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# writeShop®

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Same Great  
Content!**

## Student Workbook



an incremental writing program

Kim Kautzer and Debra Oldar

4th Edition

# WriteShop

an incremental writing program

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## WriteShop I

by Kim Kautzer and Debra Oldar

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Fourth edition

This book is dedicated to our husbands:

Jim and Eric,

and to our wonderful children:

Aaron and Karah, Janel and Ben,

Laura and Brian.

Thank you for giving up home-cooked meals, clean laundry,  
and your turn at the computer. Without your patience and  
sacrifice, we never could have completed this project.

Your wives and moms are back (for now)!

Thanks to each and every one of our *WriteShop* students---  
guinea pigs one and all!

You have inspired us with ideas and blessed us  
with your writing efforts.

We are also grateful for the many parents and friends who  
have "spurred us on toward love and good deeds" with your  
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# Introduction and Reference Pages

## Introducing *WriteShop*

*Writing. Compositions. Paragraphs. Essays.* Do these words strike fear into your heart? Well, you are 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 consider writing a chore. They do not know what to write about or how to adequately express their thoughts in writing. They often do not 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 you who enjoy writing. Maybe you like to express yourself creatively, choosing interesting words and colorful phrases to spice up your compositions. You may prefer descriptive writing, which appeals to the five senses. Or perhaps 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, you will find that *WriteShop's* incremental approach takes the guesswork out of how to write. If you enjoy writing, you will learn more sophisticated ways of expressing yourself by practicing with various types of compositions (descriptive, narrative, informative, and persuasive).

If you are intimidated by writing, you will find that this 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 or how to play a musical instrument, so you can learn to write. As you learn, practice, and build on each concept or step, you will be able to express yourself more and more easily. Soon, you may even find yourself enjoying the writing process!

**Note:** *Your 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 writing.*

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

When writing your assigned compositions, always follow these steps:

### 1. **Brainstorm.**

- ☐ Never skip this important step. It gets your ideas flowing so you can write!
- ☐ You can brainstorm in many ways, such as making lists, mind-maps, charts, Venn diagrams, word banks, writing clusters, outlines, etc. (many of your *WriteShop* assignments will already include brainstorming suggestions).

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

- ☐ It does not have to be neat---just make sure it's readable!
- ☐ Be sure to skip lines as you write (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.
- ☐ Continue the practice of double-spacing or skipping lines.
- ☐ When finished, check your revised copy against the "Mechanics" section of your Writing Skills Checklist, making necessary corrections.
- ☐ Recheck your paper for content/style, and make corrections.
- ☐ Do not rewrite yet (unless your paper is too marked up to be readable).

### 4. **Hand in your work.**

- ☐ Put your brainstorming sheet on the bottom of your stack.
- ☐ "Sloppy copy" goes on top of that.
- ☐ First revision goes on top of "sloppy copy."
- ☐ Student Writing Skills Checklist goes on the very top.
- ☐ Staple everything together.  
(Note: Your teacher will staple the Teacher Writing Skills Checklist on top of your paper.)

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

- ☐ Make any corrections suggested on the Teacher Writing Checklist.
- ☐ Type or neatly rewrite your final draft, paying close attention to details.
- ☐ Staple your final draft on top of the Teacher Writing Skills Checklist, and hand in with all copies of this 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: *always* 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.

●	First and Last Name
	Date
	Draft ("Sloppy Copy," etc.)
	<u>Title (underline the title)</u>
	(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 )
●	



### Page Model for Typed Compositions

1. All typed work must use the headings shown in the following sample. Indent the first line of every paragraph about a half-inch (about 5 letters).
2. You must double-space the body of the paragraph. This leaves space 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. **IMPORTANT:** Use a standard font, like Times New Roman, Ariel, or Helv, preferably in 12- to 14-pt. 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.

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

First and last name

Date

Draft (!st 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* the paragraphs 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, crispiest, 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:** Writing that demonstrates qualities of good taste and satisfies godly ideals of attitudes, thoughts, and speech. Gracious writing honors God and 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, and begins with a capital letter and ends with a punctuation mark.

