. Then, using the graphic organizer on the following page, have students go through the piece and find examples of each device or technique and copy it into the appropriate space.

Variations/Extensions

- The natural extension to this activity is the Write Like a Writer activity on p. 128.

Pick out the Parts: Language Analysis

Pick Out the Parts: Language Analysis

Stylistic, Sentence, or Language Device	An example from the piece of writing: copy the words here!
Find the *longest* sentence	
Find the *shortest* sentence	
Find the sentence with the most *clauses*	
Find three powerful *verbs*	
Find any *adverbs*	
Find an example of excellent *description or imagery*	
Are there *appeals to other emotions?*	
Is there any *repetition?*	
Paragraphs length: does the number of sentences in each change?	
Is there dialogue? Where?	

Sentence Combining and Subordination

Sentence combining and subordination are key tools in students' writing development. The majority of student writing suffers from short, choppy sentences that contain only one idea; sentence combining asks students to show the relationship between short ideas by combining them into clauses that are joined or subordinated together.

Even though proficient writing is characterized by a variety of sentence lengths (rather than many long sentences, which tend to reduce comprehension), practicing creating large and multi-clausal sentences is extremely useful for most students. Ultimately, the process tends to encourage more complex and interrelated *thinking* which then goes hand-in-hand in reinforcing complex writing.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Write the following sentences and ask students to think about what is wrong with them. While they are indeed grammatically correct, students will likely suggest that they are basic and "lame". Students are often surprised to learn that the complexity of writing can actually be measured – the number of clauses per sentence is usually the best indicator.
    i. The clock struck twelve.
    ii. The man closed the book.
    iii. His book was a copy of *Great Expectations*.
    iv. The book was old and tattered.
    v. The man got up out of the chair.
    vi. He got up slowly.

2. Now, ask students to make ONE sentence out of these six. There could be more than one possible correct answer to each activity.

    A possible solution:
    e.g. When the clock struck twelve, the man closed his old and tattered copy of *Great Expectations,* and slowly got up out of the chair.

(cont'd)

Sentence Combining and Subordination (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

3. Ask students to list all of the *tools* they may have used in combining the sentences, and write the list for all to see. Possible tools in sentence combining include:
    - Simple combining using *and* (coordinating conjunctions).
    - Use of semi-colons.
    - Reducing information to an adjective: *old and tattered*
    - Reducing information to an adverb: slowly
    - Reducing a sentence to a subordinate clause: *When the clock struck twelve,*
    - Using a participate phrase: *Getting out of the chair, the man…*

4. Here are some more examples of short sentences that could be used for combining. Examples like these can quickly be made by working backwards from a multi-clausal sentence, breaking it down into separate short sentences.

    I.
    Malcolm Lowry was born in England.
    He spent many years in Canada.
    He lived in a small shack on the beach.
    He wrote *Under the Volcano* in the shack.
    Under the Volcano is his most famous novel.

    II.
    The bald eagle population is thriving today.
    The bald eagle population was once threatened.
    The chemical DDT harmed the birds' eggs.
    The chemical is a powerful pesticide.

    III.
    I have to be home by eight o'clock.
    I have to babysit my brother.
    My brother is annoying.
    I can't go to the movie with you.
    The movie is new.

2-6-2 Sentence Machine

Although we automatically assume that proficient writers produce longer sentences, sentence length alone does not determine excellent writing. Sentences, obviously, must be well-structured and vary in both sheer length and the number of clauses. When used appropriately, short sentences change the flow of writing by adding emphasis and impact.

In general, high school student writing is typically about 16 words per sentence, while mature, professional writers write something more like 21 words per sentence. However, mature writers also consciously vary the length of their sentences, both for diversity and impact. A good model for variety is to have 2 long sentences, 6 average sentences, and 2 short sentences in a standard 10 sentence paragraph. This activity has students alter a basic paragraph of 10 short sentences into one, following this 2-6-2 guideline.

Writing Skills

3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Hand out the 2-6-2 Sentence Machine Writing Frame found on p. 278. (While this frame asks students to build upon a paragraph of 10 short sentences, teachers can also have students "trim" a paragraph of 10 long sentences.)
2. Students need to:
   - Add details and/or subordinate the sentences together to form longer sentences; and
   - Decide which points would best be left as short sentences for the most appropriate use of emphasis.
   - Decide which order the sentences should follow. Where should the short and long sentences be placed?

Variations/Extensions

- This task can also be used during the editing process. To gain awareness of their starting sentence length levels, students can count the number of words in each sentence of a paragraph and divide by the number of sentences.

2-6-2 Sentence Machine
Writing Frame

2-6-2 Sentence Machine Writing Frame

The following paragraph contains 10 short, basic sentences:

> In our society we are now forced to deal with computers in almost all parts of our lives. We get our money from a machine and it now costs us money to talk to a bank teller. Students used to get all the information for research reports from books and encyclopedias. They now take everything off the Internet, which is often not reliable. We talk to less people each day than we used to twenty years ago. Everything is done online. As a result, we have lost our manners. Also, people without computers do not have access to many things. Some people, seniors in particular, do not know how to use the new technology. Our society is changing too fast.

Your task is to transform the above paragraph into: 2 long sentences (more than 25 words), 6 average sentences (18-22 words), and keep 2 as short sentences (less than 18 words).

Which points will best be left as short sentences for emphasis? Where should the short and long sentences be placed for best effect? Write the new sentences on the lines below in the order in which they should appear.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Writer's Notes

Re-thinking, Revising and Editing

Editing

Re-thinking, Revising and Editing

EDITING

Activity Page

Editing 282
Comma Concepts. 283
- Comma Concepts 285

Digesting Semi-colons and Colons 286
- Semi-colon and Colon Review Exercise 288

Editing Etiquette 289
Fixer-Uppers: Editing Quotations and Citations 291
Independent Corrections and Spelling Gremlins. 292
- Student Correction Log 293
- My Spelling Gremlins. 294

- Graphic Organizers and Instructional Aids included

Editing

The purpose of editing writing is to ensure the clarity and accuracy of the message; it is an attempt to ensure the piece adheres to the conventions of standard English. A writer must examine their grammar and usage of language, and carefully refine and polish their spelling and punctuation to reduce or eliminate distractions caused by errors. Students will benefit from the development of self assessment skills through an awareness of criteria for effective editing practices. These can be explicitly modelled by an instructor and provided through samples of carefully edited work. Determine the editing skills that need to be taught, and address them as they arise, by teaching highly specific mini-lessons in context around the conventions of organizing writing.

The writer's workshop model of writing instruction, which includes small group writing conferences, is an effective way to demonstrate editing skills. There is ample research which maintains the teaching of grammar and editing skills should be taught in the context of the writing experience, using students' and teacher's own writing, not by using grammar/editing worksheets. Students require much practice with editing their own work for ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions or other criteria (BC Ministry of Education, 2008). Developing the critical writing skills of re-reading, reflecting, revising and editing will facilitate more successful writing and communicating for adolescent writers.

Writer's Notes

Comma Concepts

Comma usage is one of the largest areas of concern for teachers when teaching grammar. While some students seem to know naturally and unconsciously how commas are used, many have a difficult time sensing their proper locations. Activities such as this show commas in their correct use, and have students group the sentences into like pairs. Students then work to describe how and why the commas are being used in the sentences. While it is helpful to have a basic knowledge of the terms for sentences and clauses, it is often useful to have students use their own language to describe what is going on in each case.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Explain that the following sentences are **correct.** In partners, students then have to group them into pairs by writing the appropriate numbers in the spaces that follow. Go over the answers with them.
2. Students should try to describe what is going on in each case: Why are commas being used? What do they do in each sentence?
3. Practice the list of rules that follow, and have them try to match the rule to the sentence pairs. Then, go over the correct answers.
4. Have students complete the review exercise questions at the end. Here, the sentences are **incorrect** and students have to first fix the error, and then name the rule that determines its usage.

