

I

# writeShop®

**5th  
Edition**

## Student Workbook



an incremental writing program

Kim Kautzer and Debra Oldar



# WriteShop

An Incremental Writing Program

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## WriteShop I Student Workbook

Kim Kautzer and Debra Oldar

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This book is dedicated to our husbands  
Jim and Eric  
and to our children  
Karah, Janel, Ben, Laura and Brian.

Special thanks to former WriteShop student Andrea Mosley  
for the illustrations in Lessons 7 and 12. You're a gifted  
young woman, beautiful inside and out.



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# Introduction and Reference Pages



## Introducing WriteShop

*Writing. Compositions. Paragraphs. Essays.* Do these words strike fear in your heart? Well, you're not alone. Many people, young and old alike, break into a cold sweat when they face a blank piece of paper or computer screen. Likewise, many students think writing is a chore. They don't know what to write about or how to adequately express their thoughts in writing. They often don't feel very creative and end up crumpling up their papers in frustration.

Why are so many of us intimidated by writing? Because we were never given the right tools and techniques to do it well. Like learning to play a musical instrument, developing writing skills takes time and practice. With guidance, encouragement, and proper tools, you too can become an excellent and confident writer. That's what WriteShop is all about!

But WriteShop is also for those of you who enjoy writing. Maybe you like to express yourselves creatively, choosing interesting words and colorful phrases to spice up your compositions. You may prefer descriptive writing, which appeals to the five senses. Or maybe you feel more comfortable with narrative writing, composing stories about yourself or others. Some students love to prove an argument or engage in a debate, which helps develop logical and critical thinking skills. Such students often enjoy giving their opinions in writing. Others prefer researching and writing a report.

Whichever student you are, WriteShop's incremental approach takes the guesswork out of how to write. If you enjoy writing, you'll learn more sophisticated ways of expressing yourself by practicing with various types of compositions (descriptive, narrative, informative, and persuasive).

If you're intimidated by writing, the program's step-by-step approach gives you the necessary tools to develop not just acceptable but excellent writing skills. Just as you learned how to do math equations or play a musical instrument, you can also learn to write. As you learn, practice, and build on each concept or step, you'll be able to express yourself more and more easily. Soon, you may even find yourself enjoying the writing process!

**Note about the Teacher's Manual:** Your parent or teacher will want to use the accompanying Teacher's Manual. This student book is not intended for you to work through completely on your own. First, it does not contain any answer keys to lesson activities or Skill Builders. Second, it does not provide complete instructions for the teacher. Finally, it does not contain the tools your teacher needs to edit and evaluate your work.



## The Writing Process: Easy As 1-2-3-4-5

### 1. **Brainstorm.**

- ☐ Never skip this important step. It gets your ideas flowing so you can write!
- ☐ There are many ways to brainstorm, such as lists, mind-maps, charts, Venn diagrams, word banks, writing clusters, outlines, etc. All of your WriteShop assignments include brainstorming suggestions.

### 2. **Write a "sloppy copy."**

- ☐ It does not have to be neat—just make sure it's readable!
- ☐ Skip lines as you write or double-space if typing.
- ☐ Check your "sloppy copy" against the "Content" and "Style" sections of your Writing Skills Checklist, making necessary corrections.

### 3. **Write your first revision.**

- ☐ This copy should be neatly written or typed.
- ☐ Continue to skip lines or double-space.
- ☐ When finished, check your newly revised copy against the "Mechanics" section of your Writing Skills Checklist, making necessary corrections.
- ☐ **Recheck** your paper for content and style and make corrections.
- ☐ Staple or paperclip everything together in proper order.
  - Brainstorming sheet or worksheet on the bottom
  - "Sloppy copy" on top of that
  - First revision on top of "sloppy copy"
  - Student Writing Skills Checklist on top of first revision

### 4. **Give your composition to your parent/teacher for editing and comments.**

- ☐ Your teacher will staple the Teacher Writing Skills Checklist on top.

### 5. **Write your final draft.**

- ☐ Make corrections using teacher suggestions from the Teacher Writing Skills Checklist or your paper.
- ☐ Type or neatly rewrite your final draft. Pay close attention to details.
- ☐ **Double-check** your paper against your Writing Skills Checklist to make sure style and mechanics are still okay, especially if you added sentences or made other major changes.
- ☐ Keep all papers together in their original order, attaching your final draft to the top.
- ☐ Hand in your finished composition.

# Sample Page Models

## Page Model for Compositions Handwritten on Notebook Paper

- 1. All work written on notebook paper must use the headings shown in the following sample. Remember: *a/ways* indent the first line of every paragraph.
- 2. Get into the habit of writing on every other line. This leaves space for editing your work. (It is not necessary to skip lines for Skill Builders or other daily work.)
- 3. **Do not write on the back of the page.** Instead, continue on a second sheet of paper. Staple multiple copies together in the upper left corner.

●	First and Last Name Date Draft (sloppy copy, etc.)  Title
	(skip this line)
	Indent the first line of a paragraph.
	(skip this line)
	(skip this line)
	(skip this line)
	(skip this line)
●	
	(skip this line)
	(skip this line)
	(skip this line)
	(skip this line)
	(skip this line)
●	

## Page Model for Typed Compositions

1. All typed work must use the headings as in the following sample. Indent the first line of every paragraph about a half-inch (about 5 letters).
2. **Double-space** the body of the paragraph. This leaves room for editing your work. Type your name and date, single-spaced, in the upper right-hand corner. Then **triple-space** before typing the title, which should be centered. **Double-space** after the title to begin the body.
3. Use a **standard font** like Times New Roman, Arial, or Calibri, preferably in 12-pt font. Do not use bold print or excessively large or fancy fonts.
4. Do not print on the back of the page. Instead, continue on a second sheet of paper. Staple multiple copies together in the upper left corner.

*(Leave a 1- to 1½-inch margin all around your paper.)*

First and Last Name  
Date  
Draft (1<sup>st</sup> Revision, etc.)

*(Triple-space after heading)*

Title  
*(Double-space after title)*

Indent ½" (about 5 letters) for each new paragraph.

Double-space the body of the composition. Double-spacing leaves plenty of room for editing.

If the composition requires a second or third paragraph, *do not* increase the spacing *between paragraphs*.

The spacing *between* each paragraph should be the same as the spacing of the body.

## Ingredients for a Tasty Paragraph

Think of your paragraph as a cookie jar. The most important part of the jar is what's inside. It doesn't matter how decorative the jar is; it's what's inside that counts!

A paragraph contains several sentences that discuss and develop one thought. It is held together by one main idea. Without that common thread, you have just a group of separate sentences, not a paragraph.

Suppose someone gives you a gift. If you open it and find a jar marked "COOKIES," what do you expect to find in the jar? Cookies, right? Imagine finding a carrot in there, too! Wouldn't that be strange? All the sentences in a paragraph need to be **about the same subject**, or the paragraph will be just as surprising. Consider reading a paragraph about surfing and finding in it a sentence about shopping along the pier. That would be like the jar of cookies with a carrot in it!<sup>1</sup>

Next, think about taking the jar out of the box and finding no lid on it. Would that work? A jar without a lid would let the cookies spill out. It certainly would not be a complete cookie jar. A paragraph must also have a kind of lid, or it feels incomplete. The "lid" of a paragraph is a good, interesting **beginning sentence** that gets a paragraph off to a good start.

Finally, imagine that your jar of cookies arrived with the bottom broken out. What would you expect to happen? A jar without a bottom would not be a complete jar. Its contents would fall out. An **ending sentence** that makes the paragraph feel closed is the "bottom" of a paragraph. Without it, the paragraph does not feel finished.

So, remember the three "ingredients" for a strong paragraph:

1. **One main idea.**
2. **An interesting topic sentence to introduce the reader to your subject.**
3. **An ending, or closing, sentence to sum up your paragraph.**

---

<sup>1</sup>Credit for the "carrot in a cookie jar" idea goes to Susan Bradrick, *Understanding Writing* (Port Orchard, Wash.: Bradrick Family Enterprises, 1991).



## Choosing a Topic and Closing Sentence

### TOPIC SENTENCES

Your topic sentence introduces the reader to your paragraph. It should be general enough to cover all that you will write about and interesting enough to catch your reader's attention.

Let's say you decide to write about apples. You observe an apple carefully and discover whether it is *sweet* or *tart*, *juicy* or *mushy*, *red* or *green*, *smooth* or *waxy*. Here are some possible TOPIC SENTENCES. Read each sentence and discover why each would be a good or poor choice to introduce your paragraph.

- ☐ I love to snack on fruit.

This is *not* a good topic sentence because it is too general. Your paragraph is not about fruit; it is about apples.

- ☐ Apples are sweet and juicy.
- ☐ Apples are crisp and tart.
- ☐ Apples are red and round.

These are *not* good topic sentences either; they are too specific. You are not writing your entire paragraph about how sweet and juicy your apple is—only a sentence or two. The same goes for the other two examples. The paragraph is about your apple, inside and out. Don't be too specific with your topic sentence.

- ☐ Apples make terrific snacks.
- ☐ I enjoy nothing better than a tasty apple.
- ☐ My mouth waters at the thought of a delicious apple.

These are *good* topic sentences! They tell the reader what the paragraph will be about—apples. They let you save the details about color, flavor, and texture for the body of the paragraph.

NOTE: These examples of topic sentences are *simplistic*. As you progress in your writing skills, your topic sentences will become more complex.

### CLOSING SENTENCES

Follow the same rule when choosing a closing sentence. You want your closing sentence to *sum up* what you have said in the body of the paragraph:

I can't wait to devour my Jonathan apple. Its bright red color and smooth skin appeal to my sense of sight. I know that when I bite into it my taste buds will welcome that fresh burst of flavor. This apple could prove to be the crunchiest, crispest, most mouth-watering piece of fruit I've ever enjoyed. **Nothing is more satisfying than a fresh autumn apple.**

## Glossary of Writing Terms

**"Carrot in a cookie jar":** A phrase or sentence that is either unrelated to the topic of the paragraph OR detracts from the paragraph's unity of thought.

**Concise, conciseness:** Using the fewest words possible to convey clear meaning. It is helpful to avoid slang, as well as vague, weak, and repeated words. Choose a few concrete words, rather than many unclear words, to communicate concisely.

**Concrete, concreteness:** Using colorful, descriptive, precise nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs to appeal to the reader's five senses.

**Content:** The purpose of a composition is to convey meaningful ideas to others. This is first accomplished through its *content*, which includes the subject matter, the title, and the purpose of the written piece (typically to describe, inform, narrate, or persuade, but also to encourage, amuse, instruct, or comfort).

**Descriptive writing:** Describing objects, scenery, experiences, etc., through vivid, well-chosen, sensory words to paint a word picture in the reader's mind.

**Graciousness:** The content and word choice should be appropriate for the intended audience. Gracious writing treats the reader with respect.

**Informative writing:** Informative writing, also called expository writing, is designed to explain. Factual details are presented in a sensible and organized manner. As with descriptive writing, specific, vivid words must be used to develop the subject matter clearly and logically.

**Mechanics:** Writing mechanics include the skills of spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

**Narrative writing:** Often thought of as a *story*, narrative writing combines elements of description and explanation to recount an experience, event, or occurrence.

**Paragraph:** A division of a piece of writing typically formed by a group of three or more sentences. A true paragraph forms a unit of thought. Its first word is always indented. Generally, a paragraph has an introduction (topic sentence), some form of development (body), and a conclusion (closing sentence).

**Parallelism:** A pattern of repeated, similarly constructed phrases or sentences that use the same part of speech. Example A: Susan is *loyal*, *kind*, and *truthful* (each of these is an adjective). Example B: Exercising regularly helps teens *gain* strength, *develop* coordination, and *feel* more energetic (each is a verb).

**Persuasive writing:** Persuasive writing, also known as argumentation, presents facts and supporting details in a logical order to prove or disprove a point, to influence the reader's thinking or behavior, or to change someone's mind about an issue.

**Sentence:** A group of words that expresses a complete thought in the form of a statement, command, exclamation, or question. It contains at least a verb and a noun, begins with a capital letter, and ends with a punctuation mark.

**Style:** Style generally refers to writing technique. In order to express themselves meaningfully, writers select specific words and organize them in a specific way.

**Wordy, wordiness** (also known as **verbose** or **flowery**): The use of more words than are needed to express an idea; emphasizing style at the expense of thought.

## Glossary of Sentence Variations

Using a variety of sentence types in one's writing creates a more interesting composition. The following parts of speech make effective sentence starters.

**NOTE:** For further discussion, explanation, or examples, rely on a good English handbook. Also, *Easy Writing* by Wanda Phillips (ISHA Enterprises) gives extensive practice with many of these sentence variations.

**Adverb/adverbial phrase:** Modifies a verb. Tells how, when, where, and to what extent (how much or how long). Many times an adverb will end in -ly.

Gratefully, Scott accepted the gift from his aunt.

Yesterday a sudden storm interrupted our barbecue.

**Appositive:** A specific kind of explanatory word or phrase that identifies or renames a noun or a pronoun. It is placed by the word it explains and is set off by commas. The exception is something that is essential to the meaning of the sentence. In the last example below, *Karlie* is essential if there is more than one older sister. This is why the appositive is *not* set off by commas.

Marty, who lives next door, drives an old truck.

The women in navy suits, flight attendants for Worldwide Airlines, boarded the plane.

My older sister Karlie lives in Florida.

**Infinitive:** The simplest form of a verb, written as "to + verb" (to run, to shout, to eat). It takes practice to use an infinitive sentence starter yet avoid using a "to be" word.

To play the piano with skill **is** difficult. (not recommended; uses a "to be" word)

To play the piano with skill **requires** hours of diligent practice. (better; uses a concrete verb)

**Metaphor:** A word picture comparing things that are basically unlike but have striking similarities. A form of "to be" sometimes expresses the comparison.

Puffy white clouds were marshmallows in the morning sky.

Lucinda was a bitter woman whose heart was made of stone.

Soldiers at attention, the row of trees guarded the old mansion. (Note: Comparison between trees and soldiers is made without the use of a "to be" word.)

**Paired adjectives:** A pair of related adjectives used to begin a sentence. As with participles, the subject must agree with the adjectives.

Incorrect: Serene and peaceful, the cradle held the sleeping infant. (The crib is not serene and peaceful.)

Correct: Serene and peaceful, the sleeping infant lay in her cradle. (The sleeping infant is serene and peaceful.)

Paired adjectives may be opposites, often useful in showing conflict of emotions or to demonstrate *in spite of* or *nonetheless*. Notice the use of *but* or *yet*.

Scared but willing, Mark crept to the edge of the high dive.

Elderly yet fun-loving, Grandpa joined us for a round of miniature golf.

**Participle/participial phrase:** A participle is a verb form. Adding "ing" to a verb forms a *present* participle. To form a *past* participle, add "ed" or "en."

Looking at the moon, the dog began to howl. (present participle)

Stunned by the fall, the cowboy rested before remounting his horse. (past participle)

The subject of the sentence must closely follow the participle. The participle and the subject must agree with one another, thus avoiding a **misplaced modifier**.

Incorrect: Trembling with fear, the stream was difficult for Casey to cross. (The stream did not tremble with fear.)

Correct: Trembling with fear, Casey crossed the stream with difficulty. (Casey trembled with fear.)

**Prepositional phrase:** Prepositions are relational words that usually tell *where* (*near*, *beside*) or *when* (*before*, *since*). A prepositional *phrase* begins with a preposition and ends with its object (*near the boat*, *beside a quiet stream*, *waters*, *before school*, *since early this morning*). Here are sentences that begin with a prepositional phrase:

Between lunch and dinner, the children played contentedly on the beach.

Under the bridge, a homeless drifter huddled in his thin blanket.

**Note:** *It can be easy to mistake a subordinate conjunction for a preposition. A subordinate conjunction becomes a preposition only if it has an object.*

Incorrect: After the boys escaped from the burning building, they dashed to safety. (*The boys escaped* is an independent clause. In this case, *boys* is a subject, not an object. Therefore, *after* is a subordinate conjunction, not a preposition.)

Correct: After escaping from the burning building, the boys dashed to safety. (*Escaping* is a special verbal called a gerund, which functions as a noun. In this sentence, it serves as the object of the preposition.)

Correct: After dark, the boys escaped to safety. (The word *dark* is the object of the preposition.)

**Simile:** The difference between a metaphor and a simile is the use of the word "like" or "as" to make the comparison.

Puffy white clouds floated like marshmallows in the morning sky.

Laurie thought Daddy's beard felt as rough as sandpaper.

Like soldiers at attention, the row of trees guarded the old mansion.

**Subject-verb:** The subject appears at or near the beginning of the sentence; the verb follows. This is the most common (and most overused) sentence type.

Susie wandered along the path.

Five birds sat on Mr. Spreckel's picket fence.

**Subordinate conjunction:** This expresses relationship between the main clause and the subordinate clause. It may begin a sentence or appear within a sentence. We encourage students to begin at least one sentence with a subordinate conjunction for yet another alternative to the subject-verb opener. Here is a partial list:

after	although	as	because	before	even though	if
since	though	unless	until	when	whether	while

Incorrect: Before sunrise, Jack's neighbors arrived to help build the new barn.  
("Sunrise" is the object, making "before" a preposition.)

Correct: Before the sun came up, Jack's neighbors arrived to help build the new barn. (Don't make the mistake of assuming that "before the sun" is a prepositional phrase. "The sun came up" is a clause, making "before" a subordinate conjunction.)

**Transition words** (also called coordinate conjunctions): These words often connect thoughts between sentences and paragraphs. Some are useful as conclusions. They are usually followed by a comma. Here are some possible transition words:

accordingly	also	additionally	besides	consequently	furthermore
however	instead	likewise	meanwhile	nevertheless	therefore

Furthermore, a well-trained dog will not chew or dig.

Therefore, young children should be taught to speak a second language.

## WriteShop I at a Glance: Scope and Sequence

Lesson #	Lesson Title	Lesson Focus	Skill Builder Focus
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### Unit 1: Descriptive Writing

1	Describing an Object	Concrete Writing	Concrete Writing
2	Describing a Pet	Conciseness	Using a Thesaurus
3	Describing a Person	Learning to Edit	Paired Adjectives
4	Describing a Circus Performer	Concrete Writing	Topic Sentences
5	Describing a Food	Sensory Description	Choosing Appropriate Titles; Its vs. It's
6	Describing a Season	Limiting Narration	Choosing Concrete Season Words; Using Similes
7	Describing a Place	Limiting Narration	Present Participles

### Unit 2: Informative Writing

8	Explaining a Process	Informative Writing	Arranging in Time Sequence Order
9	Writing a Factual Paragraph	Informative Report; Avoiding Plagiarism	Introductory Participial Phrases; Participles as Similes
10	Writing a Concise Biography	Conciseness	Appositives; "-ly" Adverbs
11	Introducing Journalism	News Article	Five Ws; Writing a Lead Paragraph

### Unit 3: Narrative Writing

12	Writing a Narrative of an Emotional Event	Narratives	Prepositional Phrases
13	Writing a Narrative of Another Person's Experience	Conducting an Interview	(no Skill Builder)
14	First-Person Point of View	Point of View; Personification	Using Personification
15	First-Person Point of View	Limited Omniscience	Tense Agreement
16	Third-Person Point of View	Omniscience	Past Participles

## WriteShop II at a Glance: Scope and Sequence

Lesson #	Lesson Title	Lesson Focus	Skill Builder Focus
----------	--------------	--------------	---------------------

### Unit 4: Review of WriteShop I

17	Describing an Object	Reviewing Concreteness	Reviewing Paired Adjectives, Similes, Present Participles
18	Describing a Place	Reviewing Sensory Description	Reviewing Prepositional Phrases, Adverbs, Appositives
19	Writing a Short Report	Outlining	Reviewing Personification; Using Past Participles as Adjectives

### Unit 5: Advanced Descriptive Narration

20	Exaggeration	Descriptive/Informative Descriptive/Persuasive	Communicating Clearly; Incorrect Word Usage; Overly Descriptive Writing
21	First-Person Point of View, Part 1	Limited Omniscience; Descriptive Narration	Writing Descriptive Narration
22	First-Person Point of View, Part 2	Limited Omniscience; Changing Points of View	Descriptive Narration
23	Narrative Voice	First- and Third-Person Narration	(no Skill Builder)

### Unit 6: Persuasive Writing and Essays

24	Writing an Ad	Persuasive Writing	(no Skill Builder)
25	Opinion Essay	Developing Points through Outlining	Using Parallelism
26	Letter to the Editor	Developing Points through Outlining	(no Skill Builder)
27	Compare or Contrast Essay	Organizing Information	(no Skill Builder)
28	Compare or Contrast Essay	Organizing Information	(no Skill Builder)
29	Essays That Describe or Define	Developing Points through Outlining	(no Skill Builder)
30	Timed Essays	Writing within a Time Limit	(no Skill Builder)



## Choosing a Schedule

### Two-Week Lesson Plan (Standard)

*Recommended for most students, this track takes them through one book in one year.*

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
<b>Student Focus</b>	Pre-writing Activities  Day One Skill Builder	With teacher, brainstorm & write Practice Paragraph  Day Two Skill Builder	Brainstorm for the Sloppy Copy  Day Three Skill Builder	Write Sloppy Copy	Off
<b>Teacher/Parent Focus</b>	Intro new concepts and terms	Guide the Practice Paragraph session			
<b>Copying/Dictation</b>	Copying		Dictation		

	Day Six	Day Seven	Day Eight	Day Nine	Day Ten
<b>Student Focus</b>	Edit Sloppy Copy Write First Revision		Polish Final Draft Turn in for evaluation		Off
<b>Teacher/Parent Focus</b>		Edit student's First Revision		Grade student's Final Draft	
<b>Copying &amp; Dictation</b>	Copying		Dictation		

**One-Week Lesson Plan (Accelerated)**

*The fast track covers both levels—WriteShop I and II—in one academic year.*

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
<b>Student Focus</b>	Pre-Writing Activities  With teacher, brainstorm & write Practice Paragraph  Day One Skill Builder	Brainstorm for and write Sloppy Copy  Day Two Skill Builder	Edit Sloppy Copy and write First Revision  Day Three Skill Builder		Polish Final Draft  Turn in for evaluation
<b>Teacher/ Parent Focus</b>	Introduce new concepts  Guide the Practice Paragraph session			Edit student's First Revision	Grade student's Final Draft
<b>Copying &amp; Dictation</b>	Copying		Dictation		

## Common Proofreading Terms and Symbols

Note to Student	Margin Note	Mark the Text	After Correction
capitalize	cap	the <u>american</u> flag	the American flag
use lower case	lc	my <del>G</del> randma	my grandma
insert word or phrase		adj. her <sup>^</sup> hair	her long, golden hair
delete word or phrase		the old, <del>cracked</del> , chipped vase	the old, chipped vase
close space		Answer <sup>o</sup> the phone <sup>o</sup> .	Answer the phone.
increase space		Mrs. <del> </del> Smith arrived early.	Mrs. Smith arrived early.
indent (or increase indent)		→ Soon after, the . . .	Soon after, the . . .
spelling error		sp benifit	benefit
insert period		Read your book <sup>^</sup> 	Read your book.
insert comma		Tom, Elise <sup>^</sup> and Mark	Tom, Elise, and Mark
begin a new paragraph		Fido followed me home. <del>¶</del> The next day we ran an ad in . . .	Fido followed me home. The next day we ran . . .
sentence fragment (incomplete)	frag (or inc)	frag Before the movie began. <sup>^</sup>	Before the movie began, Dad bought popcorn.
run-on sentence	ro	ro The water felt like ice we <sup>7</sup> jumped out right away.	The water felt like ice. We jumped out right away.
misplaced modifier	mm	mm Crisp and buttery, Mary makes delicious cookies.	Crisp and buttery, Mary's cookies taste delicious.
awkward	awk	awk Blooming with delicate pink roses describes my garden	My garden blooms with delicate pink roses.

## Common Problems of Mechanics

The following pages illustrate some of the most common errors of grammar and punctuation. In order to watch for these in your writing, you must be sure to have a clear understanding of these common problems of mechanics. This is not intended to give complete instruction but to simply offer examples. Please refer to your English handbook for further clarification. If you see repeated problems, address them with a grammar curriculum.

### CONFUSION BETWEEN PLURAL AND POSSESSIVE

*Many students have trouble with this.* PLEASE REVIEW THIS CONCEPT! Common examples include:

#### ❑ ***it's* instead of *its***

1. An apostrophe shows ownership when used with a noun. For example: *This necklace is Mom's, the gentleman's book, that dog's rawhide bone*
2. Possessive pronouns DO NOT use apostrophes: *This necklace is hers, his book, its bone*
3. *It's* is a contraction for *it is*.
4. **Tip:** If you are tempted to write *it's* substitute *it is* to see if the sentence makes sense. If not, use *its*.

#### ❑ **Making plural nouns possessive.** Remember—*more than one of a noun is plural*.

But if a noun shows ownership, it is possessive. Here are some examples:

**Incorrect:** My **shell's** have a hollow cavity containing **grain's** of sand.  
(This example shows plurals incorrectly written as possessives.)

**Correct:** My **shells** have a hollow cavity containing **grains** of sand.  
(Add /s/ to the end of most nouns to make a plural—no apostrophe!)

**Also correct:** My **shells'** hollow cavities contain grains of sand.  
(This example shows ownership—*more than one* shell.)

My **shell's** hollow cavity contains grains of sand.  
(This example shows ownership—*only one* shell.)

### HOMONYM CONFUSION

#### ❑ **Beware of homonym confusion.** Students often misuse words like *are* and *our*.

1. *Are* (pronounced "ahr") is a "be" word (is, am, **are**, was, etc.). *Our* is a possessive pronoun meaning *belonging to us*. If you start to spell the word A-R-E, you should

ask yourself if you meant to use a "to be" word. If not, then you should use the *O-U-R* spelling.

2. *There/their/they're* and *your/you're* are also commonly confused homonyms.

**Incorrect:** I hope **your** having a wonderful vacation. (*your* = possessive/ownership)

**Correct:** I hope **you're** having a wonderful vacation. (*you're* = you + are)

## INCOMPLETE SENTENCES (FRAGMENTS)

❑ **A sentence must have a subject and a verb.**

**Incorrect:** My birthday, the most exciting day of the year. (no verb)

**Correct:** My birthday, the most exciting day of the year, **falls** on July 4th.  
(verb) ^

**Incorrect:** And next visited the amazing Mt. Rushmore. (no subject; begins with "and")

**Correct:** Next **we** visited the amazing Mt. Rushmore.  
(subject) ^

## RUN-ON SENTENCES

❑ **Comma splice** (two sentences separated by a comma)

**Incorrect:** I fan the pages, the musty smell of the book blows on my face.  
^

**Correct 1:** I fan the pages. The musty smell of the book blows on my face.

**Correct 2:** I fan the pages; the musty smell of the book blows on my face.

**Correct 3:** I fan the pages, and the musty smell of the book blows on my face.

**Correct 4:** As I fan the pages, the musty smell of the book blows on my face.

**Incorrect:** The rosebush is in full bloom, it bears showy pink blossoms.  
^

**Correct 1:** The rosebush is in full bloom. It bears showy pink blossoms.

**Correct 2:** The rosebush, in full bloom, bears showy pink blossoms.

**Correct 3:** When in full bloom, the rosebush bears showy pink blossoms.

**Correct 4:** When the rosebush is in full bloom, it bears showy pink blossoms.

❑ **Two complete sentences that run together**

**Incorrect:** This rock is angular and sharp it has a smooth, glassy surface.  
^

**Correct 1:** This rock is angular and sharp. It has a smooth, glassy surface.

**Correct 2:** This rock is angular and sharp; it has a smooth, glassy surface.

**Even better:**

**Correct 3:** This rock is angular and sharp with a smooth, glassy surface.

**Correct 4:** This sharp, angular rock feels smooth and glassy.

**Correct 5:** Angular and sharp, this rock has a smooth, glassy surface.

**Correct 6:** Although angular and sharp, this rock has a smooth, glassy surface.

❑ **Rambling sentences** (leave the reader feeling "breathless")

**Incorrect:** This enormous tree is growing dark green, loose, thin, soft leaves which hang down from the branches that chatter in the wind reminding me of camping in Dogwood.  
(Sentence is too long; too many adjectives.)

**Correct 1:** This enormous tree grows soft, thin leaves that hang loosely from the branches. Chattering in the wind, they remind me of camping in Dogwood.

**Correct 2:** The tree's thin, dark green leaves loosely hang from the branches. When they chatter in the wind, I think of camping in Dogwood.

**Incorrect:** Interesting and odd, like a dog, the Arctic wolf looks solemn and kind yet at times when it hunts it may look mean and ferocious which makes it seem not pleasant at all.  
(Sentence is wordy and rambling; too much information; incorrect word choices.)

**Correct 1:** Although the Arctic wolf can seem as gentle as a pet dog, it becomes mean and ferocious when it hunts.

**Correct 2:** Deceptively friendly in appearance, the Arctic wolf becomes mean and ferocious when it hunts.

## INCORRECT USE OF COMMAS

### ❑ Breaking up a sentence with a comma

**Incorrect:** Square dancing at Riley's Farm, always makes my feet tired.

^

**Correct:** Square dancing at Riley's Farm always makes my feet tired.

### ❑ Comma suggestions

3. Commas tend to be overused. When in doubt, leave it out.
4. DO use a comma at the end of a phrase:  
     Suddenly lurching, the train jumped the tracks.  
     Gazing up at the stars, I marvel at the universe.
5. DO use a comma to set off an appositive:  
     Senator Smith, the man in the blue coat, spoke at the rally.  
     That shaggy dog, a pure-bred collie, needs grooming.
6. DO NOT use a comma to separate two complete sentences.
7. DO NOT use a comma where there is no natural pause. It helps if you read the sentence aloud and pause dramatically at the comma. Does the comma fit? Does the sentence flow well? Does it sound better without the comma?
8. DO double-check usage in a grammar handbook when you are unsure.

## MISPLACED MODIFIERS

### ❑ Subject agreement

When writing a participial phrase, paired adjective phrase, or adverbial phrase, the subject of that phrase must appear **next to** or **near** the participial phrase.

(Note: these types of phrases are usually set off by commas.)

#### 1. Participial Phrase

**Incorrect:** Chasing their tails, **the crowd of children** laughed at the silly dogs.

**Correct:** Chasing their tails, **the silly dogs** amused the crowd of children.

When writing a participial phrase, ask yourself questions such as “Did the crowd of children chase their tails, or did the silly dogs chase their tails?” This will help you decide if your sentence makes sense.

Notice that in the correct sentence, the subject of the sentence (*the dogs*) appears right after the participial phrase (*chasing their tails*).

## 2. Adverbial Phrase

**Incorrect:** Noisily squealing, **Dad** took the car to the brake shop for repairs.

**Correct:** Noisily squealing, **the car** needed to have its brakes repaired.

Again, ask yourself the same questions. “Did Dad squeal noisily, or did the car squeal noisily?” In the correct sentence, the car, which is obviously the right answer, appears immediately after the participial phrase that modifies it.

## 3. Paired Adjective Phrase

**Incorrect:** Crisp and brown, I **ate** my toast with butter and jam.

**Correct:** Crisp and brown, **my toast** tasted delicious with butter and jam.

Who or what is crisp and brown? This is the subject that should closely follow the comma. In this case, toast is the correct subject.



# Unit 1:

# Descriptive Writing



# Lesson 1a: Concrete Writing Worksheet

## Pre-Writing Activity

Rewrite the sentences at the bottom of the page, replacing vague or unclear words with concrete, specific, vivid words. If you need extra practice with concreteness, find as many as three different ways to write each sentence. Work on notebook paper so you have plenty of room. Think through each sentence by asking questions similar to those in the following example.

### (Example) The bird caught its prey.

*What kind of bird?* A hawk? A seagull? A pelican?

*Describe the bird.* Is it fierce? Sleek? Silver?

*Use a different word for "caught."* Did he snatch it? Grasp it? Seize it?

*In what manner did he "catch" his prey?* Swiftly? With his sharp talons? Delicately?

*Name the prey.* Mouse? Fish? Worm?

*Describe the prey (or food).* Field mouse? Shimmering trout? Wiggly worm?

*If you wish, you can add other details, like location.*

Now let's put a couple of sentences together!

*The fierce hawk swiftly seized the field mouse with its sharp talons.*

*The sleek sea gull expertly snatched a silver herring from the harbor.*

**Directions:** On a separate sheet of paper, write up to three different concrete sentences for *each* of these vague ones. You must **replace** the underlined words with strong, precise ones. Use a thesaurus at least once for each sentence. The object is to take dull, vague writing and paint a detailed word picture for your readers. Don't leave them guessing!

- Remember: *vehicle* is vague, but so is *car*. Tell what *kind* of car, truck, airplane, boat, etc. *Meal* is vague, but *prey* would also be vague. Be specific!
- Sentences should contain at least 10 words but no more than 20. Aim for improved description, not wordiness.

1. The vehicle went down the street.
2. The animal ate its meal.
3. The toy fell off the furniture and landed on the ground.
4. The woman sat on the furniture by the plant.
5. A person cooked food at the party.



## Lesson 1a: Skill Builder

### Concrete Writing

#### DAY ONE

As a writer you can help your readers imagine a scene in their minds by using "word pictures." You don't want to be like Monet, a watercolor painter who swirls and blurs the paint so that the images cannot be seen clearly—dull, vague words will do this in your paragraph. If you are unclear, your readers may misinterpret what you mean or may simply get bored. Instead, be like a Rembrandt of word pictures—choose your words carefully so people will know exactly what you mean.

For example: "The child played with a toy." What comes to your mind? You probably do not know what the author was thinking. Words like *child*, *played*, and *toy* could mean many things. You might wonder, "How old is the child? What kind of toy is it?"

If the author reworks the example by replacing those general, unclear words with more specific words, the sentence might read: "The baby shook his rattle." It's better but still too general to give you a clear picture of the author's intentions. "The pudgy baby happily shook his yellow Big Bird rattle." Now you can see the picture in the author's mind! The author did his or her job. You write concretely when you choose vivid, clear words to express your thoughts.

#### Directions

Consider this vague sentence: **The animal moved across the ground.**

Write four different vivid, specific words for each of the general words underlined in the vague sentence. An example of each is shown below. Now add your own in the blank lines.

Name an **animal**: snake \_\_\_\_\_

Tell how it **moved**: slithered \_\_\_\_\_

Another word for **ground**: grass \_\_\_\_\_

Next, choose one of your words from each category above and write four different sentences.

**Example:** The snake slithered across the grass.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_ across the \_\_\_\_\_.

2. The \_\_\_\_\_ across the \_\_\_\_\_.

3. The \_\_\_\_\_ across the \_\_\_\_\_.

4. The \_\_\_\_\_ across the \_\_\_\_\_.

**DAY TWO**

***Directions***

1. Choose two concrete words from each of your categories from Day One (two of your words for animal, two of your words for movement, and two of your words for ground).
2. Write them in the column under “Your Words from Day One.”
3. In the remaining blanks, write interesting adjectives and adverbs for each of the specific words you selected.

**Example Words**

**Example Adjectives and Adverbs**

<b>snake:</b>	<u>coiled</u>	<u>brown</u>	<u>terrifying</u>	<u>wiggly</u>
<b>slithered:</b>	<u>quickly</u>	<u>silently</u>	<u>gracefully</u>	<u>lazily</u>
<b>grass:</b>	<u>tall</u>	<u>prickly</u>	<u>dry</u>	<u>green</u>

**Your Words from  
Day One**

**Your Adjectives and Adverbs**

_____ : (animal)	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____ : (animal)	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____ : (movement)	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____ : (movement)	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____ : (ground)	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____ : (ground)	_____	_____	_____	_____

**DAY THREE*****Directions***

1. Write **six** sentences combining the interesting concrete words you wrote during the previous exercises.
2. Put them together as in this example:

**Example:** The brown snake slithered silently across the dry grass.

Substitute your own concrete nouns, action verbs, adverbs, and adjectives by following this pattern:

The \_\_\_\_\_ across the \_\_\_\_\_.

(adjective)      (noun)      (action verb)      (adverb)      (adjective)      (noun)

**REMEMBER:** This activity uses the words from Days One and Two of this Skill Builder.

1. The \_\_\_\_\_  
across the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_  
across the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The \_\_\_\_\_  
across the \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The \_\_\_\_\_  
across the \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The \_\_\_\_\_  
across the \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_  
across the \_\_\_\_\_.





## Lesson 1b: Describing an Object

Your first assignment will require some detective skills. To describe the object of your choice, plan to use as many of your five senses as possible. Since this is your first descriptive writing assignment, you should remember some simple rules about descriptive writing.

- *Do* describe how the object looks, sounds, smells, and feels.
- *Do* use concrete, specific words to describe your object.
- *Do not* tell how the object is used.