**Style:** Style generally refers to writing technique. In order to express yourself meaningfully, you need to 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 such as Rod and Staff or ABeka. Also, *Easy Writing* 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, "Jackie" is essential if there is more than one older sister. This, then, 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 Jackie 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" often expresses the comparison.

Puffy white clouds were marshmallows in the morning sky.

Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life."

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 still waters," "before church," "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: Beware of mistaking 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. ("dark" is the object of the preposition.)

See *Skill Builder p. 12-9* for further explanation and examples or look in your *English handbook*.

**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, John's neighbors arrived to help build the new barn.  
("Sunrise" is the object, making "before" a preposition.)

Correct: Before the sun came up, John's neighbors arrived to help build the new barn. (Do not 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

Lesson Number	Lesson Title	Lesson Focus	Skill Builder Focus
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
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
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*

Lesson Number	Lesson Title	Lesson Focus	Skill Builder Focus
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
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)
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)

## Lesson Plan Overview: Two- or Three-Year Track

If you are using both *WriteShop I* and *WriteShop II*, choose this track to complete both books in two or three years. If you are only using one or the other, use this track to complete the single volume in a year or so.

Days 5, 7, and 9 contain no assigned writing. On Days 7 and 9 your teacher will be evaluating your composition. Also, Day 10 is available in case your paper needs one more revision. Plan to complete *every exercise*. With the exception of copying and dictation, each activity is directly related to the goal of writing a composition within the two-week period.

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
<b>Primary Student Writing Focus</b>	Pre-Writing Activities	Practice Paragraph	Brainstorming	Sloppy Copy	
<b>Skill Builder</b>	Day One	Day Two	Day Three		
<b>Copying/ Dictation</b>			Copying		Dictation

	Day Six	Day Seven	Day Eight	Day Nine	Day Ten
<b>Primary Student Writing Focus</b>	First Revision		Final Draft		Second Final Draft (if needed)
<b>Teacher/ Parent Editing</b>		Edit student's first revision		Grade student's final draft	
<b>Copying/ Dictation</b>		Copying		Dictation	

## Lesson Plan Overview: One-Year Track

Fast-paced, this track covers both *WriteShop I* and *WriteShop II* in one year. If you are only working through one of these books, it is possible to complete it in a single semester.

This track requires more work and is definitely more intense. Prepare to make writing a priority this year if you choose the one-year track. Expect to spend more time each day on your writing than you might otherwise. In addition, turn in each assignment promptly to your teacher so she can edit and return it right away. Then you will not fall behind.

Plan to complete *every exercise* within the lesson. With the exception of copying and dictation, each activity is directly related to the goal of writing a composition within the one-week period.

Day One's activities may take more time than your teacher plans for you to spend that day on *WriteShop*. You might complete pre-writing exercises on Day One, write the practice paragraph on Day Two, do your brainstorming and sloppy copy on Day Three, and write the first revision on Day Four. Your teacher will then have to edit the first revision right away so you can write the final draft on Day Five.

	Day One	Day Two	Day Three	Day Four	Day Five
<b>Primary Student Writing Focus</b>	Pre-writing Activities and Practice Paragraph	Brainstorming and Sloppy Copy	First Revision		Final Draft
<b>Teacher/Parent Editing</b>				Edit student's first revision	Grade student's final draft
<b>Skill Builder</b>	Day One	Day Two	Day Three		
<b>Copying/Dictation</b>			Copying		Dictation