Correct Sentences:

1. We climbed Whistler Peak, but the wind kept us from enjoying the view.
2. The impatiens, which blooms well in the shade, is available in all colours.
3. Billy, don't lose my number.
4. That car, the new Mustang, is terrible on gas.
5. The cost, of course, is passed on to the consumer.
6. "Whatever you do," said Cheryl, "don't go see that movie."
7. Inspired by the art exhibit, Kafka wrote his next novel.
8. Yes, what you see is what you get.
9. Mr. Robertson, who is a complete dork, took my morning paper again.
10. Perseus had to save Andromeda, or the monster would kill her.
11. He said, "I shall see you very soon."
12. The butcher down the street, Ivan, is a gentle man.
13. I bought an old, dilapidated chair and a new, shiny chair.

(cont'd)

Comma Concepts (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

14. By swimming with the current, Jose almost escaped from Cuba.
15. We looked in the basement, in the attic, and in the kitchen.
16. The big, red plane took off in a massive cacophony of chaos.
17. The charge is ridiculous, preposterous, and absurd.
18. We're going to go outside, Mrs. Henderson.

A. Numbers ____ and ____ are alike because they: _____

_____

The rule: _____

B. Numbers ____ and ____ are alike because they: _____

_____

The rule: _____

C. Numbers ____ and ____ are alike because they: _____

_____

The rule: _____

D. Numbers ____ and ____ are alike because they: _____

_____

The rule: _____

E. Numbers ____ and ____ are alike because they: _____

_____

The rule: _____

F. Numbers ____ and ____ are alike because they: _____

_____

The rule: _____

G. Numbers ____ and ____ are alike because they: _____

_____

The rule: _____

H. Numbers ____ and ____ are alike because they: _____

_____

The rule: _____

I. Numbers ____ and ____ are alike because they: _____

_____

The rule: _____

THE RULES:
a. Comma used in a compound sentence joining after a coordinating conjunction (1, 10)
b. Commas to separate nonessential information (2, 9)
c. Commas used to separate the name of someone being addressed (3, 18)
d. Commas to separate appositives (4, 12)
e. Commas to separate interrupting elements (5, 8)
f. Commas used in direct quotations (6, 11)
g. Commas used after an introductory or subordinate clause (7, 14)
h. Commas to separate adjectives modifying the same noun (13, 16)
i. Commas to separate items in a series (15, 17)

Comma Concepts

COMMAS: Review Exercise:
Correct the following sentences and state the rule that determines its usage.

1. Whenever I hear that magnificent song I remember our first date.
   The Rule: _____
2. Our team in the tournament for the first time is at a distinct disadvantage.
   The Rule: _____
3. Either you honour the contract or the company will be forced to take legal action.
   The Rule: _____
4. "That's my backpack" cried Martin.
   The Rule: _____
5. That's the tragedy isn't it?
   The Rule: _____
6. We hiked to the beach around the lighthouse and through the grove of trees.
   The Rule: _____
7. That man over there Chris is an excellent swimmer.
   The Rule: _____
8. We must remember however that the Americans saved us in World War II.
   The Rule: _____
9. Rex wagged his tail yelped and shook for joy.
   The Rule: _____
10. Tom saw a thin sallow face looking up at him.
    The Rule: _____
11. With little to distract them the vandals sacked all of Europe.
    The Rule: _____
12. The van which did not run very well finally broke down.
    The Rule: _____
13. We couldn't make much of a contribution nor did they expect one from us.
    The Rule: _____
14. What's up Doc?
    The Rule: _____

Digesting Semi-colons and Colons

After commas, the use of colons and semi-colons are the most troublesome punctuation problem for students. The correct use of colons and semi-colons elevates a piece of writing beyond basic structure and creates an impression of style and *command of language*. Activities such as this show colons and semi-colons in their correct use, and have students group the sentences into like pairs. Students then work to describe *why* the punctuation is being used where and when in the sentences. While it is helpful to have a basic knowledge of the terms for sentences and clauses, it is often useful to have students use their own language to describe what is going on in each case.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Explain that the following sentences are **correct.** In partners, students then have to group them into pairs by writing the appropriate numbers in the spaces that follow. Go over the answers with them.
2. Then, students should try to describe what is going on in each case: Why are colons or semi-colons being used? What do they do in each sentence?
3. Next, give them the list of rules that follow, and have them try to match the rule to the sentence pairs. Then, go over the correct answers.
4. Finally, have students complete the review exercise questions at the end. Here, the sentences are **incorrect** and students have to first fix the error, and then name the rule that determines its usage.

Correct Sentences

1. Life is very short and uncertain; let us spend it as well as we can.
2. We regret that we have sold all the shirts in blue; however, we have lots in white.
3. He prefers any of four fruits for dessert: strawberries, grapes, pears, or watermelon.
4. The students chosen to represent the school were Nick Black, president of student council; Chris Thomas, president of the debating society; Jack Amis, captain of the basketball team; and Gene Toale, treasurer of the council.
5. Only one other possibility remains: to take the bus.
6. Grace did not attend the lecture; she went to the museum instead.

(cont'd)

Digesting Semi-colons and Colons (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

7. Scientists will have to tackle the energy problem head on; still, it will be years before we have a solution.
8. My aim in the course is easily stated: to pass.
9. Robertson Davies wrote a series of novels known as the *Deptford Trilogy: Fifth Business, The Manticore,* and *World of Wonders*.
10. The expert panel consisted of James Hilson, LL.B.; Rolando Ventela, M.Sc; and Anna Salieri, Ph.D.

A. Numbers _____ and _____ are alike because they:
The rule: _____

B. Numbers _____ and _____ are alike because they:
The rule: _____

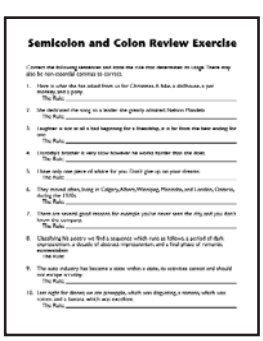
C. Numbers _____ and _____ are alike because they:
The rule: _____

D. Numbers _____ and _____ are alike because they:
The rule: _____

E. Numbers _____ and _____ are alike because they:
The rule: _____

THE RULES:

1. Semi-colon used to link two independent clauses with some relation to each other (1, 6)
(hint: the clauses on either side of the semi-colon must be complete sentences)
2. Semi-colon used to link two independent clauses with a conjunctive adverb. There is a comma after the conjunctive adverb. (2, 7)
(hint: this is similar to rule # 1, but the conjunctive adverb shows the relation between the clauses)
3. Colon used to introduce a list (3, 9)
4. Semi-colons used to separate items in a list in which there is already commas present (4, 10)
5. Colon used for emphasis to present an idea or detail (5, 8)


Semicolon and Colon Review Exercise

Semi-colon and Colon Review Exercise

Correct the following sentences and state the rule that determines its usage. There may also be non-essential commas to correct.

1. Here is what she has asked from us for Christmas. A bike, a dollhouse, a pet monkey, and a pony.
   The Rule: _____

2. She dedicated the song to a leader she greatly admired; Nelson Mandela
   The Rule: _____

3. Laughter is not at all a bad beginning for a friendship, it is far from the best ending for one.
   The Rule: _____

4. Dorothy's brother is very slow however he works harder than she does.
   The Rule: _____

5. I have only one piece of advice for you. Don't give up on your dreams.
   The Rule: _____

6. They moved often, living in Calgary, Albert, Winnipeg, Manitoba, and London, Ontario, during the 1970s.
   The Rule: _____

7. There are several good reasons for example you've never seen the city, and you don't know the company.
   The Rule: _____

8. Classifying his poetry we find a sequence which runs as follows, a period of dark expressionism, a decade of abstract impressionism, and a final phase of romantic existentialism
   The Rule: _____

9. The auto industry has become a state within a state, its activities cannot and should not escape scrutiny.
   The Rule: _____

10. Last night for dinner, we ate pineapple, which was disgusting, a tomato, which was rotten, and a banana, which was excellent.
    The Rule: _____

Editing Etiquette

One way to discourage young writers is to drown their work in a sea of red ink. Writing is an extension of ourselves and all writers can be sensitive to even well-intentioned feedback. Developing writers, especially struggling ones, are highly fragile, and overdoing error correction is counteractive to their progress. The purpose of this activity is for students to learn to develop sensitivity and use appropriate questions and comments when editing with a peer (or teacher). Above all, respect for the writer and their work is paramount to an effective editing process.