Below are examples of how two students described their objects. (*Teachers: See Teacher's Manual p. 17 for the related teaching activity.*)

### **A Piece of Granite**

*by Brian, age 12*

My small granite stone was found on the side of a riverbed in Yosemite Valley. This white rock has black speckles on each side of its bumpy surface. In the center of its flat bottom is a shiny spot of mica. The surface is covered with gold flecks. When I hold it up to the bright light, it looks as if stars are sparkling in the night sky. I can't wait to add this new specimen to my rock collection.

### **Raggedy Ann**

*by Laura, age 12*

My eleven-year-old Raggedy Ann greets me every morning from a wooden cradle. Big, black button eyes shine up at me from her friendly face. Matted and stringy, her strawberry-red hair shows how much she has been loved over the years. A white cotton pinafore covers a worn blue calico dress. A pair of red and white striped legs hanging from her floppy body make me laugh. My doll is special to me because we have been together for so long.

### **Directions**

1. Find an object you wish to describe. Keep it fairly simple. For instance, consider describing a shell, a pencil, a shoe, a piece of fabric, a small toy, a flower, an item of sporting equipment, etc. Avoid large or overly detailed objects for this lesson.
2. *Do* choose an object you can observe firsthand, preferably something you can pick up and handle.
3. *Do not* describe a food, a person, or an animal, since we will cover these specifically at another time.
4. *Do not* tell things about your object that are not readily observable. You may know interesting *facts* about it, but since this is an observation exercise, do not mention anything that cannot be learned firsthand through your senses of sight, touch, etc.
5. *Do not* describe your object in general terms ("*most* Matchbox cars"). For example, if you are describing your highlighter marker, do not say, "Most highlighters are shaped like pens, but mine is rectangular." Remember, you are describing *your* object, not the category in general.
6. As you study your object, use the sheet titled "Observing an Object." Instead of writing directly on this sheet, *use lined paper to make your notes*. Writing all the ideas you can think of that relate to your topic is a technique called **brainstorming**.
7. If while brainstorming you find that there is not enough detail to adequately fill in your brainstorming worksheet, you may need to choose another object.
8. Your topic sentence should *never* say, "I am going to describe a \_\_\_\_\_," or "Let me tell you about my \_\_\_\_\_." However, do name your object right away so you don't keep the reader guessing.
9. Do not try to describe every detail you observed. Pick the most important or interesting details. Otherwise, your paragraph may become wordy and long.
10. Avoid the phrases *It looks*, *It feels*, *It sounds*, etc. When you mention, for example, that your object is round and red or tough and leathery, you have already told readers how the object looks and feels.
11. **Do not** write in second person. The words "you" and "your" *may not be used*.
12. If you decide to tell how your object reminds you of something else, describe *only one sense* in this manner. Be descriptive! Rather than saying, "Its smell (or its texture) reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_," try writing, "Its musty odor reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_," or "When I touch its rough surface, I think of \_\_\_\_\_."
13. Be sure to conclude with a strong closing sentence. Your paragraph must be five to seven sentences long. Don't forget a descriptive title.

## Lesson 1b: Observing an Object Brainstorming Worksheet

If you want to describe an object, do you begin by picking up your pencil and writing down what you can remember about it? No, you must thoroughly examine your object and ask yourself many questions. Good detectives do not quickly glance around a large area to find answers—they investigate for details. Use these questions as a guide to help you study your subject and then carefully describe it.

**Appearance** Use the "Visual Words" and "Color Words" lists at the back of this workbook for ideas (see Word Lists, pp. 8 and 22).

What color(s) is it?

How is it shaped or formed?

What are its features?

What is its surface like?

What does its appearance remind you of?

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Texture** Use the "Texture Words" list at the back of this workbook (see Word Lists, p. 21).

What does it feel like? Is it smooth or rough, soft or hard, furry or scaly...?

What does its texture remind you of?

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Smell** Use the "Taste and Smell Words" list (see Word Lists, p. 20). Keep it gracious and avoid being crude or gross. Not every object will have a smell.

What does it smell like?

How does the smell make you feel or react? What does its smell remind you of?

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Sound** Use the "Sound Words" lists (see Word Lists, pp. 18-19).

Does it make a noise or a sound?

What do its sounds remind you of?

Other \_\_\_\_\_



## Lesson 1: Student Writing Skills Checklist

**After you write your "sloppy copy," go over it carefully with this checklist.**

1. If you can answer "yes" to a question, place a check in the box.
2. If you answer "no," leave the box blank.
3. If the checklist asks you to do so, make marks or corrections on your "sloppy copy."
4. Use the checklist to help you edit your work before you revise it.
5. Once you have made changes and written your first revision, double-check your new draft again.

### **CONTENT** *(Check all drafts against this list.)*

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Does the title capture the essence of my paragraph?

### **STYLE** *(Check all drafts against this list.)*

- ☐ Did I write a strong topic sentence that introduces my paragraph?
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs are specific, vivid, and sensory)? **Underline** vague words in green and find synonyms for them.
- ☐ Did I avoid writing in second person (*you, your*)?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

### **MECHANICS** *(Check all drafts against this list.)*

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I follow proper format on pp. ii-iii (correct placement/size of title; correct spacing, font size, etc.)?
- ☐ Is my paragraph 5-7 sentences long? How many sentences? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent my first sentence? If not, draw an **arrow** ➔ to show that you need to indent.
- ☐ Did I leave margins around my paragraph? If not, draw a light **pencil line** down right side of page.)
- ☐ Did I skip every other line? (If not, before rewriting, draw a light **X** on each line you want to skip.)
- ☐ Did I use good spacing between words and sentences? If not, draw two **vertical lines** || to separate.
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? (**Circle**) suspected words; **look up** and make changes.
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? **Correct** any errors.
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences and avoid run-on sentences?
- ☐ Did I complete and **turn in** my Observing an Object worksheet and notes?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Brainstorming worksheet on the very bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Writing Checklist on the very top?



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Describing an Object

## Lesson 1: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the paragraph                            |

### STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence that introduces the paragraph                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs that are specific, vivid, and sensory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Did not write in second person ( <i>you/your</i> )  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending                                    |

### MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (placement, spacing, font style/size)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 5-7 sentences long   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used good spacing between words and sentences   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by circling and looking up suspected words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided improper capitalization   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences and avoided run-on sentences  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Writing is neat and easy to read  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used Writing Skills Checklist, including using colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed. Made corrections before revising. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and your Writing Skills Checklist   |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Describing an Object

## Additional Comments and Feedback



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible      Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+      87-89% = B+      77-79% = C+

94-99% = A      84-86% = B      74-76% = C

90-93% = A-      80-83% = B-      70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

## Additional Comments and Feedback

## Lesson 2: Describing a Pet

Have you ever taken a good long look at your pet? Most people own a cat or a dog, while some keep furry hamsters, rabbits, or guinea pigs. Perhaps you have a colorful, noisy parakeet or a feisty pony. Maybe you don't own a pet at all, but you have a realistic-looking stuffed animal. You can even write about someone else's pet.

Keen observation leads to interesting descriptions, so in this lesson, you'll continue practicing your skills of observation by carefully studying an animal. As with describing an object, keep these purposes in mind:

- *Do* describe how your pet looks, sounds, and feels.
- *Do* use concrete, specific words to describe your pet.
- *Do not* tell a story about your pet.

### Directions

1. Decide which pet you will describe. If you have several, *you may write about only one of them*. If you have a new litter of kittens or a tank filled with fish, you still must only describe *one* animal.
2. *Do* choose a pet you can observe firsthand, preferably something you can pick up or handle.
3. As you study your pet, use the "Observing a Pet" worksheet. Instead of writing directly on this sheet, use lined paper to make your notes.
4. Make a mind-map about your pet, using the guide "Making a Mind-map." Brainstorm thoroughly! Be sure you have plenty of words from which to choose when the time comes to write your paragraph.
5. Your topic sentence should *never* say, "I am going to describe Muffy," or "Let me tell you about my horse." Don't play guessing games with your readers either---make sure they know right away what kind of pet you're writing about.
6. *Do not* try to describe every detail you observed.
7. This is not a second-person writing assignment. This means you can't use "you" or "your." Instead of saying "Muffy barks and yaps wildly when *you* give her a treat," say "Muffy barks and yaps wildly when *I* give her a treat" (or "when she wants a treat").
8. **Metaphors** and **similes** are *figures of speech* comparing two things that are basically unlike but have definite similarities. If you decide to use a figure of speech, describe

only **one** part of your pet in this way. For example, instead of saying, "She has a long tail," try writing "Her long tail stands up and waves like a flag," or "Her long, fluffy tail reminds me of a dust mop."

You'll learn more about similes in Lesson 6.

9. Group similar ideas together instead of jumping back and forth. Keep descriptions of the body together (size, fur, markings, legs, tail, etc.). Do the same thing when you talk about facial features (eyes, ears, tongue, nose, facial markings). Of course you may need more than one sentence for each of these categories; just remember to follow a logical order.
10. Be sure to finish up with a strong closing sentence. Here are some ideas to help you think of one: Is your pet playful, special, or affectionate? Can you imagine your family without it? Does this animal add something to your home or family? Sometimes it helps to begin with a phrase like "Without a doubt ..." or "Clearly this (adj. pet) ..."
11. Your paragraph must be 5 to 7 sentences long.
12. Add a descriptive title.

### **A Portrait of Your Pet**

1. After you have written your first revision, give it to an adult to read. Have her draw and color a picture of the pet you described in your composition (provide her with crayons or colored pencils). She **DOES NOT** have to be a talented artist!
2. Tell her she must draw the picture using only the descriptions she finds in your paper. She is not to add any **detail** to the drawing based on her imagination. She should not guess as to its color or size or type of fur or whether it has a collar. (It may be helpful for your "artist" to read these instructions.)
3. You're probably wondering, "What's the purpose of this activity?" Well, if your "artist" returns a drawing of a dog with no body, ears, or fur color, you know you left out some important description. Now you can go back to your paragraph and add detail about his color, size, or ear length.
4. Remember that this activity helps you to see how well you described your pet's physical features. You do not have to describe everything! However, if the picture comes back showing only one or two simple features and doesn't reveal anything unique about your pet, you will know to either add more detail **OR** add descriptive adjectives.
5. Finally, if the picture reveals the pet's behavior without clarifying details about its appearance, you will again need to add more physical description.

## Lesson 2: Observing a Pet Brainstorming Worksheet

As with an object, when you want to describe a pet, do you begin by picking up your pencil and writing down what you can remember about it? Of course not. Instead, carefully watch your pet and ask yourself many questions. An observer of animals does not quickly glance around the yard or casually walk by an aquarium to find answers. He studies the animal in search of small but important details.

Use the following questions as a guide to help you carefully describe your pet. Brainstorm carefully, as it will help you fill in your mind-map later.

**Appearance** Use the "Visual Words" and "Color Words" lists for ideas (see Word Lists p. 8 and p. 22).

What color(s) is it?

How is it shaped or formed?

What are its unique features? Consider tail, ears, nose, spots, stripes, whiskers, etc.

What does its fur, hair, skin, scales, or feathers look like?

Does it have a collar? A chain? Bows on its ears?

What does its appearance remind you of?

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Texture** Use the "Texture Words" list (see Word Lists p. 21).

What does it feel like? Is it smooth or rough, soft or hard, furry or scaly, etc.?

What does its texture remind you of?

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Sound** Use the "Sound Words" lists (see Word Lists pp. 18-19).

Does it make a noise or a sound?

What is the volume of this noise?

What do its sounds remind you of?

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Behavior** Use the "Characteristics/Expressions/Behavior" word list (see Word Lists pp. 3-7).

How does it move? For instance, does it slither, crawl, climb, flap, dash, zip . . . ?

Does it have any unique behaviors?

Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 2: Making a Mind-map

A **mind-map** is one way to brainstorm about your subject before beginning to write your composition. With a mind-map, you can jot down many words and phrases that come to mind. Try to jot down more ideas than you need. You probably will not use every one of these when it is time to write. However, it is helpful to have a wide assortment of words from which to choose!

You will describe a pet for this lesson. Remember, if you don't own a pet you may observe a friend's or neighbor's pet, *or* you may describe a stuffed animal. If you choose a stuffed animal, try to find one that looks fairly realistic. Using the example on the following page as a guide, draw your own mind-map **on a blank sheet of paper**.

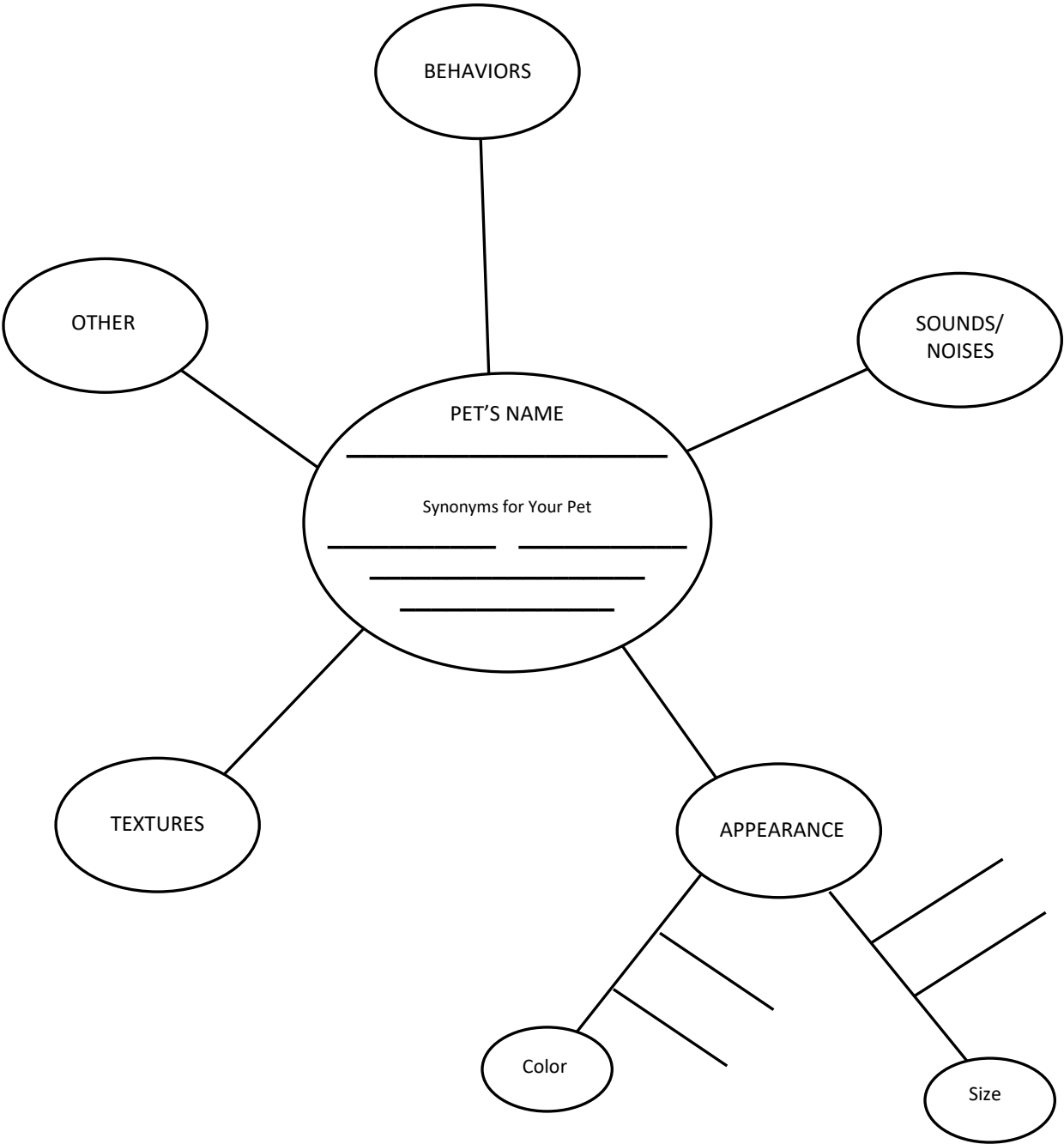
### Directions

1. Label the center circle with the name of your pet. Leave enough room inside the circle to add three to five synonyms for your animal. For example, if you decide to write about your pet, Myrtle, some synonyms might include *chicken*, *hen*, *bird*, and *Rhode Island Red*. (A thesaurus could prove helpful, but looking up your animal in an encyclopedia might give you even more ideas.)

**Important:** Words that describe characteristics of the pet (like *feathery* or *plump*) are adjectives, not synonyms, and should be placed under *texture* or *appearance*.

2. Draw five circles all around the first, connecting them to the middle circle with lines, like spokes.
3. Label the five circles *appearance*, *behavior*, *texture*, *sounds/noises*, and *other*.
4. Draw smaller circles around each of these, as needed, to describe your pet in greater detail. Look at the example on the following page. Notice how circles for *color* and *size* have been added to the *appearance* circle.
5. Finally, draw lines to list specific details about your animal. Look at the details that appear under *size*, for instance. (Your "Observing a Pet" brainstorming sheet provides you with ideas for both categories and details.)

# Lesson 2: Pet Mind-map



## Lesson 2: Skill Builder

### How to Use a Thesaurus to Choose Synonyms

As a writer, you have an advantage. Through your words you can describe exactly what you see, hear, or touch. You can communicate specific emotions. A reader can know just what you have pictured in your mind's eye when you write concretely.

For your reader, careful word choices make the difference between vague, dull, uninteresting ideas and lively, appealing, crystal-clear images. In this lesson you will discover the value of using a **thesaurus**, or synonym finder, to add interest to your compositions.

1. *A thesaurus is helpful when you have used a word too many times within a paragraph.* Look at this example in which the word "lion" was used four times:

*When the lion spotted the unsuspecting zebra, the lion crouched low and waited.  
Silently the lion eased forward, ready to pounce upon his unsuspecting prey.  
Hearing a noise, the zebra bolted into the savannah, but he was not quick enough  
for the lion.*

Watch how the paragraph becomes more interesting when we substitute synonyms for "lion."

*When the lion spotted the unsuspecting zebra, he crouched low and waited.  
Silently the big cat eased forward, ready to pounce upon his unsuspecting prey.  
Hearing a noise, the zebra bolted into the savannah, but he was not quick enough  
for the king of the jungle.*

2. *A thesaurus is also helpful when you need to replace overused or vague words.* Words like *good*, *go*, and *a lot* are examples of vague words. *Said* and *then* are often overused. It's best not to use unnecessary words like *really* and *very*. Your "Weak Words" list (see Word Lists p. 17) will help you decide if you need a synonym.
3. *A thesaurus will help you find a more exact word.* Often, words like *little* or *went* are too vague. Try being more specific (*pint-size*, *traveled*). Look at these examples:

OK: *Megan and her dad stayed at the pond for a long time.* (look up "stay")

Better: *Megan and her dad lingered at the pond.*

OK: *Going to the bench, Tyler got his baseball glove.* (look up "go" and "get")

Better: *Racing to the bench, Tyler grabbed his baseball glove.*

4. *Be sure the synonym makes sense.* Know the synonym's exact meaning. Use a dictionary if you are uncertain. Avoid slang as well as overused, weak synonyms.



**DAY ONE**

1. **Use your thesaurus** to find five synonyms for each of the following **vague** words: *good*, *nice*, and *pretty*. Use vivid, concrete words. For example, do not choose *nice* as a synonym for *good*.
2. *Do not* repeat words.
3. *Do not* "think up" words on your own; you **must** use the thesaurus.
4. Write one word per line, choosing a synonym that describes each noun.

<b>good</b> (adj.)	<b>nice</b> (adj.)	<b>pretty</b> (adj.)
_____ <u>book</u>	_____ <u>manners</u>	_____ <u>view</u>
_____ <u>pizza</u>	_____ <u>personality</u>	_____ <u>rose</u>
_____ <u>worker</u>	_____ <u>man</u>	_____ <u>girl</u>
_____ <u>friend</u>	_____ <u>flavor</u>	_____ <u>voice</u>
_____ <u>toddler</u>	_____ <u>time</u>	_____ <u>tea cup</u>

**DAY TWO**

**Use your thesaurus** to find five synonyms for each of the following **overused** words.

1. Look up the *infinitive* form of the verb. (For example, the infinitive form of *went* is "to go.") In your thesaurus, look up the word *go*.
2. Choose *specific*, *concrete* verbs as synonyms: The point of this exercise is to expand your vocabulary and discover strong alternate words to replace common ones.

<b>went</b> (to go)	<b>said</b> (to say)	<b>had</b> (to have)
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**DAY THREE**

- 1. Use your thesaurus to find five synonyms for each of the following **vague** words.
- 2. Be *descriptive, specific, and concrete*.

<b>get (verb)</b>	<b>make (verb)</b>	<b>big (adj.)</b>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

- 3. Think of your own vague or overused word that wasn't part of this lesson's Skill Builder. Find three synonyms that you could use instead. If you can't think of something off the top of your head, write a vague emotion word, size word, or verb.

<b>Vague word</b>	<b>Synonyms</b>
_____	_____
	_____
	_____

## Lesson 2: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### **CONTENT** *Check all drafts against this list.*

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I describe my pet's physical appearance?
- ☐ Did I describe my pet's expressions and behaviors?
- ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Does the title capture the essence of my paragraph?

### **STYLE** *Check all drafts against this list.*

- ☐ Did I write a strong topic sentence that introduces my paragraph?
- ☐ Did I use no more than three forms of "to be"? (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*)  
**Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague words in green and find synonyms for them.
- ☐ Did I check my "Weak Words" list against my paragraph? **Underline** any of these in green.
- ☐ Did I avoid writing in second person (*you, your*)?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

### **MECHANICS** *Check all drafts against this list.*

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I follow proper format on pp. ii-iii (correct placement/size of title; correct spacing, font size, etc.)?
- ☐ Is my paragraph 5-7 sentences long? How many sentences? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent my first sentence? (If not, draw an **arrow** ➔ to show that you need to indent.)
- ☐ Did I leave margins around my paragraph? If not, draw a light **pencil line** down right side of page.
- ☐ Did I skip every other line? If not, before rewriting, draw a light **X** on each line you want to skip.
- ☐ Did I use good spacing between words and sentences? If not, draw two **vertical lines** || to separate.
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? **Circle** suspected words; **look up** and make changes.
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? **Correct** any errors.
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ Did I complete and **turn in** my Observing a Pet worksheet, notes, and mind map?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Brainstorming worksheet on the very bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Writing Checklist on the very top?
- ☐ Did I ask an adult to draw a portrait of my pet? Did I staple the drawing to the bottom of my stack?



## Lesson 2: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described pet's physical appearance                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described pet's expressions and behaviors                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the paragraph                            |

### STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence introduces the paragraph  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than three forms of "to be" ( <i>is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been</i> ) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs that are specific, vivid, and sensory   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided writing in second person ( <i>you/your</i> )  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending                                      |

### MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (placement, spacing, font style/size)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 5-7 sentences long  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used good spacing between words and sentences  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided improper capitalization  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Writing is neat and easy to read   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used Writing Skills Checklist (including using colored pencils), circling and underlining as directed. Made corrections before revising. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and your Writing Skills Checklist  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included a portrait of the pet, drawn by an adult (and stapled to bottom of stack)   |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Describing a Pet

## Additional Comments and Feedback

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible    Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

## Additional Comments and Feedback



## Lesson 3: Describing a Person

You have practiced describing objects and animals. Now you will describe a person. Plan to observe a good friend, yourself, or a member of your family.

Spend a few minutes examining your subject. This person may or may not be aware that you are watching him or her. Imagine you are seeing this person for the first time.

### Directions

1. Study the face. Do you see freckles? Laugh lines around the eyes? A deep dimple in the left cheek? A faint scar over one eyebrow? Eyes that crinkle when the person smiles? Make notes on "Observing a Person Brainstorming Worksheet" (p. 3-9).
2. Can you figure out your subject's mood? (See "Emotions" word list, p. 9.) Sometimes it helps to read their "body language." Pay special attention to facial expressions.
3. Posture and body movement also give clues about your subject's mood. **Be descriptive.** If your subject is happy, *tell how you know* that (he or she is whistling a tune, smiling broadly, walking with a bouncing step). If he or she is disheartened, describe how the body shows discouragement (slumped shoulders, drooping head, tears on cheeks).
4. Next, observe this person's overall appearance. What color is his or her hair? Is it straight or curly? Is the person of a slim or stocky build? Muscular and athletic or soft and rounded? Are the hands rough and work-worn or smooth and silky?
5. Finally, notice what your subject is wearing. Be prepared to describe the type of clothing (jeans, a party dress, a suit and tie, shorts and a T-shirt) and the color or even the texture of the clothes. Also look for interesting detail, like a unique piece of jewelry, a hole in the knees, or a hat or headband.
6. Although this assignment's focus is physical appearance, don't forget to add a few personality details to make your subject more interesting. Look for clues in foreheads, dimples, lines of laughter or worry, softness or hardness of facial features. But remember, **your writing must be gracious**. This is a time to focus on your subject's *positive* features!
7. Your paragraph is about the person, not his or her activity or environment. It's not about the kitchen, the park, or the beach. It's not about John's swim meet or Megan's birthday party. Use the setting only as a prop. Is your brother playing with toy cars? Don't focus on what the cars look like. If you mention that Mom is standing at the stove, don't get carried away by describing the features of the stove or the details of the meal she's preparing.

**Incorrect:** *The tall, stately sycamore tree offers Dad a shady place to rest.* (The tree is the focus of this sentence.)

**Correct:** *Leaning against a shady sycamore, Dad slowly wipes his weary brow with a worn red hankie.* (Dad is the focus of this sentence.)

1. **Begin your paragraph with a strong topic sentence.** Jump right in! It is never necessary to say, "I am going to describe my Grandpa Harry," or "This is about my oldest sister."
2. Your paragraph must be between five and seven sentences long, and you must begin one of your sentences with **paired adjectives**. Make sure this sentence doesn't contain a misplaced modifier (see p. xix-xx for help). The subject the paired adjectives describe must closely follow the comma. Ask your parent or teacher for help if this is an unfamiliar concept.

You'll find many excellent ideas for paired adjectives in your "Characteristics/Expressions/Behaviors" and "Emotions" word lists (Word Lists pp. 3-7, 9).

3. Get creative when finding **synonyms** for your subject (remember—a synonym is another way of saying the same word). For example, your grandmother could be called *Grandma*, *Grandma Ruth*, *my nana*, or *she*. Your best friend could be referred to as *Seth*, *my friend*, *playmate*, *pal*, or *he*. Try not to use each synonym more than twice. The exception is pronouns (like *he*, *his*, *she*, and *hers*), which generally can be used more often.
4. **End your paragraph with a strong closing sentence** to wrap up your thoughts about this person. You might consider rewording your *topic* sentence. *Do not* end by saying something like, "This is why I like Uncle Joe."

Here's an example:

Lanky and tan, my brother proudly wears his new tee-ball uniform. Sandy blond hair peeks out from under the brim of a royal blue cap, and his twinkling brown eyes crinkle happily at me. Joshua's fresh blue-and-white shirt is tucked into my old pants, where grass stains still appear faintly at the knees. A broad smile lights up his freckled face, showing a gap where a tooth fell out last week. He jumps up and gives a joyful yell when Dad finally comes in to take him to his first game.

If you are a high school student, your paragraph might look more like this:

Squinting through pale, aged eyes, Granny peered beyond the dusty yard to the dark clouds forming on the horizon. With gnarled fingers, she pulled her worn shawl tightly about her bent shoulders. Hobbling down the creaky porch steps, she headed for the flapping sheets and began yanking them off the clothesline. An occasional gust of wind whipped at the woman's faded pink housecoat and tugged at the gray wisps of her thinning hair. Her stooped body moved slowly as she readied her home against the coming storm. Now and then a large raindrop plunked onto her wrinkled frame, urging her on. In a frail voice Granny called for her yellow hound, picked up her basket of laundry, and shuffled up the old steps and into the house.

The second paragraph (above) contains a story line, which qualifies it as a narrative. However, you'll also see many words and phrases describing the subject. If your readers can come away from your composition with a clear picture in their minds of how the person looks, you've done your job.

### **Draw a Picture**

Authors know what they have in mind when they write a description, but sometimes they don't give the reader enough information. When you finish writing your paragraph, *ask a family member or friend to draw a picture based on your description*. If they can't do it, you probably need to describe your person more clearly. Then, have someone try drawing your subject again. Attach the final drawing to your composition.

# Lesson 3: Elements of a Character Sketch, Part 1

**Directions:** Read the paragraph below and complete the activities that follow.

## My Sister the Artist

Bethany's pink tongue pokes out of her mouth as she concentrates on her project. Lying on her tummy, she squints her hazel eyes seriously. Wispy blonde bangs fall in her face, and she absentmindedly brushes them away. Dots of blue paint splatter her bare arms and rosy, dimpled cheeks, but my determined sister is too busy with her artwork to notice the mess. After she paints a round yellow sun at the top of her paper, Bethany smiles up at me with satisfaction. Beaming and proud, this adorable girl wipes chubby hands on her faded denim overalls and carries her picture to Mom.

1. What *activity* is Bethany involved in? \_\_\_\_\_
2. List the *synonyms* you find for Bethany \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Using an orange pencil, underline words that give *specific* clues about this particular activity.
4. List the *body parts* named in the paragraph \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Bethany made specific movements. Use a red pencil to underline these actions. (Underline body movements ONLY.)
6. Use a yellow pencil to circle words that tell about Bethany's *behavior, character, personality, and emotions*.
7. What behaviors/expressions tell you she is *concentrating*? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What *articles of clothing* are mentioned? \_\_\_\_\_
9. Place a green X over the *paired adjectives*.
10. How many "to be" words can you find? \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 3: Elements of a Character Sketch, Part 2

It's not unusual when describing a person to focus on your subject's activity rather than on his or her description. Your paragraph is not to be about your sister's dancing lesson, your friend's soccer game, or your brother's toy cars. Stick to the assignment of *describing the subject!* The following paragraph was written by a beginning writing student. Notice how the student described her sister's activity instead of describing her sister.

*My younger sister Katie unloads the dishwasher. She carefully carries the blue-flowered plates in her hands. Smaller than I, she stands on a stepstool, stretching to reach the high cupboards. Next, she opens the drawer and puts away the silverware. After finishing her chore, she runs outside to play.*

This paragraph is a narrative—its focus is on the activity. You may be tempted to make do something similar. If I were your teacher, I would make the following suggestions.

Dear Morgan,

You did an excellent job telling how your sister empties the dishwasher. Unfortunately, I think you got confused and missed the point of this assignment. Remember: you need to concentrate on your *subject* (Katie) instead of her *activity* (emptying the dishwasher).

After reading your paragraph, I should have learned a little about Katie. However, there's no description of your sister except for "smaller than I." But what if I didn't know you? I wouldn't know how big or tall you are, so I couldn't picture your sister's size. Because you didn't describe her, I don't know what she's wearing. I don't know what color hair or eyes she has, or whether she has freckles or dimples or pigtails or a button nose. I can't tell if she's scowling or smiling or humming a tune or talking to you. The only thing I learned is that she empties the dishwasher.

You would have avoided this by completely filling in your "Observing a Person Brainstorming Worksheet." Your brainstorming assignment is one of the most important parts of writing. Brainstorming helps you think of writing ideas. If you don't know what to write in the blanks, *ask someone to help you go through the steps.*

Also, use the brainstorming material you **do** gather! The wonderful bits of information you filled in on your worksheet (her hair and eye color, clothing, and attitude) never made it to your paragraph.

The brainstorming process becomes easier over time. You've got this!

## A Word about Editing

Your paper will probably require less editing if you use your brainstorming sheets. These are designed to gather more information than you will use in your paragraph. Do not neglect this vital step; it is foundational to effective writing. You may be tempted to jot down a minimum of details instead of stretching your "mental muscles" by processing your thoughts and developing an adequate idea bank filled with descriptive details from which to draw.

It is important to realize that editing is not a punishment imposed on you by mean parents and writing teachers. It is a necessary process designed to refine and polish your work. All authors go through the revising process numerous times before arriving at a finished piece.

## A Garden Metaphor

Picture an overgrown, unkempt garden. Although it may be filled with beautiful flowers and lush foliage, it has lost its attractive, well-groomed appearance. Weeds have begun to invade and crowd out the healthy plants. Dead flowers must be picked. Dense, overgrown shrubbery needs to be trimmed and shaped or replanted elsewhere.

Or imagine just the opposite: a *sparsely planted garden*. Few shrubs and flowers decorate this bare plot. Many of the flowers are not in bloom, and the other plants seem bare and thin. This garden would benefit from more plants and added color. Perhaps an interesting piece of pottery or an unusual rock would add texture and appeal.

**Your "sloppy copy" is like one of these gardens**, and you, the author, are the gardener. To prune and shape your "overgrown" paragraph, you must trim unnecessary words, remove vague and weak words, and find synonyms for repeated ones. Sentences may need to be rearranged or reworded.

Likewise, if your paragraph is sparse, you will need to insert more colorful, concrete words. You may need to add more information and description to fill in bare places.

With this in mind, consider editing a beneficial step in the writing process. You are creating a garden of words designed to please and uplift your reader.

**Directions**

Copy the following paragraph onto notebook paper. When a part of speech or other instruction appears underlined, replace it with the appropriate word or words. You will end up with a paragraph that vividly describes this girl.

Paired adjective and paired adjective, my adjective sister adverb telling how unloads the dishwasher. Wearing adjective clothing and adjective clothing, she carefully carries plates in her adjective hands. Only as tall as what, Katie stretches in what manner to reach the high cupboards. Her adjective eyes do what whenever what happens. As she puts away the silverware, she does what to her adjective adjective hair. With adjective what on her adjective face, she adverb telling how finishes her chore and action verb out to activity.





## Lesson 3: Observing a Person Brainstorming Worksheet

Whom are you describing? \_\_\_\_\_ What is the setting? \_\_\_\_\_

### Face

Eyes: Color \_\_\_\_\_ Eye shape/size \_\_\_\_\_

Prominent facial features (dimples, freckles, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

Expressions: \_\_\_\_\_

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Overall Appearance

Hair: Color \_\_\_\_\_ Description \_\_\_\_\_

Build or figure type (height, build, appearance): \_\_\_\_\_

Posture: \_\_\_\_\_

Hands: \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior/Mannerisms: \_\_\_\_\_

Other (voice, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

### Clothing

What is this person wearing? \_\_\_\_\_

Fabrics \_\_\_\_\_

Textures (see Word Lists, p. 21) \_\_\_\_\_

Colors \_\_\_\_\_

Details (jewelry, trim, hat, shoes) \_\_\_\_\_

Personality Observations \_\_\_\_\_

**Synonyms That Rename My Subject** Do not list *descriptions* (adjectives) here.

\_\_\_\_\_



## Lesson 3: Skill Builder

### Paired Adjectives

Writing can become tired and boring if your sentence structure is not varied. One interesting way to begin sentences is to use **paired adjectives**. This is the first of many sentence variations you will learn in WriteShop to help you write stronger, more interesting sentences.

Paired adjectives are words that relate together to describe the subject of the sentence.

A child can be "bright and expressive" or "tearful and confused."

A wolf could be "wounded and weary" or "uneasy and tense."

*Opposite* paired adjectives are also effective.

"Fearful yet determined" could describe a jittery athlete.

"Excited but nervous" could describe Johnny as he prepares to ride his first roller coaster.

### DAY ONE

These sentences were taken from student writing assignments. Start by identifying the adjectives in a sentence. Next, create "paired adjectives" by relocating them to the beginning of the sentence.

1. **EXAMPLE:** The crunchy, salty nuts make me thirsty for a cool glass of lemonade.  
Crunchy and salty, these nuts make me thirsty for a cool glass of lemonade.
2. I like this peach because it tastes good. It is sweet and flavorful.
3. Mom's collection of delicate glass swans sat on a high shelf. They were very fragile.
4. Butterflies are dainty and they look colorful as they flutter throughout my garden.
5. The absorbing novel was well written and it kept my attention.
6. The cunning fox was quiet as he slowly stalked his prey.
7. My puppy's appearance is shaggy and adorable. He looks like a mop.
8. Take a bite, it's crisp, but it's juicy. This green apple tastes sour. (*Hint: Try opposite pairs.*)

**DAY TWO****Directions**

Fill in the blanks below with paired adjectives. Use the word lists in the back of your workbook if you get stuck.

- Be sure your words make sense in the sentence.
- Notice that the sentences are written in pairs. The first sentence of each pair uses *and*. The second sentence uses *yet* or *but*.
- Choose different adjectives each time to broaden your vocabulary.

As you practice this new skill, your "Characteristics/ Expressions/Behaviors" word lists (Word Lists pp. 3-7) and "Emotions" word lists (Word Lists pp. 9-10) will be helpful. Using these word lists as tools, fill in the blanks with paired adjectives **that make sense with the rest of the sentence**.