## Common Proofreading Symbols and Terms

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 hair ^	her long, golden hair
delete word or phrase	/	the old, <del>cracked</del> , chipped vase	the old, chipped vase
close space		Answer (the phone)	Answer the phone.
increase space	#	Mrs. # Smith arrived early.	Mrs. Smith arrived early.
indent (or increase indent)		→ Soon after, the . . .	Soon after, the . . .
spelling error		<del>sp</del> benifit	benefit
insert period		Read your book <sub>o</sub>	Read your book.
insert comma		Tom, Elise <sub>^</sub> and Mark	Tom, Elise, and Mark
begin a new paragraph		Fido followed me home. <sup>¶</sup> The next day we ran an ad in . . .	Fido followed me home. The next day we ran . . .
sentence fragment (incomplete)	frag. (or inc.)	Before the movie began. <sup>frag.</sup>	Before the movie began, Dad bought popcorn.
run-on sentence	r.o.	The water felt like ice we <sup>r.o.</sup> jumped out right away.	The water felt like ice. We jumped out right away.
misplaced modifier	m.m.	Crisp and buttery, my aunt <sup>m.m.</sup> makes delicious cookies.	Crisp and buttery, my aunt's cookies taste delicious.
awkward	awk.	<sup>awk.</sup> 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.

### 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, like "this necklace is Mom's," "the gentleman's book," "that dog's rawhide bone."
2. Possessive pronouns; however DO NOT use apostrophes, as in "this necklace is hers," "his book," "its bone."
3. "it's" is a contraction for "it is."
4. A **tip**: If students are tempted to write "it's," have them 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 which 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

1. The comma tends to be overused. When in doubt, leave it out.
2. DO use a comma at the end of a phrase, like:  
     Suddenly lurching, the train jumped the tracks.  
     Gazing up at the stars, I marvel at the universe.
3. DO use a comma to set off an appositive:  
     Pastor Smith, the man in the blue coat, spoke at the rally.  
     That shaggy dog, a pure-bred collie, needs grooming.
4. DO NOT use a comma to separate two complete sentences.
5. DO NOT use a comma where there is no natural pause. It helps to read the sentence aloud and pause dramatically at the comma. Does it fit? Does the sentence flow well? Does it sound better without the comma?
6. 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 adverb phrase the subject of that phrase must appear next to or near the participial phrase. (Note: these 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, 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*.

## 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 right 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

Rewrite the following sentences, changing vague or unclear words into 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 sea gull? 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.*

On a separate sheet of paper, write up to three different concrete sentences for *each* of the underlined (vague) ones. Use a thesaurus to find at least two words in each sentence.

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.

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

Write down four different vivid, specific words for each of the general words underlined in the above sentence. You have been given some examples. 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

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 first column below, under the examples.
3. In the remaining blanks, write interesting adjectives and adverbs for each of the specific words you selected.

### Example Words

### Example Adjectives and Adverbs

snake : coiled brown terrifying wiggly

slithered : quickly silently gracefully lazily

grass : tall prickly dry green

### Your Words

### Your Adjectives and Adverbs

from Day One

\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
(animal)

\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
(animal)

\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
(movement)

\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
(movement)

\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
(ground)

\_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_  
(ground)

**DAY THREE**

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

### **A Piece of Granite**

*by Brian, age 12*

*My small granite stone was found on the side of a river bed 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 think this is one of God's most unique creations.*

### **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 Worksheet

If you wish to describe an object, would you begin by picking up your pencil and writing down what you can remember about it? No, you should look very carefully at your object and ask yourself many questions! Good detectives do not quickly glance around a large area to find answers. They look closely at everything around them. Use these questions as a guide to help you carefully describe your object.

Appearance (Use the "Visual Words" and "Color Words" lists at the back of this workbook for ideas.)

1. What color(s) is it?
2. How is it shaped or formed?
3. What are its features?
4. What is its surface like?
5. What does its appearance remind you of?
6. Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Texture (Use the "Texture Words" list at the back of this workbook.)

1. What does it feel like? Is it smooth or rough, soft or hard, furry or scaly, or . . . ?
2. What does its texture remind you of?
3. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Smell (Use the "Taste and Smell Words" list at the back of this workbook.)

*Keep it gracious, avoiding being crude or gross. Also, not every object will have a smell.*

1. What does it smell like?
2. How does the smell make you feel or react?
3. What does its smell remind you of?
4. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Sound (Use the "Sound Words" lists at the back of this workbook.)

1. Does it make a noise or a sound?
2. What do its sounds remind you of?
3. 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.)

- ☐ Do all my sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Does my title capture the essence of my paragraph?