Writing Skills

8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Have students brainstorm some editing comments that could be considered constructive and others that might be perceived as criticism. Ask students to work in partners, make two columns to separate the comments and discuss the differences between constructive feedback and criticism. By doing this, the concept of constructive feedback is illustrated through contrast to criticism. It might be useful to have students discuss their decisions with the whole class.
2. Model editing etiquette for the students using an anonymous piece of writing, possibly one created by you. The purpose for using the anonymous piece is to encourage more honest feedback from students. Use a Think-Aloud approach to model the editing process for the students. Ask questions and share thoughts from the reader's perspective. These might include the following:
   - What is this piece of writing going to be about?
   - What proof does the writer use to support their topic sentence/thesis statement?
   - Is this the best word to use? What is the writer trying to say?
   - What information do I need to understand this discussion?
   - I really like this sentence. It is really clear/beautiful/important.
   - Does this work?
   - What is this paragraph about? How does this fit the overall discussion?
   - Why is this important?
   - What life lesson can be learned from this?
   - This sentence really explains the background to what the character says. I understand this much better than the last point.
   - How important is this information to the story?

(cont'd)

Editing Etiquette (cont'd)

Teaching the Activity

Underline key words or phrases that aid or impede understanding and appreciation of the piece as they are discussed. This will help student understanding.

3. Ask students to get into partners. Have each partnership share one thing that they liked about the writing ('star') and have them offer one suggestion ('wish') for improvement. Write all the students responses on the board as either a 'star' or a 'wish'.
4. Tell the students that editors cannot comment on everything and often must choose to make only the most important comments. Have the class discuss the comments on the board and decide upon two 'stars' and one 'wish'. Prompt students to defend their choices by asking questions like:
    - Which 'star' has the biggest impact on the success of the writing?
    - Which 'star' is the best example of something good that makes the piece unique to the writer?
    - Which 'wish' would make the biggest difference to the reader's understanding of the writing?
    - Which 'wish' would make the biggest difference to the style of the piece of writing?
5. Invite the students to choose a piece of writing for which they would like feedback.
6. Pair students up, reminding them to focus on two positive aspects of the writing and one aspect that needs improvement.
7. Have the students read their partner's writing. Have each editor write their positive comments and suggestions for improvement on sticky notes or a separate piece of paper to attach to the draft copy. This is a more respectful way to deliver constructive feedback.

Variations/Extensions

- Have student volunteers role-play the comments from their list of constructive comments and criticisms. Students should read each comment with the voice and facial expression/action that they feel accompanies it. This highlights the emotional interpretation that accompanies commentary, whether intended or not. Students can create and present these role-play commentaries in partners or small groups. Discussion can take place as a class or as the teacher visits each group.
- Have each student editor read the 'star' and 'wish' comments aloud to the student writer that they are paired with. This will help students to think about the phrasing of the comments that they make as it is more difficult to make comments directly to a person versus a piece of paper. Commenting directly to a person results in more empathetic and positive feedback

Fixer-Uppers: Editing Quotations and Citations

The purpose of this activity is to have students edit quotations to learn more about and practice the proper integration and citation of quotations, and to practice revising these. This activity also explicitly demonstrates the meta-cognitive process that writers undergo when revising and editing their own work.

Writing Skills

2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Model the activity for students by placing a sample quotation on the overhead. Use a Think-Aloud approach as you read and revise the quotation.

   Ask questions like:
   - Is the quotation part of one of the writer's own sentences?
   - Is the quotation confusing? Does the quotation need to be shorter or longer for it to make sense?
   - Does the entire sentence (quotation and all) make sense? Is it understandable?
   - What are the most important words in the quotation?
   - Who says the quotation?
   - Who or what is the quotation about?
   - What is happening in the story when the quotation occurs?
   - Does the citation include the page of the story on which the quotation is found?
   - Does the author's last name need to be included in the citation?
   - Are grammatical rules followed within the quotation sentence?

2. Whenever a mistake is found, make a point-form note of the problem. Then, use those notes to help you revise the quotation and fix the problems.
3. Demonstrate at least two different ways that the quotation could be correctly fixed; this will show students that there are multiple variations of phrasing for correctly integrating quotations.
4. Distribute the handout Using Quotations on p. 170. Read aloud the directions to the activity and have students complete the activity. This can be done individually or in pairs.
5. Assign each pair a specific quotation to share with the class during discussion.
6. Discuss the improved quotations as a class.

Independent Corrections and Spelling Gremlins

The ability for students to take ownership over their editing is every writing teacher's goal. This activity helps to foster student awareness of common errors and to gain independence with their editing skills through gradual release of responsibility. When students are able to record their language errors and corrections on a master sheet, they can recognize recurring patterns of errors, and are then able to focus on areas of greatest need. On subsequent assignments, students can refer to their correction logs and Spelling Gremlin sheets to then edit for the errors they typically make.

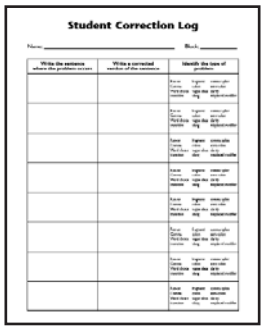
This process can be integrated into most writing assignments as part of the editing and drafting process.

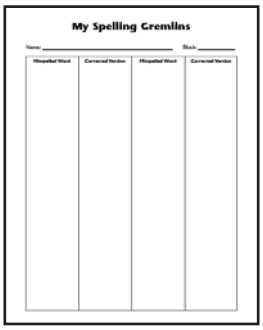
Writing Skills

8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. The best way to initiate this activity is to begin with an initial writing sample or a preliminary assignment. The teacher then circles the language, grammar, and spelling errors, but does not correct them. Students then have to determine each error that has been identified. In some cases, there may need to be clues given by the teacher as to the type of error being made, especially if it is the beginning of the year, and it may be worthwhile to also introduce students to various marking symbols that might be used.
2. Hand out copies of the Student Correction Log and Spelling Gremlins handouts.
3. Students then record their errors on the Correction Log sheet and the Spelling Gremlins sheet.
4. The sheets are then used in subsequent writing assignments as part of the editing process.
5. Another approach is to make reference to the errors on the marking rubric or the comments, and then have the students find the errors in the writing.


Student Correction Log


My Spelling Gremlins

Student Correction Log

Name: _____ Block: _____

Write the sentence where the problem occurs	Write a corrected version of the sentence	Identify the type of problem
		Run-on fragment comma splice Comma colon semi-colon Word choice vague ideas clarity transition slang misplaced modifier
		Run-on fragment comma splice Comma colon semi-colon Word choice vague ideas clarity transition slang misplaced modifier
		Run-on fragment comma splice Comma colon semi-colon Word choice vague ideas clarity transition slang misplaced modifier
		Run-on fragment comma splice Comma colon semi-colon Word choice vague ideas clarity transition slang misplaced modifier
		Run-on fragment comma splice Comma colon semi-colon Word choice vague ideas clarity transition slang misplaced modifier
		Run-on fragment comma splice Comma colon semi-colon Word choice vague ideas clarity transition slang misplaced modifier
		Run-on fragment comma splice Comma colon semi-colon Word choice vague ideas clarity transition slang misplaced modifier
		Run-on fragment comma splice Comma colon semi-colon Word choice vague ideas clarity transition slang misplaced modifier

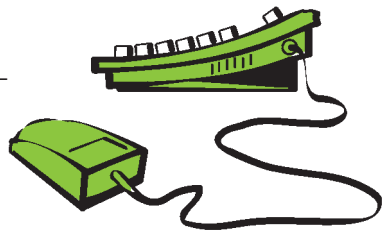
My Spelling Gremlins

Name: _____ Block: _____

Misspelled Word	Corrected Version	Misspelled Word	Corrected Version

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Writer's Notes



Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Assessment

Assessment

"The key to assessment is the word itself. It comes from the Latin verb "assidire": to sit beside. We are not ranking here. We are sitting beside a piece of writing and observing its qualities. We are finding a common language to talk about those qualities."