Suppose your sentence is about a two-year-old's first experience in a petting zoo. As the author, you decide this child will be afraid of the animals. Look at one of your new word lists under "Fearful" or "Uncertain/Afraid." Find two words that describe the way the child feels. Perhaps you chose the words "timid" and "uncertain." Since these adjectives mean similar things, use the word "and" to connect your pairs.

*Timid and uncertain, the toddler reached out to pet the goat.*

You can also use the word "but" or "yet" to connect paired adjectives. Using pairs in this way sometimes suggests that there is a struggle, as when someone is "shy yet willing" or "young but frail." At other times, it reveals two sides of a personality, such as a "frisky yet teachable" pup, or "charming but temperamental" movie star.

Let's think back to our toddler at the petting zoo. Maybe you would rather describe a youngster who is just a bit braver than in the first example. His mom has been reading books to him about sheep, geese, and goats. This eager boy wants to know what their fur and feathers feel like. He wants to touch the animals, but because he's only two, he's also a little fearful!

This time look up words from two *separate* columns. Find words that express different, even opposite, emotions:

*Curious yet anxious, the toddler reached out to pet the goat.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, the banana bread cooled on the counter.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ yet \_\_\_\_\_, the banana bread cooled on the counter.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, Stacey ran the race.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_, Stacey ran the race.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, the children huddled together.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_, the children huddled together.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, the dogs circled around each other.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ but \_\_\_\_\_, the dogs circled around each other.

### DAY THREE

#### Directions

1. In a magazine or online, find two photos of people with interesting facial expressions—happy, sad, excited, surprised, annoyed, joyful, etc. Pick two different expressions.
2. Mount your two photos on the left-hand side of a sheet of notebook paper. Use your "Characteristics, Emotions, and Expressions" words (see Word Lists pp. 3-7) to come up with your own set of words to accurately describe the person in each picture. Choose carefully. Write your list to the right of each picture.
3. Under each picture, beginning with paired adjectives, write two phrases or sentences to describe that photo. Pick your words from the lists you just made.



## Lesson 3: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### **CONTENT** *(Check all drafts against this list.)*

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I describe my subject's physical appearance, clothing, and expressions?
- ☐ Did I describe my subject's activity without focusing on the activity itself?
- ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Does the title capture the essence of my paragraph?

### **STYLE** *(Check all drafts against this list.)*

- ☐ Did I write a strong topic sentence that introduces my paragraph?
- ☐ Did I use no more than two forms of "to be"? (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*)  
**Circle** (to be) words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs are specific, vivid, and sensory?  
**Underline** vague words in green and find synonyms for them.
- ☐ Did I check my "Weak Words" list against my paragraph? **Underline** any of these in green.
- ☐ Did I begin one sentence with paired adjectives?
- ☐ Did I avoid wordiness by crossing out unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

### **MECHANICS** *(Check all drafts against this list.)*

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I follow proper format on pp. ii-iii (correct placement/size of title; correct spacing, font size, etc.)?
- ☐ Is my paragraph 5-7 sentences long? How many sentences? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent my first sentence? If not, draw an **arrow** ➔ to show that you need to indent.
- ☐ Did I leave margins around my paragraph? If not, draw a light **pencil line** down right side of page.
- ☐ Did I skip every other line? If not, before rewriting, draw a light **X** on each line you want to skip.
- ☐ Did I use good spacing between words and sentences? If not, draw two **vertical lines** || to separate.
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? **Circle** suspected words; **look up** and make changes.
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? **Correct** any errors.
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I complete and **turn in** my Observing a Person worksheet and notes?
- ☐ Did I find someone to draw a picture of my subject based on my descriptions? (This is **not** optional!)
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Drawing of subject on the very bottom, brainstorming worksheet next, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Writing Checklist on the very top?





## Lesson 3: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described subject's physical appearance                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described subject's activity without focusing on the activity itself   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the paragraph                            |

### STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence introduces the paragraph  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than two forms of "to be" ( <i>is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been</i> ) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs that are specific, vivid, and sensory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Began one sentence with paired adjectives   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending                                    |

### MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and <u>date</u> in the upper right-hand corner                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (placement, spacing, font style/size)                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 5-7 sentences long  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used good spacing between words and sentences  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided improper capitalization  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Writing is neat and easy to read   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included someone's drawing of your subject based on your description                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used Checklist and colored pencils; made corrections before revising           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and Writing Skills Checklist |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Describing a Person

## Additional Comments and Feedback

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible      Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

## Additional Comments and Feedback

## Lesson 4: Describing a Circus Performer

Last time, you practiced describing a person. This lesson takes you a step further by asking you to describe someone you cannot observe firsthand—a circus performer! Your choices might include a trapeze artist, clown, ballerina, strong man, lion tamer, ringmaster, cowboy, bareback rider, rubber man, etc. If you have trouble envisioning a circus performer, look up *circus* in the encyclopedia or check out a book from the library. (Caution: Please avoid "questionable" characters like the bearded lady or the fat lady because it's difficult to describe them graciously.)

Combine **facial expressions**, **body movements**, and **vivid descriptions** to help the reader know about this character. Beware! It will be tempting to describe the person's activity. It is important that you avoid this and focus on this person's outward appearance and expressions.

Because the audience sees circus troupers from a distance, performers must rely a great deal on dazzling clothing, overstated makeup, and exaggerated mannerisms and expressions to make an impact.

Use your "Visual Words" (Word Lists p. 22) and "Texture Words" (Word Lists p. 21) to help you choose concrete describing words, like *glimmering*, *glossy*, or *limber*.

The "Characteristics, Expressions, and Behaviors" words (Word Lists pp. 3-7) will help you choose interesting words to describe facial features and body language.

Since circus people are flamboyant, extravagant, and expressive (do you need to look up any of these words?), your descriptions should also be along those lines. Be bold, daring, and creative, but most of all, have fun!

### Directions

1. Decide on a circus performer to describe. A photo might help. Do not pick an animal like a monkey or an elephant. Stick to a person for this assignment.
2. Use your "Observing a Circus Performer Brainstorming Worksheet" to come up with details.
3. Follow these suggestions to make this assignment easier:
  - **First**, describe this person when he or she is involved in a specific activity, such as spinning by his teeth, clowning around, riding an elephant or unicycle, etc. Write about how he/she looks while doing this activity.
  - **Second**, try to figure out what mood your subject is in (cheerful? silly? anxious? focused?) and concentrate on the mannerisms and expressions that communicate

that mood. Look at *eyebrows, mouth, hands and arms, back*. Remember: Strong verbs and descriptive adjectives can help you.

- **Third**, remember that **this is not a narrative**. In other words, this assignment should concentrate on describing your subject, not his/her activity. Therefore, *tell more about the person than about the activity*.

4. Begin your paragraph with a strong topic sentence.
5. **Be descriptive**. Use strong words to paint a bold picture!
6. Use your background as a setting *only*. Your paragraph is about the *person*, not about the circus. Use the circus as a prop. If you mention that the clown is riding a bicycle, don't describe the bike, unless it directly relates to this person's appearance, such as a funny miniature bike).
7. End your paragraph with a strong closing sentence to wrap up your thoughts about this person. You might consider rewording your *topic* sentence. *Do not* end by saying something like, "This is why I like the circus (or clowns, or ringmasters)."
8. Here is an example:

### **The Popcorn Vendor**

Beaming broadly, the friendly popcorn vendor loudly hawks his wares. The brass buttons of his red-and-white striped blazer strain across an ample belly. A skinny bow tie adorns the collar of his starched white shirt. Twinkling and lively, bright black eyes peer out from beneath a snug bowler hat. With soft, pudgy hands this jolly man cheerfully scoops hot popcorn into large paper cups. His curly mustache twitching, he smiles warmly and hands me my treat.

## Lesson 4: Observing a Circus Performer Brainstorming Worksheet

Circus performer you are describing \_\_\_\_\_ Name the setting \_\_\_\_\_

### Face

Prominent facial features (e.g., bulbous nose): \_\_\_\_\_

Expressions \_\_\_\_\_

Makeup \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Overall Appearance

Hair: Color \_\_\_\_\_ Description \_\_\_\_\_

Build or figure type (height, build, appearance): \_\_\_\_\_

Posture \_\_\_\_\_

Hands \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior/Mannerisms \_\_\_\_\_

Other (voice, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

### Clothing

What is this person wearing? \_\_\_\_\_

Fabrics (e.g., satin, tulle, velvet, net, fur) \_\_\_\_\_

Textures (see "Texture Words" list, p. 21) \_\_\_\_\_

Colors \_\_\_\_\_

Details (jewelry, trim, hat, shoes) \_\_\_\_\_

**Personality Observations** \_\_\_\_\_

**Synonyms That Rename My Subject** Do not list *descriptions* (adjectives) here.

\_\_\_\_\_





## Lesson 4: Skill Builder

### *Choosing Appropriate Topic Sentences*

1. Write a topic sentence for each subject listed below. (Refer to the page titled "Choosing a Topic and Closing Sentence," Intro p. v.)
2. Grab your readers' attention with catchy words. They'll want to read more about your subject.
3. Avoid using "to be" words in your opening sentence.
4. **Do not begin by writing openers like, "My favorite sport is \_\_\_\_\_" or "I like the \_\_\_\_\_."**
5. It takes time to develop a creative topic sentence. Take your time to do it well.

Example subject:       Insects

Poor topic sentences:   *I like insects.*  
                                   *Ants are insects.*  
                                   *Bees are black and yellow.*

Good topic sentences:   *Small yet hardworking, industrious ants build intricate underground cities.*  
                                   *Nothing fascinates me more than watching a silkworm spin its cocoon.*  
                                   *Delicate butterflies add beauty and color to our summer garden.*

### **DAY ONE**

1. The Zoo

---



---

2. The Library

---



---

3. My Bed

---



---

4. My Closet

---



---

**DAY TWO**

1. Morning

---

---

2. Summer

---

---

3. Whale

---

---

4. Elephant

---

---

**DAY THREE**

1. My Favorite Snack

---

---

2. Ice Cream

---

---

3. The Mountains

---

---

4. The Desert

---

---

## Lesson 4: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I describe my subject's physical appearance?
- ☐ Did I describe my subject's expressions and mannerisms?
- ☐ Did I describe my subject's activity *without* focusing on the activity itself?
- ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Did I organize the details in a way that makes sense to the reader?
- ☐ Does the title capture the essence of my paragraph?

### STYLE

- ☐ Did I choose a strong topic sentence that introduces my paragraph?
- ☐ Did I use no more than two forms of "to be"? (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*)  
**Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague words in green.
- ☐ Did I check my "Weak Words" list against my paragraph? **Underline** any of these in green.
- ☐ Did I begin one sentence with paired adjectives?
- ☐ Did I write concisely, avoiding wordiness? (~~Cross out~~ unnecessary words or phrases.)
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

### MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I follow proper format on pp. ii-iii (correct placement/size of title; correct spacing, font size, etc.)?
- ☐ Is my paragraph 5-7 sentences long? How many sentences? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent my first sentence? If not, draw an **arrow** ➔ to show that you need to indent.
- ☐ Did I leave margins around my paragraph? If not, draw a light **pencil line** down right side of page.
- ☐ Did I skip every other line? (If not, before rewriting, draw a light **X** on each line you want to skip.
- ☐ Did I use good spacing between words and sentences? If not, draw two **vertical lines** || to separate.
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? **Circle** suspected words; **look up** and make changes.
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? **Correct** any errors.
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I complete and **turn in** my observation worksheet?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Drawing of circus performer on the very bottom, brainstorming worksheet next, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Writing Checklist on the very top?



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Describing a Circus Performer

## Lesson 4: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described subject's physical appearance   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described subject's expressions and mannerisms  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described subject's activity <i>without</i> focusing on the activity itself           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized in a way that makes sense to the reader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the paragraph   |

### STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence that introduces the paragraph                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than <b>two</b> forms of "to be" (is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Began one sentence with paired adjectives   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending                                  |

### MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (placement, spacing, font style/size)                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 5-7 sentences long   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used good spacing between words and sentences   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided improper capitalization   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used proper punctuation   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Writing is neat and easy to read  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and used colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and your checklist          |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Describing a Circus Performer

## Additional Comments and Feedback

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible      Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+      87-89% = B+      77-79% = C+

94-99% = A      84-86% = B      74-76% = C

90-93% = A-      80-83% = B-      70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

## Additional Comments and Feedback



## Lesson 5: Describing a Food

By using mouth-watering, vivid nouns and adjectives, magazines offer tempting descriptions of casseroles, breads, desserts, and appetizers. Advertisers and restaurant reviewers choose words that entice the palate and create a desire to buy a certain food or prepare a particular dish. This lesson will help you describe a food of your own.

Choose a topic from the box. If you want to pick your own, get your teacher's OK. One that offers a contrast of interesting flavors, textures, and colors works best. A piping hot or icy cold food is easier to describe than a lukewarm one. Consider a food with a crust or sauce; toppings such as salsa, cheese, syrup, or frosting; or interesting ingredients like nuts, raisins, or spices. It's better to write about a food that appeals to most or all of the five senses rather than one with limited sensory appeal. Plain oatmeal, rice, or pretzels, for example, are bland and would probably not make interesting subjects.

### Food Topics (choose one)

Fresh-baked bread	Corn on the cob	Popsicle
Lemon meringue pie	Cinnamon roll	Pizza or lasagna
Fried chicken	Spaghetti and meatballs	Tacos
Barbecued hamburger	Sundae or banana split	Waffles or French toast

Ask as many questions as you can about your food, using the "Observing a Food Worksheet." Use the "Taste and Smell Words" list (p. 20), "Texture Words" list (p. 21), and "Sound Words" list (pp. 18-19). Pretending your readers have never seen or tasted your food, choose words that will help them experience it with their senses. **Tip:** *Read food ads and restaurant reviews to see how other writers describe foods.*

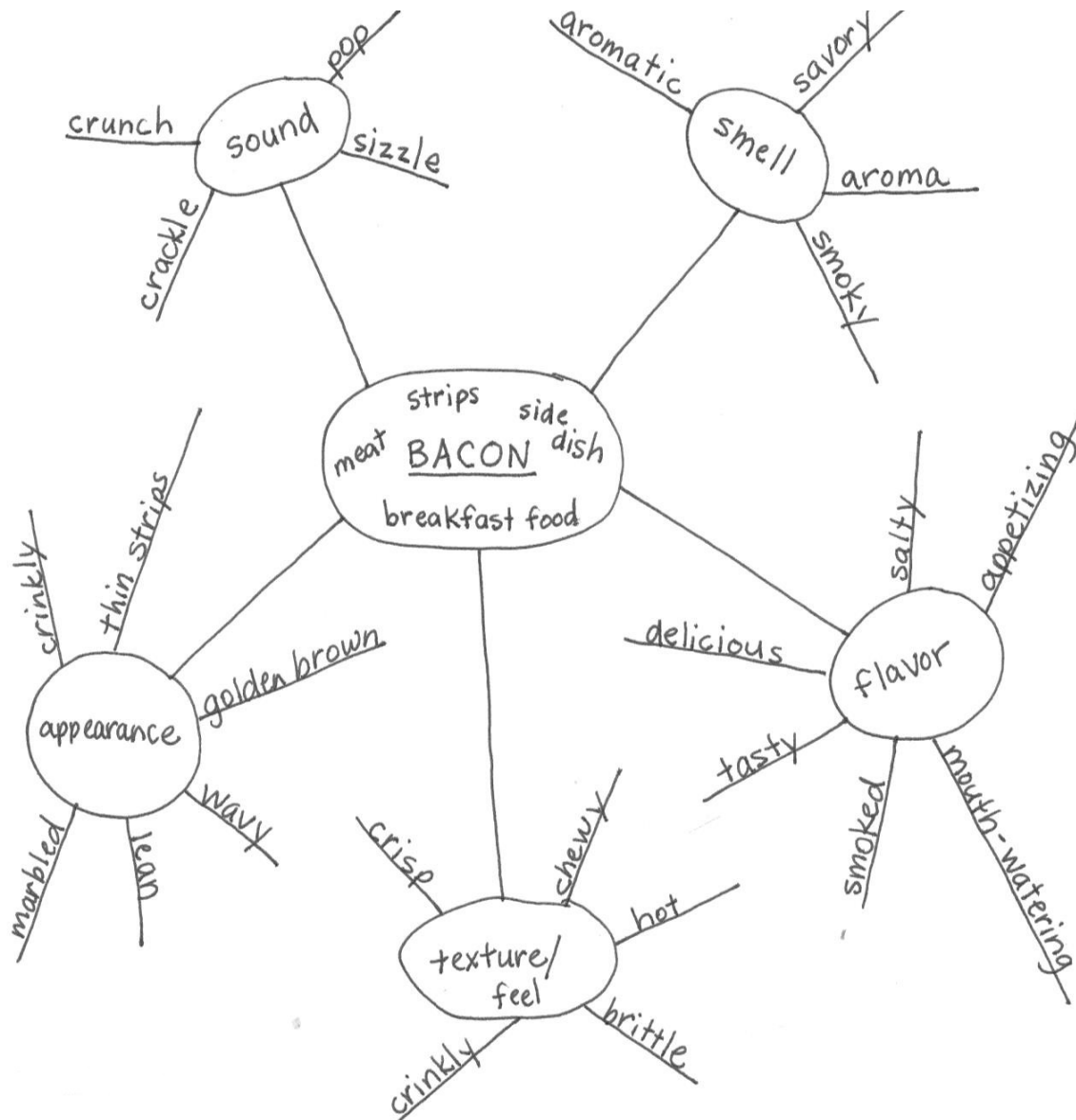
With the "Bacon Mind-map" sheet (p. 5-2) as an example, make your own mind-map. Write as many synonyms as you can for your food. Refer to your synonym finder/thesaurus to expand your list. Again, synonyms *rename* rather than *describe*.

Write a 5- to 7-sentence paragraph. You will not use every word or idea on your mind-map. Present information in a logical order *according to how your senses experience this food*. Do you hear it first or smell it? Do you see it before you taste it? Also, keep similar thoughts together rather than skipping back and forth. If you choose lasagna, for instance, describe the noodles first, the sauce next, and the cheese last.

**Note:** This paragraph must be about the *food itself*. Do *not* focus on yourself or your experience with the food. Also, *do not* write a "how-to" paragraph, like this:

*First, take a slice of bread and place it in the toaster. Then, push down the button and wait for it to brown. When it pops up, spread it with butter and jam . . .*

## Bacon Mind-map



### Sizzling Bacon

(Sample Paragraph)

Every Saturday morning the warm, smoky aroma of sizzling meat wafts throughout our home. My mouth waters at the thought of crunchy bacon for breakfast. In the frying pan, red and white marbled strips pop and crackle as they turn to a savory golden brown. Crisp and brittle, each flavorful bite melts in my mouth. This delicious side dish perfectly complements scrambled eggs and toast.

## Lesson 5: Observing a Food Brainstorming Worksheet

If you wish to describe a food, do you begin by picking up your pencil and writing down what you can remember about it? No, you observe your food carefully and ask many questions! A *connoisseur* does not quickly glance around the kitchen or restaurant to learn about a particular food. He studies it, smells it, tastes it, and enjoys its distinct qualities. Use these questions as a guide to help you carefully describe your food.

**Appearance** Use "*Visual Words*" list (p. 22) and "*Color Words*" list (p. 8) for ideas.

What color(s) is it?

How is it shaped or formed?

What are its features?

What is its skin or surface like? What does it look like inside?

What does its appearance remind you of?

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Texture** Use the "*Texture Words*" list (p. 21).

What does it feel like? Is it smooth or rough, soft or hard, delicate or flaky or ...?

How does it feel in your mouth? Juicy, moist, or dry? Crisp or creamy? (Be gracious!)

What does its texture remind you of?

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Flavor** Use the "*Taste and Smell Words*" list (p. 20).

How does it taste? Is it sweet or sour? Tangy, spicy, or bland? Or?

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Smell** Use the "*Taste and Smell Words*" list (p. 20).

Does it have a particular aroma?

How does the smell make you feel or react?

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Sound** Use the "*Sound Words*" lists (pp. 18-19).

Does it make an appetizing sound?

How does it sound when you bite or chew it? (Again, be gracious!)

What do its sounds remind you of?

Other \_\_\_\_\_



## Lesson 5: Skill Builder

### *Choosing Appropriate Titles/Its vs. It's*

#### **DAY ONE** *Choosing Appropriate Titles*

When choosing a title for your composition, ask yourself, "What is the main idea?" Then select a title to reflect that idea. A short yet interesting title will catch the readers' attention and entice them to read your work.

- Do not title your paragraph according to the assignment (like "Describing a Pet").
- Try to avoid titles that are vague or uninteresting (like "A Dill Pickle" or "My Sister").
- The title should reflect the entire paragraph, not just a sentence or two.

#### **Directions**

Students like you wrote the following paragraphs. Circle the letter of the title you think *best fits* each paragraph.

1. *I enjoy a heavy, winter rainstorm. Looking through my window, I see raindrops forming large, muddy puddles in the street and a blanket of dark gray clouds covering the sky. The tapping of water on my roof is like a drummer gently keeping rhythm with a song. The naked branches of the large maple tree flex with each gust of wind. Warm and dry, I appreciate the downpour from the comfort of my home.*

*by Daniel*

- A. Winter Rainstorm
- B. A View from My Window
- C. Rain

2. *Walking along a rocky path, I came upon a beautiful icy cold, bubbling stream. Looking at the pebbles at the bottom of the stream, my eyes caught an occasional frog that seemed to swim as fast as a bullet. Giant redwoods and Sequoias towered over me. The fragrance of the trees and the bark, and the spray from the creek filled the air. Blue jays and robins peacefully chirped over the sloshing of the stream. It was a wonderful hike!*

*by Peter*

- A. The Stream
- B. A Walk in the Woods
- C. A Day in the Forest

3. *Refreshing and colorful, autumn is the best time to visit Oak Glen. At Riley's Farm, frisky squirrels search through fallen leaves for acorns. Farmers pick crisp, juicy apples to sell and turn into spicy cider. Rustling through the trees, the nippy wind chills me to the bone. Crimson and golden leaves float aimlessly through the air like careless butterflies. Drifting out the door, the rich scent of fruit pies baking in the oven draws me to the restaurant. A piece of warm, mouth-watering apple pie and a soothing cup of steaming tea suddenly seem like the perfect way to finish a fall day.*

by Dianne

- A. A Spicy Slice of Pie
- B. Autumn in Oak Glen
- C. Riley's Farm

4. *Every Saturday is cheap cheeseburger day at Burger Junction. As we pull into the drive-thru, I envision the plump and juicy patty sizzling on the grill. The bun smells warm and yeasty, and the meat has a smoky aroma. Each savory swallow melts in my mouth. Fresh and seasoned, the burger is deliciously appetizing to my hungry stomach. Salted french fries and a frosty root beer round out this tasty meal.*

by Grant

- A. Burger Junction
- B. Cheap Cheeseburger Day
- C. A Sensational Cheeseburger

5. *With much excitement, my friend Elizabeth and I board the dirty white boat for Catalina and remain by the railing. As the vessel starts to advance toward the ocean, and the green hills and large ships disappear from the harbor, my stomach churns at the thought of our upcoming trip. Loud and obnoxious, sea gulls fly overhead for many miles, searching the decks for food. Elizabeth and I shout for joy as we notice dozens of graceful gray dolphins gliding in the sea alongside the ferry. Watching the waves jerk up and down and feeling the boat toss and turn, I become nervous and hope that we arrive safely. Slowly, we plop down on a bumpy white bench to calm our nerves. As we see the island come into view, we jump up and quickly grab our backpacks to depart from the boat. When our feet touch the ground, we immediately feel at ease about our fears. We smile and head down the pier.*

by Aimee

- A. An Exciting Boat Ride
- B. Catalina Island
- C. A Day with the Dolphins

**Directions:** On the blank lines, write an appropriate title for each of the following paragraphs.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

*Thinking back on our vacation transports me into a strange land of natural wonders and abundant wildlife. Expansive and serene, Yellowstone National Park gives the impression of being America's Black Forest. The music of the park includes a lonely coyote howling, mud pots bubbling up from the ground, and geysers gushing like skyscrapers of hissing water. Shuffling along a nearby path, an American bison produces a pungent odor. Old Faithful, Yellowstone's center stage, exemplifies the marvels of nature. I look forward to returning for further exploration of this unique national park.*

*by Jonathan*

2. \_\_\_\_\_

*Able to tolerate sub-zero temperatures, the Arctic wolf lives in the northern Canadian islands. Three- to five-feet long and white as snow, it wears a warm thick fur coat. Arctic wolves usually travel in packs of seven to ten animals. Eating only a few times a month, the big beasts usually prey on Arctic hares, musk ox, caribou, and lemmings. While a mother hunts, other pack members stay near the den to baby-sit her cubs and protect them from predators. Courageous and clever, the Arctic wolf is an extraordinary animal.*

*by John*

3. \_\_\_\_\_

*Panting heavily as I climb the many wooden stairs, I finally reach the top of the snowy hillside. Exhausted but elated, I join my friend in the line to slide down the hill. Happily joking about the ride, we eagerly wait for our turn. As the person ahead of me finishes his run, I place my inner tube at the edge of the icy slope and climb in. Pushing off with my hands, I begin my slide. As the cold air hits my face, my nose feels like an icicle. Suddenly, the tube hits a bump in the run, and I fly into the air. I hit the snow hard and coast to a stop. Joyful and excited, I rush to the stairs to go again.*

*by Matt*

4. \_\_\_\_\_

*Nervously latching the red and blue wakeboard to her feet, her hands start to sweat as Kristen timidly glances up at Mr. Rick, the boat driver, signaling that she is ready. Fearfully dropping into the water, she anxiously waits as the rope tightens. With her heart pounding, she gives Mr. Rick the thumbs up to go. As the boat starts, she pulls herself forward standing up on the first try. Cheerful and free, she proudly glides on top of the water, like an eagle soaring above the earth. Surprised by the huge swell in the water, she fell into the river face first. Even though discouraged by the pain, she bravely tried again and succeeded. Kristen, the daring little wakeboarder, truly knows the meaning of the word courage.*

*by Katie*

## DAY TWO Is It "It's" or "Its"?

When writing about an object, it is not uncommon to confuse the contraction "it's" with the possessive pronoun "its."

**it's** This is the **contraction** for "it is" (pronoun "it" + verb "is" = "it's")

It's raining this morning. (It is raining.)

I think it's time for Tim's birthday party. (it is time)

**its** This is the **possessive** form of the pronoun "it"

The animal injured its paw.

Standing near the enormous waterfall, Bonnie listened to its roar.

► When in doubt, substitute "it is" to see if it makes sense in the sentence.

**Write it:** The dog wagged **it's** tail.

**Test it:** The dog wagged **it is** tail.

**Fix it:** The dog wagged **its** tail.

### Directions

Fill in the blank with either the possessive "its" or the contraction for it is: "it's."

- \_\_\_\_\_ a beautiful day today.
- \_\_\_\_\_ beautiful fur is long and silky.
- The baby dropped \_\_\_\_\_ rattle onto the floor.
- I can tell by \_\_\_\_\_ spots that \_\_\_\_\_ a Dalmatian.
- \_\_\_\_\_ easy to see that the collie loves \_\_\_\_\_ master.
- From what I've seen so far, \_\_\_\_\_ an interesting place to visit.
- Since \_\_\_\_\_ so cold, I'm sure \_\_\_\_\_ going to snow tonight.
- Tell me when \_\_\_\_\_ time to leave for piano lessons.
- The train blows \_\_\_\_\_ whistle, announcing that \_\_\_\_\_ pulling out.
- \_\_\_\_\_ feathers ruffled at the sight of the cat.
- Because I'm colorblind, \_\_\_\_\_ hard to tell if \_\_\_\_\_ a green shirt or a red one.



**DAY THREE: "Its" and "It's"****Directions**

- A. Write three sentences using the contraction "it's." Vary your sentences. Do not begin them all the same way. Each sentence should be original and different from the others.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- B. Write three sentences using the possessive "its." Vary your sentences. Do not begin them all the same way. Each sentence should be original and different from the others.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- C. Write **one** sentence that uses *both* "it's" and "its" *correctly*. Double-check your sentence by substituting "it is." Fix any errors.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Lesson 5: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I carefully describe the food in a tempting way, using each of my five senses?
- ☐ Did I describe the food *without* focusing on how it was prepared?
- ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Did I organize the details in a way that makes sense to the reader?
- ☐ Does the title capture the essence of my paragraph?

### STYLE

- ☐ Did I write a strong topic sentence that introduces my paragraph?
- ☐ Did I use no more than two forms of "to be"? (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*)  
**Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague words in green.
- ☐ Did I check my "Weak Words" list against my paragraph? **Underline** any of these in green.
- ☐ Did I begin one sentence with paired adjectives? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I write concisely, avoiding wordiness? (Cross out unnecessary words or phrases.)
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

### MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I follow proper format on pp. ii-iii (correct placement/size of title; correct spacing, font size, etc.)?
- ☐ Is my paragraph 5-7 sentences long? How many sentences? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent my first sentence? If not, draw an **arrow** ➔ to show that you need to indent.
- ☐ Did I leave margins around my paragraph? If not, draw a light **pencil line** down right side of page.
- ☐ Did I remember to skip every other line? If not, draw a light **X** on each line you want to skip.
- ☐ Did I use good spacing between words and sentences? If not, draw two **vertical lines** || to separate.
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? **Circle** suspected words; **look up** and make changes.
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? **Correct** any errors.
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I complete and **turn in** my mindmap?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Brainstorming worksheet on the very bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Writing Checklist on the very top?



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Describing a Food \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 5: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Carefully described the food in a tempting way, using each of the five senses         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described the food <i>without</i> focusing on the preparation                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized in a way that makes sense to the reader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the paragraph   |

### STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence that introduces the paragraph                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than <b>two</b> forms of "to be" (is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Began one sentence with paired adjectives   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending                                  |

### MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (placement, spacing, font style/size)                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 5-7 sentences long   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used good spacing between words and sentences   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided improper capitalization   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Writing is neat and easy to read  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and used colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, mindmap, all drafts of this paragraph, and your checklist |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Describing a Food \_\_\_\_\_

## Additional Comments and Feedback

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible      Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+      87-89% = B+      77-79% = C+

94-99% = A      84-86% = B      74-76% = C

90-93% = A-      80-83% = B-      70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

## Additional Comments and Feedback



## Lesson 6: Describing a Season

Whether you want to describe an apricot, a sunset, your great-grandmother, or a summer day, the words you choose can make your writing dull or interesting. There are so many wonderful words you can use to make your writing come alive!

Don't settle for ordinary words and phrases. Add life and sparkle to your sentences in these two ways:

1. Choose exciting, interesting, concrete, specific, colorful, and **vivid words**.

When you say, "The wind blew," do you mean a warm tropical breeze? A violent hurricane? A dusty gust? A wintry blast? What do you want your reader to picture? You have power over your word choice; make each word count.

### Activity

The two example paragraphs below describe the same setting. *Which one is more fun to read? Which one paints a clear picture in your mind? Which one tells you exactly what the author had in mind?*

On a sheet of notebook paper, list from Example #1 any words that are *not* concrete enough. For Example #2, list words that make the paragraph *come to life*.

*Example #1:* The wind blew outside. It blew snow off the trees. The windows rattled, but we were dry and warm inside. We sat in front of the fire with blankets on us to get warm. We drank hot chocolate with whipped cream. Music played in the background. It was the first storm of winter.

*Example #2:* The arctic wind howled as fiercely as a wolf, freeing snow crystals from the bent pines. While gust after gust of icy breath threatened at the windowpanes, we nestled comfortably inside. Snug and cozy in fleecy blankets, we sat before a crackling fire, its warmth defrosting our chilled faces. Our hands cupped mugs of steaming cocoa, adrift with clouds of whipped cream. As peaceful melodies floated through the air, we enjoyed the first storm of winter.

2. **Vary your sentence structure.**

Look at Example #1 again. One reason it seems dull is that every sentence uses the subject/verb form. "The wind blew," "It blew," "The windows rattled," "We sat," "We drank," "Music played," "It was."

Example #2 uses more interesting sentences *as well as* the subject/verb type.

Describing a season is a perfect opportunity to write descriptively, because each season gives us so much imagery!

- **Spring** reminds us of fresh green grass, sweet strawberries, bright flowers of lavender and yellow, brisk breezes, and puffy white clouds or cool spring showers.
- **Summer** calls to mind juicy melons, shady beach umbrellas, dewy pink roses, splashing water, droning insects, humming lawn mowers, leafy trees, and the aroma of barbecues.
- **Fall** makes us think of smoky bonfires, crisp red apples, spicy pies, colorful, crunchy autumn leaves, foggy gray skies (or clear blue ones), and windy days.
- **Winter** means freshly fallen snow, tinkling icicles, steaming hot chocolate and fragrant gingerbread, crackling fires, barren branches, and the clean smell of pine trees.

Does a vivid picture "pop" into your head as you read each description? That's your goal!

### Directions

First, brainstorm by making a mind-map. (See "Season Mind-map," p. 6-5)

- This is a necessary and important step to help to get focused. Don't skip this activity!
- Fill in more information than you will need.
- Day One Skill Builder (p. 6-9) may offer some ideas to use when mind-mapping.

### Now write your own descriptive paragraph. Follow these steps:

1. Using all your resources (Word Lists, Skill Builders, etc.), write a "sloppy copy" about the season of your choice. *Don't forget to skip lines*, even on the "sloppy copy"!
2. Use **at least three** of your five senses to carefully describe details about that season. Cause your reader to *feel* the cold snow, or *smell* the bonfire's smoke, or *see* tiny new flowers in bloom, or *taste* the first fresh peach of the summer, or *hear* the crash of the waves on the beach. *Your goal is to make the readers feel like they are right there*
  - tasting that hot dog and mustard.
  - smelling the coconut suntan oil.
  - watching hundreds of brilliant kites soaring in the clear sky.

Think of the sights, sounds, and more that make your season unique. Appeal to readers' senses.

3. Include a variety of sensations and experiences.
4. Review the Pre-Writing activity about autumn. What made the difference between the *descriptive* and the *narrative* paragraphs? Look also at the "Winter" example on this instruction sheet. It's all about *experiencing* the season.

- *Do not* write about what you think and feel. Instead, write about what you experience with your senses, which is the focus of *descriptive writing*: colors, flavors, aromas, textures, and sounds. Don't miss chances for interesting description, like "snug and cozy in fleecy blankets" instead of "we were warm and dry."
- *Do not* write about what you (or others) are doing (*narrative writing*) **unless** you can describe the activity through your senses, using colorful, concrete words. Consider "refreshing dip in the sparkling aqua lake" instead of "going for a swim," for instance. Remember, for this assignment, you are *not* to write about a series of events.
- *Do* fill the page with wonderful seasonal aromas, flavors, sizzling hot or freezing cold temperatures, music, shades of green, yellow and bright blue, sparkling silvers and whites, or vivid crimsons and golds.

**Instead of:** *The sidewalk burning beneath my feet makes me go faster.*  
(narrative)

**Try:** *Drops of melting pink popsicle sizzle as they plop onto the burning sidewalk.* (descriptive)

Can you see the difference? The first sentence *explains an action*, but the second gives *pure, vivid description*! Both sentences tell you that the sidewalk is hot, but which one gives this information in a fun and picturesque way?

If this were a movie, the season would be the "star" and you (or others) would play background character(s). But in a *narrative* paragraph, *you* would be the "star" and the season would play a minor role. If you find that your paragraph seems to focus on "I (or they) did this, and then I (or they) did that," you probably have too much narration. Try to write more in third person than in first person.

5. **Add contrast.** Part of what makes writing interesting is *contrast*. Avoid a one-sided paragraph (snow, ice, cold). Contrast with *textures, colors, sounds*, and *smells* that feel warm and inviting. For instance, contrast a hot summer day with water or shade, cool colors, and refreshing foods. Contrast a gray-and-white winter day with a warm fire, nubby knitted scarf, evergreen trees, or red birds.
6. **Avoid season confusion.** Don't write about *gently falling snowflakes, melting icicles, a fierce wind*, and *snow that sparkles like diamonds* all in the same paragraph. Even though these are all winter examples, they contradict each other because they don't occur all at once. Focus on a short period of time and stick to one type of weather!