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

- ☐ Did I choose 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" and "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 five to seven sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ 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 the right side of your page)
- ☐ Did I remember to skip every other line?  
(If not, before you rewrite, 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 finish and turn in my observation worksheet?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed?  
(This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)

- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** 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"/> | 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"/> | Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others |
| <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 words that are specific, vivid, and sensory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided writing in second person ("you" and "your")       |
| <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"/> | <u>Name</u> 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 five to seven sentences long  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | First sentence of the paragraph is indented and margins left around the paragraph                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Remembered to skip 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 appropriate punctuation   |
| <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 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Included brainstorming sheet, all drafts of this paragraph, and your Writing Skills Checklist                  |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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>	_____
• Graciousness	<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 (homonyms, 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 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



## 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 room filled with stuffed animals. You can even write about someone else's pet.

In this lesson, you will continue practicing your skills of observation by carefully studying a pet. Keen observation leads to interesting descriptions. 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.

### Instructions

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." However, don't play guessing games with your readers---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. Therefore, *do not* use the words "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* that compare two things which 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."

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. Make sure your paragraph is five to seven sentences long. Then 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 him draw and color a picture of the pet you described in your composition (provide him with crayons or colored pencils). He DOES NOT have to be a talented artist!
2. Tell him he must draw the picture using only the descriptions he finds in your paper. He is not to add any **detail** to the drawing based on his imagination. He 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. What is the purpose of this activity? If your "artist" returns a drawing of a dog with no body, ears, or fur color, 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 does reveal anything unique about your pet, you will know to either add more features 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 Worksheet

As with an object, when you wish to describe a pet, would you begin by picking up your pencil and writing down what you can remember about it? No, you should 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 or she studies the animal for small but important details. Use these questions as a guide to help you carefully describe your pet.

Appearance (use the "Visual Words" and "Color Words" lists at the back of this notebook for ideas)

1. What color(s) is it?
2. How is it shaped or formed?
3. What are its unique features? Consider tail, ears, nose, spots, stripes, whiskers.
4. What do its fur, hair, skin, scales, or feathers look like?
5. Does it have a collar? A chain? Bows on its ears?
6. What does its appearance remind you of?
7. Other \_\_\_\_\_
8. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Texture (use the "Texture Words" list)

1. What does it feel like? Is it smooth or rough, soft or hard, furry or scaly, or . . . ?
2. What does its texture remind you of?
3. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Sound (use the "Sound Words" list)

1. Does it make a noise or a sound?
2. What is the volume of this noise?
3. What do its sounds remind you of?
4. Other \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior (use the "Characteristics/Expressions/Behavior" word list)

1. How does it move? For instance, does it slither, crawl, climb, flap, dash, zip . . . ?
2. Does it have any unique behaviors?
3. Other \_\_\_\_\_