Barry Lane (1996)

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT WRITING

Teaching and assessment must be closely connected. Formative assessment of student writing helps guide teachers in their practice by identifying the writing skills students need to improve upon. Assessment for learning also helps teachers to determine the types of literature they will read/model in class, the design of mini-lessons, the creation of instructional activities, and the development of further writing assignments that will help students grow in their craft.

When assigning a writing exercise, the objectives of the writing assignment should be clearly linked to improving specific writing skills; the assessment of the same writing assignment should focus primarily on those targeted writing skills. Assessing the writing for elements other than the agreed upon criteria (e.g. lateness, effort, etc.) is not beneficial for learning or developing adolescent writers' self-esteem. The focus for formative assessment of student writing should remain solely on the written expression.

When teachers provide students with explicit criteria for assessment of their writing, both teaching and learning are simplified and students will have a clearer understanding of what is needed for fully meeting expectations. Furthermore, inviting the students to co-establish the assessment criterion allows both the teacher and students to be actively engaged in the assessment process. Providing students with effective writing samples and explicitly modelling how one achieves the desired effect will help guide students as well. Criteria for successful writing should be discussed with students prior to the assignment and clearly laid out in the form of checklists or rubrics. Students should also be encouraged to develop peer and self-assessment skills which help them to critique their own work.

Assessment

Principles of Assessment

Stepping Out, Writing: Teacher's Resource (2008) outlines five principles of assessment. Any assessment of writing should be:

Valid:	it provides information on the actual products expected of students.
Educative:	it provides a positive contribution to student learning.
Explicit:	the criteria are clear and specific so that the basis for judgments is clear.
Fair:	it seeks to address only the tasks, ideas, and skills that have been taught. In this manner, it excludes extraneous issues like lateness or behaviour.
Comprehensive:	judgments on student progress are based on as much evidence as possible. (Pearson 42)

The Challenges of Assessment

In *Start Where They Are: Characteristics of Young Adolescents* (2008), author Karen Hume explains that adolescent learners are incredibly diverse in their ability, maturity, and emotional levels. The assessment process is therefore an emotionally fraught endeavour that may be met with resistance and feelings of insecurity and doubt.

As well, teachers are often faced with such a wide range of student writing abilities that knowing how to respond with assessments can be a confusing process that at times seems to almost necessitate a completely differentiated approach. The one central and unifying mantra to keep in mind, however, is that everyone can and will improve.

The Importance of the Draft

The most meaningful type of assessment, particularly for longer assignments, is often ongoing feedback that gives suggestions for corrections and revisions before a final grade is given (assessment *for* and *as* learning rather than *of* learning). This is usually the point at which the most meaningful growth can occur (Gallagher, 2006), especially if this 'mid-process check-up' does not award a mark, and if the feedback focusses on larger issues like structure, voice, and argument. In effect, ongoing assessment tries to ensure that there are 'no surprises' when the paper is handed in for the final time for a summative evaluation.

Assessment

TYPES OF ASSESSMENT

Formative Assessment *For* and *As* Learning

Formative assessment, which in its design and practice serves the purpose of promoting students' learning, is also described as *assessment for* and *as learning*. Differing from summative assessment, the goal of *assessment for* or *as learning* is to provide feedback which teachers and students can use to adapt or adjust their teaching/learning needs. In this way, assessment becomes an instructional tool that can be used to lead students on to the next stage of learning. Examples of *assessment for learning* might include:

- writing conferences and other informal conversations with students
- classroom observations
- prewriting activities with graphic organizers
- writing portfolios
- daily work
- checklists of student progress over time
- student reflections on writing
- writing journals
- goal-setting checklists
- written assignments
- peer and self-assessment

Assessment as learning emphasizes the role of student self-monitoring to take a deeper responsibility for their own development. The goal is to lead students to be their own 'best assessors.' When students personally monitor what they are learning, and use feedback from this information to make adjustments, adaptations, and changes in their own learning, they can begin to take responsibility for their learning progress.

Summative Assessment *Of* Learning

Summative assessment is generally used to make a judgment after all the instruction has occurred and it is what teachers use to evaluate, grade, place, or promote students. Large-scale summative assessments include provincial examinations or standardized tests such as the Foundation Skills Assessments (FSAs). While often predominant in schools, this type of *assessment of learning* provides limited feedback for students as it is primarily based on performance rather than process.

Assessment

The following table outlines the key differences between *assessment for, as*, and *of learning*.

	ASSESSMENT *FOR* LEARNING	ASSESSMENT *AS* LEARNING	ASSESSMENT *OF* LEARNING
TYPE	FORMATIVE	FORMATIVE	SUMMATIVE
PURPOSE	• To access information about students' learning • To inform teachers' instructional decisions • To highlight individual students' strengths and weaknesses	• To empower students to personally monitor their own learning and make adjustments, adaptations, and changes that enable further growth • To lead students to be their own best assessors • To increase self-motivation	• To make judgments about placement, promotion, credentials, etc. • Signals student's relative position compared to peers
FOCUS	• Teachers use knowledge of their students' learning needs to plan further instruction • Descriptions that can be used to lead students to the next step of learning	• Students' individual learning process (comparison with other students is irrelevant)	• A judgment of students' final work
FORM	• Observations • Daily work/assignments, • Questioning • Student-teacher conferences • Portfolios • Collections of artifacts • Progress checklists, etc.	• Routine self-monitoring in relation to set criteria/objectives • Record keeping such as files or portfolios	• Tests or exams based on materials covered in unit • Provincial exams • FSAs • Results expressed symbolically in marks or grades • Holistic rubrics that report overall quality or proficiency
USE	• To provide useful feedback that will further student learning through informed instruction	• To aid students in setting personal goals, targets, and aspirations that are visible and concrete	• To certify learning for reporting on students' progress for parents • Assessing student performance and abilities based on standardized criterion (e.g. PLOs and Performance Standards)

Formative Assessment

"Teaching writing is a matter of faith. We demonstrate that faith when we listen well, when we refer to our students as writers, when we expect them to love writing and to pour heart and soul into it"

Lucy Calkins (1994)

Responding to Students' Writing

Responding to students' writing is an integral part of the assessment and teaching of writing. Responses may be written or oral, verbal, or non-verbal. Responses to students' writing, whether made by the teacher, peer, or in self-talk, have the potential to motivate, inspire, direct, and instruct.

In responding to student writing and in the assessment process, it is important to make a distinction between the substantive components of writing and language level editing (Gallagher, 2006). Traditionally, responses to students' writing have focussed immediately and often exclusively on editing the conventions of writing (spelling, grammar, etc.). Researchers and teachers now agree that greater improvement in overall writing ability is associated with a focus on meaning (the ability to communicate clearly) in the first stages of writing. Revisions made to meaning, particularly in the beginning of the writing process, often involve cutting and/or re-writing sections of text. Therefore, time spent correcting convention errors at the beginning stages of revision may be time wasted if those sections are later deleted from the text. The following order is recommended when providing feedback to students on their writing.

Stage One: REVISING

1. Provide feedback and suggestions on aspects of Meaning* and Style* and encourage students to revise their work.
2. Provide feedback and suggestions on aspects of Form* and encourage students to revise their work.

Stage Two: EDITING

1. Provide feedback and suggestions on aspects of Conventions* (spelling, punctuation, grammatical errors) and encourage students to proofread and edit their work.

*Refer to the B.C. Performance Standards for more information on these aspects of writing.