7. **Add sentence variations.**

- (Required) Use **paired adjectives** to begin one of your sentences. Consider using your "Sound Words," "Taste and Smell Words," "Texture Words," and "Visual Words" word lists as paired adjective ideas.
- (Required) Use a **simile** to compare two things. Example:  
*The arctic wind howled as mournfully as a wolf.*
- (Optional) Try starting a sentence with a **subordinate conjunction** such as *while*, *when*, *as*, or *meanwhile*.
- (Optional) Try other sentence variations
  - *Wrapped in fleecy blankets, ...*
  - *Listening to the waves crash, ...*
  - *Melting ice cream dripped ...*
  - *Swirling lazily, golden leaves ...*

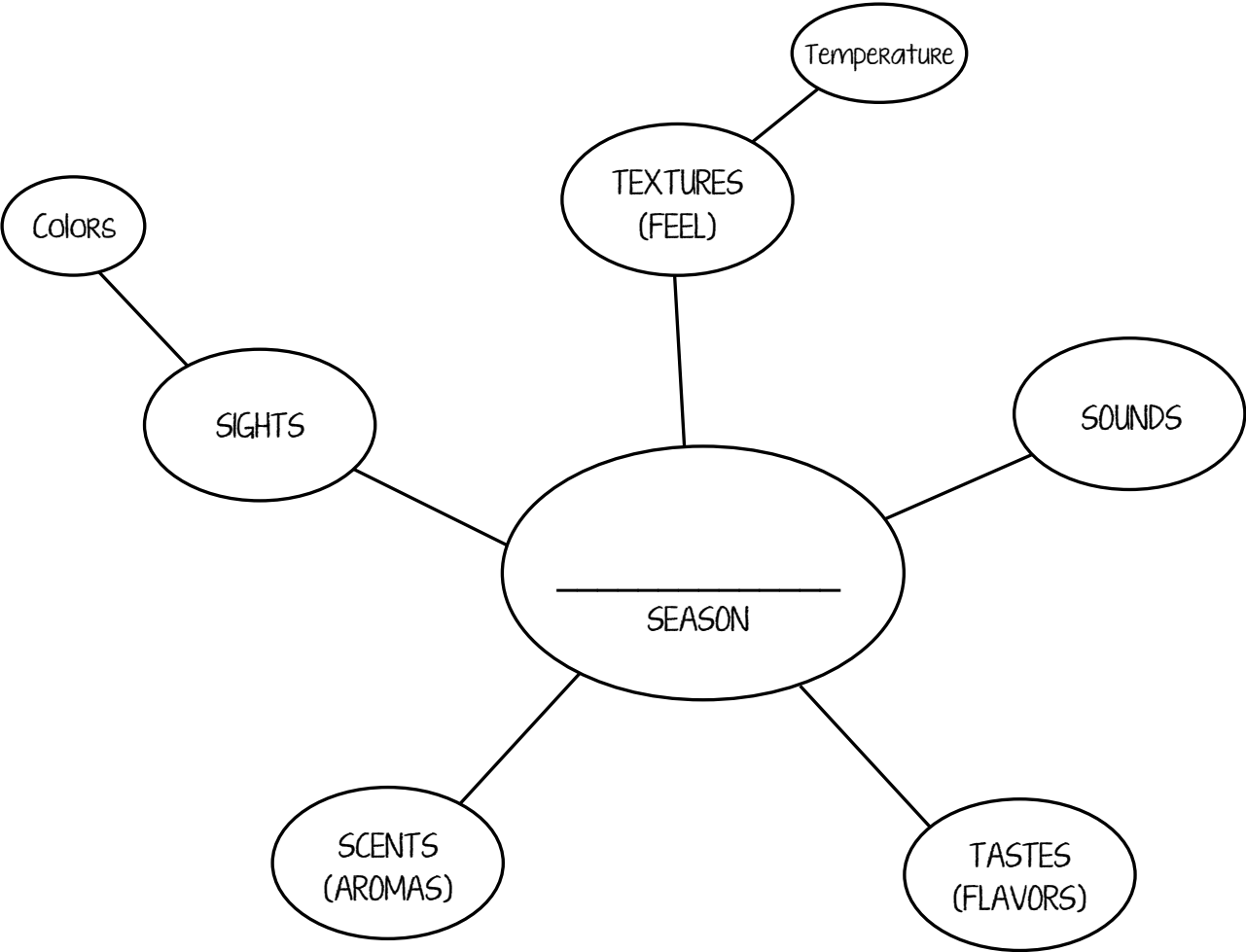
Here's an example of a descriptive "Season" paragraph:

**Winter's Pleasures**

*by Andrea, age 13*

A fierce blast of icy wind rushes against our house. Protected from the onslaught of winter's fury, my family and I relax in comfortable overstuffed chairs. Bright and cheerful, a crackling fire pops as vigorously as a corn popper. It creates a lively song which blends harmoniously with the gusts of air clattering on the frosty panes. Meanwhile, the delicious smell of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies wafts through the house. Dad reads from a classic novel, *The Yearling*, as we nibble our warm and chewy treat. Enjoying these holiday pleasures with my family makes winter a season to relish.

Lesson 6: Season Mind-map





## Lesson 6: Limiting Narration in a Descriptive Paragraph

Narrative writing usually *tells a story or a sequence of events*. It can be vivid, colorful, and exciting, as with a terrific novel. However, narrative writing can also lack sensory details that help the reader truly picture what the author had in mind.

Our current focus is on writing **descriptively**. Sometimes you must tell a story or order of events to give substance to your description. Here are two paragraphs written about the same subject and event. The first one, written by a student like you, is highly descriptive, but uses some sequencing to make it interesting for the reader. The second one is purely narrative, still needing more colorful words to make it more appealing to the senses.

1. **Descriptive:** The writer focuses on what she experiences with her senses. *This is a good example of descriptive writing.*

### An Autumn Afternoon

Fall is my favorite season for taking walks in my neighborhood. Quietly fluttering to the ground, chestnut-brown leaves drop from the young sycamore trees lining our street. They crackle and crunch beneath my feet like someone munching potato chips. A whispering, crisp breeze plays gently with my hair as I meander\* along the leaf-covered sidewalk. Plump squirrels chatter noisily about me looking for nuts. As I walk back inside my house, the spicy aroma of pumpkin pie wafts\* to my nose. Popping and crackling, a welcoming fire draws me to the hearth, where I stop to rest after my refreshing autumn stroll.

\**meander*: to wander or rove in an aimless manner

\**wafts*: drifts or floats in the air

This is mainly a *descriptive* composition. You can see that even though the writer is taking a stroll, her paragraph does *not* focus on what she is doing or where she is going; instead, it describes all the wonderful *sights*, *sounds*, and *fragrances* of autumn. **This is important for you to notice**, since beginning writers find it easier to write *narratives*, which tell stories or events. Narratives also tend to focus more on the *action* than on the *description*.

2. **Narrative:** Below is an example of how this paragraph can become a narrative. You will see that now the writer tells more about *what* she is doing, or plans to do, and less about the *colors*, *aromas*, and *sounds* of the season. Although it is an acceptable narrative, this is a *poor example of descriptive writing*.

Fall is my favorite season for taking walks in my neighborhood. I hear the dead leaves beneath my feet as I stroll toward my friend's house. As I meander along the sidewalk, I think about the games we will play. Visiting her home also means that her mom will make cocoa, a perfect fall beverage. The squirrels that scamper about me seem to beg for a snack, and I toss a fallen nut toward them. Finally arriving, I eagerly enter Jenny's large brick house. I can tell by the delicious smell that her mom has made a pumpkin pie. Warm and content, Jenny and I enjoy our autumn treat.

Let's look closer at this paragraph and talk about ways to improve the description.

1. The author talks about what she *thinks* and *feels* more than what she experiences with her senses. She uses narration with little or no description.
  - **Narration with *no* description:** As I meander along the sidewalk, I think about the games we will play. (What is happening around you as you meander?).
  - **Narration *with* description:** The *whispering, crisp breeze plays with my hair* as I meander along the sidewalk.
2. The author does not use descriptive details.
  - **No description:** Her mom will make *cocoa, a perfect fall treat*. (What makes it a perfect treat?)
  - **Vivid description:** *Creamy cocoa sends swirls of chocolate-scented steam into the cozy room*.
3. The author *mentions* sensory experiences without actually describing them.
  - **Sensory experience with *no* description:** I can tell by the *delicious smell* that her mom has made a pumpkin pie. (What delicious smell?)
  - **Sensory experience *with* description:** As I walk back inside my house, the *spicy aroma of warm pumpkin pie wafts to my nose*."

Notice the frequent use of "I + verb" ("I stroll," "I think," etc.). Using this combination too many times results in boring writing.

When you begin to write this week, focus carefully on what you see, hear, taste, smell, and touch. **You will be asked to rewrite narratives that don't describe.**



# Lesson 6: Skill Builder

## Choosing Concrete Season Words/Using Similes

### DAY ONE *Choosing Concrete Season Words*

#### Directions

- 1. On the "Choosing Concrete Season Words" chart (see following page), brainstorm and fill in the blanks with words describing that particular season. You might have noticed that some of your words seem vague. Circle words that are not specific or concrete.
- 2. Decide which season you will write about this week. Circle the season below.
- 3. Find synonyms for the words you circled under that season.
- 4. List a minimum of **eight** circled words, and at least two synonyms for each. Use your thesaurus, *Synonym Finder*, and/or word lists to find interesting, unusual words.
- 5. Do not select vague or dull synonyms.

**Season I Am Writing About** (circle one):

Spring      Summer      Autumn      Winter

List of circled words from my season

Synonyms (at least two for each circled word)

Example:     RED    

    CRIMSON    

    SCARLET    

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Choosing Concrete Season Words

SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN/ FALL	WINTER
<b>Nouns</b> (place or thing) <u>garden</u>	<b>Nouns</b> (place or thing) <u>barbecue</u>	<b>Nouns</b> (place or thing) <u>leaves</u>	<b>Nouns</b> (place or thing) <u>icicles</u>
<b>Adjectives</b> <u>lavender</u>	<b>Adjectives</b> <u>refreshing</u>	<b>Adjectives</b> <u>red</u>	<b>Adjectives</b> <u>drifting</u>
<b>Verbs</b> (nature action words) <u>bloom</u>	<b>Verbs</b> (nature action words) <u>melt</u>	<b>Verbs</b> (nature action words) <u>twirl</u>	<b>Verbs</b> (nature action words) <u>glisten</u>
<b>Adverbs</b> <u>gently</u>	<b>Adverbs</b> <u>temptingly</u>	<b>Adverbs</b> <u>lazily</u>	<b>Adverbs</b> <u>contentedly</u>

**DAY TWO** *Using Similes*

A **simile** is a figure of speech comparing two things that are basically unlike but have striking similarities.

Notice how the word **like** may be used:

- Each star twinkled *like* a jewel. (compares a twinkling "star" with a twinkling "jewel")
- The rain thundered on the roof *like* a herd of wild ponies. (compares thundering "rain" with thundering "ponies")

Notice how the word **as** may be used:

- The boy ran as swiftly *as* an eagle. (compares a swift "boy" with a swift "eagle")
- Fluffy *as* cotton candy, the clouds drifted across the sky. (compares fluffy "cotton candy" with fluffy "clouds")

**Directions**

A. Circle "as" or "like," and underline the comparisons.

**Example** Autumn leaves twirled like acrobats.  
*Twirling leaves* are compared with *twirling acrobats*.

1. The snow sparkled like crystals.
2. The field stretched out like a quilt of flowers.
3. The pond looked as smooth as glass.
4. On the stove, popcorn popped like tiny firecrackers.
5. Dark storm clouds rolled in like a steam engine.
6. The flowers seemed as bright and colorful as tropical parrots.
7. The May morning felt as hot as July.
8. Her glass of lemonade felt as refreshing as a dip in a mountain stream.
9. The morning fog was as cold as an ocean mist.
10. The windows rattled like chattering teeth in the cold wind.

B. Using similes, fill in the blanks.

1. as orange as \_\_\_\_\_
2. as crisp as \_\_\_\_\_
3. twinkling like \_\_\_\_\_
4. as gentle as \_\_\_\_\_
5. fluttering like \_\_\_\_\_

### DAY THREE

#### Directions

A. Using similes, finish these sentence starters. Compare with "like" or "as".

1. I feel \_\_\_\_\_.
2. My cup of tea \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The kitten's fur \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The pine needles covered the ground \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Waves tossed \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The frozen pond glistened \_\_\_\_\_.
7. The windows rattled \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Swirling leaves floated \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The bright fireworks exploded \_\_\_\_\_.
10. The spring rain pattered \_\_\_\_\_.

B. Write your own sentences using similes.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## Lesson 6: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I use at least three of the five senses to describe my season?
- ☐ Did I include contrasts in color, temperature, and/or texture?
- ☐ Did I avoid "season confusion"?
- ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Did I organize the details in a way that makes sense to the reader?
- ☐ Does the title capture the essence of my paragraph?

### STYLE

- ☐ Did I write a strong topic sentence that introduces my paragraph?
- ☐ Did I use no more than two forms of "to be"? (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*)  
**Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague words in green.
- ☐ Did I check my "Weak Words" list against my paragraph? **Underline** any of these in green.
- ☐ Have I correctly varied my sentence structure by  
    \_\_beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?  
    \_\_using a simile? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I avoid wordiness by crossing out unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

### MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Is my paragraph 5-7 sentences long? How many sentences? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent my first sentence? If not, draw an **arrow** ➔ to show that you need to indent.
- ☐ Did I leave margins around my paragraph? If not, draw a light **pencil line** down right side of page.
- ☐ Did I remember to skip every other line? If not, draw a light **X** on each line you want to skip.
- ☐ Did I use good spacing between words and sentences? If not, draw two **vertical lines** || to separate.
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? **Circle** suspected words; **look up** and make changes.)
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? **Correct** any errors.
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I complete and **turn in** my mindmap?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Worksheet on the very bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Checklist on the very top?



## Lesson 6: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used at least three of the five senses to describe the season                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included contrasts of color, temperature, and/or texture                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided "season confusion" (see Lesson Instructions for explanation)                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized in a way that makes sense to the reader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the paragraph   |

### STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence that introduces the paragraph   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than <b>two</b> forms of "to be" ( <i>is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been</i> )                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Varied sentence structure by correctly using each of the following:<br>__began one sentence with paired adjectives    __used a simile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence   |

### MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed proper page format (placement, spacing, font style/size)                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 5-7 sentences long  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines and used good spacing between words and sentences                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided improper capitalization  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Writing is neat and easy to read   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and your checklist     |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Describing a Season

## Additional Comments and Feedback



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible      Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

## Additional Comments and Feedback

## Lesson 7: Describing a Place

Descriptive writing has been our focus thus far. You have been learning how to describe objects, pets, people, and seasons based on what you observe about them with your senses. In this assignment, you will write about a **place**. When you describe a location or setting, call upon your memory and creativity to make it colorful, concrete, and interesting for your reader. As with your season composition, use your senses to write a descriptive paragraph that makes readers feel like they are right there!

*Don't confuse this assignment with narrative writing*, which describes the sequence of events during an activity, like a birthday party, a hike to a waterfall, or making a sandwich. (You will begin learning about narrative writing later.) This is still a *descriptive writing assignment*. Stay on target by following directions carefully and writing about what you would experience with your senses.

### Directions

1. Choose one of the sentence starters on p. 7-3. Add your own ending. Use this as your topic sentence. All sentence starters will begin with a participle ("-ing" verb).
2. **Name the place** somewhere in the composition. Most of the sentence openers already say *forest*, *desert*, *field*, etc. The topic sentence is often a good spot for this: "Sitting on a dusty bench, I enjoy the beauty of the *park* (*my back yard*, etc.)."
3. Use sensory words to fill in the "Sensory Brainstorming Worksheet" (p. 7-3).
4. Use at least **three** of your senses to write a five to seven sentence "sloppy copy."
5. Write in either present tense or past, but *stay consistent* throughout the paragraph.
6. No matter how vivid and concrete, your paragraph should not simply be a string of unrelated sentences such as these: "*A chirping robin perches on a fallen branch. Fluffy white clouds sail across the pale sky. Graceful and free, a delicate monarch butterfly lands on a daisy.*" As descriptive as they are, these sentences don't flow from one to the other. Conjunctions, time sequence words, and location words can help your sentences connect better. See "Transition Words" list (Word Lists, pp. 14-15) for ideas.
7. Follow instructions carefully.
  - **Do not** focus on *your* activity; the paragraph **is not** about what *you* are doing. (Your hike, walk, or stroll is just a means for you to describe what your senses experience along the way.) It helps to avoid using "I" as the subject of your sentences.
  - **Do** limit yourself to a *brief period of time* in *one place*—a sort of "snapshot" that describes the place itself instead of an *experience* at the beach or forest.
  - **Do** describe what you see, hear, smell, feel, or perhaps taste; the paragraph **is** about what is happening *all around you*.
  - **Do** be specific: *robin*, not *bird*; *birch*, not *tree*. Are any nouns in need of adjectives?

## Lesson 7: Identifying Elements of a Descriptive Paragraph

As you become more familiar with varying your paragraphs through interesting word choices and sentence variations, it is important to practice identifying some of these elements in other writing. Read the sample paragraph. Complete the simple activities that follow.

Strolling along the sandy shore, I let the low waves break over my bare feet. With each crash, a flood of water rolls onto the beach, covering the sand with white foam. A gull cries loudly overhead. Then swift as an eagle, it dives into the surf. I take a deep breath of sea air. Salty and fishy, it stings my nose. I dig my toes deep into the wet sand, enjoying every minute of my day at the beach.

### Directions

1. With a **green** colored pencil, circle the *simile* in the paragraph above.
2. Use a **red** colored pencil to underline the *paired adjectives*.
3. Use an **orange** colored pencil to underline the *present participle* sentence starter.
4. Mark a **yellow** V over three *concrete verbs*.
5. Place a **blue** X over the *different words for ocean water*.
6. How many "to be" words can you find? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Circle the best *title* with an **orange** pencil.

A Swift Sea Gull

A Walk on the Beach

Ocean Waves

**Challenge:** Browse through several good books. See if you can spot some of these elements in other writers' paragraphs.

## Lesson 7: Sensory Brainstorming Worksheet for Describing a Place

**Sentence Starters** (choose one to introduce your paragraph)

- Walking along a rocky path, I ...
- Sitting on a park bench, I ...
- Strolling along the sandy shore, I ...
- Passing through a dense forest, I ...
- Hiking down a desert trail, I ...
- Entering a woodland clearing, I ...
- Discovering a peaceful meadow, I ...
- Collapsing in a field of flowers (or bed of leaves), I ...

**Examples** *Notice that the topic sentence should be fairly broad. The paragraph, not the topic sentence, should contain the specific details about the scene.*

- Passing through a dense forest, I scatter fallen oak leaves with my feet.
- Entering a woodland clearing, I gaze at the enchanted scene before me.
- Hiking down a desert trail, I pause to scan the rocky terrain.

**Write your topic sentence here.** (Begin it with one of the sentence starters.)

---



---



---

**Make a list of sensory words.** What might you *see? Hear? Feel? Smell or taste?*

Sights: \_\_\_\_\_

Sounds: \_\_\_\_\_

Textures: \_\_\_\_\_

Smells/Tastes: \_\_\_\_\_

**Use this checklist when writing your paragraph**

- ☐ Use *paired adjectives* and a *simile* in your paragraph. (REQUIRED)
- ☐ Use your "Visual Words," "Texture Words," "Taste and Smell Words," and/or "Sound Words" lists.
- ☐ Use your thesaurus or *Synonym Finder* at least twice to find a more concrete word.



# Lesson 7: Skill Builder

## Present Participles

### DAY ONE

A present participle is the "-ing" form of a verb.

<u>Infinitive</u>	<u>Participle</u>
to skip	skipping
to fly	flying
to discover	discovering

### Directions

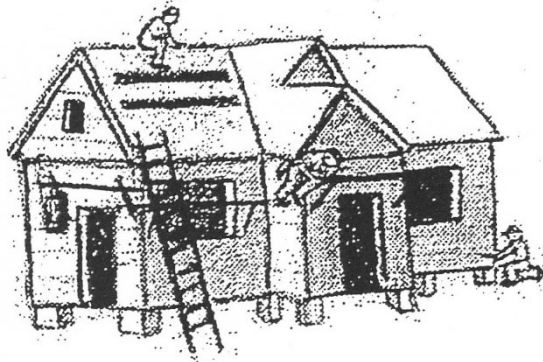
1. The pictures on the next page display an action. For each of these pictures, choose **one or two** action words and **add "-ing."** An example has been given for you below.
2. Then, use your thesaurus to find synonyms for those words. When looking up verbs, always look up the infinitive form. If you want to find another word for "running," look up the word "run."
3. List five participles for *each* picture.

<u>Picture No.</u>	<u>Participles</u>	<u>Picture No.</u>	<u>Participles</u>
1.	<u>escaping</u> <u>running</u>    	2.	     
3.	     	4.	     
5.	     	6.	     

1



2



3



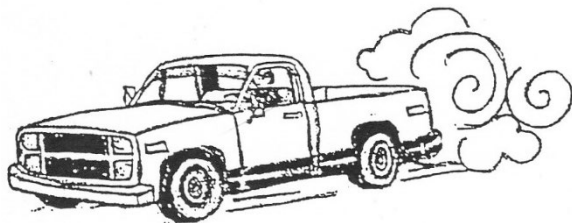
4



5



6





**DAY TWO** *Convert Infinitives to Present Participles*

A. Write the participle form of each infinitive listed below.

- |             |                 |                 |       |
|-------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|
| 1. to sleep | <u>sleeping</u> | 5. to try       | _____ |
| 2. to dream | _____           | 6. to clean     | _____ |
| 3. to wash  | _____           | 7. to travel    | _____ |
| 4. to hide  | _____           | 8. to celebrate | _____ |

By combining a participle with one or more words, you can form a participial phrase. Often, a participial phrase will tell "how" or "where." Here are some examples of participial phrases that begin with the word *smiling*.

Smiling at her brother, ...      Smiling for the camera, ...      Smiling shyly, ...

Each of these phrases can become a sentence starter. For instance:

- Smiling at her brother, Emily clapped as he received his trophy.
- Smiling for the camera, the twins posed with Mickey Mouse.
- Smiling shyly, I handed a bouquet of roses to the mayor's wife.

B. Begin each sentence below with a present participle ("-ing") phrase by converting the infinitive to a participle.

1. to fly      Flying overhead, the gull cried loudly.
2. to dance      \_\_\_\_\_, Louisa performed in the ballet.
3. to swim      \_\_\_\_\_, I caught up with my older brother.
4. to shout      \_\_\_\_\_, the toddler stood up in her crib.
5. to hope      \_\_\_\_\_, the tour group boarded the bus.

C. Write your own sentences. Begin each one with a **participial phrase**.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**DAY THREE** *Subject Agreement and Participial Phrases*

When you write a participial phrase, the subject of that phrase must appear *next to* or *near* the participial phrase. Participial phrases are usually set off by commas.

Wrong: *Chasing their tails, the crowd of children laughed at the silly dogs.*

Right: *Chasing their tails, the silly dogs amused the crowd of children.*

Why is the first one wrong? When writing a participial phrase, ask yourself questions, like, "Did the crowd of children chase their tails or did the silly dogs chase their tails?" This will help you decide if your sentence makes sense. Notice that in the correct sentence, the subject of the sentence (the dogs) appears right after the participial phrase, *chasing their tails*. When it's incorrect, it's known as a **misplaced modifier**.

Wrong: *Squealing noisily, Dad took the car to the brake shop for repairs.*

Right: *Squealing noisily, the car needed its brakes replaced.*

Again, ask yourself the same questions. "Did Dad squeal noisily or did the car squeal noisily?" In the correct sentence, the car, which is obviously the right answer, appears **right after** the participial phrase that modifies it.

**Directions**

A. Decide whether each of the following sentences is written correctly. If it is, circle the ☺. If not, circle the ☹. Underline the subject that the participial phrase modifies.

Example: ☺ ☹ Wearing a yellow raincoat, the crossing guard was easy to see.

☺ ☹ Eating juicy oranges, the children licked their sticky fingers.

☺ ☹ Waiting for her mother, the rain began to drizzle on Becky.

☺ ☹ Limping painfully, Jon took his hurt pup to the vet.

☺ ☹ Helping her aunt make jam, Abby washed jars and sliced strawberries.

☺ ☹ Sobbing as if her heart would break, Leslie told her dad the whole story.

☺ ☹ Stuffing the turkey, Thanksgiving was clearly Mark's favorite holiday.

☺ ☹ Melting rapidly in the hot sun, Lily quickly finished her ice cream cone.

☺ ☹ Shivering from the cold, the swimmers hurried into the gym.

B. Write five sentences that begin with a participial phrase. Be sure the subject and the participial phrase agree.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Lesson 7: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I use *at least three* of the five senses when describing my place?
- ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Does my content flow smoothly? Did I organize the details in a way that makes sense to the reader?
- ☐ Does the title capture the essence of my paragraph?

### STYLE

- ☐ Did I write a strong topic sentence that uses one of the required sentence starters?
- ☐ Did I use no more than two forms of "to be"? (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*)  
**Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague words in green.
- ☐ Did I check my "Weak Words" list against my paragraph? **Underline** any of these in green.
- ☐ Have I correctly varied my sentence structure by
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?
  - \_\_\_beginning topic sentence with one of the suggested present participle (-ing) sentence starters?
  - \_\_\_using a simile?
- ☐ Did I avoid wordiness by ~~crossing out~~ unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

### MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Is my paragraph 5-7 sentences long? How many sentences? \_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent my first sentence? If not, draw an **arrow** ➔ to show that you need to indent.
- ☐ Did I leave margins around my paragraph? If not, draw a light pencil line down right side of page.
- ☐ Did I remember to skip every other line? If not, draw a light **X** on each line you want to skip.
- ☐ Did I use good spacing between words and sentences? If not, draw two **vertical lines** || to separate.
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? Circle suspected words; **look up** and make changes.
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? **Correct** any errors.
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I complete and **turn in** my Describing a Place brainstorming worksheet?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Worksheet on the very bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Checklist on the very top?



## Lesson 7: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used at least three of the five senses in describing the place                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized in a way that makes sense to the reader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the paragraph   |

### STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence that begins with one of the required sentence starters   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than <b>two</b> forms of "to be"  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Varied sentence structure by correctly using each of the following:<br>__began one sentence with paired adjectives<br>__began topic sentence with one of the suggested (-ing) sentence starters<br>__used a simile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending   |

### MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 5-7 sentences long  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used good spacing between words and sentences                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided improper capitalization  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Writing is neat and easy to read   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and your checklist     |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Describing a Place

## Additional Comments and Feedback



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

	Points Possible	Points Earned
Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

	<u>10</u> _____	_____
Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)		
Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization		
Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)		
Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)		

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+      87-89% = B+      77-79% = C+

94-99% = A      84-86% = B      74-76% = C

90-93% = A-      80-83% = B-      70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

### Additional Comments and Feedback

# Unit 2:

# Informative Writing



## Lesson 8: Explaining a Process

**Informative writing** does exactly what it intends: it provides the reader with information! This type of writing provides the reader with information that is educational, inspirational, or practical. Can you name different kinds of writing that give you information? How about encyclopedias? Nature magazines? Newspapers? These are designed to "inform" you. Study guides help you understand a subject better. Instruction manuals tell you how to program an oven, assemble a drone, or operate a machine. Cookbooks explain step-by-step how to prepare various foods. Textbooks fill your head with information about math, grammar, science, and history. Biographies tell you about the life of another person. Craft books, carpentry books, or art books teach you how to make or build or draw.

One type of informative writing is called **explaining a process**. When you explain a process, you tell your readers, in a step-by-step manner, how something is done. You might wish to help readers understand a process with which they are not familiar, like how paper is made, or how tomatoes go from field to grocery shelf. This type of writing is simply meant to educate.

On the other hand, you may want to enable readers to follow your steps and perform the process themselves, as in making a sandwich or playing a new game. In this case, you must write clear, specific, well-organized details so that no step will be missed or performed out of order.

The following student example may give you an idea of how to add interesting detail to a seemingly ordinary task:

### **Laundry Time**

*by Nick, age 13*

Laundrying is quite a simple task. To begin, sort dirty clothes into stacks according to light or dark colors and heavy or delicate fabrics. Second, check for spots or smudges that will need to be briskly scrubbed with stain remover before washing. After selecting the appropriate water level and temperature cycle, load a pile of laundry into a machine with half a cup of liquid detergent to begin washing. Next, transfer the soggy heap into the dryer, choose the optimum heat and drying time, and add a fabric softener sheet for longer lasting freshness. Finally, when the electronic buzzer sounds, remove the soft, warm garments, quickly fold them and replenish your empty drawers immediately. Satisfied and delighted, stop and smell the laundry!

## Choosing a Topic

This lesson teaches you to write a paragraph that explains a process. *Follow the directions carefully.* If you have trouble thinking of a topic you could write about how to:

- Wash the car, the dishes, or the dog
- Prepare a simple dish, like pancakes or an ice cream sundae
- Play a simple game
- Make an easy craft
- Treat a minor injury
- Perform a household chore
- Make a simple repair
- Sharpen a pencil

## Brainstorming

1. Choose to write about a process with which you are both familiar and comfortable.
2. Go through the process yourself.
3. Have one of your parents **take pictures** of you as you perform each step.  
*IMPORTANT: Print the photos soon; you will need them when you write the final draft.*
4. Imagine that someone is interested in your topic. **Think of a broad question** they might ask, such as "How do you cook scrambled eggs?" or "How do you play Pin the Tail on the Donkey?"
5. **Write this question in the Question Box** on the Process Planning Worksheet (p. 8-5).
6. Recall the steps you performed as you went through the process. On scratch paper, write them down in order.
7. See if you can break down the process into **four main steps**. Write these steps in Boxes 1, 2, 3, and 4 on the worksheet. (Note: You might not have four main steps.)
8. Now think of how each of these steps can be divided into **three smaller steps**. Write these steps in the remaining blanks under the appropriate main heading. (Note: sometimes you might only be able to list one or two smaller steps.)
9. Important Tips
  - **Do not** give exact measurements or other such details.
  - **Do not** list every single ingredient, supply or procedure, just the important ones.
  - **Do not** write what the reader can assume. For instance, it isn't necessary to mention using a knife to slice an apple or tying a knot in the thread before clipping it.
10. Brainstorm for additional *descriptive* details on your "Process Planning Worksheet."

## Writing the "Sloppy Copy"

1. Write a topic sentence. Consider using *paired adjectives* to begin the topic sentence, such as: "Fragrant and colorful, scented bath salts make a unique homemade gift."  
Note: **Don't** write anything like, "I am going to tell you how to make bath salts."
2. Following the plan of your paragraph outline, write the details of the process in a logical, step-by-step order. Use clear, concrete instructions that your reader will easily understand.
3. Use the "Transition Words" list on pp. 14-15. Since this is a short paragraph, do not use the same transition word more than once.
4. Because you're giving instructions directly to the reader, you will, of course, write in second person. However, whenever possible avoid using the actual words *you* and *your*. Instead, imply them, as in the following examples:

*"First you will need to gather your shampoo, a bucket, and old towels"* becomes  
*"First, gather shampoo, a bucket, and old towels."*

*After you are through rinsing your dog...* becomes *"After rinsing the dog..."*

5. Eliminate instructions that can be worked into another sentence, such as greasing a pan or turning on the stove. Focus on what is most important and what can be described most vividly. For instance:

Instead of: *"Grease a frying pan with oil. Turn on the stove and heat the pan. Next, pour the mixture into the pan."*

Write: *"Next, pour the (adj.) mixture into the greased and heated pan and let it cook (adv.) until ..."*

Not only does it sound better, it combines **three sentences into one!**

6. Don't forget to use all required *sentence variations*. **Hint:** *Paired adjectives and participial phrases work especially well in topic and closing sentences.*
7. Include some *colorful descriptions*. After all, this is a creative writing assignment and not a technical manual! Refer to your "Process Planning Worksheet," where you brainstormed for details.
8. Also, be sure to include *articles* (a, an, the). They tend to be easily omitted. Instead of saying "Place pan in oven," write "Carefully place **the** pan of creamy batter into **a** preheated oven," including both articles *and* details.
9. Be especially careful of wordiness. Avoid repeating main words and phrases.
10. To double-check for accuracy, read your paragraph *out loud*. If possible, ask someone to follow the steps and perform the same task. Make any necessary changes.

## Writing the First Revision and Final Draft

1. Write your first revision and have your parent/teacher edit it.
2. Make necessary corrections and changes.
3. Put together an **Instruction Manual** for the task you have written about. *If you didn't take photos, simply rewrite your final draft as usual and turn it in as a regular paragraph.*
  - Choose the photos you will use to illustrate your process. Use 4-6 photos and sheets of notebook paper. Tape or glue-stick each picture to the top half of each sheet of paper.
  - **Your manual is your final draft.** Write the sentence or sentences that the photo illustrates. Copy your corrected revision word-for-word. This "instruction manual" will be a duplicate of your best rewrite.
  - Assemble your "manual." Design and decorate a colorful cover, using as much creativity as you like.
  - Give your manual an attractive or catchy title.



# Lesson 8: Process Planning Worksheet

A. Write your broad question here:

?

B. Write down the FOUR main steps here:

1.

- A.
- B.
- C.

2.

- A.
- B.
- C.

3.

- A.
- B.
- C.

4.

- A.
- B.
- C.

- C. Once you've written your sloppy copy, brainstorm for interesting descriptions.
1. Use an **orange** colored pencil to underline all the nouns. Make a list of these nouns in the spaces below (use extra paper if necessary). Brainstorm to come up with synonyms and adjectives that will make them more descriptive and colorful. Not every noun needs an adjective, but it certainly helps make your writing more lively when you **add a few well-chosen details**.

**EXAMPLE**

If you wrote, "*Massage the shampoo into her fur,*" ask yourself: *How could I describe the shampoo? Thick? Sweet-smelling? Creamy?*

And what about the dog's fur? *Is it wet? Dirty? Stiff? Matted?*

Finally, if you repeated the word *shampoo*, can you think of synonyms?

**LIST NOUNS HERE.**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2. Repeat the process above, using a **brown** colored pencil to underline verbs. Brainstorm for synonyms and adverbs that make your meaning clear. For example, if the instructions say, "*Stir the batter,*" ask yourself, "*How should the batter be stirred? Briskly? Gently? Carefully?*" Furthermore, do you really mean *stir*? Maybe *beat, fold, whip, or blend* would define the action better.

**LIST VERBS HERE.**

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

## Lesson 8: Skill Builder

### *Arranging in Time-Sequence Order*

**Directions:** Number each group of sentences in time-sequence order.

#### DAY ONE

- 
- \_\_\_\_\_ Next, paint a number from one to six inside each can.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Stand back and try to toss six buttons or pebbles into the cans.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Glue six tin cans together to form a triangle.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ The player with the highest score wins.
- 
- \_\_\_\_\_ Each player can carry as many beans and make as many trips as he wants.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ The first one to move his beans to the finish line wins the game.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ They must use the spoon to move all the beans to an empty cup behind the finish line.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Players place their cup of beans behind the starting line.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ To begin, give each player a spoon and a cup with fifty beans in it.
- 

#### DAY TWO

- 
- \_\_\_\_\_ String the macaroni.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Wrap it at one end with transparent tape to make a needle.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Lay the macaroni on paper towels until it dries.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Cut a piece of yarn long enough to make a necklace.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ First, dip large macaroni into different food colors for a few seconds.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Then untie the piece of macaroni and tie the yarn ends together.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Tie a piece of macaroni at the other end.
- 
- \_\_\_\_\_ Squeeze the peeled lemons, strain the juice, and add it to the cooled mixture.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ When the water is cool, take out the rinds and throw them away.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Peel the rinds from four lemons, put them in a bowl, and cover with one cup sugar.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Refrigerate until ice-cold.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Then boil your water and pour it over the sugar and rinds.
-

### DAY THREE

- \_\_\_\_\_ Lather the soap on the cloth and thoroughly scrub her all over.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Second, scrub the baby's hair with shampoo.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Lift her out and dry her off.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Gather together baby shampoo and soap, a washcloth, towel, toys, diaper, clothes, and a comb.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finally, comb her hair.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Don't forget all the creases on her chubby body!
- \_\_\_\_\_ Then change her diaper and dress her.
- \_\_\_\_\_ First, gently lower the baby into the bathtub.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rinse off the soap.

## Lesson 8: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Did I organize the details in a way that makes sense to the reader?
- ☐ Does the title capture the essence of my paragraph?

### STYLE

- ☐ Did I write a strong topic sentence that introduces my paragraph?
- ☐ Did I use no more than two forms of "to be"? (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*)  
**Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague words in green.
- ☐ Did I check my "Weak Words" list against my paragraph? **Underline** any of these in green.
- ☐ Have I correctly varied my sentence structure by
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a present (-ing) participial phrase?
  - \_\_\_using my Transitions word list?
- ☐ Did I avoid wordiness by crossing out unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ As much as possible, did I imply *you/your* instead of using the actual words?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

### MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Is my paragraph 5-9 sentences long? How many sentences? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent my first sentence? If not, draw an **arrow** ➔ to show that you need to indent.
- ☐ Did I leave margins around my paragraph? If not, draw a light **pencil line** down right side of page.
- ☐ Did I remember to skip every other line? If not, draw a light **X** on each line you want to skip.
- ☐ Did I use good spacing between words and sentences? If not, draw two **vertical lines** || to separate.
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? **Circle** suspected words; **look up** and make changes.
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? **Correct** any errors.
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I complete and **turn in** my Explaining a Process brainstorming worksheet?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Worksheet on the very bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Checklist on the very top?



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Explaining a Process

## Lesson 8: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; details are organized in a way that makes sense to the reader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the paragraph   |

### STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence that introduces the composition  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than <b>two</b> forms of "to be"  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Varied sentence structure by correctly using each of the following:<br>__began one sentence with paired adjectives<br>__began one sentence with an "-ing" participle<br>__used Transitions Word List |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Implied <i>you/your</i> instead of using the actual words (as much as possible)  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending   |

### MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 5-9 sentences long  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used good spacing between words and sentences                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided improper capitalization  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Writing is neat and easy to read   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and your checklist     |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Explaining a Process

## Additional Comments and Feedback



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible      Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_ /50 = \_\_\_\_\_ % = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

## Additional Comments and Feedback

## Lesson 9: Writing a Factual Paragraph

As a student, you will sometimes be asked to write a report that informs readers with interesting facts. This report might be about a state or country, a famous person, an invention, or an animal. You could write about a current event or one from the past. Usually you will not give your opinion when writing this kind of report. As Sergeant Friday of the old *Dragnet* television show used to say, "Just the facts, Ma'am."

**Plagiarism.** To write a factual paragraph, you must gather information from a reliable source and **rewrite it in your own words**. This is very important, because to copy someone else's work and say that *you* wrote it is called **plagiarism (PLAY-JER-IZ-M)**.

Plagiarism, using another person's written work when you write a story, a report, a poem, or anything else, is the same as stealing. What has been stolen is the author's unique way of formulating thoughts into his or her own words. When writing for this class or for any other purpose, you must guard against the temptation to copy another's work and call it your own.

**Fact gathering.** So then, how do you collect facts without copying from another author? Jot down simple words or phrases that give you the basic information; then later on you will form sentences that put those facts into your own words.

Here is an example of a factual sentence about the Florida Everglades:

*The Everglades is characterized by prairies of tall sawgrass that grow in swampy, shallow water. Sawgrass can grow up to 12 feet high.*

(from Wildlife Fact File™, North American Habitats)

To take notes on sawgrass in the Everglades, you would write down the facts you found in this sentence.

### **SAWGRASS**

- tall sawgrass covers Everglades
- grows up to 12 feet high
- grows in swamps
- grows in shallow water

Combine these facts into your *own* words to write a sentence or two, like this:

*Sawgrass grows throughout the Everglades. Reaching heights of up to 12 feet, sawgrass can be found in the shallow water of the swamplands.*

See how the same facts were written using different words? Use this technique to write your factual paragraph. You'll find it useful when writing future reports.

Find a resource about one particular animal. It can be a short book or chapter, an Internet article, or an educational video. Make sure this resource includes (1) details about the animal's size, color, and special body features; (2) features of its habitat/home; and (3) facts about its living habits, such as eating, sleeping, moving, and parenting.

1. **Brainstorming:** Follow the instructions on the Fact-Gathering Worksheet, p. 9-3.
2. **Body of the paragraph.** Next, write the body of the paragraph. Again, be sure to put the facts into your own words.
  - Describe what your animal looks like.
  - Describe where your animal lives (its habitat).
  - Describe how your animal lives (its eating, moving, and sleeping habits).

You don't necessarily have to sequence your facts in this order, but be careful not to jump back and forth within the paragraph. Don't describe the animal's fur, then its eating habits, followed by its habitat, followed by a description of its facial features. *Keep similar ideas together*, making sure the information flows smoothly.

Also, you *do not* have to use every fact you collect. Only use the ones that make sense in your paragraph.

3. Use sentence variations:
  - Begin one sentence with a present participle ("-ing" action verb)
  - Use a simile
  - Use paired adjectives
4. **Closing sentence.** Finally, choose an appropriate ending sentence to wrap up your informative paragraph. **Do not** end with a sentence like this:

*This is why I like the dolphin.*

*These are the reasons why dolphins are interesting.*

*I think dolphins would be neat pets.*

#### **Remember...**

- *Your closing sentence must give your paragraph a feeling of ending.*
- **Do not** give an opinion (such as "I think ...").
- **Do** use a general thought, such as:

*The graceful dolphin is a fascinating mammal.*

*Dolphins bring amusement and playfulness to the sea.*

*Amusing and playful, dolphins make the sea a more interesting place.*

## Lesson 9: Fact-Gathering Worksheet

**Directions:** Using your selected material, gather the following facts about your animal. The more information you collect, the more you will be able to draw from when you begin to write. Write down more information than you think you will use.

**Using this worksheet, jot down notes about your animal. *Do not* copy sentences.**

Name of your animal \_\_\_\_\_

List several synonyms for this animal (Hint: you may find some in your article or fact source). Look for words like *predator, hunter, fish, beast, herbivore, etc.*

\_\_\_\_\_

### Animal's Body

1. Size (*Avoid uninteresting details such as exact measurements. Maybe you could make a comparison to something familiar, like "about the size of a house cat" or "weighs as much as a car."*)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Color and type of covering \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Special or interesting body parts \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Animal's Habitat

1. Location (states, countries, or continents) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Type of habitat (do not confuse with "habit") \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

3. Type of home (cave, den, burrow) \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

### **Animal's Living Habits**

1. Eating \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

2. Sleeping \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

3. Moving \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

4. Other \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

### **Most Interesting Fact**

*Use this information in your topic sentence*

---

---

---

---

## Write Your Paragraph

Using information from your notes, write a paragraph restating the facts in your own words.

1. **Topic sentence.** Begin with a topic sentence **QUESTION** that includes the most interesting fact about your animal. Follow the format of these examples:
  - *What strange mammal lays eggs like a bird? This **funny-looking** animal is the duckbill platypus.*
  - *What water animal can stay submerged for 15 minutes? This **remarkable** mammal is the dolphin.*
  - *What reptile can eat a whole deer at one time? This **unusual** creature is a Komodo dragon.*

**Write your topic sentence here.** Be sure to phrase it as a *question*.

What \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_?

This \_\_\_\_\_ (animal, mammal, creature) is (a, the) \_\_\_\_\_.  
(descriptive adjective) (name of animal)

2. **Maintain noun-pronoun agreement:** When you write your paragraph, *be sure nouns and pronouns agree*. If you refer to your animal in singular terms, pronouns must agree by being singular as well. Likewise, if your subject is plural, use plural pronouns.

### Examples

What land mammal needs to keep mud on <sup>its</sup> ~~their~~ skin for sunburn protection? <sup>This</sup> ~~These~~ animal is astounding ~~animals are~~ the Indian rhinoceros.

<sup>tigers live</sup> ~~The Siberian tiger lives~~ in frigid climates. Silky and warm, ~~their~~ dense coats protect them from fierce winter weather.

If you want to change from singular to plural, rename the subject in plural form.

**Incorrect:** *Sneaky and agile, this nocturnal animal (singular antecedent) waits until dark to hunt for fish and insects. Scavenging in local neighborhoods, they (plural pronoun) also enjoy eating from garbage cans.*

**Correct:** *Sneaky and agile, this nocturnal animal (singular subject) waits until dark to hunt for fish and insects. Scavenging in local neighborhoods, raccoons (renames the subject in plural form) also enjoy eating from garbage cans.*

3. **Don't capitalize common nouns.** When writing about an animal whose name includes a country or continent, capitalize the proper noun ONLY. Here are some typical examples:

the African elephant (not African *Elephant*)

the Siberian tiger (not Siberian *Tiger*)

the polar bear (not *Polar* bear; not *Polar Bear*)



## Lesson 9: Skill Builder

### *Introductory Participial Phrases*

You have learned that a present participle is a verb with an "-ing" ending.

drive + ing = driving

To make a participial phrase, you must combine an "-ing" participle with one or more words to form a thought. (Hint: Try following the participle with a prepositional phrase or an adverb)

driving (participle) + through town = driving through town (participial phrase)

#### **DAY ONE** *Writing Phrases*

1. For each of the following participles, write three DIFFERENT participial phrases.
2. *Do not write complete sentences!* Be sure to follow each phrase with a comma.
3. Follow these examples:

**Writing** 1. Writing her history report,

2. Writing carefully,

3. Writing in blue ink,

#### A. Smiling

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

#### B. Waiting

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

#### C. Strolling

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

D. Following

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

E. Camping

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**DAY TWO** *Introductory Participial Phrases*

One way to successfully introduce sentence variation to your writing is by using an **introductory participial phrase**. Begin a sentence with an "-ing" verb. Then add one or more words to the participle to make it a phrase. Following this formula, your sentence will begin with an introductory participial phrase.

Driving through town, the Smith family enjoyed the festive decorations.

A. **Directions:** Using the following participial phrases as sentence starters, complete each sentence. Avoid using "to be" words.

1. Shouting wildly, the excited fans \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Wearing old clothes, Jordan's leadership group \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Marching proudly, the Southside High School band \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Burying a bone, the naughty puppy \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Whistling cheerfully, our paper boy \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Make sure that the subject of the participial phrase always follows closely. Misplaced modifiers are common mistakes that are easily avoided when you place the subject just after the introductory phrase. Here is an example:

**Incorrect:** *Reaching for a cookie, the plate slipped to the floor.*

Ask: "Who is reaching for a cookie? The plate?" (The answer is no.)

**Correct:** *Reaching for a cookie, Sam accidentally knocked the plate to the floor.*

Ask: "Who is reaching for a cookie? Sam?" (The answer is yes.)

B. **Directions:** Complete each of the following sentences. The introductory participial phrase has been given. Be sure to add a comma. Check to make sure your subject agrees by asking yourself a question. As always, avoid using "to be" words in the sentences.

1. Buying donuts for breakfast\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Strolling through the village\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Performing a skit at the retirement home\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Sobbing uncontrollably\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Wearing a suit and tie\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**DAY THREE** *Using Participles as Similes*

- A. **Directions:** Complete the following sentences. Notice that each phrase begins with a participle (an "-ing" verb). Do you also see that each phrase is a simile? Add an ending to each phrase so that it becomes a complete sentence. Be sure the entire sentence makes sense and your subject agrees. Avoid "to be" words!

Example: Running *like the wind*, Bob chased the escaping dog.

1. Sleeping like a baby, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Fighting like cats and dogs, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- B. **Directions:** Finish these participial phrases **with an ending simile**.

Example: Posing for the camera, Janna stood like a statue.

1. Wrestling wildly, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Dancing gracefully, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- C. **Directions:** Write your own participial phrases. Each sentence must begin with an "-ing" verb (*present participle*), and each sentence must contain a **SIMILE**.

**Example:** Growling *like a bear*, Dad chased his boys playfully.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 9: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I include information about the animal's appearance, habits, and habitat?
- ☐ Did I put the facts into my own words?
- ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Does my content follow a logical, orderly sequence?
- ☐ Did I write an interesting title for my report?

### STYLE

- ☐ Do my first two sentences follow the required "question-answer" format?
- ☐ Did I use no more than two forms of "to be"? (*is, am, are, was, were, be, being, been*)  
**Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague words in green.
- ☐ Did I check my "Weak Words" list against my paragraph? **Underline** any of these in green.
- ☐ Have I correctly varied my sentence structure by
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a present (-ing) participial phrase?
  - \_\_\_using a simile?
- ☐ Did I avoid wordiness by ~~crossing out~~ unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that wraps up the report?

### MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Is my paragraph 5-7 sentences long? How many sentences? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent my first sentence? If not, draw an **arrow** ➔ to show that you need to indent.
- ☐ Did I leave margins around my paragraph? If not, draw a light pencil line down right side of page.
- ☐ Did I remember to skip every other line? If not, draw a light **X** on each line you want to skip.
- ☐ Did I use good spacing between words and sentences? If not, draw two **vertical lines** || to separate.
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? **Circle** suspected words; **look up** and make changes.
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? **Correct** any errors.
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I complete and **turn in** my Fact-Gathering Worksheet (pp. 9-3 to 9-5)?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Worksheet on the very bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Checklist on the very top?



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Factual Report (Animal)

## Lesson 9: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included information about the animal's appearance, habits, and habitat |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote facts in own words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content follows a logical, orderly sequence                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote an interesting title for the report                               |

### STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | First two sentences of the paragraph follow the "question-answer" format  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than <b>two</b> forms of "to be"   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Varied sentence structure by correctly using each of the following:<br>___began one sentence with paired adjectives<br>___began one sentence with an "-ing" participle ___used a simile |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that wraps up the report  |

### MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 5-7 sentences long   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used good spacing between words and sentences   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided improper capitalization   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Writing is neat and easy to read  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included Fact-Gathering worksheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Factual Report (Animal)

## Additional Comments and Feedback



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible      Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

## Additional Comments and Feedback

## Lesson 10: Writing a Concise Biography

When you write a **biography**, which describes the events and circumstances of a person's life, you are using another type of **informative writing**. Biographies can be as long as a thick book or as short as a paragraph. For this exercise, you won't need to write a book or even a long report! As a matter of fact, you are only required to write a short paragraph. Please follow directions carefully.

### Directions

1. Choose a figure from the past for your biography. Your mom or teacher may ask you to write about someone whom you are studying in history, science, or art. For ideas, look at the categories on the Biography Brainstorming Worksheet, p. 10-5.
2. Read an article about this person from the Internet or other source, such as a history book or library book. *Choose simple, concise reading material for this exercise.*
3. Fill in the Biography Brainstorming Worksheet.
4. Write your topic sentence. Be sure to include information that introduces your character. **IMPORTANT: The topic sentence must contain an appositive.** For example:
  - Abraham Lincoln, *the Great Emancipator*, lived during the time of the Civil War.
  - Christopher Columbus, *courageous explorer*, discovered a new land in 1492.
  - Beethoven, *a deaf musician*, composed some of the world's most beautiful music.
5. Now, write your paragraph. Since this exercise also teaches *conciseness*, your composition must be **EXACTLY five sentences long**, including topic and closing sentences. See student samples on p. 10-2 for ideas of how this can be done.
6. Be sure to focus on:
  - MAIN accomplishment (there is not enough space to list more)
  - Obstacles your subject overcame
  - Character qualities he or she possessed (you may have to determine these based on what you have read)
7. Support with facts. (If he or she is bold and daring, give an example to support this.)
 

Example: *Shy yet determined, John X overcame his fear of speaking in public.*
8. In addition to using an appositive in your topic sentence, begin one sentence with a **participial phrase** ("-ing" verb) and one with **paired adjectives**. Begin your closing sentence with an **adverb** from your "-ly Adverbs" word list.
9. Include an interesting title. Get creative! Instead of "Anne Frank" or "Mahatma Gandhi," use an **appositive** with a character quality or other identification, such as "Leonardo da Vinci, Renaissance Man" or "Hatshepsut, Female Pharaoh." Or try a descriptive title, such as "A Noble King" or "The Man Who Discovered Gravity."

## Lesson 10: A Five-Sentence Biography

Writing about a person's life in only five sentences seems like an impossible task. In truth, you're merely writing a summary, not a detailed description. Remember, the key to success is to tell just the highlights. Notice how the following examples briefly touch on important influences and mention each person's contributions. Although short, both paragraphs still sound interesting.

### **Daniel Boone, Bold Frontiersman**

*by Evan, age 13*

Daniel Boone, a daring pioneer, helped people settle Kentucky during the 1700s. Undaunted and adventurous, he and five others left their homes in North Carolina and set off on an exploration of the Allegheny Mountains. Marking the trail as he went, Daniel forged the way that would later become the Wilderness Road, which connected the American colonies and the Kentucky Valley. Despite very little education, Boone became an excellent hunter and trapper through determination and hard work. Unquestionably, Daniel Boone's boldness and perseverance played a major part in settling and expanding America.

### **Mother of the Civil Rights Movement**

*by Lacey, age 14*

Rosa Parks, mother of the civil rights movement, became a heroic figure in America during the time of segregation. Refusing to give up her bus seat for a white man, Mrs. Parks was arrested because of the Jim Crow laws, which required a black person to give their seat to a white passenger. Alarmed and upset, the people of Montgomery, Alabama, both black and white, instigated a bus boycott until the U.S. Supreme Court declared bus segregation unconstitutional. Later in her life, Mrs. Parks participated in many civil rights marches and received the first Rosa Parks Peace Prize, named in her honor. Clearly, this remarkable woman took a courageous stand for the equality of all people in America.

**Directions**

Choose one of the preceding paragraphs and complete the following activities:

1. Underline the *participle* sentence starter in red.
2. Underline the "-ly" *adverb* sentence starter in green.
3. Underline the *paired adjectives* sentence starter in orange.
4. Underline the appositive in yellow.
5. In blue, **circle** all the synonyms used for this person. (**Hint:** Not *just* his or her name)
6. Who or what influenced this person? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Name an obstacle this person overcame. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What was his or her main accomplishment? \_\_\_\_\_
9. List two positive character qualities. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Lesson 10: Biography Brainstorming Worksheet

I am writing about (name) \_\_\_\_\_

This person is a/an (check one)

\_\_\_scientist    \_\_\_politician    \_\_\_humanitarian    \_\_\_inventor    \_\_\_public figure

\_\_\_composer or artist    \_\_\_athlete    \_\_\_other \_\_\_\_\_

Three or four synonyms for this person \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Education \_\_\_\_\_

People or events that influenced this person \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Best known for (*main accomplishment*) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other contributions or accomplishments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Two interesting facts about this person \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Obstacles this person overcame \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Four positive character qualities this person possesses (see your Word Lists for ideas)

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





## Lesson 10: Skill Builder

### *Appositives and "-ly" Adverbs*

#### **DAY ONE** *Appositives*

An **appositive** is a specific kind of explanatory word or phrase. It identifies or renames a noun or a pronoun.

**Example:** Emma, *the girl in the second row*, plays the violin.

Always place an appositive right next to the word it renames.

**Examples:** Jose and Ethan share the same birth month, *November*.

My uncle, *an architect*, designed the new library.

Usually, an appositive is set off by commas. Names and single-word appositives, however, are usually *not* set off by commas. If the information is essential to the meaning of the sentence, *do not* use commas.

**Examples:** Rick Riordan, an American author, wrote *The Lightning Thief*. (*not essential*)

Jessie's best friend, Madison, lives on the next block. (*not essential*)

The comic strip "Peanuts" appears in our daily newspaper. (*essential*)

A. **Directions:** Place an appositive in each blank space below. Use commas to set off appositives of more than one word.

1. Mrs. Smith is my neighbor. Mrs. Smith grows prize roses.

Mrs. Smith \_\_\_\_\_ grows prize roses.

2. Thomas Edison is known as "The Wizard of Menlo Park." Thomas Edison invented the light bulb.

Thomas Edison \_\_\_\_\_ invented the light bulb.

3. Jason's nephew is named Peter. Peter loves to wear baseball caps.

Jason's nephew \_\_\_\_\_ loves to wear baseball caps.

4. The flowers were arranged into a bouquet. The flowers were yellow roses.

The flowers \_\_\_\_\_ were arranged into a bouquet.

B. **Directions:** Write your own appositive in each blank space below. Remember to add commas.

1. Mrs. Terry \_\_\_\_\_ drove the boys to baseball practice.
2. Our puppy \_\_\_\_\_ chewed a hole in Dad's favorite slipper.
3. The rattlesnake \_\_\_\_\_ lives in dry climates.
4. Albert Einstein \_\_\_\_\_ developed the theory of relativity.
5. Dr. Brooks \_\_\_\_\_ arrived early to set up his display.

## DAY TWO *Appositives*

A. **Directions:** Combine each pair of sentences to form one sentence containing an appositive.

**Example:** The field trip will take place Tuesday. The field trip is a tour of two historic homes.

The field trip, *a tour of two historic homes*, will take place Tuesday.

1. Mary Mullin wrote an article for *The Daily Journal*. *The Daily Journal* is our local paper.

---

---

2. My dad is a terrific fisherman. He takes me to Lake Georgia every Saturday morning.

---

---

3. Senator Rockwell gave an interesting speech. He was the man in the dark gray suit.

---

---

4. The twins played with Lee's puppies. Lee's puppies are the ones with brown spots.

---

---

B. **Directions:** Using each of the clues below, write a sentence that contains an appositive.

1. George Washington

---

---

2. Don's favorite jeans

---

---

3. Burger King

---

---

4. My drama teacher

---

---

5. Cindy and her brother

---

---

**DAY THREE** *Using -ly Adverbs to Conclude a Thought*

A. Complete the following sentences:

1. Sadly, the runt of the litter \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Undeniably, my father \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Evidently, his old tennis shoes \_\_\_\_\_.

B. Fill in the blanks with a word from your “-ly Adverbs” word list (see Word Lists p. 2).

Remember to capitalize the first word of a sentence.

1. \_\_\_\_\_, Mary received the highest score in the class.
2. Bob broke his mom's favorite vase. \_\_\_\_\_, he earned money to replace it.
3. The Smiths' van was running poorly. \_\_\_\_\_, a mechanic repaired the engine.
4. \_\_\_\_\_, Miss Baker's students were the best-behaved children.

C. Write -ly adverb sentences. Use your **Word List** for ideas.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

## Lesson 10: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I mention my subject's **main accomplishment**?
- ☐ Did I include **obstacle(s)** he/she overcame?
- ☐ Did I include at least **one character quality**?
- ☐ Did I support this character quality with facts, and did I put the facts into **my own words**?
- ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Did I write an interesting title for my biography?

### STYLE

- ☐ Did I write a strong topic sentence that introduces my biography?
- ☐ Did I use no more than one "to be" word? **Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague words in green.
- ☐ Did I check my "Weak Words" list for empty words? **Underline** any of these in green.
- ☐ Have I correctly varied my sentence structure by using *each* of these in my biography?  
\_\_\_began one sentence with paired adjectives    \_\_\_used an appositive in the topic sentence  
\_\_\_began one sentence with a present participle    \_\_\_began closing sentence with an -ly adverb
- ☐ Did I add more facts or details by including items in a series?
- ☐ Did I write concisely by crossing out unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that wraps up the report?

### MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Is my paragraph **exactly** 5 sentences long? It cannot be longer than 5 sentences, so revise if necessary.
- ☐ Did I **indent** my first sentence and leave margins around my paragraph?
- ☐ Did I remember to skip every other line, even when typed?
- ☐ Did I use good spacing between words and sentences? If not, draw two **vertical lines** to separate.
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? **Circle** suspected words; **look up** and make changes.
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? **Correct** any errors.
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I complete and **turn in** my Biography Brainstorming Worksheet?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Biography Worksheet on the very bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Checklist on the very top?



## Lesson 10: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Mentioned your subject's main accomplishment                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included obstacle(s) he/she overcame                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included at least one character quality                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Supported this character quality with facts                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote facts in own words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote an interesting title for the biography                           |

### STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence that introduces the biography  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than <b>one</b> "to be" word  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided using weak words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Varied sentence structure by correctly using <u>each</u> of the following:<br>__began one sentence with paired adjectives<br>__used an appositive in the topic sentence<br>__began one sentence with a present participle<br>__began closing sentence with an -ly adverb |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included a sentence with items in a series in order to add more facts or details   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely and communicated clearly   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that wraps up the report   |

### MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is <b>exactly</b> 5 sentences long   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used good spacing between words and sentences  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized correctly  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included <b>Biography Brainstorming Worksheet</b> , all drafts of the report, and your checklist |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Concise Biography

## Additional Comments and Feedback



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible      Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

## Additional Comments and Feedback

## Lesson 11: Introducing Journalism

You have been learning about **informative writing**, which provides the reader with information that's educational, inspirational, and practical. One type of informative writing is called **journalism**. Journalism is the style of writing typically found in newspapers, magazines, and online news sources. Facts or events are presented in a direct manner with little attempt to analyze or explain the information. (When writers give their personal opinions or otherwise interpret the information, it becomes **editorial**.)

News stories are written using a standard formula based on what is often called the **5 Ws** or the **5 Ws and an H**---also known as *who*, *what*, *when*, *where*, *why*, and *how*. Gathering information with the help of the 5 Ws makes journalism fairly simple. Here are some things to look for when using these tools to read or write a news article.

1. **Who?** Who is the article about? (It may not be a person. For example, it could be an animal, a corporation, or a tornado.) Who else played a role in this event? What authorities became involved?
2. **What?** What happened? What major and minor events occurred?
3. **When?** When did this take place? Day of the week? Time of day?
4. **Where?** Where did the action take place? Was more than one location involved?
5. **Why?** What caused the situation? Why did people respond or react?
6. **How?** How did this happen? How was it resolved? How did people respond?

This lesson gives you practice as a journalist. As with previous informative assignments, you must concentrate on the **facts** when writing a news article.

News articles often break traditional writing rules. People read the newspaper more for education and information than for entertainment. Therefore, many of the techniques you've learned for descriptive writing won't be useful or applicable when writing a news story. For example, as you skim various newspaper articles in person or online, you'll notice that most sentences are the "subject-verb" type. It's uncommon for a news reporter to use a variety of sentence structures, although you may spot one now and then. Likewise, news articles don't usually rely on the colorful vocabulary common to descriptive writing.

**Use the following tips to help you write your article.**

1. **Use actual newspaper articles** for guidance. (If your family doesn't subscribe to a newspaper, download news articles from reputable Internet news sources.) Look at both content and form.
2. **Consider your audience.** Most newspapers are written at a 5<sup>th</sup>- to 8<sup>th</sup>-grade level.

3. **Use familiar words and define technical terms.** Your thesaurus will be helpful for eliminating overused words. However, now is not the time to introduce unusual vocabulary. If you're writing about a scientific, political, or historical topic, it's often helpful to acquaint your reader with unfamiliar words. (If you're quoting a historical figure, some of his or her words may use specialized vocabulary. This is acceptable.)
4. **Do not editorialize.** Your job is to present the reader with the facts about the situation (the 5 Ws). This isn't the time to give your opinion, analyze, explain, or otherwise interpret information. In addition, don't tell what you think will happen next.
5. **Write about the event as if it happened within the past several days.** Generally, newspapers report yesterday's news. Journalists can write "yesterday" or "Thursday night" or "early Wednesday" knowing that readers assume the event took place within the past week. As a rule, don't refer to the complete date (August 27, 20\_\_). Simply write "yesterday" or "Saturday." Exact time of day is also rarely important. Furthermore, don't mention facts that wouldn't normally become known until days or even weeks after the article is written.
6. **You may not always know the "why."** As an example, a journalist can write an article about a crime or a warehouse fire even though authorities may not be able to determine a motive for the crime or the cause of the fire for days, weeks, or longer. In such cases, you won't be able to fill in the "why" section of your worksheet.
7. **Understand how to write geographic place names.** Don't mention the state or country if the event has taken place in a well-known national or international city. London, Moscow, Rome, Seattle, Chicago, San Francisco, New York, and Charleston are examples of familiar cities whose countries or states are common knowledge. Moreover, if the event took place in a city or town within your state, mention only the city's name. Your reader will assume the rest.
8. **Write short paragraphs.** Often, a paragraph will only be **one sentence long**.
9. **Write in third person.** Unless you're quoting someone, never use *I*, *we*, *my*, or *our*.
10. **Headlines must follow a specific format.**
  - They must be concise *phrases* or *sentences*. Think "short and to the point."
  - They must grab the reader's attention and give clues about the content of the article.
  - They must include a present-tense verb. Not "Light bulb *made* history" but "Light bulb *makes* history"; not "Bombing of Pearl Harbor" but "Pearl Harbor bombed."  
**Note:** The *implied* "to be" word—(*is*) *bombed*—suggests tense.
  - They cannot end with a period.
  - The *first word* and *proper nouns* are capitalized. Some newspapers also capitalize *nouns*, *verbs*, *adjectives*, and *adverbs*. Follow your newspaper's format.
  - "To be" words, helping verbs, and articles (*a*, *an*, *the*) rarely appear in headlines.

## Lesson 11: Examining a Lead Paragraph

The lead paragraph not only introduces the news story, it **summarizes the article**. Brief and concise, it normally consists of one or two sentences that answer most or all of the 5 Ws. Don't be fooled by inessential information. Look for the main point of the article.

After reading the following lead paragraphs, determine the 5 Ws. They will not always be given in "5 W order." Note that sometimes the "why" or "how" doesn't appear in the lead but is explained later in the article. Also be aware that the "who" is often the subject of the article but is not necessarily a *person*. It can sometimes be a company, a weather phenomenon, or an animal, for example.

*Returning to the White House on Thursday after a weeklong Midwest tour, the president was expected to veto a \$792 billion tax cut measure as early as today, believing it will wreak havoc on America's economy.*

Who? \_\_\_\_\_

What? \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

*As Hurricane Floyd took a sudden turn inland Wednesday night, it knocked out power, flooded streets with drenching rain, and uprooted trees as South Carolina braced itself for a direct hit.*

Who? \_\_\_\_\_

What? \_\_\_\_\_

When? \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 11: Writing a News Article

Plan your article using the “News Article Planning Worksheet” (p. 11-5). Then, write the article (sloppy copy), adding details and description to your 5 Ws.

1. Begin with your headline as the title. Capitalize according to your newspaper's headline format.
2. Write the byline. This is the reporter's name (in this case, your name). It goes under the headline in longer articles.
3. Use transition words to connect paragraphs. (See "Transition and Conjunctions" word list, pp. 14,15.)
4. Make sure your tenses agree.
5. Refer to a newspaper to see how journalists deal with dates. Follow their format.
  - Do they say *Monday* or do they say *Yesterday*? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Are complete dates given? Is the year mentioned? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Write primarily in a **subject-verb style**. However, make sure you use each of the following sentence variations somewhere in your article:
  - Present participle sentence starter
  - Appositive
  - Subordinate conjunction sentence starter (although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while). *Although the police arrived within minutes, OR While rescuers worked to free the trapped miners, ...*
7. In a news article, you are permitted to use more "to be" words. You may use up to **four**.
8. Use concrete words, taking **extra care** to avoid wordiness and flowery prose, which are not appropriate for journalistic articles.
9. Write concisely and to the point.
10. Write an article of 7-12 sentences.
11. Write a minimum of three paragraphs for a 7-sentence article. Use more paragraphs if you write more sentences.
12. Keep your paragraphs short. Sometimes, a paragraph is only one sentence long.
13. As always, pay attention to margins, spacing, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.
14. Write a **summary statement** to conclude your article.
15. Place the date in the upper right corner. (Remember your name goes in the byline.)

## Lesson 11: News Article Planning Worksheet

Below you will find an assortment of events that may be worthy of a news story. Pretend you're a reporter for a local newspaper. Choose one of the following scenarios. Then, using this worksheet, develop and write an article for *The Daily News*.

### 1. Choose a scenario. Check the box of the one you plan to use.

- ☐ A dangerous animal has escaped from the zoo.
- ☐ A 10-year-old boy becomes successful in his quest to pilot a plane across the country.
- ☐ War breaks out in Moravia. (Fictitious location—make up the details yourself!)
- ☐ NASA is finally successful in sending a team of astronauts to Mars.
- ☐ Japanese scientists discover a cure for \_\_\_\_\_.

Your parent or teacher might require you to write about a historical or scientific event in a journalistic fashion, as if you were reporting in an earlier time. *Note: Actual historical events like these are often easier to write about than made-up news events.*

- ☐ Eli Whitney invents the cotton gin.
- ☐ Pierre and Marie Curie discover radium.
- ☐ Napoleon's army is victorious at the Battle of Austerlitz.
- ☐ Howard Carter discovers the tomb of King Tutankhamun.
- ☐ Japan bombs Pearl Harbor.
- ☐ Charles Lindbergh completes the first solo transatlantic flight.
- ☐ The Berlin Wall is torn down.
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Jot down the main details.

Who \_\_\_\_\_

What \_\_\_\_\_

When \_\_\_\_\_

Where \_\_\_\_\_

Why/How \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Write the headline**

---

---

**4. Write the lead paragraph** (usually one to two sentences).

---

---

---

---

**5. Do a little research.**

- **If your article is about a factual historical event**, read about it in a book or encyclopedia, or check out an online source.
- **If your article is about a fictitious event**, make sure your "facts" make sense. Even if your article is based on imaginary circumstances, it must still be believable. For instance, if you write about a boy who makes a cross-country flight, you will need to find out what kind of plane he might fly, who would have to accompany him, what kind of preparation or training would be required, how long such a trip would take, and how many stopovers he would need to make along the way.



Lesson 11: Skill Builder

Journalism

**DAY ONE** *No Skill Builder today because of the many pre-writing activities.*

**DAY TWO** *Reading the News*

An important part of writing effective news articles is knowing what kind of information a news story contains. Newspapers seek to inform the reader about local, national, and world events. They do this primarily through the use of the "5 Ws and an H"—*who, what, when, where, why, and how*.

**Directions:** Read the newspaper article below and fill in the blanks with the proper information.

**Mother, 2 children survive home fire**

CREEKSIDE -- A mother and her two children survived a kitchen fire that gutted their home early Friday. Rescuers said they found a smoke detector disconnected on the floor.

The fire had apparently been smoldering for some time, filling the house with smoke, said Thomas Johnson, operations chief for the city fire department. Neighbors who smelled the smoke kicked in the door about 6:45 a.m. and found the kitchen burning.

Firefighters found Shelley Smith, 32, unconscious inside the house. The children's grandparents, who live down the street, dragged out 3-year-old Jessica Smith, who was found in her bed, and 5-year-old Lance, who was beside his bed.

The children were released Friday afternoon to their grandparents' care after treatment for smoke inhalation. Mrs. Smith remains in critical condition at St. Stephen's Hospital, where she is being treated for smoke inhalation and second degree burns.

1. Who? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. When? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Where? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Why/How? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Write the lead. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**DAY THREE** *Writing a Lead Paragraph*

**Directions:** Imagine that you are a reporter for the *Daily Times*. Use the information in the box to answer the questions.

severe snowstorm	sleet, snow, and freezing rain
Thursday	flights delayed at O'Hare Airport
Chicago	holiday travelers stranded

- 1. Who? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. What? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. When? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Where? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**Write the Lead Paragraph**

**Directions:** Using the notes you've taken above, write the lead paragraph for your article on the lines provided here. Fill in your lead paragraph with any other necessary information.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 11: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I answer who, what, when, where, why, and how?
- ☐ Does my news article follow a logical, orderly sequence?
- ☐ Did I stick to the facts and avoid giving my opinion?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly and avoid using pretentious or unfamiliar terms?
- ☐ Does my headline capture the attention of the reader and give clues about the content of the article?

### STYLE

- ☐ Did I write a strong lead sentence or paragraph to introduce my article?
- ☐ Did I use no more than FOUR "to be" words? **Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are recognizable to most readers? **Underline** vague words in green.
- ☐ Did I check my "Weak Words" list against my news article? Underline any of these in green.
- ☐ Did I use transition words? List them:  
\_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ Did I write in past tense?
- ☐ Did I write in third person?
- ☐ Although news articles contain mostly subject-verb sentences, did I vary my sentence structure by also using *each of these correctly* in my article?  
\_\_\_ began a sentence with a present participle  
\_\_\_ began a sentence with a subordinate conjunction  
(*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)  
\_\_\_ used an appositive
- ☐ Did I write concisely by **crossing out** unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?

### MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I write a strong summary statement that gives a feeling of ending?
- ☐ Did I write the date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I place my **name** (byline) beneath the title and then skip a line?
- ☐ Did I use correct headline *format*? Is my headline *concise*? Does my headline *avoid* "to be" words?
- ☐ Did I write 3 paragraphs (more for a longer article)? How many? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Is the article 7-12 sentences long? How many sentences? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent, leave margins, and skip every other line?
- ☐ Did I use good spacing between words and sentences?
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling and **look up** words I'm not sure about?
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation and **correct** any errors?
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in this order: Worksheet on the bottom, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and Writing Checklist on the very top?



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject News Article

## Lesson 11: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your paragraph one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Answered <i>who, what, when, where, why, and how</i>                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | News article follows a logical, orderly sequence                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Stuck to the facts and avoided editorializing (giving opinions)                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Communicated clearly (including avoiding unfamiliar or pretentious terms)        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support the theme of the article (no "carrots in your cookie jar") |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Headline captures reader's attention and gives clues about content of article    |

### STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong lead sentence or paragraph introduces the article   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided using more than <b>four</b> "to be" words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Chose synonyms instead of repeating main words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words recognizable to most readers   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of weak words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used transition words to connect paragraphs  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote article in past tense  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote article in third person  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used each of the following sentence variations:<br>__began with a present (-ing) participle<br>__began with a subordinate conjunction<br>( <i>although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while</i> )<br>__used an appositive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely by eliminating unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong summary statement that gives a feeling of ending  |

### MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Date in the upper right-hand corner  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name (byline) written under the headline, followed by a skipped line               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used correct headline format; headline is concise and in present tense             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote 3 or more paragraphs   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Article is 7-12 sentences long   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of each paragraph; left margins around the paragraph       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines and used good spacing between words and sentences                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized and punctuated correctly   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming worksheet, all drafts of this article, and your checklist   |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject News Article

## Additional Comments and Feedback

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible      Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

## Additional Comments and Feedback



# Unit 3:

# Narrative Writing



## Lesson 12: Writing a Narrative of an Emotional Event

A **narrative** tells a story through a sequence of events. An interesting narrative also appeals to the senses through the writer's effective use of vivid description.