Formative Assessment

The table below lists some traditional responses or feedback to student writing, and offers suggestions for adjusting those responses to have the most positive effect possible on students' development as writers.

Types of Responses to Student Writing

Traditional Type of Response/Feedback	Negative Effect on Student Writing	Suggested Response/Feedback	Positive Effect on Student Writing
• Commenting on or marking every error in a student's written work • Making comments on aspects outside of the context of the assignment criteria • Providing more commentary than students can handle • Writing comments in a negative tone, with little praise given	• Students will find this type of feedback unfair • Students may be discouraged and learn to write less so there are fewer errors to correct next time • Students may not revise at all because the task seems daunting or not worth while	• Give praise and comment first on what the student is able to do well • Comment on only those aspects of a student's writing that are specific to the lesson goals (established criteria for the assignment), or to the individual needs of the writer (specific writing goals)	• Improves students' confidence in their own ability • Helps students recognize their strengths as writers • Allows students to focus on specific writing skills • Encourages students to take greater risks in their writing
• Teachers imposing their own revisions on students' writing • Correcting students' errors for them	• Overthrows students' voice as a writer; students lose confidence in their ability to write • Students may depend on the teacher to correct all their errors and do the writing for them	• Indicate passages/words that should be revised • Offer suggestions to guide the student in revising the text (e.g. *"Can you think of some words to describe the dog in your story?" "What other words could you use instead of 'said'?"*	• Enhances student learning since improvements in writing are associated with students making their own revisions and playing with meaning
• Short, vague, or one-word comments that do not offer any strategies for revision (e.g. *'Unclear' 'Explain' 'Be more specific' or 'More detailed')*	• Students may have difficulty interpreting the response • Students have little or no direction for making revisions	• Provide comments to students' writing that are clear and text specific; quote student's writing within your comment	• Students will understand exactly what they need to do and to focus on in their revisions
• General praise or criticism in the form of hollow and impersonal comments (e.g. *'Well done!' 'Good job!' 'Good effort!' or 'You can do better!'* • Letter grades with a brief comment (e.g. *'Great improvement!')*	• Students will not feel respected as writers • Students will have little or no direction for setting goals and improving their writing • Students may resent the grade if no explanation or rationale is provided • Students may become distrustful and confused if your comments seem to imply that the letter grade is based on a lack of effort on their part	• Provide sincere, truthful, and individualized comments that are specific to the student's own writing and 'voice' • Refrain from adding a written comment beside a letter grade. Let the grade stand on its own	• Students will feel appreciated and respected as 'real writers' • Students will feel that assessment of their writing is individualized and 'fair'

Formative Assessment

Descriptive Written Feedback to Student Writing

Franklin (2005) emphasizes the importance of formative assessment in the classroom. He argues that schools spend too much time on summative assessment (testing, grading, reporting, etc.) and not enough time on formative assessment, which he considers "the most essential element of classroom work to raise standards of achievement."

Pages filled with red pen, or accompanied by circled rubrics, one-word comments, or letter grades, do not provide the information students need to grow as writers. In order to improve in their writing, students need clear and specific feedback from teachers (or peers) about what they are doing well and what exactly they need to revise or edit. Descriptive feedback should be both supportive in that it points out the strong elements of the writing, and also instructive in that it offers clear and specific ways in which the writer can improve the piece.

Other Suggestions for Responding to Students' Writing

1. **Get to Know your Students as Writers:**
   - Invite them into conversations about their writing.
   - Conduct regular Writing Conferences with students.
   - Give students frequent opportunities to share what they are currently working on in their own writing (e.g. weekly reflections on writing, writing journals, goal-setting in the revision process).

2. **Model and Discuss Good Writing Regularly:**
   - Discuss what you notice authors do in their writing when reading aloud to students and make links to what you have noticed in your students' writing.
   - Talk about what you want students to focus on when writing.
   - Generate a growing bank of writing tips or word walls for students to refer to, and post them in class.

3. **Build a Community of Trust:**
   - Write when your students write; become a part of the community of writers in your class.
   - Provide opportunities for students to share their writing with others, but give them the 'right to pass' if they are not comfortable or ready to make their writing public.
   - Provide students with a list of respectful responses for commenting on peers' writing, and model how to phrase suggestions and feedback.
   - Consider using a separate piece of paper or large post-it pads to write feedback comments on, instead of writing on the students' page. This approach does not take up space on the student's page that might be needed for re-writing sections, nor does it infringe on their writing.

Other Suggestions for Responding to Students' Writing (cont'd)

4. **Make Students Accountable for Making Revisions:**
   - Ask students to make changes to their writing in a different-coloured pen so that the changes they make stand out from the original text.
   - Have students explain revisions to their writing during writing conferences.

5. **Make Revising a Manageable Task for All Students:**
   - Vary the kind and amount of feedback you give, depending on students' experience with revising, their ability as writers, their attitude towards writing and their tolerance for revising.
   - Ask mid to high-level writers, with experience revising and a positive attitude toward writing, to make changes on three or four aspects of their writing.
   - Ask less capable or 'reluctant' writers in your class to revise only one aspect of their writing at a time; provide specific instructions and guidance on how to make the revisions.
   - Conduct whole class 'mini-lessons' where all students revise the same aspect in their writing with modelling by the teacher, or through small group instruction.
   - Allow students to type their first or second drafts on the computer to make revisions easier and less time consuming.

"As with revision, do not insist that students edit everything they write. There are important – even critical – times to edit, and, realistically, there are times when editing is as unimportant as dusting every piece of furniture in your house every day. When we insist on compulsive behavior, we get what we ask for: students who, to survive, will keep their text short, simple and barren of meaning."

Vicki Spandel (2001)

Summative Assessment

Performance Standards

The assessment of writing is often thought of as being notoriously subjective, yet it does not have to be that way. Should it not be possible for a teacher to identify the criteria of an assignment, to design the delivery of instruction based on the criteria, and to gear assessment towards the instruction and the criteria? Ken O'Connor in *How to Grade for Learning* (2002) notes that "teachers should use criterion based . . . performance standards that are public, based on expert knowledge, clearly stated in words or numbers, and are supported by exemplars or models" (O'Connor 79).

The BC Performance Standards are an excellent resource for teachers. They were developed for the purpose of describing standards and expectations at each grade level in specific areas of learning in order to establish some consistency across the province. BC Performance Standards support criterion-referenced assessment and evaluation practices and were developed to be used as a resource and reference point for planning and guiding instruction and developing assignment-specific criteria and grading rubrics.

The BC Performance Standards are of most value if the criteria are translated into student-friendly language and used as a regular part of curriculum instruction. When using the following BC Performance Standards to evaluate student writing, the rubrics should be modified to reflect the specific criteria of the given assignment and the teaching/learning that has gone on in the classroom. In the process of modification or creation of an assignment-specific rubric, the standards listed in the BC Performance Standards rubrics guide teachers in setting up grade-level expectations.

Source: ***http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/using.htm***

Summative Assessment

The Use of Exemplars

Use of student exemplars is invaluable not only for students to see what is required of an assignment, but to remind teachers of what it is they are looking for in a particular task. "Teachers have to provide clarity and consistency…then students know what is expected and have some chance of producing it" (O'Connor 79). Ideally, teachers should cultivate a collection of student samples for writing assignments, and not just at the high levels of achievement. It is also important for students to see the differences between proficient work and work that meets expectations but does not exceed them.

In British Columbia, the Ministry of Education provides exemplars of student writing from the English 10 and 12 final exams, and these are often valuable resources for students to gauge the range of writing abilities in samples of writing. Go to ***http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/exams/welcome.htm***

Independent Corrections

The traditional process of a teacher correcting language level and punctuation errors during the assessment process has limited use in that students can not only become overwhelmed, but can also become disempowered and disenfranchised because they are not active participants in the correction process.

One solution to this is to circle errors, but not correct them; an excellent and more meaningful alternative to this is to have students record their own errors, which can then be consulted prior to the final draft or subsequent assignment. See Independent Corrections Graphic Organizer in the Editing section on p. 292. Likewise, having students keep a list of their most common spelling errors is an individualized approach to the instruction of spelling. See the Spelling Gremlins Graphic Organizer in the Editing Section on p. 294.