When learning about writing narratives, it helps to think back to the illustration of the overgrown garden in Lesson 3. Just as you can't adequately describe every flower, bush, and tree in your garden in a single paragraph, you can't do justice to a weeklong (or even a one-day) vacation in a short composition. On the other hand, you could write a detailed paragraph about one small aspect of the garden, perhaps describing the roses or the garden gnome. In the same way, you could write a short, focused narrative about a single experience or event.

Read the narrative paragraphs on p. 12-2. Do you notice the vagueness of the first snorkeling paragraph? It doesn't use colorful, descriptive words or focus on a single event. It's just a general overview. But the second paragraph effectively zooms right in on **one memorable activity**.

When you write an expressive and descriptive narrative, you have the power to hold the reader's close attention. You probably discovered this yourself as you read the two snorkeling paragraphs. The detailed, colorful second narrative captured your imagination in a more concrete way.

All narratives have several elements in common: **characters**, **setting**, passage of **time**, and a **plot**. Let's talk about each of these.

1. **Characters:** When writing one-paragraph narratives, it makes sense to stick to one or two main characters. You won't have time to develop more than this. As you progress to longer compositions, you can always include more characters.

You will be the main character of the Lesson 12 narrative.

2. **Setting:** Establish a location for the action. Because you're writing one here, limit yourself to one setting. This helps you stay focused. Beginning writers tend to jump around when writing narratives. Choosing one location eliminates this temptation.
3. **Time:** When writing a single paragraph, focus on the events of a few hours *or less*. As you expand to longer compositions, it will be natural to expand the time frame of your story as well.
4. **Plot:** The plot is the story line of your narrative. It contains the action and the sequence of events, and it places your character(s) in some kind of activity.

## Lesson 12: Details of a Narrative Event

Skilled gardeners have the ability to draw your eye to a bower of cascading roses or an interesting stone birdbath. They carefully plot out their gardens knowing the importance of strategic focal points. When guests step into such a garden, their gaze naturally wanders to these eye-catching arrays.

Writers have similar control over the focal point of their compositions. By narrowing the topic and using descriptive, colorful words, writers can draw attention to a smaller, more interesting portion of a larger event. Do you remember first learning about descriptive writing? Rather than write about a bowl of fruit, you focused on every small detail of one banana, apple, or orange. When writing about your pet, you didn't write about pets in general or even about dogs. You chose one pet and described it carefully.

**Directions:** Read these examples of narrative writing and complete the activities that follow.

On our trip to Maui, my family and I went to Lahaina for a day of snorkeling. I looked forward to my new experience because it combined two of my favorites, swimming and fish. I have a tropical fish tank at home. We put on our masks and fins and waded into the water. It was hard at first. I could not get used to breathing through my mouth. I was afraid I would inhale the water. But it got easier as the day went on. It was amazing to see tropical fish swimming right in front of my nose! I enjoyed my snorkeling adventure.

\* \* \* \* \*

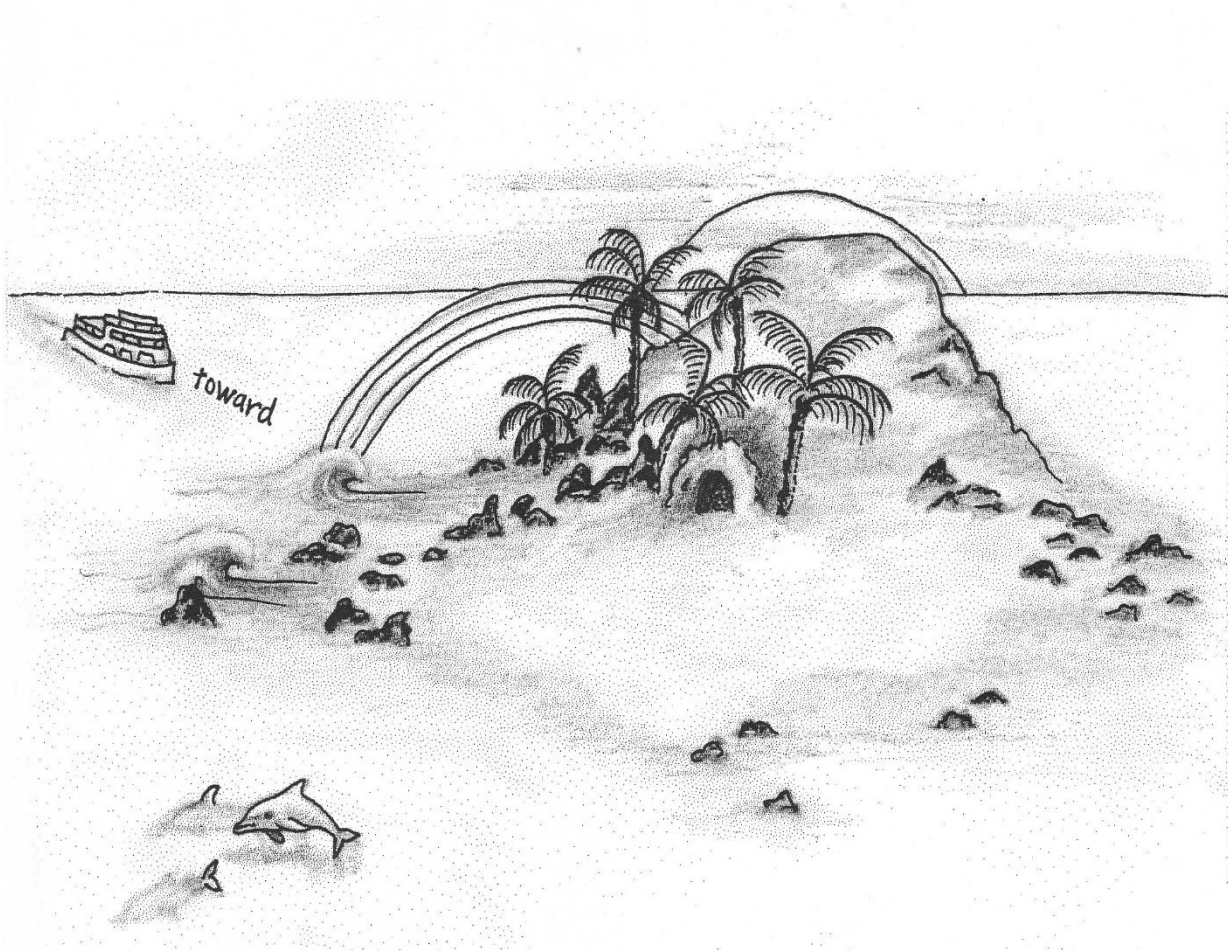
The water feels cool on my hot skin as I take my last plunge into the sheltered cove. Finally breathing normally through my snorkeling tube, I follow my dad into the shallows off the Hawaiian coast. Peering through my mask at the sun-dappled rocks below me, I search for interesting sea life. Suddenly, hundreds of tiny iridescent fish dart out of a hidden cave and swish past my mask. Their small bodies brush against me like feathers, tickling my sensitive skin. Then, from the corner of my eye, I spot three brilliant fish in colors of lemon yellow, black, and fluorescent green. The sight of each new exotic creature sends a thrill through me! Exhilarated and free, I glide through the clear blue-green ocean, my yellow fins kicking gently behind me. Upon reaching the shore, I regretfully step out of my personal paradise, eager to return tomorrow.

Before talking about narrative paragraphs, let's see what you can discover about narrative writing through the following exercises. You will need your colored pencils.

1. How much **time** goes by in the first paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_  
In the second? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Find the "carrot in a cookie jar" in the first paragraph. Underline it in **orange**.
3. In **red**, underline the words that appeal to your *senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, or touch*.
4. Use **dark green** to circle *emotion* words.
5. In **black**, underline the *information* that tells *who, what, where, and when*.
6. Underline the *topic sentence* in **pink**.
7. Draw a **yellow** line through the *simile*.
8. Place a **purple** X on any *participles* ("-ing" verbs) that begin sentences.
9. In **dark blue**, circle the *paired adjectives*.
10. In **brown**, underline and count the "*to be*" words. How many did you find? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Use a **light green** pencil to place an X on the "*-ly*" *adverb* sentence starter.
12. In **light blue**, circle the *prepositional phrase* sentence starter.

## Lesson 12: Preposition Island

*See Teacher's Manual p. 45 for instructions.*



1. toward the island

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_

6. \_\_\_\_\_

7. \_\_\_\_\_

8. \_\_\_\_\_

9. \_\_\_\_\_

10. \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 12: Narrative Planning Worksheet

For your first narrative, let's put all the elements together to help you write about an incident you remember. When you choose an event to write about, consider one that had an emotional impact on you (great joy, excitement, fear, anxiety, nervousness, etc.). Then, narrow your topic to a **SINGLE INCIDENT** that took place during this event.

1. Choose an event that **occurs in one setting or location**.
2. Choose an action that **you have experienced firsthand**.
3. Choose an action that **covers a brief period of time** (generally a few hours or less).
4. **Decide who the main character is** and omit any minor characters who are not important to the story.

How do you go about reaching your goals? Let's do this step-by-step.

1. **Choose an event.** First, decide on your **BROAD** topic (ideas: a favorite vacation or day trip, a sporting event you attended or participated in, a thrilling experience, a close call, a memorable holiday event, or doing something for the first time, like riding a bike or snowboarding).

My broad topic is: \_\_\_\_\_

Next, narrow your topic to **ONE INCIDENT** that lasted only a few hours or less.

### Examples:

Broad topic A visit to Disneyland ➔ Narrow topic Riding on Space Mountain

Broad topic Playing football ➔ Narrow topic Breaking my arm

Broad topic Yosemite ➔ Narrow topic Hiking to Vernal Falls

My narrow topic is: \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Choose the characters.** Besides yourself, decide if you want to include another **main** character—someone else who participated in the *primary action*. On the other hand, **minor** characters such as ticket takers, flight attendants, people in a crowd, and others who *interact casually (or not at all)* with the main characters, should be used *sparingly* in a short narrative. You might not even want any minor characters.

Either way, make sure to focus the narrative on *yourself* rather than the action going on around you.

Main character(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Minor character(s) \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Choose emotions.** Tell what you felt during this experience. Some events produce stronger feelings than others. Often, we can identify these feelings in physical ways.

For example, waiting in the dentist's chair to have your tooth filled may produce **anxiety** that you recognize as *knots in your stomach*. Emotions such as **guilt** or **embarrassment** might make you feel *shaky, cold, clammy, light-headed, or dizzy*. Your *heart could pound* from **fear** or **excitement**. You may get *butterflies in your stomach* from **nervousness** (singing a solo) or **eager anticipation** (your birthday).

Use your "Emotions" word list to choose just the right words. Consider the effects of the experience. Were you only a *little* scared, or were you absolutely terrified? Were you elated or merely pleased? Use the strongest emotion words where you want the most impact!

Emotions that this experience produced \_\_\_\_\_

Physically, how or where you felt those emotions \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Choose the setting.** Select the main location for your action. Keep it narrowed. While "Disneyland" is too broad a setting for a single paragraph, "Thunder Mountain" is a narrow location. "My house" is too broad; "my patio" or "the kitchen table" are narrow locations.

The setting is: \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Determine time.** Decide how much time elapses during your narrative. It might only be a few minutes, but don't choose an event that lasts longer than a few hours.

Length of time that passes: \_\_\_\_\_

6. **Determine the plot.** Decide on the primary action for your paragraph. Who interacts with whom (or with what)? If you write about an exciting amusement park ride, the main action is the ride itself. You, the passenger, interact with the ride.

Main action: \_\_\_\_\_

(Who) \_\_\_\_\_ interacts with (whom/what) \_\_\_\_\_?

7. **Write a topic sentence.** Write a topic sentence that introduces your *emotionally-charged* narrative.

---



---



---



8. **Sequence.** Write out the sequence of events. If you find that the sequence is too long, narrow your incident even further. You should be able to describe this incident in one paragraph of 7-10 sentences. (Note: Not every line will have a related emotion.)

Sequence of Events	Emotion Felt
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____

9. **Write your narrative.** Go for it! You have all the ingredients for a terrific story. Don't forget to use all kinds of interesting, concrete, vivid words to describe the action. Use your senses to draw the reader into the plot. Vary your sentence structure to make the narrative interesting to your readers. After all the hours spent writing descriptive paragraphs, many students find narrative writing a refreshing change. Enjoy!

10. **Use sentence variations** (You must use *each one of these*.)

- Participle sentence starter (-ing verb)
- Paired Adjectives sentence starter
- Adverb sentence starter (-ly)
- Prepositional phrase sentence starter
- Appositive (renames a noun in a sentence with another noun or noun phrase)  
*My rescuer, an experienced lifeguard, pulled me swiftly to shore.*
- Subordinate conjunction sentence starter (although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while)  
*As I slid down the steep embankment, I grabbed a protruding root.*
- Simile (a comparison of two very different things; uses "like" or "as") - OPTIONAL  
*I bounced along the rough ice like a stone skipping on water.*



## Lesson 12: Skill Builder

### Prepositional Phrases

#### DAY ONE

A **preposition** is a relational word, usually telling *where* or *when*. (See "Prepositions" word list, p. 12.) By itself, a preposition is useless in a sentence. To be a true preposition, and to make sense in the sentence, a preposition must be used in a **prepositional phrase**.

A prepositional phrase always begins with a preposition and always ends with a noun or a pronoun as the object of the preposition. Because a preposition is a relational word, it must relate to, or meet, an object.

For example: **BEHIND**, while on your list of prepositions, can also function as an adverb.

1. *He is running BEHIND.* In this case, *behind* is not a preposition; it is an adverb. It does not have an object to answer the question, "Behind *what* or *whom*?"
2. *He is running BEHIND THE BLUE BIKE.* This is the correct use of "behind" as a preposition! *Behind the blue bike* is a complete prepositional phrase, because the preposition (BEHIND) meets an object (BIKE).

Here is another example. **AFTER** is another word that can function as a preposition and as an adverb or subordinate conjunction.

1. *AFTER THE BASEBALL GAME, the team enjoyed pizza and soda.* "After the baseball game" is a complete prepositional phrase because the preposition (AFTER) meets an object (BASEBALL GAME).
2. *AFTER I opened gifts, Maria passed out favors.* Here, "after" is a *subordinate conjunction*, not a preposition, for two reasons.
  - First, "I" is not the object. (The pronouns *I*, *he*, and *she* may never be objects, but *me*, *him*, and *her* may. *Ryan voted after I* is incorrect; it should state *after ME*.) This becomes a little harder to spot when pronouns like *you* or *they* are used, or when names follow the subordinate conjunction ("*After you arrived*," "*After Tim explained his reasons*.")
  - Second, *AFTER I opened gifts* is a *clause*, not a *phrase*. A clause contains a subject ("I") and a predicate, or verb ("opened"). This would make *AFTER* a subordinate conjunction because prepositional *phrases* do not contain predicates.

► **Helpful hint:** If you can remove the preposition and the remaining words stand alone as an independent clause, then your word is not a preposition.

**Example:** After I opened gifts

*I opened gifts* stands alone; therefore, "after" is not a preposition.

Look at these:	<u>Preposition</u>	<u>Object</u>
	<i>above</i>	the child's <i>head</i>
	<i>within</i>	an <i>hour</i>
	<i>beyond</i>	the crumbling brick <i>wall</i>

You are probably used to seeing and using prepositional phrases in the middle or end of a sentence. For example:

We huddled together DURING THE STORM to keep safe.

Sharks lurked silently BENEATH THE DARK SEA.

But you can also vary your sentence structure by beginning a sentence with a prepositional phrase:

DURING THE STORM, we huddled together to keep safe.

BENEATH THE DARK SEA, sharks lurked silently.

- A. Underline the prepositional phrase (or phrases) in each sentence. On the line, write B if the prepositional phrase appears at the beginning, M if it is in the middle, or E if it is at the end.

  M     E   We searched behind the barn for the stray cow. (EXAMPLE)

              Our dog slept under the table after dinner.

              At noon the parade will march past the general store.

              He has only practiced for two hours since Monday.

              The children played with building blocks until nap time.

              By tonight your room must be completely in order.

              In the theater, please sit behind the woman wearing the red sweater.

              Mary's brother peeked around the corner of the schoolhouse.

- B. First, underline the prepositional phrase or phrases in each sentence. Then, rewrite the sentences so that they BEGIN with a prepositional phrase. Be sure they make sense.

1. I have not been myself since the accident.

---

2. A beaver built a dam in my grandpa's pond.

---

3. She turned quickly and left without a word.

---

4. The car had crashed before John knew what hit him.

---

5. A waiting wolf crouched beyond the bend in the road.

---

6. The fierce wind howled loudly throughout the stormy night.

---

7. Rover would surely die without food and water.

---

8. We were stuffed into the small car like packed sardines.

---

## DAY TWO

Today you will practice writing sentences that begin with a prepositional phrase.

A. Complete the sentences below. Notice that each one begins with a *prepositional phrase*.

1. Across the lake, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

2. Without any help, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Upon reaching safety, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

4. From dusk to dawn, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

5. Inside the makeshift shelter, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

B. Complete the sentences below. Notice that each one begins with a *preposition*. (Hint: Finish the prepositional phrase before completing the rest of the sentence. *Don't forget the comma!*)

1. Among \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

2. Beneath \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

3. Throughout \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

4. During \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

5. Since \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

### DAY THREE

A. Pull out your list of "Prepositions" words (see Word Lists, p. 12) to complete the sentences below. Add a prepositional phrase *sentence starter* to each. Don't use the same preposition more than once.

1. \_\_\_\_\_, we ate waffles with maple syrup.

2. \_\_\_\_\_, the Smiths moved to Washington.

3. \_\_\_\_\_, Grandma has not regained her strength.

4. \_\_\_\_\_, Ray finally found the missing envelope.

5. \_\_\_\_\_, the neighbor's dog howled all night long.

6. \_\_\_\_\_, the ocean was barely visible.

- B. Using your Prepositions Word List (see Word Lists, p. 12), write your own sentences beginning with prepositional phrases. Do not repeat prepositions. Use colorful, descriptive words to make interesting sentences.

**Not this:** *Down the street, a cart went by.*

**But this:** *Down the narrow cobblestone street, a rickety cart creaked by.*

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.





## Lesson 12: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I narrow my topic to **one** incident?
- ☐ Did I limit my narrative to **one** or **two** main characters, keeping the focus on me (and my emotions)?
- ☐ Did I limit my paragraph to **one** setting?
- ☐ Did I limit my time frame to a **few hours or less**?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly, expressing exactly how I felt by using strong emotion words?
- ☐ Did I describe the physical aspects of my emotions (butterflies in stomach, etc.)?
- ☐ Do all sentences support the topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Have I written a title that appeals to the reader's emotions?

### STYLE

- ☐ Does my first sentence do a good job of introducing the narrative and hooking the reader?
- ☐ Did I use no more than one "to be" word? **Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague or weak words in green.
- ☐ Have I correctly varied my sentence structure by
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a present participle
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with an -ly adverb?
  - \_\_\_using a simile (optional)?                      \_\_\_using an appositive?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a subordinate conjunction? (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a prepositional phrase?
- ☐ Did I use the same tense consistently throughout the narrative?
- ☐ Did I avoid wordiness by ~~crossing out~~ unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

### MECHANICS (*Check your first revision against this list.*)

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Is my paragraph 7-10 sentences long? How many sentences? \_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent my first sentence and leave margins around the text?
- ☐ Did I skip lines and use good spacing between words and sentences?
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling and **look up** suspected words?
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation and **correct** any errors?
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in proper order?



## Lesson 12: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your composition one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK    needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited topic to one incident   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited paragraph to one or two main characters, keeping the primary focus on self        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited paragraph to one setting or location  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited time frame to a few hours or less   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Communicated clearly, expressing strong emotions with <i>specific</i> words               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described the <i>physical</i> aspects of your emotions as they related to your experience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title appeals to the reader's emotions  |

### STYLE

OK    needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Began with a sentence that introduces the narrative and hooks the reader  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than <b>one</b> "to be" word                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of repeated words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words and avoided "weak" words                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Varied sentence structure by <i>correctly</i> using each of the following |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with paired adjectives                              |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with a present participial phrase                   |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with an -ly adverb phrase                           |
|                          |                          | ___used a simile (optional)      ___used an appositive                    |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with a subordinate conjunction                      |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with a prepositional phrase                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used the same tense consistently throughout the composition               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending                    |

### MECHANICS

OK    needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 7-10 sentences long   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines and used good spacing between words and sentences                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized correctly  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and used colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming, <u>all</u> drafts of this paragraph, and your Writing Skills Checklist |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject First-Person Emotional Narrative

## Additional Comments and Feedback

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible      Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

### Additional Comments and Feedback

## Lesson 13: Writing a Narrative of Another Person's Experience

During this lesson, you will again try your hand at writing a narrative of an event. This time, however, you will write about an event, situation, or emotional experience that happened to someone else. The person you interview should recall an event where you were *not* present.

You will begin by interviewing the person whose story you will write. Choose someone you can talk to *today*. An older person (parent, grandparent, adult friend, or neighbor) is generally easier to interview than a peer or a young sibling.

Remember to *limit* this person to *one event* that took place in a few hours or less. Have him/her choose an experience with a lot of action, if possible. Be sure to ask about his or her emotions and feelings at the time. Here are some ideas of broad topics:

- Interview your grandfather about a war memory.
- Interview a grandparent or older family friend about a memory of 9-11.
- Interview a parent, grandparent, or family friend about their most anxious, frightening, exciting, or emotional moment. (Always remember to be gracious.)
- Interview someone about a scary close call.
- Interview an older person about his/her most challenging obstacle.
- Interview a parent or grandparent about a birthday or holiday memory.
- Interview someone about an exciting, anxious, or adventurous vacation memory.
- Interview someone about their memory of learning to ride a bike, drive a car, etc.
- Interview someone about the first time they sang a solo, played an instrument in a recital, or gave a speech.

When you're ready to begin the interview, use your Interview Worksheet (p. 13-5) to brainstorm and plan the details with your subject.

You and the person you are interviewing will surely be able to agree on an interesting topic! Tell this person that he or she is limited to the following criteria:

1. Decide who the **main character** is. Figure out which minor characters can be omitted from the narrative and which are important to the story.
2. Choose an **action that was experienced firsthand**.
3. Choose an action that covers a **brief period of time** (generally a few hours or less).
4. Choose an event that **occurs in one setting**.

## Directions

1. Write a **topic sentence** that grabs your readers' attention and makes them want to read for details.
2. **Write your narrative.** You have all the ingredients for a terrific story.
  - The person you interview must be the subject of most sentences.
  - If the story has minor characters, make sure to tell the story from the main character's point of view.
3. Write in **third person**. Write about the person you interviewed. You may refer to him or her by first name (Logan/Ellie), affectionate name (Uncle Jim/Grandma), or formal name (Dr. Chen/Mrs. McCall). Try to use a synonym or two for your main character to keep from repeating the name too many times, but don't overdo the synonyms. Intersperse synonyms with *pronouns*.
4. Give an accurate picture of the **person's emotions**.
  - If the experience is frightening, nerve-wracking, harrowing, exhilarating, or thrilling, for example, choose words from your "Characteristics, Expressions, and Behaviors" or "Emotions" lists. (See Word Lists, pp. 3-7 and 9-10).
  - Also describe the physical aspects of emotion as they relate to your subject's emotional state, such as stomach in knots, sweaty palms, tension in shoulders or neck, trembling hands or knees.
5. Include **descriptive details**. Make your narrative more than just a series of events. Don't forget to use all kinds of interesting, concrete, vivid words to describe the action! Use sensory descriptions to draw the reader into the action. Remember, lack of descriptive detail results in a dry, dull story.
6. Write in **past tense**. And keep your tense consistent throughout the composition.
7. Write **one paragraph of 7-10 sentences**.
8. **Vary your sentence structure** to make the narrative interesting. *Use each one of these at least once in your composition:*
  - Paired adjectives sentence starter (You'll find excellent ideas for paired adjectives in your "Characteristics/Expressions/ Behaviors" and "Emotions" word lists.)
  - Present participle sentence starter
  - Adverb sentence starter
  - Prepositional phrase sentence starter
  - Appositive



- Subordinate conjunction sentence starter (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- Simile (use only one simile)
- Don't forget to include a few regular old subject-verb sentences too.
  - Too many sentences structured in the same manner (in other words, beginning with a phrase) can produce a monotonous or sing-song paragraph.
  - Subject-verb sentences can help to break up this repetition.
  - Another way to break up monotony is to include a short sentence (six words or fewer).

► **Helpful Hint:** Most sentence starters may be used more than once in a paragraph as long as you don't include them in back-to-back sentences.

Here is one student's narrative account of her mother's exciting experience.

### **An Exciting Rafting Adventure**

*by Dianne, age 14*

Rafting down the Colorado River one perfect summer day, my mom, Dorie, and a group of adventurers had no idea they were heading straight for disaster. As they rounded the bend, they suddenly found themselves in the clutches of a raging whirlpool; the raft flipped over and all but one person fell out. Under the water, Mom tried to come up for air as she struggled against the rushing river, her heart pounding like a drum. Scared and cold, she managed to rise to the surface and helped pull the others into the raft. Ahead of her, a giant rock appeared, forcing her to let go. Swiftly, the current carried her to shore. She sat shivering while she waited for the others. After regaining their strength, the traumatized party unanimously decided to walk the rest of the way.



## Lesson 13: Interview Worksheet

**Important:** Review the Interview Sheet before beginning so you're familiar with the questions you'll be asking.

- Begin by addressing the person you are going to interview. Say:

*I'd like to interview you and write a short narrative of an interesting event that you remember. This experience has to have happened to you personally. It needs to be narrow enough that it took place in a few hours or less and in one setting or location. You'll also need to tell me some of the emotions you were feeling during your experience.*

- Give the person some ideas of broad topics (see p. 13-1).
- Ask the questions on pp. 13-5 to 13-7, taking detailed notes as you listen.
- Remember: *You're the interviewer.* Let the person know if he or she is giving you too much information. Ask more questions if you need to have something clarified for you.

\* \* \* \* \*

Whom are you interviewing? \_\_\_\_\_

- What was one of your **most memorable experiences?** (As you interview, decide on the BROAD topic)

My broad topic is \_\_\_\_\_

Next, narrow the topic to ONE INCIDENT that lasted only a few hours or less.

### Examples

Broad topic <u>Dad learns to drive</u>	➔	Narrow topic <u>Dad's narrow escape</u>
Broad topic <u>Birthday</u>	➔	Narrow topic <u>Uncle Max's surprise puppy</u>
Broad topic <u>Yosemite</u>	➔	Narrow topic <u>Dakota's hike to Half Dome</u>

My narrow topic is: \_\_\_\_\_

*If the topic is still too broad for you to write about in a short narrative, choose another broad and/or narrow topic before continuing the interview.*

2. Who were the **important characters**? *Main characters* are the ones who take part in the *primary action*. *Minor characters* are people who barely interact with the main characters, such as ticket takers, flight attendants, or people in a crowd.

Besides you, were there any other main characters? What about minor characters?

Main character(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Minor character(s) \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Let's choose the setting.** What was the main location for the action? We need to keep it limited to one place. "Grandpa's house" is too broad; "Grandpa's garden" or "the kitchen table" are narrow locations.

The setting is \_\_\_\_\_

4. **How much time goes by** during this event? It can be as short as a few minutes or as long as a few hours, but no longer than that.

Length of time that passes \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Let's talk about the plot.** Who interacts with whom (or with what)? (**Note:** If you write about when Dad learned to drive, the main action is Dad driving. Dad, the driver, can interact with the car or with the driving instructor.)

Main action \_\_\_\_\_

(Who) \_\_\_\_\_ interacts with whom (or what) \_\_\_\_\_?

6. **What emotions** did you feel during this experience? If you were **anxious**, did you have *knots in your stomach*? If you felt **guilty** or **embarrassed**, were you *shaky*, *cold*, *clammy*, *light-headed*, or *dizzy*? Did your *heart pound* from **fear** or **excitement**? Did you feel *butterflies in your stomach* from **nervousness** (singing a solo) or **eager anticipation** (starting a new job)?

Emotions this experience produced

Physically, how or where emotions were felt

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What was the **sequence of events**? You should be able to tell me the story in about 10 sentences. If it gets too long, we'll need to narrow your event even more.

(Student: Not every line will have a related emotion.)

Sequence of Events	Emotion felt
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____

8. **Can you tell me anything else** about this experience that would help me describe it in a more colorful or interesting way? Can you describe something about the setting, circumstances, time of day, or weather?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Lesson 13: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I narrow my topic to **one** incident?
- ☐ Did I limit my composition to **one** or **two** main characters, keeping the focus on my subject?
- ☐ Did I limit my composition to **one** setting?
- ☐ Did I limit my time frame to a **few hours or less**?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly, expressing exactly how my subject felt by using strong emotion words?
- ☐ Did I describe the physical aspects of my subject's emotions (sweaty palms, etc.)?
- ☐ Do all sentences support the topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Have I written a title that appeals to the reader's emotions?

### STYLE

- ☐ Does my first sentence do a good job of introducing the narrative and hooking the reader?
- ☐ Did I use no more than one "to be" word? **Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I avoid the use of repeated words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague or weak words in green.
- ☐ Have I correctly varied my sentence structure by
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a present participle
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with an -ly adverb?
  - \_\_\_using a simile (optional)?      \_\_\_using an appositive?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a subordinate conjunction? (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a prepositional phrase?
- ☐ Did I use the same tense consistently throughout the composition?
- ☐ Did I avoid wordiness by crossing out unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

### MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Is my paragraph 7-10 sentences long? How many sentences? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent the first sentence of my paragraph and leave margins around my composition?
- ☐ Did I skip lines and use good spacing between words and sentences?
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling and **look up** suspected words?
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation and **correct** any errors?
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in proper order?





## Lesson 13: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your composition one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK    needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited topic to one incident   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited paragraph to one or two main characters, keeping the primary focus on self              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited paragraph to one setting or location  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited time frame to a few hours or less   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Communicated clearly, expressing strong emotions with <i>specific</i> words                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described the <i>physical</i> aspects of your emotions as they related to his or her experience |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title appeals to reader's emotions  |

### STYLE

OK    needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence introduces the narrative and hooks the reader       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than one "to be" word  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of repeated words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words (specific, vivid, and sensory)                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Varied sentence structure by <i>correctly</i> using each of the following |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with paired adjectives                              |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with a present participial phrase                   |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with an -ly adverb phrase                           |
|                          |                          | ___used a simile (optional)      ___used an appositive                    |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with a subordinate conjunction                      |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with a prepositional phrase                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used the same tense consistently throughout the composition               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely by eliminating unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending                    |

### MECHANICS

OK    needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 7-10 sentences long  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines and used good spacing between words and sentences                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided improper capitalization   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences & checked for misplaced modifiers             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included Interview worksheet, <u>all</u> drafts of this narrative, and Writing Skills Checklist |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Another Person's Experience

## Additional Comments and Feedback

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible      Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

## Additional Comments and Feedback

## Lesson 14: First-Person Point of View (Personification)

### Defining Point of View

A car accident occurs at the corner of Oak and Main. Several witnesses give their reports to the police.

- The young woman walking her dog heard the squeal of tires and looked up in time to see a red Ford strike the old pick-up truck.
- The driver of the pick-up truck said he looked both ways and saw no cars coming. Suddenly his driver's side door was hit by the speeding Ford.
- The driver of the Ford told police she was driving carefully through the intersection when the old truck suddenly decided to turn right.
- A construction worker said the red car was speeding and ran a red light.

Who is right? What do you notice about each of these descriptions? Each person saw the accident from a different perspective. We call this **point of view**. By looking at a situation from various points of view, we can add interest to our writing. Your experiences and perceptions of life up to now define and reflect your personal point of view. When writing, it is often necessary to put yourself in the place of someone or something else. Your point of view will change as you use your imagination to see a situation through different eyes.

Do you remember the original *Toy Story* movie? The tale was told from the point of view of the toys, particularly the cowboy doll, Woody. You learned how Mr. Potato Head longed for a wife. You discovered the secret lives of the army men in the bucket. You related to the toys' feelings of sadness, anger, jealousy, and excitement. Even the camera angle reinforced this point of view. The camera often showed peoples' legs and feet, instead of entire bodies, as viewed through the eyes of the toys.

If the movie had been made from the boy Andy's perspective, you wouldn't have experienced the toys' thoughts and feelings but would have seen the story through Andy's emotions and experiences.

### Defining First-Person Point of View

This assignment focuses on writing from the **first-person** point of view, which means writing as if *you* are in the middle of the action. First-person narratives use words such as *I*, *me*, *my*, *mine*, *our*, and *us*. When you tell about an incident that happened to you, you are writing in first person. Here are two examples:

- *As our plane climbed higher, cars and people became ants crawling below us.*
- *When I was seven years old, my grandfather took me on my first fishing trip.*

Sometimes you can use first-person point of view to put yourself in the place of someone (or something) else in the story. If you are writing a fictional narrative about a young man during the Civil War, for example, you can write it in first person, as if *you* are *him*.

Another way to write in first person is to write from the perspective of an object or animal. *This is the approach you will take in this assignment.* Choosing a subject from the list that follows, put yourself in that object's place and imagine how it might feel in a given situation. What kind of life does it think it leads? Pretend that this object can tell all, and write a paragraph describing what it does, feels, sees, and hears.

Here is a sample paragraph written by a student like you.

### **A Dizzy Experience**

*by Erika, age 13*

*Dillon pulled me out of the kitchen cupboard, unwrapped my skinny tail from around my thick body, and plugged it into the socket. After he plopped sweet-smelling raspberries, strawberries, and bananas into my belly and poured in some milk, he poked two of my eyes and I began to whir and hum like a washing machine. Dizzy and aching, I squeaked softly when he twisted and lifted me up to pour my juicy insides into a cup. My lid, a snug hat, was set back on my head. Yanking my plug out of the wall, Dillon lifted me up, poured some water over my head, and then swished the water gently around inside me. Finally, he dried me off with a soft towel, rewrapped my long tail around me, and carefully placed me in my cupboard. Fatigued, I fell fast asleep.*

## Lesson 14: Writing a First-Person Narrative Using Personification

**Characters.** Choose one of the following objects. Since your point of view will be first person, *you will become this object* and will therefore write **as though you are that thing**.

- Piece of candy in a bag or dish
- Piece of furniture
- Mirror
- Vehicle (fire truck, mail truck, jet ski, race car)
- Kitchen utensil (fork, electric mixer, can opener)
- Appliance (vacuum, refrigerator, washing machine, alarm clock)
- Overstuffed or messy drawer or closet
- Sporting equipment (hockey puck, basketball, baseball glove)
- Toy
- Pencil or crayon
- Fruit or vegetable
- Stamp or a letter being mailed
- Article of clothing (shoe, hat, jeans)
- Sewing needle
- Piñata
- Another object not on this list

**Setting.** You must also consider the setting. Where are you? Are you in a box? A drawer? On the floor? In a tree? On a shelf in a store or a closet? In a particular room of the house? You may want to describe what is happening around you, but you must have an active part as well.

**Time.** How much time passes by? One night? A few minutes? Keep the time frame short (unless, for instance, you're a stamp that must travel some distance).

**Plot.** What is the main action of your story?

**Personification.** What human traits, emotions, and character qualities does your object possess? A washing machine can have a large mouth or stomach; a piece of furniture or a watch could have eyes or arms; a needle might be delicate and frail like a grandmother; a hockey puck may be tough and street-smart! A LEGO® brick might be timid and weary of being stepped on.

## Lesson 14: Personification Brainstorming Worksheet

1. What object will you be? (no animals for this) \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is the setting for your narrative? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Are there any minor characters? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is the time frame for your narrative? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What human qualities and emotions will you give your object? Remember that **personification** gives human *characteristics, traits, qualities, and emotions* to objects that aren't human. Too often, students give their objects emotions while forgetting to give them *physical* personification.

Writing in first person as an object is *automatically* personification, because the object must take on a human "mind" and be able to express itself in human language.

### PHYSICAL TRAITS WORD BANK

head	eyes	ears	mouth	nose	tongue	freckles
teeth	face	skin	arm	hands	fingers	elbow
leg	knee	foot	toes	body	waist	neck
chest	stomach	voice	throat	lungs	nerves	heart

6. Write down the **physical characteristics** of your object. Next to each, write a human counterpart. Some will have more traits than others. For instance, a car could have headlight eyes, a chrome bumper mouth, a body, a stomach (for gasoline). If it is, say, a stamp, it might be ticklish when licked, or a potato might "see" with its eyes. (Note: Not every part of the object needs to be compared in this way.)