The more teachers can do to encourage students to take ownership (and gain awareness) of self-correction, the greater success students will achieve.

Summative Assessment

Rubrics Versus Holistic Grading Scales

The ubiquitous six-point grading scale is a good way to quickly judge the proficiency level of student writing in a summative format (assessment of learning), and, for these reasons, it is used in the marking of the provincial exams in British Columbia. However, the six-point scales provide little or no feedback on the specific strengths and weaknesses in a piece of student writing. For example, a paper receiving five out of six might have a strong argument, but a lack of flow, or vice versa. For this reason, rubrics specific to a writing task are much better suited to providing detailed feedback to students: they allow students to see the different components of writing, and to plan their learning according to their areas of need. For rubrics to be truly effective, however, students must be literate in their use and it is, therefore, very helpful to have students use a rubric to assess ungraded/anonymous student exemplars before they will have their own writing assessed with the rubric. This is often best done as a small group activity. Students can also be involved in the creation of rubrics.

Another form of summative assessment is a checklist which can quickly assess the features of a piece of writing. Please see the Essay Assessment checklist on the following pages as an example.

The Key Components of Writing Rubrics:

Although rubrics can vary tremendously in their scope and specificity, depending on the task at hand, there are common key elements in any piece of writing:

Argument/Level of Detail:	Does the writer offer detailed and meaningful insights?
Voice/Style/Flow:	Does the writer express his/her ideas in a fluent and stylized manner that exhibits a strong command of language?
Corrections/Language Conventions:	Is the writing free of language-level errors in punctuation, sentence mechanics, and spelling?
Formatting/Organization:	Does the writing follow a logical method of development and organization?
Referencing: (for literary writing)	Does the writing support its claims through the use of appropriate and specific references to the text in question?

The following pages contain examples of sample rubrics for general writing assignments.

Essay Assessment

Name: _____

1. Is your essay persuasive? **Arguments** used to support your thesis are
   - ❒ highly persuasive, refreshingly original and very intelligent.
   - ❒ reasonably persuasive; are occasionally predictable but are accurate and show thought.
   - ❒ somewhat persuasive in places but somewhat weak in others; occasionally are repetitive, forced, or inaccurate.

2. The **quotations** you used to support your thesis are
   - ❒ well integrated and well-chosen.
   - ❒ appropriate but not always well-integrated.
   - ❒ too numerous; rely mostly on your own words for legitimacy.
   - ❒ lacking; more quotations would add further validity to your ideas.
   - ❒ non-existent and needed.
   - ❒ not required for this assignment.

3. The **transition words/phrases** that you use between paragraphs are
   - ❒ sophisticated and effective; they smoothly move essay forward.
   - ❒ predictable but successful in bringing the reader 'along'.
   - ❒ missing; they are needed to persuasively move your arguments forward.

4. Have you mastered your essay's all-important **thesis statement?**
   - ❒ thesis statement is accurately found at the end of your introduction, is specific, arguable, and integrated throughout your essay.
   - ❒ thesis is accurately placed, but is not as powerful as it could be.
   - ❒ thesis is not completely clear to the reader; be specific.
   - ❒ thesis statement is incorrectly placed or missing.

5. Have you let your reader know of the **three key support points** that you will use to defend your thesis statement in your introduction?
   - ❒ a minimum of 3 points are there, and they are elaborated upon in the body of your essay.
   - ❒ less than three support points are readily apparent in your introduction.
   - ❒ support points are there but they are repetitive or not clear.
   - ❒ you have not included any indication of the arguments you will use to support your thesis in your introduction; this is a serious error in essay writing.

6. The **opening line** of your essay
   - ❒ is compelling and original.
   - ❒ is somewhat predictable but appropriately general and on topic.
   - ❒ needs work.

(cont'd)

Essay Assessment (cont'd)

Name: _____

7. Your all-critical **vocabulary** use
   - ❒ is sophisticated, compelling, and refreshing; your writing 'sings'! shows deliberately manipulated diction for strong effect.
   - ❒ is impressive in places and reasonable in others.
   - ❒ is accurate but often predictable; consciously work on adding more specific, descriptive, and interesting words to your writing.

8. **Topic sentences** are critical to strong essay writing.
   - ❒ you begin your body paragraphs with specific, arguable topic sentences.
   - ❒ some of your body paragraphs do not start with a topic sentence. (this is a serious error in essay writing; work on mastering this skill)
   - ❒ errors include topic sentences that are too broad ❒, are a question ❒, are a quotation ❒, or are a fact that's not debatable.

9. The **tone** of your essay
   - ❒ is appropriately formal and doesn't use the 1st person 'I'.
   - ❒ occasionally slides into slang/colloquial expressions.
   - ❒ is occasionally personal when it needs to be formal; never use phrases like 'I think', 'I believe', or 'I feel'. The reader already knows what you think/believe/or feel simply by reading your essay.

10. The **content** of your essay is
    - ❒ excellent; you have included much solid evidence of depth and originality.
    - ❒ decent; you have included a reasonable amount of support material but some of it is predictable; always strive to include your most interesting, compelling arguments.
    - ❒ somewhat lacking; even more solid evidence from the text is needed to back up your thesis. This will make your essay more persuasive.
    - ❒ occasionally off-topic; every sentence must add to your thesis. Do not bother with 'filler' material (like rehashing plot) that does not deal directly with your thesis. Detailed analysis is key.

11. **Grammatically** speaking, your essay is
    - ❒ excellent; it's all but error free.
    - ❒ solid; your occasional errors do not overwhelm the reader.
    - ❒ somewhat shaky in several places; this is distracting to the reader.
    - ❒ weak; significant errors are being made. Proofreading is not obvious. You need to master some key grammatical rules.

Sample Rubric – Compare/Contrast Essay

Aspect	Does Not Meet Expectations	Minimally Meets Expectations	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Snapshot (Overall impression)	• Writing displays significant problems.	• Writing is generally clear, but may not be effective.	• Writing is clear and effective.	• Writing is sophisticated and engaging.
Meaning *Thesis should list the areas that will be contrasted and give a statement about how the two elements are alike or different.	• Weak thesis. • Demonstrates no understanding of the two elements and how they compare/contrast each other. • No details or examples to support ideas.	• Unclear thesis. • Limited understanding of the two elements and how they compare/contrast each other. • Few details or examples to support ideas.	• Clear thesis. • General understanding of the two elements and how they compare/contrast each other. • Logically supports ideas with details, examples and quotations.	• Meaningful thesis. Clear understanding of the two elements and how they compare/contrast each other. • Thoroughly and effectively supports ideas with details and examples and quotations.
Style	• No sentence variety. • Limited vocabulary. • No sense of audience.	• Few types of sentences. • Predictable language. • Some sense of audience.	• Variety of sentence types. • Some descriptive language. • General sense of audience.	• Variety of sentence types. • Precise, descriptive language. • Clear sense of audience.
Form	• Lacks organization. • No transitions.	• Some organization. • Uses categories to compare/contrast elements. • Few transitions.	• Effective organization. • Uses three specific categories to compare/contrast elements. • Some transitions.	• Sophisticated organization. • Uses three specific categories to compare/contrast elements. • Smooth and varied transitions.
Conventions	• Frequent errors. • Significant problems with spelling and grammar that interfere with meaning.	• Some errors. • Errors distract the reader but do not interfere with meaning.	• Few errors. • Errors do not distract the reader or interfere with meaning.	• Few, if any errors.