Characteristics of My Object

Human Counterpart

**Example** *cylinder of pen*

*body (or neck or arm or leg*

**Example** *pen point*

*tongue (or finger or foot)*

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7. How would this object express itself if it were human? If you smacked an alarm clock on the head, it might get a headache or feel bruised and battered. A car might blink its eyes or flash a shiny chrome smile, while a truck could wince in pain when someone kicks its tire.
- **Action.** What action done *by* or done *to* this object would make it feel ticklish, nervous, achy, or itchy? What could give it pain, goosebumps, chills or some other sensation?
  - **Behavior.** How could its physical characteristics behave like a human's?  
*Examples:* A pen can skate on its "foot"; a desk can collect dust, making its "nose" itch; an old chair can be sanded, scratching its "back"; a curling iron can grab a "mouthful" of hair; any kind of machine could use its "voice" to roar, growl, or bellow; a lawn mower can "bite" grass and spit it out; a shoe can "swallow" a foot.
  - **Emotions.** What *emotions* might this object feel if it were a human being in the same situation? *Examples:* An alarm clock might cower in fear, anticipating its morning whack on the head; a dryer could "burn up" at the thought of chewing one more mouthful of clothes; an iPod or wireless speaker could sing for joy.
  - **Physical sensations.** What *physical sensations* might this object feel if it were a human in the same situation? *Examples:* an ice cream scoop might shiver as it grabs a frosty mouthful of raspberry sherbet; a dirty spoon might relax in a "bath" of warm dishwater.)
  - **Other characteristics.** What other human qualities might your object possess?  
*Examples:* A recording device has a good memory; a garbage disposal is hungry; a computer is intelligent.)

Next, write down *a minimum of 5* comparisons telling how your object is like a human. Be specific! Choose from *at least three* of the above categories.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

Use the following helpful Word Lists when writing with personification:

- "Sound Words" (pp. 18-19), "Visual Words" (p. 22), "Texture Words" (p. 21), and "Taste and Smell Words" (p. 20)
- "Personification" word list (p. 11)
- "Characteristics, Expressions, and Behaviors" (pp. 3-7) and "Emotions" (pp. 9-10)

8. What will be the main plot (action) in your story? \_\_\_\_\_

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9. **Sequencing.** Write down the main steps of the plot.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### Other Reminders

1. **Title:** You may choose one of the following titles or create your own.

- ☐ My Life As a/an \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ My Adventure As a/an \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ I, Blender (or I, Lawnmower; I, Smartphone; I, Stapler, etc.)
- ☐ A/An \_\_\_\_\_ Experience
- ☐ I Am a/an \_\_\_\_\_

My Title: \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Use specific personification** in your paragraph when writing as the object, like:

- Baseball: *Throbbing and bruised, every fiber of my being aches at the end of a game.*
- Lamp: *I'm thankful to be turned out at night, so I don't have to look at this mess any longer!*
- Refrigerator: *Whenever my door is opened, I blow breaths of cold air into the room.*
- Tea kettle: *At first, I quietly start to whisper, but as I get more excited, I begin to dance and whistle wildly.*

3. **Write a 7- to 10-sentence paragraph.**

4. **Use descriptive words** to help give your reader a vivid mental picture.

5. **Use each of the following sentence variations:**

- Use a simile
- Use an appositive (optional), like "The rock, *a huge granite boulder*," or "The rug, *a thick Persian carpet*." (Remember that an **appositive** renames the noun just before it.)
- Begin one sentence with a present participle.
- Begin one sentence with an "-ly" adverb.
- Begin one sentence with paired adjectives. (Your word lists contain many ideas.)
- Begin one sentence with a subordinate conjunction (although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while).
- Begin one sentence with a prepositional phrase. **Remember** that a prepositional phrase:
  - Contains no verbs.
  - Begins with a preposition.
  - Ends with a noun, which is the object of the preposition.

*After her recital, After dinner, and After a long pause* are all prepositional phrases.

These **are not** prepositional phrases: *After he ate lunch, After Tom ran home, and After the house caught fire* because:

- These are subordinate clauses.
- There is no object of the preposition.
- There is a verb.

## Lesson 14: "The Blind Men and the Elephant"

*by John G. Saxe*

It was six men of Indostan  
To learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant  
(Though all of them were blind),  
That each by observation  
Might satisfy his mind.

The First approached the Elephant,  
And happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy side,  
At once began to bawl:  
"My goodness! but the Elephant  
Is very like a wall!"

The Second, feeling of the tusk,  
Cried, "Ho! what have we here  
So very round and smooth and sharp?  
To me 'tis mighty clear  
This wonder of an Elephant  
Is very like a spear!"

The Third approached the animal,  
And happening to take  
The squirming trunk within his hands,  
Thus boldly up and spake:  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant  
Is very like a snake!"

The Fourth reached out his eager hand,  
And felt about the knee.  
"What most this wondrous beast is like  
Is mighty plain," quoth he;  
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant  
Is very like a tree!"

The Fifth, who chanced to touch the ear  
Said, "E'en the blindest man  
Can tell what this resembles most;  
Deny the fact who can,  
This marvel of an Elephant  
Is very like a fan!"

The Sixth no sooner had begun  
About the beast to grope,  
Then, seizing on the swinging tail  
That fell within his scope,  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant  
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan  
Disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion  
Exceeding stiff and strong.  
Though each was partly in the right,  
And all were in the wrong!

*"The Blind Men and the Elephant" (1852) by John G. Saxe*

## Lesson 14: Skill Builder

### *Using Personification*

**Personification** is a figure of speech that gives a human trait to something as if it were a person. Personification is different from a simile. A simile says, "This is like this," but personification says, "This behaves like a person."

Simile                      ***Like fingers***, the branches of the tree reached toward the hiker.

Personification      The ***branches' fingers reached out*** toward the hiker.

Human characteristics can be given to objects and, sometimes, to animals.

- The breeze ***whispered*** in a soft ***voice***. (*Whispering* is a human trait; *voice* is a human quality.)
- Tiny fireflies ***winked*** in the night. (*Winking* is a human trait)
- Low waves ***crawled*** up the shore. (*Crawling* is a human trait)
- The windows of the old house ***watch over*** the street. (*Watching over* is a human trait)

### DAY ONE

A. In green, circle the "thing" that is being compared to a person. In red, underline the human traits, characteristics, or actions that were given to that thing.

1. The snowflakes danced and twirled through the air.
2. The weary wagon groaned under the weight of its load.
3. Our grandfather clock supervises the hall from its place in the corner.
4. Nathan's new car proudly boasted a new coat of paint.
5. Daffodils in the field nodded their heads in agreement.
6. Sadie's cat scowled and complained.
7. The squirrel laughed at me from its perch in the tree.

B. Classical literature and poetry are filled with examples of personification. In the following excerpts, circle the "thing" that is being compared to a person. Underline the human traits, qualities, or actions that were given to that thing. Use the same colors as above.

1. Earth felt the wound . . . – *John Milton*, "Paradise Lost"
2. And a rainbow held out its shining hand . . . – *Richard Le Gallienne*, "I Meant to Do My Work Today"
3. The meeting-house windows, blank and bare / Gaze at him with a spectral glare. – *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, "Paul Revere's Ride"
4. The sunshine threw his hat away . . . – *Emily Dickinson*, "Summer Shower"
5. The wind stood up and gave a shout. – *James Stephens*, "The Wind"
6. As the moon climbed higher in the sky . . . – *H.P. Lovecraft*, "Dagon"

**DAY TWO**

A. Tell what object or animal is being given human traits. Then tell what that trait is.

	object(s) or animal(s)	human trait
Hey, diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle	_____	
	_____	
The cow jumped over the moon;	_____	_____
The little dog laughed to see such sport	_____	_____
And the dish ran away with the spoon.	_____	_____
	_____	

B. Convert the point of view in these sentences from third person to first person.

Example: The swan gracefully danced over the surface of the lake.

***I gracefully danced over the surface of the lake.***

1. The baseball shivered with terror at the sight of the burly batter.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Bob's lamp bathes the room in a warm glow.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. In the quiet of the darkened kitchen, the refrigerator chatters and hums all night.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Stretching happily, the sunflower turns its face toward the warmth.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Boldly, the car's headlights stared into the blackness.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. As its water begins to boil, the tea kettle whistles merrily for the cook.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## DAY THREE

**Directions:** Rewrite this paragraph in **first person**. Remember, *you* are the toothbrush!

Hearing Bob's alarm clock, the toothbrush watches through the crack in the door of the medicine cabinet. When the bathroom light turns on, it mentally prepares itself for the morning ritual. Crabby and tired, Bob grabs the handle roughly and rinses the bristles under the faucet. Carelessly, he squeezes a blob of minty toothpaste onto the head of the brush and jams it into his mouth. The head rotates dizzily over Bob's teeth, anxiously awaiting the end of this foamy ordeal. Finally, Bob washes off the toothbrush under the faucet, smacks it soundly against the sink, and replaces it in the cabinet.

[illegible]





## Lesson 14: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I use personification by giving human qualities and emotions to my object?
- ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Did I organize the narrative in a way that makes sense to the reader?
- ☐ Does the title capture the essence of my paragraph and give a clue about the personification of my object?

### STYLE

- ☐ Did I write a strong topic sentence that introduces my narrative?
- ☐ Did I use no more than one "to be" word? **Circle** (to be) words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague or weak words in green.
- ☐ Did I write in first person?
- ☐ Have I correctly varied my sentence structure by
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a present participle?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with an -ly adverb?
  - \_\_\_using a simile?                      \_\_\_using an appositive? (optional)
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a subordinate conjunction? (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a prepositional phrase?
- ☐ Did I write concisely by crossing out unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

### MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Is my paragraph 7-10 sentences long? How many sentences? \_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent the first sentence of my paragraph and leave margins around my composition?
- ☐ Did I skip lines and use good spacing between words and sentences?
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling and **look up** suspected words?
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation and **correct** any errors?
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in proper order?



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject First-Person Personification \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 14: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your composition one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK    needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used personification by giving human qualities to the subject                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; narrative is organized in a way that makes sense to the reader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures essence of paragraph; gives a clue about personification of the object  |

### STYLE

OK    needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence introduces the narrative                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than <b>one</b> "to be" word                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of repeated words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words (specific, vivid, and sensory)                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote in first person   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Varied sentence structure by <i>correctly</i> using each of the following |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with paired adjectives                              |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with a present participial phrase                   |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with an -ly adverb                                  |
|                          |                          | ___used a simile (optional)      ___used an appositive                    |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with a subordinate conjunction                      |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with a prepositional phrase                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely by eliminating unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending                    |

### MECHANICS

OK    needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is 7-10 sentences long   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines and used good spacing between words and sentences                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided improper capitalization  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming worksheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and your checklist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers are stapled together in proper order                                    |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject First-Person Personification\_\_\_\_\_

## Additional Comments and Feedback

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible      Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

## Additional Comments and Feedback

## Lesson 15: First-Person Point of View (Limited Omniscience)

In this lesson you'll retell an account of the famous tale, "Androcles and the Lion." Although the story is filled with adventure, it only contains basic information. It doesn't include personal emotions or detailed descriptions.

You'll write your story in first person (which means writing using "I"). You may write in present tense, as if it's happening now, or in past tense. Choose one character and write from that perspective, as though you are Androcles, the lion, the Emperor, a soldier, or a person in the audience at the arena.

You don't need to retell the entire account from start to finish. Instead, choose the parts of the story you want to include. For example, you could describe the scene between Androcles and the lion in the cave when they first meet. Or you could write about Androcles's capture by the Roman soldiers or his encounter with the Emperor. What about including a little bit of background information in an opening paragraph and writing a few paragraphs in greater detail?

Don't forget that your character has **limited omniscience**. This means he can't possibly know what anyone else is thinking or doing. He can only write about what he sees or experiences or hears. Ask yourself, "How would I know this?" If your character didn't observe or take part in the action, he can't write about it firsthand.

### Directions

1. Carefully read this narrative tale.

### Androcles and the Lion

In Ancient Rome, a slave named Androcles escaped from his master and fled into the forest. He hid himself in a cave in the hills, and soon he was fast asleep. Before long, a lion came near the cave and gave a roar. Androcles rose up and saw the lion coming toward him.

As the beast came up to him, it kept moaning and groaning. Androcles saw that the lion's right paw was swollen and covered with blood. Looking closer, Androcles discovered a long thorn pressed deep into the animal's paw.

Androcles seized the thorn and drew it out. The lion roared with pain at first, but soon the pain turned to relief. In gratitude, the beast brought food to Androcles every day. The two became good friends.

One day, soldiers came marching through the forest and found Androcles in the cave. They took him prisoner, and he was sentenced to be thrown to the lions in the arena because he had run away from his master.

On the appointed day, Androcles was led forth into the arena and left with only a spear to protect him. Thousands of people had crowded into the arena to see the sport. The Emperor gave the signal for a lion to come out and attack Androcles. With a single bound, the wild animal reached Androcles. No longer frightened, the slave at once recognized that this lion was his old friend, the lion from the cave. That day, instead of watching a beast kill a man, the spectators saw Androcles put his arms around the lion's neck. In return, the animal lay down at the slave's feet.

The Emperor summoned Androcles to him and asked, "How does it happen that this this particular lion has lost all its cruelty toward you?"

So Androcles told the Emperor all that had happened to him and how the lion was showing its gratitude for his having relieved it of the thorn.

The people cried, "Live and be free! Live and be free!" Thereupon the Emperor pardoned Androcles and ordered his master to set him free. The lion was given to the hero, and the two lived together in freedom for many happy years.

2. This story is too long to rewrite as one paragraph, so expect to write two or more paragraphs (16 to 22 sentences total).
3. When you begin writing your narrative, keep in mind that *you* are Androcles, the lion, a soldier, a spectator in the arena, or the Emperor. Put yourself in his place and write as if you are that character. Include your emotions, thoughts, and feelings.
4. On your "Androcles and the Lion" Brainstorming Worksheet (p. 15-5), write a **list telling the sequence of events**. Because each item in your list could become a sentence in your tale, decide what information to eliminate and what to keep. *Include only what your character knows.*
5. Use concrete, specific **descriptive** words. Refer to your Word Lists for help.
6. Use each of the following **sentence starters and sentence variations**. in your narrative.
  - Subject-verb sentence
  - Sentence beginning with a present participle
  - Sentence beginning with a prepositional phrase
  - Sentence beginning with an adverb (see "Adverbs" word lists, pp. 1-2)
  - Sentence beginning with paired adjectives (Find excellent ideas for paired adjectives in your "Characteristics/Expressions/Behaviors" or "Emotions" word lists, pp. 3-7 and 9-10.) Use paired adjectives to describe one of the *characters* in the narrative, *not* the story's setting.



- Sentence beginning with a subordinate conjunction (*though, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
  - Simile (no more than one in the entire paper)
  - Appositive
  - Sentence of six words or fewer (This is new, so you may find it a challenge!)
  - You may use dialogue as the sample story does, but it's not a requirement. See the suggestions below for how to write dialogue in a narrative.
7. **Practice writing concisely.** Eliminate unnecessary sentences, words, or phrases. Keep descriptions crisp and clear, yet simple. You don't need to cover the entire timeline of events. Cross out anything that doesn't add to the tone or flow of the story.
8. **Tenses must agree.** *Choose one tense and stick with it.*
- **Hint:** Read your sloppy copy *out loud* and listen for accidental changes in tense.
9. Write an **interesting title**. "Androcles and the Lion" may be adequate, but it's definitely not descriptive. Get creative and see what you can do!

### Using Dialogue in a Narrative

If this is your first experience with dialogue, or if you don't remember how to write with dialogue, this section will guide you.

**What is dialogue?** Dialogue is characters talking in the story. They can be talking to themselves or having a conversation with another character.

**What does dialogue look like when it is written down?** You know characters are talking because their words are set off by quotation marks.

**How do you know who is speaking?** Tag lines such as "said the Big Bad Wolf" give clues.

Follow these guidelines for punctuation and formatting of dialogue:

- Use quotation marks to set off the words a character is speaking.
- Place quotation marks after the ending punctuation of the quoted text.
 

"Don't come one step closer," said the pig.

"Little Pig, Little Pig, let me come in!"
- Start a new paragraph every time someone different speaks. Use commas, question marks, or exclamation points to separate the speaking words from the tag lines.
 

"Why do I need to open the door?" asked the frightened pig.

"Open the door!" shouted the angry wolf.

"Please be so kind as to open the door," whispered the sly wolf.

- Tag lines, or dialogue tags, can be made more interesting by using synonyms for *said* sometimes. See the “Said Synonyms” word list (p. 13) for ideas.

“I don’t want to buy a coat,” the Big Bad Wolf *argued*.

“Come in!” *cried* the second pig.

Here’s a limited-omniscience narrative written from the Roman Emperor’s point of view.

### **From Fear to Freedom**

“Why can’t these slave owners keep track of their own property?” I muttered to a guard as another captured runaway entered the heart of the dusty arena.

“Respectfully, my lord Caesar, it does provide amusement for the unruly masses,” said the outspoken guard. “Better this boisterous crowd should enjoy a prisoner’s death than yours.”

As Emperor of Rome, it fell on me to maintain these public spectacles in order to pacify the bloodthirsty crowd. I stepped onto the balcony of the colossal arena, and I looked upon the throng that had gathered to watch today’s deadly match. Squinting my eyes, I peered down to see a scrawny figure holding a cumbersome spear and awaiting his untimely death.

Restless, I paced across the marble podium, whose polished surface gleamed like the morning sun. I couldn’t take my eyes off the young runaway, Androcles. Fearful yet unwavering, he stirred something in me. Perhaps this match would rouse the spectators and provide worthy entertainment after all.

Standing to my feet, I raised my cloak-covered arm and proclaimed, “Release the beast!” The hungry lion lunged forward, but to my astonishment, he did not attack! Instead, the massive creature bowed his tawny head and approached the lad, who embraced him with tears of great joy.

I shouted down to the prisoner, “How is it possible that this fierce lion did not eat you alive?”

“My Emperor, after my escape, this lion entered my cave with a jagged thorn stuck deep in its paw, so I helped him. In return, he sheltered me and gave me food.”

Warmed by Androcles’s kindness and bravery, the people began to chant for the freedom of both boy and beast. “Go free,” I commanded, “and take the creature as your reward. Your courage and friendship have saved you.” After that, I never heard of them again. I like to think the lad and his devoted lion now live peaceful lives in the hills of the Roman countryside.

## Lesson 15: “Androcles and the Lion” Brainstorming Worksheet

### 1. Choose your point of view:

☐ Androcles

☐ Roman soldier

☐ The lion

☐ Spectator in the crowd

☐ Emperor of Rome

### 2. List some synonyms for the different characters in the story (see the stories for clues).

Androcles \_\_\_\_\_

Lion \_\_\_\_\_

Emperor \_\_\_\_\_

Soldier \_\_\_\_\_

Spectator \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Choose a tense for your narrative: \_\_\_past tense \_\_\_present tense

### 4. List sequence of events (Use short phrases. Make sure your character witnessed, experienced, or heard about each event.)

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



## Lesson 15: *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*

Once upon a time there were four little Rabbits, and their names were—Flopsy, Mopsy, Cotton-tail, and Peter.

They lived with their Mother in a sand bank, underneath the root of a very big fir tree.

"Now, my dears," said old Mrs. Rabbit, "you may go into the fields or down the lane, but don't go into Mr. McGregor's garden: your Father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor. Now run along and don't get into mischief; I am going out."

Then old Mrs. Rabbit took a basket and her umbrella, and went through the woods to the baker's. She bought a loaf of brown bread and five currant buns.

Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-tail, who were good little bunnies, went down the lane to gather blackberries; but Peter, who was very naughty, ran straight away to Mr. McGregor's garden, and squeezed under the gate!

First he ate some lettuces and some French beans; and then he ate some radishes; and then, feeling rather sick, he went to look for some parsley.

But round the end of a cucumber frame, whom should he meet but Mr. McGregor!

Mr. McGregor was on his hands and knees planting out young cabbages, but he jumped up and ran after Peter, waving a rake and calling out, "Stop thief!"

Peter was most dreadfully frightened; he rushed all over the garden, for he had

forgotten the way back to the gate.

He lost one of his shoes among the cabbages, and the other shoe amongst the potatoes. After losing them, he ran on four legs and went faster, so that I think he might have got away all together if he had not unfortunately run into a gooseberry net, and got caught by the large buttons on his jacket. It was a blue jacket with brass buttons, quite new.

Peter gave himself up for lost, and shed big tears; but his sobs were overheard by some friendly sparrows, who flew to him in great excitement and implored him to exert himself.

Mr. McGregor came up with a sieve, which he intended to pop upon the top of Peter; but Peter wriggled out just in time, leaving his jacket behind him. And rushed into the tool shed, and jumped into a can. It would have been a beautiful thing to hide in, if it had not had so much water in it.

Mr. McGregor was quite sure that Peter was somewhere in the tool shed, perhaps hidden underneath a flower-pot. He began to turn them over carefully, looking under each.

Presently Peter sneezed—"Kerty-school!" Mr. McGregor was after him in no time, and tried to put his foot upon Peter, who jumped out of the window, upsetting three plants. The window was too small for Mr. McGregor, and he was tired of running after Peter. He went back to his work.

*(continued next page)*

Peter sat down to rest; he was out of breath and trembling with fright, and he had not the least idea which way to go.

Also he was very damp with sitting in that can. After a time he began to wander about, going lippity—lippity—not very fast, and looking all around.

He found a door in a wall; but it was locked and there was no room for a fat little rabbit to squeeze underneath.

An old mouse was running in and out over the stone door-step, carrying peas and beans to her family in the wood. Peter asked her the way to the gate, but she had such a large pea in her mouth that she could not answer. She only shook her head at him. Peter began to cry.

Then he tried to find his way straight across the garden, but he became more and more puzzled. Presently, he came to a pond where Mr. MacGregor filled his water-can. A white cat was staring at some goldfish; she sat very, very, still, but now and then the tip of her tail twitched as if it were alive. Peter thought it best to go away without speaking to her; he had heard about cats from his cousin, little Benjamin Bunny.

He went back towards the tool shed, but suddenly, quite close to him, he heard the noise of a hoe—scr-r-ritch, scratch, scratch, scritch. Peter scuttered underneath the bushes. But presently, as nothing happened, he came out, and climbed upon a wheelbarrow and peeped over. The first thing he saw was Mr. MacGregor hoeing onions. His back was turned toward Peter, and beyond him was the gate!

Peter got down very quietly off the wheelbarrow, and started running as fast as

he could go, along a straight walk behind some black-currant bushes.

Mr. MacGregor caught sight of him at the corner, but Peter did not care. He slipped underneath the gate, and was safe at last in the wood outside the garden.

Mr. McGregor hung up the little jacket and the shoes for a scare-crow to frighten the blackbirds.

Peter never stopped running or looked behind him till he got home to the big fir-tree.

He was so tired that he flopped down upon the nice soft sand on the floor of the rabbit hole, and shut his eyes. His mother was busy cooking; she wondered what he had done with his clothes. It was the second little jacket and pair of shoes that Peter had lost in a fortnight!

I am sorry to say that Peter was not very well during the evening.

His mother put him to bed, and made some camomile tea; and she gave a dose of it to Peter!

*"One table-spoonful to be taken at bed-time."*

But Flopsy, Mopsy, and Cotton-tail had bread and milk and blackberries for supper.

## Lesson 15: Skill Builder

### *Practicing with Tense Agreement*

When choosing a point of view, you must also select a **tense**. If you wish to describe the event as if it is occurring right now, you will use **present tense**.

Present tense is an interesting way to write. The reader experiences your event firsthand, right along with you, because when writing in present tense, you express your emotions and actions as the story unfolds. Here is an example of *present tense*:

*I **walk** slowly along the dusty road, kicking stones with my sandaled toes. As the sun **shines** intensely on my back, its baking heat **penetrates** my white robe. Parched and weary, I **long** for a cool drink of water.*

► Notice how the verbs show that the action is happening *now*.

If, instead, you decide to write about an event as though it has already happened, you will use **past tense**. Past tense is effective whether your story took place one hour ago, yesterday, or last year, and is the most common tense used by writers. Here is an example of the same narrative, this time written in *past tense*.

*I **walked** slowly along the dusty road, kicking stones with my sandaled toes. As the sun **shone** intensely on my back, its baking heat **penetrated** my white robe. Parched and weary, I **longed** for a cool drink of water.*

► Now notice how the verbs show that the action took place *in the past*.

It's not unusual for beginning writers to confuse tenses within a story, even within a single sentence. When your tenses agree, your narrative will flow more smoothly. As you proofread your work, it's a good idea to read it aloud, either to yourself or to a parent. Then you can listen for and correct any errors in tense disagreement.

Let's look at our paragraph about the thirsty boy. Neither example above uses confused tenses. One paragraph is clearly happening *now*; the other paragraph just as clearly happened *in the past*. Now, see what happens when the tenses are confused:

*I **walked** slowly along the dusty road, kicking stones with my sandaled toes. As the sun **shines** intensely on my back, its baking heat **penetrates** my white robe. Parched and weary, I **longed** for a cool drink of water.*

Can you see how the paragraph begins in past tense, switches to present tense, and reverts to past tense again? This example demonstrates disagreement between present and past tenses. On the next two pages, you'll find paragraphs written with mixed tenses. Your job is to correct them so the tenses agree.

**DAY ONE**

The tenses in the following sentences are mixed up. Sometimes the tenses agree and sometimes they don't. If the sentence doesn't have any tense errors, write *past* or *present* on the line to indicate the tense being used. **If you find errors**, rewrite the verbs so they all agree, and write on the line whether you used *past* or *present*. You may rewrite the verbs in either tense, as long as they are *all* present tense OR *all* past tense. An example has been done for you.

**Examples**

PAST *jumped* I ~~jump~~ into the lake to rescue a boy, but what I ~~thought~~ *was* a boy ~~turns~~ *turned* out to be a fat, wet log.

PRESENT I ~~jump~~ into the lake to rescue a boy, but what I ~~thought~~ *think* *is* a boy ~~turns~~ out to be a fat, wet log

PRESENT Paul carefully balances himself before making his way across the rope.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The forest fire was caused by a camper who uses matches carelessly.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ The children scramble anxiously up the rock and sat nervously while rescuers hurried to their aid.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The robotics team built a hovercraft and entered it in a competition.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Jacob's father drives to the bank, parks the car, and opened a new savings account for his son.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ A large crow circles the corn field and swiftly dropped down to eat.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ My troop collects canned goods and donates them to the food bank.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ When Becky's family visited Aunt Ruth, they took a large chicken dinner to share, and they also bring apple pie for dessert.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ On Saturday night we curled up in front of the TV, ate popcorn and watched a favorite movie, and go to bed by 10:00.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Lopez carefully examined the X-rays before he can determine if Chase's leg is broken.



**DAY TWO** *Past Tense***Directions**

The tenses in the following two paragraphs are mixed up. Sometimes the narrator is speaking in **present tense** and sometimes in **past tense**. Your assignment is to find any tense errors and correct them.

1. During today's activity, correct the paragraphs so they're both in **past tense**.
2. Using a *colored* pencil, circle each verb that's written incorrectly in PRESENT TENSE. In the space above it, write in the word correctly in PAST TENSE.
3. When finished, reread the paragraphs out loud to see if you caught all the tense errors.

A. They were obliged to camp out that night right under a large tree in the forest, for there are no houses near. The tree makes a good, thick covering to protect them from the dew, and the Tin Woodsman chopped a great pile of wood with his ax, and Dorothy builds a splendid fire that warms her and made her feel less lonely. She and Toto ate the last of their bread, and now she does not know what they will do for breakfast.

(from *The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum)

B. He sat down by the gate, and when a man comes out he stands up, opens his mouth, and points down it to show that he wanted food. The man stared, and ran back up the one street of the village shouting for the priest, who is a big, fat man dressed in white, with a red and yellow mark on his forehead. The priest came to the gate, and with him at least a hundred people, who stare and talk and shouted and pointed at Mowgli.

(from *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling)

### DAY THREE *Present Tense*

#### Directions

Below you'll find the same two paragraphs as last time, filled with mixed-up tenses. Sometimes the narrator is speaking in **present tense** and sometimes in **past tense**. Again, your assignment is to find any tense errors and correct them.

1. During today's activity, correct the paragraphs so they're both in **present tense**.
2. Using a *colored* pencil, circle each verb that's written incorrectly in PAST TENSE. In the space above it, write in the word correctly in PRESENT TENSE.
3. When finished, reread the paragraphs out loud to see if you caught all the tense errors.

A. They were obliged to camp out that night right under a large tree in the forest, for there are no houses near. The tree makes a good, thick covering to protect them from the dew, and the Tin Woodsman chopped a great pile of wood with his ax, and Dorothy builds a splendid fire that warms her and made her feel less lonely. She and Toto ate the last of their bread, and now she does not know what they will do for breakfast.

(from *The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum)

B. He sat down by the gate, and when a man comes out he stands up, opens his mouth, and points down it to show that he wanted food. The man stared, and ran back up the one street of the village shouting for the priest, who is a big, fat man dressed in white, with a red and yellow mark on his forehead. The priest came to the gate, and with him at least a hundred people, who stare and talk and shouted and pointed at Mowgli.

(from *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling)

## Lesson 15: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Did I only include details about what my character would have witnessed, experienced, or heard?
- ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Did I organize the narrative in a way that makes sense to the reader?
- ☐ Does the title capture the essence of my narrative?

### STYLE

- ☐ Did I begin my narrative with an interesting, audience-grabbing sentence?
- ☐ Did I use no more than two "to be" words in this composition? **Circle** to be words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague or weak words in green.
- ☐ Do all my tenses agree? (I wrote in \_\_\_present tense \_\_\_past tense)
- ☐ Have I correctly varied my sentence structure throughout the narrative by
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a present or past participle?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a prepositional phrase?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with an -ly adverb?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a subordinate conjunction? (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
  - \_\_\_using a simile?
  - \_\_\_using an appositive?
  - \_\_\_using a subject-verb sentence?
- ☐ Did I write a sentence of six words or fewer?
- ☐ Did I write concisely by ~~crossing out~~ unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence that gives a feeling of ending?

### MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I write two or more paragraphs? Is **this composition** 16-22 sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent first sentence of each paragraph and leave margins around the text?
- ☐ Did I skip lines and use good spacing between words and sentences?
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling and **look up** suspected words?
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation and **correct** any errors?
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ If I included dialogue, did I format and punctuate it correctly?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist and colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in proper order?



## Lesson 15: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your composition one more time, making necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; narrative is organized in a way that makes sense to the reader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the narrative  |

### STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Began with an interesting, audience-grabbing sentence                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than <b>two</b> "to be" words in the composition             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided repeating main words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words (specific, vivid, and sensory)                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of "weak" words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tenses agree (student wrote in ____present tense ____past tense           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Varied sentence structure by <i>correctly</i> using each of the following |
|                          |                          | ____began one sentence with paired adjectives                             |
|                          |                          | ____began one sentence with a present participial phrase                  |
|                          |                          | ____began one sentence with an -ly adverb                                 |
|                          |                          | ____used a simile _____used an appositive                                 |
|                          |                          | ____began one sentence with a subordinate conjunction                     |
|                          |                          | ____began one sentence with a prepositional phrase                        |
|                          |                          | ____using a subject-verb sentence   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included one sentence of six words or fewer                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely by eliminating unnecessary words, phrases, and sentences  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence   |

### MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Name and date in the upper right-hand corner                                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote two or more paragraphs   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Narrative is 16-22 sentences long  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of the paragraph; left margins around the paragraph        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines and used good spacing between words and sentences                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized the first word of each sentence as well as proper nouns                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided improper capitalization  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences; avoided run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Dialogue (if used) is formatted and punctuated correctly                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All papers are stapled together in proper order                                    |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject First-Person Limited Omniscience

## Additional Comments and Feedback

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible      Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+      87-89% = B+      77-79% = C+

94-99% = A      84-86% = B      74-76% = C

90-93% = A-      80-83% = B-      70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

## Additional Comments and Feedback



## Lesson 16: Third-Person Point of View (Omniscience)

As you finish your study of **point of view**, you will incorporate all your new skills to write a *three*-paragraph narrative from *two* different points of view. For this story you will act as the narrator by writing in third person. Using *limited* omniscience when you wrote your Androcles and the Lion narrative, you didn't have the ability to know the thoughts and behaviors of every person. However, in this composition you *will* know what each character is doing and thinking. This is called **omniscience**.

This will be a fictional (made-up) story. If you base your story on fact, you have permission to use your imagination to add extra details. Here is the plot for your narrative:

*A delighted and enthusiastic child brings home a new pet. However, he is having trouble holding back his enthusiasm, which is making the animal even more nervous. Finally, the child leaves the pet alone, and it calms down and begins to adjust to its new surroundings.*

### Directions

1. Write a narrative with the following guidelines:
  - **Three paragraphs** in length (total story length of 12-15 sentences)
  - **Past tense**
  - **Third person**
2. Here is a summary of the information each paragraph should contain:
  - **First paragraph** - *Child brings home the new pet*
    - The pet may be a rabbit, guinea pig, hamster, puppy, kitten, or bird (choose an animal that would display anxiety; therefore, NO reptiles, amphibians, or fish).
    - The child may be a boy or girl.
    - Write the first paragraph in such a way that *the reader identifies with the enthusiastic child*.
  - **Second paragraph** - *Pet's observed behavior*
    - Describe the pet's reactions and anxious behaviors.
    - Write the second paragraph in such a way that *the reader sympathizes with the frightened or nervous animal*.
    - Note: *Do not* write about what the animal is *thinking*, since personification is not the focus of this lesson.
  - **Third paragraph** - *Pet calms down*
    - The story should end with the child leaving the pet alone.
    - The pet calms down and begins to adjust to its new home.

3. **A word about pronouns.** Once you've decided whether the pet is male or female, keep pronouns consistent. *Do not* jump back and forth between *he*, *she*, or *it*.
4. Use **different kinds of sentence starters** and sentence variations. You must use all of these starters and variations somewhere in the composition. Use at least three DIFFERENT sentence STARTERS per paragraph. You may reuse sentence variations as long as each has been used at least once.
  - Subject-verb sentence
  - Sentence beginning with a present participle ("-ing")
  - Sentence beginning with a past participle ("-ed" or "en")
 

**TIP:** Find many past participles in the "Characteristics/Expressions/ Behaviors" or "Emotions" word lists. (See Word Lists pp. 3-7 and 9-10.)
  - Sentence beginning with a prepositional phrase
  - Sentence beginning with an adverb (See Word Lists pp. 1-2.)
  - Sentence beginning with paired adjectives
 

**TIP:** Find excellent ideas for paired adjectives in your "Characteristics/ Expressions/ Behaviors" or "Emotions" word lists. Use paired adjectives to describe the child or the pet, *not* the parent, cage, or surroundings.
  - Sentence beginning with a subordinate conjunction (*though, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
  - Sentence of six words or fewer
  - Simile (no more than one in the entire paper)
  - Appositive
 

**TIP:** Although the example on p. 16-3 uses "a child of eight" as the appositive, your appositive should be different. It could refer to the pet or to the child. Furthermore, you can place your appositive anywhere you choose, whether in the first, second, or even third paragraph.
5. As with all narratives, include descriptions that add interest and make your writing colorful. The following pages will help you plan your narrative.

## Lesson 16: Elements of a Narrative

**Directions:** Read the following narrative and complete the activities below.

Bobby, a child of eight, stared longingly at the colorful parakeet perched on its ladder in the pet store aviary. Glancing toward the check stand, the youngster saw his mom paying the cashier. Anxiously, Bobby hopped up and down as the clerk removed the bright bird from its wooden roost and placed it in a cardboard box. The excited boy had begged and pleaded for this special birthday gift. At last, he could take Petey, his beloved new bird, home.

Inside the box, the poor parakeet frantically flapped its wings. It flitted nervously from one side of its small prison to the other. Scratching helplessly, the turquoise bird slid across the bottom of the box as the car took a sharp turn. Trembling and jittery, the anxious little parakeet ruffled its green-tipped feathers.

When the car came to a stop, Bobby proudly carried his new pet into the house. His mom helped him place the pecking, biting bird into its wire cage. Then, sensing Petey's fear, Mother spread a black cloth over the cage to soothe the parakeet. Disappointed, Bobby protested when she hung the cage out of his reach. Finally, as darkness settled over the frightened bird, its heart ceased its wild pounding, and it fell into a peaceful sleep.

- How many sentences are in the *first* paragraph? \_\_\_\_ the *second*? \_\_\_\_ the *third*? \_\_\_\_
- List the **synonyms** for the *animal* in this story:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- List the **synonyms** for the *child* in this story:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Use a **green** pencil to *circle* words that describe *Bobby's behavior or actions*.
- Underline words in **red** pencil that describe *Bobby's feelings and emotions*.
- Circle in **blue** pencil words that describe the *parakeet's behavior or actions*.
- Underline in **yellow** pencil the words that describe the *parakeet's emotions*.
- Place an **orange** X on past or present participles that *begin sentences*.
- Place a **purple** X on -ly adverbs that *begin sentences*.
- Draw a **brown** line through any prepositional phrases that *begin sentences*.
- Circle the *appositives* in **gray**.
- Name the *paired adjectives*: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.



## Lesson 16: Pet Narrative Brainstorming Worksheet

### Choose the Settings

- What is the setting for the FIRST paragraph? (such as pet store, yard, bedroom, garage, or den) \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the setting for the SECOND paragraph? (cage, box, bag, crate, basket, kennel, lap, pen, confined or gated area...)\_\_\_\_\_

### Describe the Child

- Child is a ☐ boy ☐ girl
- Child is approximately \_\_\_\_\_ years old
- Child's name is \_\_\_\_\_
- Make a list of **emotion words** to describe this excited child. (Look in your "Characteristics/Expressions" word list under *Funny/Silly/Delighted* or *Enthusiastic*.)

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### Describe the Pet

- What kind of pet will you choose?\_\_\_\_\_
  - **Hint:** It helps to write about an animal you're familiar with, but this isn't absolutely necessary
- Make a list of *synonyms* for this pet. This will help you avoid repeating, for example, the word *dog* over and over in your writing.
  - **Hint:** use your **thesaurus**.

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- Describe your animal's **physical traits**.

Color \_\_\_\_\_

Markings \_\_\_\_\_

Texture \_\_\_\_\_

Sounds it makes when afraid \_\_\_\_\_

Sounds it makes when content \_\_\_\_\_

How it moves \_\_\_\_\_

- Make a list of **emotion words** to describe this frightened animal. Use your "Emotions" word list, pp. 9-10. (Look under "*Fearful*.")

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- List **actions or behaviors** this animal would display when *anxious* or *afraid*. Be specific; use your **thesaurus** as necessary. Think of concrete words like *flutter*, *burrow*, or *quiver*.

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- List **actions or behaviors** this animal would display when *calm* or *content* (snuggling, sleeping, chewing a bone, purring).

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- What would calm an anxious pet (specifically, the pet you are writing about)?

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### Write Your Narrative

Tell the *sequence of events*, *emotional displays*, and *actions* of the characters in each paragraph. Don't be discouraged about writing three paragraphs. Your entire narrative should still be only 10-15 sentences long. **Each** paragraph must have a *minimum of three* sentences and a *maximum of five* sentences.

#### First Paragraph - *Child brings home the new pet.*

1. 

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2. 

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3. 

---
4. 

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5. 

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**Second Paragraph** - *Pet's observed behavior (NOT its thoughts)*

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Third Paragraph** - *Pet calms down*

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_



## Lesson 16: Skill Builder

### *Past Participles*

**DAY ONE** Using *past participles as adjectives*.

You've become skilled at using present participles in your writing. Are you ready to try your hand at **past participles**? Instead of adding "-ing," simply add "-ed" to any regular verb. The resulting past participle is also known as a **verbal** because it acts as another part of speech (in this case, an adjective). For example:

infinitive	past participle (verbal)
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to speckle	= a <u>speckled</u> egg ("speckled" acts as an adjective to describe "egg")
------------	---

to weaken	= a <u>weakened</u> horse ("weakened" acts as an adjective to describe "horse")
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This adjective form (verbal) can also begin a sentence. Use it to modify, or describe, the subject of the sentence. Notice how these past participles (verbals) describe their subjects:

verbal	subject
--------	---------

Speckled, the camouflaged brown eggs lay hidden from view.

verbal (paired adjectives)	subject
----------------------------	---------

Exhausted and weakened, the injured horse collapsed upon reaching the creek.

The following sentences start with a past participle (verbal) followed by the subject. As you complete each sentence, avoid "to be" words by using **active, concrete** verbs whenever possible.

1. Tired, a jogger \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Cornered, the frightened raccoon \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Surprised and delighted, the children \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Terrified, the three girls \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Crushed, the glass figurine \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**DAY TWO**

A past participle followed by one or more words is called a **participial phrase**. Just as you did with present participles, continue your practice of following participial phrases with a comma. Remember that the subject of the sentence must closely follow the comma.

Examples: Banished to the yard, the dejected spaniel peered sadly from her doghouse.

Delighted to meet the senator, I enthusiastically shook his hand.

1. Followed by a prowling lion, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Determined to win, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Stranded at the side of the road, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Painted blue, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Not all past participles end in “-ed.” You can create them from irregular verbs, too.

infinitive		past participle	infinitive		past participle
to buy	=	<u>bought</u>	to eat	=	<u>eaten</u>
to sweep	=	<u>swept</u>	to teach	=	<u>taught</u>

Examples: Found in a dusty attic, the antique chest fit perfectly in Mary Ellen’s bedroom.

Stuck in Rusty’s fur, the prickly burrs seemed impossible to remove without scissors.

1. Hurt by their unkind remark, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Swollen shut, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Awakened by a noise, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Woven tightly, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**DAY THREE**

Though participial phrases make great sentence starters, you may incorporate them into other places in a sentence as well.

Example: A. Mailed last week, the package finally reached its destination.

B. The package, mailed last week, finally reached its destination.

Finish each sentence below. In the A sentence, the past participle is the sentence starter. In the B sentence, name the subject first and follow it with a past participial phrase, as in the example above. Stay away from “to be” words. Instead, choose active, concrete verbs whenever possible as you complete your sentences. Remember to set off participial phrases with commas.

A. Defeated again, the Tigers \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A. Caught in a tree, Mike's kite \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A. Nestled beneath a warm blanket, the puppy \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A. Trained as a lifeguard, Matt Smith \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Lesson 16: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words appropriate for my audience?
- ☐ Is my first paragraph about the **enthusiastic child**?
- ☐ Is my second paragraph about the **anxious pet**?
- ☐ Is my third paragraph about **how the pet calms down**?
- ☐ Do all sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Does the content flow smoothly? Did I organize the narrative in a way that makes sense to the reader?
- ☐ Does the title capture the essence of my composition?

### STYLE

- ☐ Did I write a strong topic sentence that introduces my composition?
- ☐ Did I use no more than two "to be" words **in the entire composition**? **Circle** (to be) words in **red**.
- ☐ Did I choose synonyms instead of repeating main words? **Underline** repeated words in blue.
- ☐ Did I use concrete words that are specific, vivid, and sensory? **Underline** vague or weak words in green.
- ☐ Did I write in past tense? Do all my tenses agree?
- ☐ Have I correctly varied my sentence structure throughout the narrative by using each of these *once or twice*?
  - ☐ began with paired adjectives
  - ☐ began with an -ly adverb
  - ☐ began with a subordinate conjunction
  - ☐ began with a past participle
  - ☐ began with a present participle
  - ☐ used an appositive
  - ☐ began with a prepositional phrase
  - ☐ used a subject-verb sentence
- ☐ Did I use a sentence of six words or fewer?
- ☐ Did I write concisely by crossing out unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence?

### MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Is **each paragraph** 3-5 sentences long? How many? 1st \_\_\_\_ 2nd \_\_\_\_ 3rd \_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent the first sentence of each paragraph and leave margins around my composition?
- ☐ Did I remember to skip every other line?
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling and **look up** suspected words?
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation and **correct** any errors?
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences? Did I check for run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist along with colored pencils? Did I **make corrections** before revising?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING IN MY WORK:** Did I staple my papers together in proper order?



## Lesson 16: Teacher Writing Skills Checklist

*Edit your composition one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.*

### CONTENT

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are appropriate for the audience                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Followed instructions for this assignment  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | First paragraph is about the enthusiastic child  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Second paragraph is about the pet's anxiety  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Third paragraph tells how the pet calms down   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Content flows smoothly; narrative is organized in a way that makes sense to the reader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the composition  |

### STYLE

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Began with a sentence that introduces the composition                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than <b>two</b> "to be" words in the entire composition      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided repeating main words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used concrete words and avoided the use of "weak" words                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Tenses agree (student wrote in past tense ___yes ___no)                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Varied sentence structure by <i>correctly</i> using each of the following |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with paired adjectives                              |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with a present participial phrase                   |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with an -ly adverb                                  |
|                          |                          | ___used an appositive ___used a subject-verb sentence                     |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with a subordinate conjunction                      |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with a prepositional phrase                         |
|                          |                          | ___began one sentence with a past participle                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included a sentence of six or fewer words                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely by eliminating unnecessary words, phrases, and sentences  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence   |

### MECHANICS

OK Needs improvement

- |                          |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>Name</u> and <u>date</u> in the upper right-hand corner                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Three paragraphs of three to five sentences each (1st___ 2nd___ 3rd ___)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Indented first sentence of each paragraph; left margins around the paragraph       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Skipped lines and used good spacing between words and sentences                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Double-checked spelling by <u>circling</u> and <u>looking up</u> suspected words   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Capitalized correctly  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used punctuation correctly   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences, avoided misplaced modifiers    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Correctly used checklist and colored pencils, circling and underlining as directed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist   |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Third Person (Omniscience)

Additional Comments and Feedback

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible      Points Earned

Followed directions for assignment	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Communicated clearly	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Paragraph unity (sentences support main idea; use of details)	<u>5</u> _____	_____
Appropriate for audience	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Style 20 points

Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Sentence fluency/readability (awkwardness)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Concreteness (wise use of vivid, specific words)	<u>4</u> _____	_____
Conciseness (avoids wordiness; also not flowery or verbose)	<u>3</u> _____	_____
Proper use of tense	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Topic sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Closing sentence (strong=2; adequate=1; poor or none=0)	<u>2</u> _____	_____

### Mechanics 10 points

10 \_\_\_\_\_

- Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)
- Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization
- Grammar (homophones, possessive vs. plural, contractions, etc.)
- Sentence structure (complete; no run-ons; no misplaced modifiers)

### General 5 points

Included all drafts of composition (including brainstorming)	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Correct use of Student Writing Skills Checklist	<u>2</u> _____	_____
Overall neatness of final draft	<u>1</u> _____	_____

**TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_/50 = \_\_\_\_\_% = \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ (over)

100% = A+	87-89% = B+	77-79% = C+
94-99% = A	84-86% = B	74-76% = C
90-93% = A-	80-83% = B-	70-73% = C-

Below 70%: rewrite composition

## Additional Comments and Feedback

# Word Lists



## Adverbs

### "HOW" ADVERBS

angrily  
briskly  
busily  
carefully  
courageously  
courteously  
dangerously  
eagerly  
gently  
heavily  
honestly  
hungrily  
intensely  
noisily  
proudly  
rapidly  
silently  
slowly  
smoothly  
softly  
stubbornly  
suddenly  
swiftly  
tenderly  
tiredly  
uncomfortably  
wearily

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### "WHEN" ADVERBS

afterwards  
always  
before  
daily  
early  
ever  
forever  
hourly  
late  
later  
monthly  
never  
nightly  
now  
soon  
sooner  
then  
today  
tonight  
weekly  
when  
whenever  
yearly  
yesterday  
yet

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### "WHERE" ADVERBS

around\*\* (as in "Let's walk around.")  
down\*\* (as in "Set it down.")  
downward  
everywhere  
far  
here  
in\*\* (as in "He fell in.")  
inside\*\* (as in "Go inside.")  
nearby  
nowhere  
out\*\* (as in "Put the dog out.")  
outside\* (as in "She's outside.")  
someplace  
somewhere  
there  
underfoot  
underground  
up\*\* (as in "Take it up with him.")  
upstream  
where

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\*\* These are adverbs when used as in the examples. However, when followed by nouns, they become prepositions, as in "Take it up the stairs." or "He fell in a hole."

## Adverbs ("-ly")

- "-ly" adverbs are useful as transition words when connecting thoughts between sentences or paragraphs.
- They are also helpful when concluding a paragraph or a thought.
- Many "-ly" adverbs make excellent sentence starters.
- For variety, adverbs may be moved around within a sentence when describing verbs.

absolutely	entirely	positively	strictly
accordingly	essentially	possibly	substantially
amazingly	eventually	predictably	suddenly
apparently	evidently	presumably	surely
assuredly	fearlessly	previously	tentatively
boldly	finally	primarily	thankfully
carefully	fortunately	probably	typically
cautiously	frequently	progressively	ultimately
certainly	fundamentally	rapidly	unbelievably
clearly	gradually	regretfully	undeniably
completely	hopefully	regularly	undoubtedly
confidently	increasingly	relatively	unfortunately
consequently	indisputably	remarkably	unquestionably
constantly	initially	repeatedly	usually
continuously	normally	sadly	utterly
conveniently	notably	seemingly	virtually
courageously	obviously	seriously	willingly
distinctly	occasionally	significantly	_____
easily	ordinarily	simply	_____
effectively	originally	slowly	_____
encouragingly	plainly	steadily	_____

## Characteristics, Expressions, and Behaviors

### Enthusiastic

adventuresome  
amiable  
animated  
beaming  
bright  
bubbling  
chatty  
crazy  
demonstrative  
dynamic  
eager  
effervescent  
energetic  
excitable  
excited, exciting  
fabulous  
fervent  
festive  
fired up  
friendly  
frisky  
fun  
fun-loving  
gleeful  
gregarious  
hearty  
lighthearted  
lively  
noisy

obsessed  
outgoing  
passionate  
peppy  
playful  
rambunctious  
rowdy  
sociable  
spirited  
thrilled  
vigorous  
vivacious  
wholehearted  
zealous  
zestful

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Smart/Wise

adept  
alert  
bright  
brilliant  
clever  
creative  
cunning  
curious  
gifted  
imaginative  
ingenious  
intelligent  
inventive  
keen  
knowledgeable  
logical  
observant  
prudent  
questioning  
sensible  
sharp  
sharp-witted  
talented  
teachable  
wise

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Funny/Silly/Delighted

amused, amusing  
animated  
beaming  
bubbling  
cheerful  
comical  
congenial  
delighted, delightful  
droll  
foolish  
frivolous  
giggly  
glad  
gleeful  
happy  
humorous  
jolly  
jovial  
joyful  
joyous  
laughing  
merry  
mirthful  
silly  
surprised  
whimsical  
witty  
zany

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Hardworking**

dedicated

devoted

diligent

disciplined

educated

exhausted

helpful

industrious

occupied

orderly

organized

powerful

responsible

strong

sturdy

successful

tenacious

tough

useful

vigorous

---

---

---

---

---

**Honest**

believable

candid

congenial

conscientious

decisive

dependable

fair

forthright

frank

genuine

honest

honorable

just

objective

open

real

realistic

reliable

sincere

straightforward

trustworthy

truthful

upright

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**Warm/Kind**

appreciative

calm

caring

charming

comfortable

comforting

compassionate

concerned

cuddly

encouraged

encouraging

generous

gracious

grateful

hospitable

kindhearted

lovable

loving

loyal

pleasant

pleased

safe

sensitive

sympathetic

tender

thankful

understanding

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**Cool**

aloof

casual

cautious

cheerless

cold

detached

disinterested

distant

indifferent

introverted

remote

removed

reserved

shy

unapproachable

withdrawn



**Uncertain/Afraid**

afraid	submissive
anxious	suspicious
ashamed	tearful
bashful	tense
bewildered	timid
cautious	touchy
careful	troubled
confused	uncomfortable
discreet	unpredictable
discouraged	unstable
distracted	unsure
embarrassed	vague
fearful	vulnerable
flustered	wary
frantic	weak
frightened	weepy
indecisive	wishful
insecure	wistful
isolated	yearning
lonely	_____
nervous	_____
perplexed	_____
puzzled	_____
queasy	
questioning	
quivering	
rattled	
scared	
self-conscious	
sensitive	
serious	
shy	

**Secure/Bold**

adventuresome
adventurous
aggressive
assertive
bold
brave
certain
confident
courageous
daring
decisive
fearless
firm
heroic
influential
poised
popular
positive
reliable
responsible
solid
sound
stable
successful
sure
tenacious
unafraid
undaunted
unwavering
valiant
venturous
well-liked

**Amazing/Amazed**

astonished
astonishing
astounded
astounding
awestruck
breathhtaking
dumbfounded
fabulous
glorious
incredible
legendary
magical
majestic
sensational
staggering
surprised
terrific
tremendous
unbelievable
wonderful
wondrous

_____
_____
_____
_____

**Active**

agile  
alert  
animated  
athletic  
brisk  
busy  
chipper  
dynamic  
energetic  
fast  
frisky  
hurried  
lively  
occupied  
quick  
ready  
snappy  
sprightly  
spritzy  
strenuous  
vigorous  
wiggly  
wiry

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**Tired/Quiet**

calm  
docile  
easy  
easygoing  
exhausted  
idle  
inactive  
lazy  
passive  
peaceful  
preoccupied  
quiet  
reflective  
relaxed  
rested  
silent  
sleepy  
still  
subdued  
tame  
thoughtful  
tired  
untroubled

weak  
weary  
withdrawn

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**Proud**

arrogant  
boastful  
conceited  
disdainful  
extravagant  
forward  
haughty  
impertinent  
impudent  
insolent  
nervy  
obnoxious  
pompous  
proud  
sassy  
saucy  
scornful  
self-centered  
slick  
snobbish  
sophisticated  
stuffy  
superior

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**Unique**

different  
dignified  
distinct  
distinguished  
eminent  
exceptional  
extraordinary  
famous  
great  
honored  
incomparable  
lone  
matchless  
new  
obvious  
original  
particular  
peculiar  
rare  
remarkable  
special  
specific  
strange  
uncommon  
unequaled  
unique  
unmistakable  
unusual

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<b>Neat</b>	<b>Attractive</b>	<b>Stature(Appearance)</b>	<b>Misc. (Negative)</b>
clean	adorable	aged	condemning
dainty	alluring	ashen	cruel
delicate	beautiful	big	difficult
exact	breathtaking	brawny	disgusted
fastidious	bright	burly	disobedient
finicky	brilliant	chunky	dreadful
fussy	charming	elderly	ferocious
meticulous	chic	enormous	fickle
orderly	darling	feeble	fierce
organized	dashing	frail	forceful
particular	distinguished	great	furious
picky	elegant	healthy	horrible
prim	enchanted	heavy	hysterical
simple	fair	husky	jealous
tidy	fashionable	muscular	judgmental
trim	flattering	pale	mean
uncluttered	glamorous	pallid	mischievous
well groomed	glorious	petite	naughty
_____	glowing	plain	negative
_____	gorgeous	portly	pathetic
_____	handsome	reedy	pessimistic
_____	irresistible	slender	pitiful
_____	lovely	slight	raging
	magnificent	slim	shocking
	pretty	stocky	sorry
	smart	stout	temperamental
	stunning	thickset	terrible
	stylish	thin	ugly
	_____	tiny	unruly
	_____	wan	vicious
	_____	wholesome	_____
	_____	wiry	_____
	_____	young	_____
		youthful	_____

## Colors

■ Red	■ Yellow	■ Green	■ Brown	■ White	■ Black
brick	amber	*apple-green	auburn (hair)	blanched	*coal-black
cardinal	banana	aqua	bronze	bleached	ebony
cherry	blond/blonde	aquamarine	brunette (hair)	chalky	inky/inky black
crimson	butter/buttery	celery	chestnut (hair)	cottony	*jet-black
maroon	buttercup	emerald	chocolate	*dove-white	onyx
ruby	canary	evergreen	cinnamon	*milk-white	*pitch-black
ruddy (skin)	dandelion	forest	cocoa	milky	*pitch-dark
scarlet	flaxen	*kelly-green	coffee	pale	raven
strawberry	golden	lime	copper	pasty	sable
tomato	goldenrod	mint	mocha	pearl/pearly	sooty
■ Pink	lemon/lemony	moss	mousy-brown	*pearl-white	■ Gray
blush	ochre	olive	*nut-brown	powdery	charcoal
carnation	straw	*pea-green	*reddish-brown	*snow-white	cloudy
flamingo	sunflower	pear	rust	snowy	*dove-gray
flesh	sunny	*sea-green	sepia	whitened	dusky
flushed	■ Blue	*spring-green	walnut	whitewashed	granite
fuchsia	azure	teal	■ Tan	■ Off-white	gunmetal
magenta	blueberry	*yellow-green	camel	beige	*lead-gray
rose, rosy	Delft	■ Purple	fawn	buff	*pearl-gray
salmon	denim	burgundy	ginger	cream	silver/silvery
■ Orange	indigo	grape	*golden-brown	*creamy-white	slate
apricot	navy	lavender	honey	dusty beige	smoke
*burnt-orange	periwinkle	lilac	nutmeg	ecru	smoky
butterscotch	*powder-blue	mauve	sandy	eggshell	smudged
melon	*royal-blue	orchid	taffy	ivory	steel
peach	sapphire	plum	tan	oatmeal	*steel-gray
pumpkin	sky blue	violet	toffee	unbleached	
tangerine	turquoise	wine	topaz	vanilla	

### COLOR WORD CAUTIONS

- **Use color words wisely.** For example, you may describe *hair* as *blonde* or *mousy*, but choose more appetizing words for foods, such as *creamy* or *golden-brown*.
- **Look up synonyms:** Use the dictionary to make sure you're using a synonym correctly.
- **Know when to hyphenate\* color words:** Hyphenate\* between two adjectives when they come before a noun and act as a SINGLE WORD (e.g., *milk-white skin*; *melon-colored sweater*; *denim-dyed overalls*). Don't hyphenate when the adjectives follow a noun (e.g., *eyes of steel gray*; *toasted to a golden brown*).
- **Use color words creatively:** For a more "poetic" way to express an object's color, consider saying *the color of fresh cream*; *the color of ripe pears*; *as dark as rich coffee*, etc.

## Emotions

### Happy

amused  
beaming  
bright  
cheerful  
content  
delighted  
elated  
excited  
exhilarated  
exuberant  
festive  
genial  
glad  
gratified  
joyful  
jubilant  
laughing  
lightheaded  
lighthearted  
lively  
merry  
playful  
pleasant  
pleased  
radiant  
satisfied  
spirited  
sunny  
thrilled  
victorious

### Sad

confused  
dark  
dejected  
depressed  
desolate  
despondent  
dismal  
downhearted  
dreary  
droopy  
embarrassed  
empty  
gloomy  
glum  
grave  
grief-stricken  
grim  
hurt  
melancholy  
miserable  
morbid  
morose  
mournful  
pained  
pathetic  
pensive  
serious  
solemn  
somber  
sorrowful  
sullen

tearful  
tired  
troubled  
vacant  
weary  
wistful  
woeful  
wounded

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Brave

audacious  
bold  
courageous  
daring  
dauntless  
determined  
encouraging  
fearless  
gallant  
hardy  
heroic  
intrepid  
persistent  
plucky  
resolute  
spunky  
stalwart  
stouthearted  
unafraid  
valiant  
valorous

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Angry**

affronted

agitated

annoyed

bitter

boiling

bristling

burning

cross

cruel

displeased

disturbed

enraged

fretful

fuming

furious

grouchy

hateful

huffy

incensed

indignant

inflamed

infuriated

irked

irritated

livid

mean

mean-spirited

miffed

nettled

offended

peevied

piqued

rabid

raging

riled

seething

simmering

sizzling

smoldering

sore

stormy

surly

vengeful

vexed

wrathful

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**Fearful**

afraid

alarmed

anxious

apprehensive

ashamed

awed

bashful

cowardly

cowed

cringing

disconcerted

eerie

frightened

guilty

jumpy

nervous

palpitating

panicky

paralyzed

petrified

quaking

quivering

scared

shaking

shivering

shrinking

shy

skittish

staggered

stunned

stupefied

suspicious

terrified

timid

trembling

uncertain

uneasy

wary

wincing

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## Personification

*Possible word choices when giving human traits to an object or animal*

ache	giggle	prowl	throw
agree	glance	pursue	tickle
argue	grasp	push	tiptoe
believe	grin	reach	toss
blow	groan	reside	tremble
boast	guide	rest	trip
bow	hear	run	trust
breathe	hiss	scowl	tumble
browse	hug	search	twirl
chase	inhale	see	understand
claw	insult	serve	walk
complain	jump	shake	waltz
comprehend	kick	shove	watch
cough	lament	sigh	wave
crawl	laugh	sing	weep
creep	leap	sleep	welcome
cry	listen	smile	whisper
dance	live	sneeze	whistle
doze	moan	snore	wrestle
eat	mope	sob	wriggle
enjoy	mumble	soothe	yawn
escape	nibble	spy	yield
feel	notice	stare	_____
frolic	observe	step	_____
frown	oversee	stretch	_____
fumble	perceive	stroke	_____
fuss	play	stumble	_____
gape	pout	supervise	
gaze	preside (over)	think	

## Prepositions

aboard	but (meaning	outside
about	<i>except</i> )	over
above	by	past
across	concerning	regarding
after	despite	since
against	down	through
along	during	throughout
amid	except	till
among	for	to
around	from	toward
at	in	under
atop	inside	underneath
before	into	unlike
behind	like	until
below	near	up
beneath	of	upon
beside	off	with
between	on	within
beyond	onto	without
	out	



## Said Synonyms

added	defended	mumbled	snapped
advised	demanded	murmured	snarled
announced	disclosed	muttered	snickered
answered	exclaimed	noticed	snorted
argued	explained	observed	sobbed
asked	exploded	ordered	squawked
asserted	fussed	pleaded	squeaked
barked	giggled	pointed out	squealed
begged	gripped	pouted	stammered
bellowed	grouched	predicted	stated
blurted out	growled	proposed	suggested
boasted	guessed	queried	told
bragged	hinted	recited	uttered
breathed	hissed	remarked	wailed
called, called out	implied	repeated	warned
cautioned	implored	replied	wept
challenged	indicated	requested	wheezed
chimed in	inquired	responded	whimpered
chuckled	insinuated	retorted	whined
claimed	insisted	returned	whispered
commanded	interjected	revealed	yelled
commented	interrupted	roared	_____
complained	lamented	sang	_____
confided	laughed	scolded	_____
contended	maintained	screamed	_____
cried, cried out	mentioned	shouted	_____
croaked	moaned	shrieked	_____
declared	mouthed	sighed	_____

## Transitions and Conjunctions

### Location Words

above  
across  
alongside  
around  
behind  
below  
beside  
beyond  
in back  
in front  
next to  
over  
to the left  
to the right  
at the \_\_\_\_\_  
from the \_\_\_\_\_  
through the \_\_\_\_\_

### Time/Sequence

a few minutes later  
after  
after a while  
afterwards  
at last  
before  
beforehand  
by the time  
by (by May, by dinnertime)  
during  
earlier  
eventually  
finally  
finally  
first  
former

furthermore  
immediately  
initially  
later  
later on  
latter  
meanwhile  
next  
not long after  
not until  
now  
often  
on (on my birthday, on Friday)  
once  
originally  
previously  
progressively  
second  
since  
soon  
suddenly  
then  
third  
to begin with  
today  
tomorrow  
ultimately  
until  
until this time  
when  
yesterday

### Words to Connect Ideas

additionally  
again  
also  
besides  
furthermore  
in brief  
in fact  
in addition  
in short  
in conclusion  
in summary  
indeed  
likewise  
moreover  
similarly

### Words to Connect Opposing Ideas

in contrast  
nevertheless  
on the one hand  
on the other hand  
on the contrary  
rather  
still

**Coordinate Conjunctions**

and  
but  
for  
nor  
or  
so  
yet  
accordingly  
also  
anyhow  
besides  
consequently  
furthermore  
hence  
however  
indeed  
instead  
likewise  
meanwhile  
moreover  
namely  
otherwise  
still  
then  
therefore  
thus  
both \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ (both A and B)  
either \_\_\_ or \_\_\_ (either A or B)  
neither \_\_\_ nor \_\_\_ (neither A nor B)  
not only \_\_\_, but also \_\_\_ (not only A, but also B)  
whether \_\_\_ or \_\_\_ (whether A or B)

**Subordinate Conjunctions**

after  
although  
as  
as if  
as long as  
as much as  
as soon as  
as though  
because  
before  
even if  
even though  
if  
provided  
since  
though  
unless  
until  
when  
whenever  
where  
wherever  
whether  
while

## Using Transition Words to Make or Introduce Your Points

### **Introducing your first point**

- first/first of all
- to begin with

### **Transitioning to your second point**

- additionally/in addition
- besides
- furthermore
- in contrast (when presenting an opposing point of view)
- likewise
- moreover
- next
- on the contrary (when presenting an opposing point of view)
- on the other hand (when presenting an opposing point of view)
- second
- similarly

### **Transitioning to your third point**

- above all
- additionally/in addition
- also
- finally
- furthermore
- moreover
- most importantly
- third

### **Beginning your concluding statement or paragraph (optional)**

- considering/after considering ("Considering the evidence, one must conclude \_\_\_\_")
- in brief
- in summary
- in conclusion
- in short

### **Connecting similar thoughts (useful when expanding a point with illustrations or examples)**

- consequently
- consider ("Consider the number of young people who \_\_\_\_")
- for instance
- for example
- however

### **Transitioning from fact to opinion (or from one fact to another)**

- although
- even though
- nevertheless
- since
- still
- therefore
- while

## Weak Words

*When editing your "sloppy copy," underline in green any of these words you find. Sometimes you will be able to replace them with more concrete words using your thesaurus or Synonym Finder. Write the new word above the weak one.*

### Vague Words

a lot, lots  
awfully  
big  
come, came  
cute  
do, does, done, did  
eat  
fine  
fun  
get, got, gotten  
go, went  
good  
kind of  
like (OK when used as a simile)  
look  
make/made  
move  
nice  
pretty  
put  
say, said  
see  
sorta, sort of  
stuff, stuff like that  
take/took  
thing

### Slang Words

awesome (as in: *His skateboard is awesome.*)

amazing

cool (as in: *Seth drove a cool car.*)

plus other currently used slang terms

### Overused Words/Phrases

get/got/gotten

good

great (OK if used as a size word)

has, have, had (OK if used as a helping verb)

It has \_\_\_\_, It is \_\_\_\_

just

then (OK if not overused)

### Unnecessary Words

really

so

very

The end.

This story is about \_\_\_\_.

This is what happened when \_\_\_\_.

What I want to tell you is \_\_\_\_.

## Sound Words (Adjectives and Verbs)

- Many of these words can either be adjectives or verbs, depending how you use them in a sentence.

**Adjective:** I heard a banging noise in the kitchen. (*Banging* tells what kind of noise.)

**Verb:** I hear mom banging pots in the kitchen. (*Banging* is the action word.)

**Participle sentence starter:** Banging pots in the kitchen, Mom hurriedly made dinner.

- To see a list of sound words used as *nouns*, see the "Sound Words (Nouns)" word list.

audible	croaking	loud	rustling	swelling
banging	crying	meowing	scraping	swooping
barking	deafening	moaning	scratching	tearing
bawling	droning	mooing	screaming	thudding
baying	drumming	muffled	screeching	thumping
bellowing	dull	murmuring	shattering	thundering
blaring	ear-splitting	musical	shocking	thunderous
blasting	echoing	muted	shouting	ticking
boisterous	explosive	muttering	shrieking	tolling
booming	fizzing, fizzy	noisy	shrill	tomblike
breaking	fuming	panting	sighing	tonal
bubbling, bubbly	fussing	peaceful	silent	twangy
bursting	gagging	pealing	sizzling	vibrating
buzzing	gasping	piercing	slamming	vocal
cheering	gossiping	pinging	sloshing	wailing
chiming	groaning	popping	snapping	wheezing
choking	grousing	pounding	sobbing	whimpering
clacking	gurgling	quiet	soft	whining, whiny
clamorous	gushing	rackety	soundless	whistling
clanging	harmonious	rasping, raspy	spoken	whooping
clangorous	hissing	raucous	squawking	wordless
clattering	hoarse	reverberating	squeaky	wrenching
cracking	howling	ringing	stifled	_____
crackling	humming	ripping	still	_____
crashing	hushed	roaring	strident	_____
creaking, creaky	knelling	rumbling	sucking	_____

## Sound Words (Nouns)

- ▶ To see a list of sound words used as adjectives, see p. 18.
- ▶ The Sound Words (Adjectives and Verbs) page also helps you use sound words as participles.
- ▶ Try combining sound words:
  1. the **deafening roar** of a waterfall  
                   *adj.*    *noun*
  2. her new kitten's **squeaky meow**  
                           *adj.*    *noun*

bang	clunk	howl	rumble	tinkle
bark	crack	hubbub	rustle	tintinnabulation
bawl	crackle	hum	scrape	tone
bay	crash	hush	scratch	tumult
bellow	creak	jangle	scream	twang
blast	croak	jingle	screech	uproar
bleat	cry	meow	shout	vibration
boom	detonation	moan	shriek	voice
bubble	din	moo	sigh	wail
burst	echo	murmur	silence	wheeze
buzz	explosion	music	snap	whimper
call	fizz	neigh	sob	whine
cheer	fuss	noise	sound	whinny
chime	gasp	pandemonium	squawk	whisper
chink	gossip	pant	squeak	whistle
choke	groan	peace	strain	whoop
clack	growl	peal	thud	word
clamor	gurgle	ping	thump	yell
clang	gush	pop	thunder	_____
clatter	hiss	racket	thunder crack	_____
clink	holler	roar	tick	_____

## Taste and Smell Words

### Taste Words

acidic	juicy
appetizing	luscious
baked	mild
biting	moldy
bitter	nasty
bland	palatable
boiled	peppery
bubbly	pleasant
candied	rich
coagulated	roasted
cold	rotten
congealed	salty
creamy	savory
curried	scrumptious
delectable	seasoned
delicious	sharp
dried	sizzling
effervescent	smoked
flat	sour
flavorful	spicy
foul	spoiled
fresh	stale
fried	stewed
frosty	succulent
gamy	sugary
honeyed	sweet
horrid	sweet and sour
hot	syrupy
iced, icy	tainted

### Smell Words

acrid
aromatic
balmy
caustic
fermented
fetid
foul
fragrant
fresh
fruity
malodorous
mildewed
musty
odorous
peppery
perfumed
piquant
pungent
rancid
rank
redolent
scented
smoky
spoiled
stinking, stinky
strong
sweet-smelling
_____
_____



## Texture Words

abrasive	fibrous	matted	sharp	unyielding
angular	firm	metallic	silken	upholstered
blunt	flabby	moist	silky	velvety
bony	fleecy	moldable	sleek	warm
braided	flexible	mushy	slippery	waxy
bristly	flimsy	nappy	smooth	wet
brittle	fluffy	nubby	soaked	whiskered
bumpy	fragile	peaked	sodden	wiry
calloused	furry	pebbly	soft	woolly
chewy	fuzzy	pliant	solid	woven
coarse	glossy	plush	spiny	wrinkled
cold	gnarled	pointed	spongy	wrinkly
concrete	grainy	porous	springy	yielding
cool	gravelly	prickly	squishy	_____
cottony	greasy	puffy	starched	_____
creamy	gritty	raised	stark	_____
crinkly	hairy	resilient	sticky	_____
crisp	hard	rigid	stiff	_____
crusty	humped	rocky	stony	
delicate	jagged	rough	stretchy	
dense	knobby	rugged	stringy	
doughy	knotty	rusty	stubbly	
downy	leathery	sandy	supple	
dry	level	satiny	textured	
dull	light	saturated	thorny	
elastic	limber	scaly	tough	
embossed	lumpy	scratchy	unbendable	
feathery	malleable	shaggy	uniform	

## Visual Words

<b>Bright</b>	<b>Pale</b>	<b>Dull</b>	<b>Big</b>	<b>Attractive</b>
blinking	ashen	bare	beefy	appealing
bright	bland	barren	burly	beautiful
brilliant	colorless	blank	colossal	charming
cheerful	dim	bleak	enormous	delightful
clear	flat	cheerless	gigantic	elegant
colorful	insipid	cloudy	grand	engaging
dazzling	lifeless	dark	great	exquisite
flashing	pallid	desolate	hefty	fabulous
gleaming	sallow	dim	huge	fantastic
glimmering	wan	dismal	husky	glorious
glinting	washed out	drab	immense	gorgeous
glistening	watery	dreary	imposing	grand
glossy	waxy	dusky	jumbo	lovely
glowing		dusty	large	luxurious
luminous	<b>Small</b>	empty	major	magnificent
lustrous	dainty	foggy	mammoth	marvelous
polished	itsy-bitsy	gloomy	mighty	picturesque
radiant	itty-bitty	hazy	monstrous	pleasing
shimmering	little	heavy	monumental	pretty
shining	microscopic	misty	overgrown	splendid
shiny	miniature	murky	tall	stately
sleek	minute	pasty	towering	stunning
sparkling	petite	solemn	tremendous	superb
translucent	pint-sized	somber	vast	wonderful
transparent	pocket-sized	smoky	_____	_____
twinkling	teensy, teeny	vacant	_____	_____
winking	teeny-weeny	vaporous	_____	_____
_____	tiny	_____	_____	_____
_____	wee	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____