Sample Rubric – Expository/Persuasive Paragraph

Aspect	Does Not Meet Expectations	Minimally Meets Expectations	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Snapshot (Overall impression)	• Significant problems with writing. • Purpose or meaning is unclear. • Writing is too brief.	• Writing is generally clear. • Development of ideas is lacking. • Limited knowledge of vocabulary and conventions of language.	• Writing is clear and logical. • Ideas show depth. • Good variety in vocabulary and stylistic techniques.	• Writing is sophisticated and mature. • Ideas are complex and original. • Variety of stylistic techniques used for effect.
Meaning (purpose, ideas, information, details, sources)	• Purpose is unclear. • Few relevant details and examples.	• Purpose is clear. • Some relevant details and examples.	• Purpose is clear. • Supporting details and examples are relevant and explained in detail.	• Purpose is clear. • Supporting details and examples are sophisticated and original.
Style (word choice, sentence structure, variety)	• Basic vocabulary. • Simple sentences. • May use inappropriate tone or language.	• Straightforward vocabulary. • Some sentence variety. • May attempt to use stylistic techniques.	• Varied and appropriate vocabulary. • Effective sentence structure. • Uses stylistic techniques. • Generally maintains flow of ideas by incorporating quotations into text.	• Precise and concise language. • Sophisticated sentence structure. • Effective use of stylistic techniques. • Maintains flow of ideas by incorporating quotations into text.
Form (topic sentence, organization, concluding statement, transitions)	• Little evidence of organization. • Few transitions.	• Organizational sequence is logical but may lack direction. • Some transitions.	• Clear organization. • Transitions effectively connect ideas.	• Strong organization. • Smooth and integrated transitions.
Conventions (spelling, punctuation)	• Frequent errors. • Significant problems with spelling and grammar that interfere with meaning.	• Some errors. • Errors distract the reader but do not interfere with meaning.	• Few errors. • Errors do not distract the reader or interfere with meaning.	• Few, if any errors.

Sample Rubric – Expository/Persuasive Essay

Aspect	Does Not Meet Expectations	Minimally Meets Expectations	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Snapshot (Overall impression)	• Significant problems with writing. • Purpose or meaning is unclear. • Writing is too brief.	• Writing is generally clear. • Development of ideas is lacking. • Limited knowledge of vocabulary and conventions of language.	• Writing is clear and logical. • Ideas show depth. • Good variety in vocabulary and stylistic techniques.	• Writing is sophisticated and mature. • Ideas are complex and original. • Variety of stylistic techniques used for effect.
Meaning (purpose, ideas, information, details, sources)	• Purpose is unclear. • Few relevant details and examples. • Little/no use of text quotes.	• Opening establishes a thesis. • Some relevant details and examples. May support some details with text quotes.	• Opening establishes a clear thesis. • Supporting details and examples are relevant and explained in detail. • Details are supported by text quotes.	• Opening establishes an engaging thesis. • Supporting details and examples are sophisticated and original. Details are uniquely supported by text quotes.
Style (word choice, sentence structure, variety,clarity)	• Basic vocabulary. • Simple sentences. • May use inappropriate tone or language.	• Straightforward vocabulary. • Some sentence variety. • May attempt to use stylistic techniques.	• Varied and appropriate vocabulary. • Effective sentence structure. • Uses stylistic techniques. • Generally maintains flow of ideas by incorporating quotations into text.	• Precise and concise language. • Sophisticated sentence structure. • Effective use of stylistic techniques. • Maintains flow of ideas by incorporating quotations into text.
Form (introduction, organization, conclusion, transitions)	• Little evidence of organization. • Few transitions.	• Organizational sequence is logical but may lack direction. • Some transitions. • Conclusion is mechanical.	• Clear organization. • Transitions effectively connect ideas. • Conclusion clearly links to thesis.	• Strong organization. • Smooth and integrated transitions. • Conclusion clearly links to thesis and is thought-provoking.
Conventions (spelling, punctuation)	• Frequent errors. • Significant problems with spelling and grammar that interfere with meaning.	• Some errors. • Errors distract the reader but do not interfere with meaning.	• Few errors. • Errors do not distract the reader or interfere with meaning.	• Few, if any errors.

Sample Rubric – Narrative Essay

Aspect	Does Not Meet Expectations	Minimally Meets Expectations	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Snapshot (Overall impression)	• Writing displays significant problems.	• Writing is generally clear, but may not be effective.	• Writing is clear and effective.	• Writing is sophisticated and engaging.
Meaning	• Does not introduce setting or characters. • Does not demonstrate understanding of plot line. • Lacks basic elements of a narrative.	• Tells a story that attempts to develop a plot line. • Loosely developed introduction, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution.	• Tells a story that contains an effective plot line including an introduction, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution.	• Tells a story that contains an effective and thoroughly developed plot line, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution.
Style	• No sense of audience. • No sentence variety. • Limited vocabulary.	• Little sense of audience. • Few types of sentences. • Predictable language.	• General sense of audience. • Variety of sentence types. • Uses descriptive language.	• Clear sense of audience. • Variety of sentence types. • Precise, descriptive language.
Form	• Lacks organization. • May contain multiple paragraphs. • No transitions.	• Competent organization. • Lacks effective transitions and variety.	• Effective organization. • Essay has a clear beginning, middle and end. • Transitions are effective.	• Sophisticated organization. • Logically developed beginning, middle and end. • Transitions are varied and effective.
Conventions	• Frequent errors. • Significant problems with spelling and grammar that interfere with meaning.	• Some errors. • Errors distract the reader but do not interfere with meaning.	• Few errors. • Errors do not distract the reader or interfere with meaning.	• Few, if any errors.

Sample Rubric – Research Essay

Aspect	Does Not Meet Expectations	Minimally Meets Expectations	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Snapshot (Overall impression)	• Writing displays significant problems.	• Writing is generally clear, but may not be effective.	• Writing is clear and effective.	• Writing is sophisticated and engaging.
Meaning	• Weak thesis. • Does not state research question. • No details to support ideas or answer research question.	• Unclear thesis. • May identify three main points of support. Content is occasionally synthesized from several sources. • Limited evidence.	• Clear thesis. • Effectively identifies three main points of support. • Content is synthesized from several sources. • Uses primary and secondary sources.	• Sophisticated thesis. • Clearly identifies the main points of support. Content effectively synthesized from several sources. • Uses primary and secondary sources.
Style	• Limited vocabulary. • No sentence variety.	• Predictable language. • Some sentence variety.	• Effective vocabulary. • Variety of sentence types. Generally maintains flow of ideas by incorporating quotations and citations into text.	• Precise vocabulary. • Variety of sentence types. • Maintains flow of ideas by incorporating quotations and citations into text.
Form	• Lacks organization. • No transitions.	• Some organization. • Attempts to develop an introduction and body, but may lack a conclusion. Few transitions.	• Effective organization. • Competently develops an introduction, body and conclusion. • Some transitions.	• Sophisticated organization. • Logically develops an introduction, body and conclusion. • Smooth and varied transitions.
Conventions	• Frequent errors. • Significant problems with spelling and grammar that interfere with meaning. • Does not contain a bibliography. MLA guidelines are not followed.	• Some errors. • Errors distract the reader but do not interfere with meaning. Limited bibliography. • Attempts to use MLA guidelines.	• Few errors. • Errors do not distract the reader or interfere with meaning. Effective bibliography. MLA guidelines are followed with few errors.	• Few, if any errors. • Effective bibliography that includes a variety of sources. MLA guidelines are followed.

Sample Rubric – Descriptive Essay

Aspect	Does Not Meet Expectations	Minimally Meets Expectations	Fully Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
Snapshot (Overall impression)	• Writing displays significant problems.	• Writing is generally clear, but may not be effective.	• Writing is clear and effective.	• Writing is sophisticated and engaging.
Meaning	• Weak thesis. • Does not mention what will be described. • Details do not support the thesis and they lack descriptive language.	• Unclear thesis. • Attempts to state what will be described, but does not capture the reader's attention. • Details vaguely describe the subject and writer may attempt to use descriptive language.	• Clear thesis. • Specifically states what will be described and attempts to grab the reader's attention. • Effective details that include descriptive language.	• Sophisticated thesis. • Thoughtfully states what will be described and grabs the reader's attention. • Thorough and effective ideas that include descriptive language.
Style	• Limited vocabulary. • No sentence variety. • No use of poetic devices.	• Predictable language. • Little sentence variety. • Attempts to use poetic devices, but may do so incorrectly.	• Effective vocabulary. • Variety of sentence types. • Frequent, accurate use of poetic devices.	• Precise, descriptive vocabulary. • Variety of sentence types. • Effective, engaging use of poetic devices.
Form	• Lacks organization. • No transitions.	• Some organization. • Few transitions.	• Effective organization. • Some transitions.	• Sophisticated organization. • Smooth and varied transitions.
Conventions	• Frequent errors. • Significant problems with spelling and grammar that interfere with meaning.	• Some errors. • Errors distract the reader but do not interfere with meaning.	• Few errors. • Errors do not distract the reader or interfere with meaning.	• Few, if any errors.

Writer's Portfolio

There are many purposes for keeping a writer's journal. Many writers keep a journal to remember key ideas or phrases, inspirational quotes from other writers they admire, or to practice their technique. This writing journal is a culminating performance task – a way to apply what has been learned throughout a given language arts or writing course.

This is an opportunity to "publish" and visually illustrate 10 pieces of writing that students have written during the course. This is a culmination of learning and understanding of the different styles of writing. As a form of expression, the journal may include both written and visual components.

Writing Skills

1. I generate ideas in a variety of ways.
2. I organize my ideas based on my purpose for writing.
3. I use a variety of sentence lengths and patterns.
4. I write so my thoughts flow smoothly and are easy to read.
5. I carefully choose the most effective words to express my ideas.
6. I choose the tone and point of view that suit my writing purpose.
7. I use my personal style to make my writing unique.
8. I re-read, reflect, revise, and edit.

Teaching the Activity

1. Choose 10 pieces of writing that you have completed in class. You must include at least **one** of each of the following:

   - A descriptive paragraph
   - A short story
   - A persuasive essay
   - A letter
   - A personal narrative
   - An expository essay
   - A poem

2. Carefully revise, edit, and proofread each piece for "publication" quality.
3. Create a visual to represent each piece of writing. The visual could be a drawing, a painting, a collage etc.
4. The 10 pieces and 10 visuals must be displayed in a scrapbook. Create a visually appealing cover for the scrapbook that includes your name, course name, date, teacher's name, and a title for your selected works. Your scrapbook should also include a table of contents.
5. All work must be revised, edited, and presented in a professional manner.
6. Evaluation will be based on the quality of thought, development of ideas, organization, language conventions, and visual presentation.

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Professional Resources

Professional Resources

Armstrong, T. (2003). *The multiple intelligences of reading and writing: making the words come alive*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Atwell, N. (1990). *Coming to know: writing to learn in the intermediate grades*. Concord, ON: Irwin Publishing.

Atwell, N. (1998). *In the middle: new understandings about writing, reading and learning.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Barker, P. (Director). (1997). *Sitting on a story* [Documentary]. Canada: Moving Images.

BC Ministry of Education. (2007). *English language arts grades 8-12 IRP.* Ministry of Education. (Also available online at: bced.gov.bc.ca)

BC Ministry of Education. (2003). *ICT and the research quest model.* Retrieved June 3, 2008, from ***http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/technology/documents/request.pdf***

Brewster, Cori & Klump, J. (2004). *Writing to learn, learning to write: revisiting writing across the curriculum in northwest secondary schools*. Portland, OR: Northwest Educational Laboratory.

Browne, R. & King, D. (2004). *Self-editing for fiction writers* (second edition). NY: Harper Collins.

Calkins, L.M. (1994). *The art of teaching writing*. Toronto, ON: Irwin Publishing.

Calkins, L.M. (1991). *Living between the lines*. Toronto, ON: Irwin Publishing.

Chapman, C. & King, R. (2003). *Differentiating instructional strategies for writing in the content areas*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press Inc.

Culham, R. (2003). *6 + 1 Traits of writing: the complete guide, grades 3 and up*. New York: Scholastic Professional Books.

DeBolt, V. (1998). *Write! Cooperative learning and the writing process*. San Clemente, CA: Kagan Cooperative Learning.

Diederich, P.B. (1974). *Measuring growth in English.* Urbana, IL: National Council Teachers of English.

Elbow, P. & Belanoff, P. (2005). *A community of writers: a workshop course in writing* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Professional Resources

Fletcher, R. (1993). *What a writer needs.* NH: Heinemann.

Fox, K. (1990). *The reading-writing connection: writing activities based on selections from modern literature.* Glenview, IL: Lifelong Learning Books.

Gallager, K. (2006). *Teaching adolescent writers.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

Golding, W. (1954). *The Lord of the Flies.* London: Faber and Faber.

Gordon, W.J.J. (1961). *Synectics.* New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Graham, S. & Perin, D. (2007). *Writing next: effective strategies to improve writing of adolescents in middle and high schools.* New York: Alliance for Excellent Education.

Heacox, D. (2002). *Differentiating instruction in the regular classroom: how to reach and teach all learners, grades 3-12.* Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Heffernan, L. (2004). *Critical literacy and writer's workshop: bringing purpose and passion to student writing.* Newark, DE: International Reading Association, Inc.

Hume, K. (2008). *Start where they are: differentiating for success with the young adolescent.* Toronto, ON: Pearson Education Canada.

Jago, C. (2005). *Papers, papers, papers: an English teacher's survival guide.* Portsmouth, MN: Heinemann.

Jeroski, S. (2004). *Implementation of the wireless writing program.* Retrieved on Jun 5, 2008 from ***http://www.prn.bc.ca/documents/WWP/wwp2005.pdf***.

Kropp, P. & Jamison Rog, L. (2004). *The write genre: classroom activities and mini-lessons that promote writing with clarity, style and flashes of brilliance.* Markham, ON: Pembroke.

Leggo, C. (2000). *Inviting writing: 133 suggestions.* Update, BCTELA, vol. 43, No. 1. (workshop handout)

MacFarlane, N. & Serafini, F. (2006). *Reflections on literacy.* Toronto, ON: Pearson.

Marzano, R., Pickering, D., and Pollock, J. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: research-based strategies for increasing student achievement.* Alexandria, VA: McREL.

Professional Resources

Murray, D. (2005). *Write to learn.* Boston: Thomas Wadsworth.

O'Connor, K. (2002). *How to grade for learning: linking grades to standards*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Parker, J.F. (1990). *Workshops for active learning*. Delta, BC: JFP Productions.

Pirie, B. (1997). *Reshaping high school English.* Champaign, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.

Rog, L.J., & Kropp, Paul. (2004). *The write genre: classroom activities and mini-lessons that promote writing with clarity, style and flashes of brilliance*. Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers.

Rothstein, E. & Lauber, G. (2000). *Writing as learning: a content based approach*. Arlington Heights, IL: Skylight Professional Development.

Sizoo, B. (2001). *Teaching powerful writing.* New York, NY: Scholastic, Inc.

Spandel, V. & Stiggins, R.J. (1997). *Creating writers: linking writing assessment and instruction*. White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers USA.

Sweeney, C. (2006). *Guided writing, shared writing, interactive and modelled writing: practical strategies for beginning and developing writing*. Bellevue, WA: Bureau of Education and Research (workshop handout).

Tomlinson, C. (1999). *The differentiated classroom: responding to the needs of all learners*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Lisi, L. & Sacco, P. (Eds). (2004). *Helping students succeed: writing strategies*. North York, ON: York Catholic School District Board.

Vacca, R., Vacca, J. & Begoray, D. (2005). *Content area reading: literacy and learning across the curriculum*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Education Canada.

Well, J. & Reid, J. (2004). *Writing anchors*. Markham, ON: Pembroke Publishers Limited.

Western Australia Minister of Education and Training. (2008). *Stepping out: writing, constructing, and crafting meaning*. Toronto, ON: Pearson.

Worsham, S. (2001). *Essential ingredients: recipes for teaching writing*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Writing 44: A Core Writing Framework

Writer's Notes