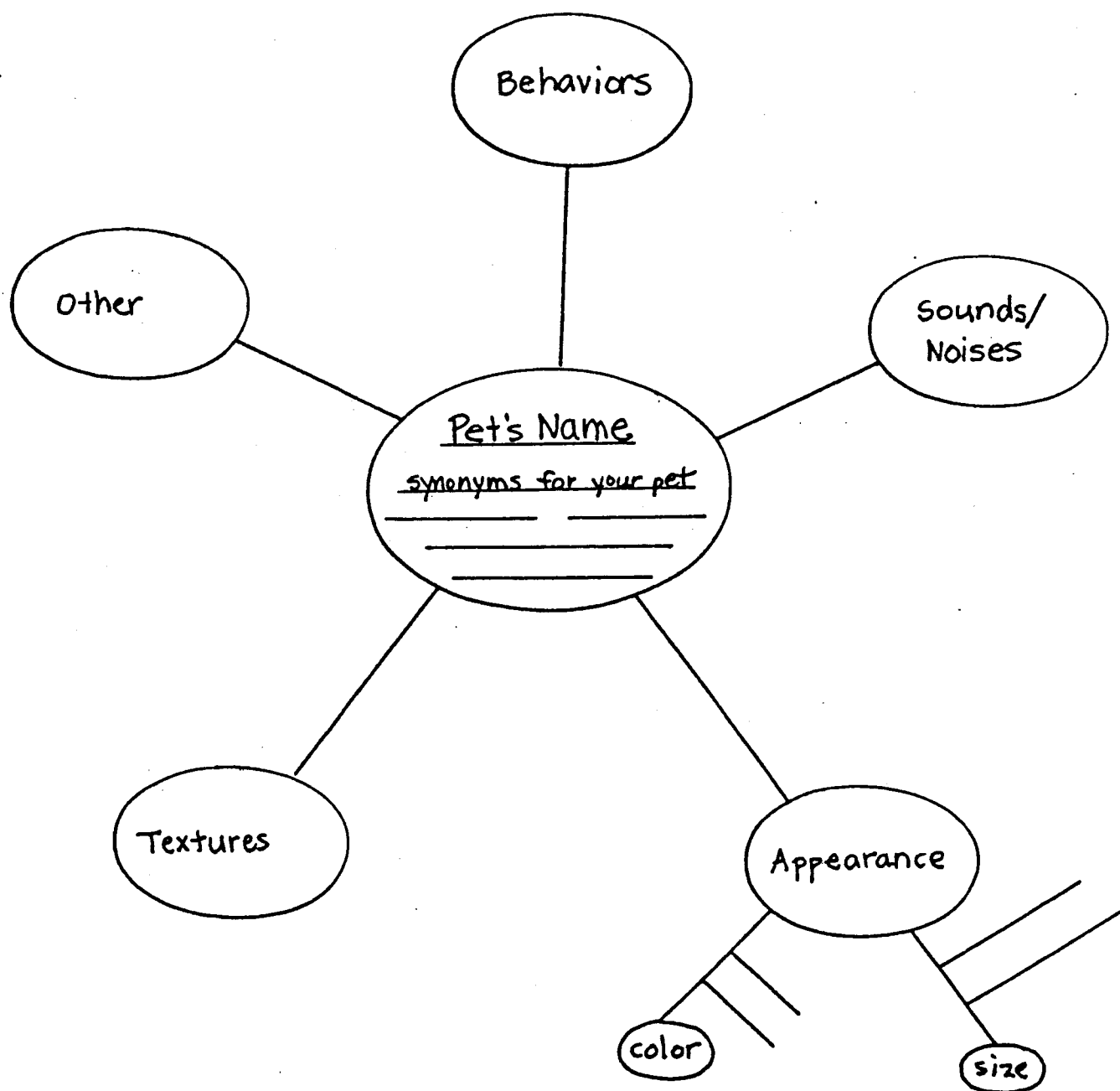
## Lesson 2: Making a Mind-map

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.

- ☐ 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*.
- ☐ Draw five circles all around the first, connecting them to the middle circle with lines, like spokes.
- ☐ Label the five circles *appearance*, *behavior*, *texture*, *sounds/noises*, and *other*.
- ☐ 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.
- ☐ 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 will provide you with ideas for both categories and details.)

## Lesson 2: Pet Mind-map



## Lesson 2: Skill Builder

### *Using 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.

Notice how the paragraph becomes more interesting when synonyms are substituted 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 is best not to use unnecessary words like *really* and *very*. Your "Overused, Vague, and Unnecessary Words" list 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, Sam got his baseball glove. (*look up "go" and "get"*)

Better: Racing to the bench, Sam 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. Avoid overused, weak synonyms.

## DAY ONE

1. Use your **thesaurus** to find five synonyms for each of the following **vague** words (*good*, *nice*, and *pretty*). (Note: use vivid, concrete words; do not use *nice*, for instance, as a synonym for *good*.)
2. Do not repeat words.
3. Do not "think up" words on your own; you must use the thesaurus!

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

## DAY TWO

1. Use your thesaurus to find five synonyms for each of the following **overused** words.
2. 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*.
3. Choose *specific*, *concrete* verbs as synonyms: The point of this exercise is to expand your vocabulary and discover alternate words to replace common ones.

went (to go)	said (to say)	had (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*.

**get** (verb)

---

---

---

---

---

**make** (verb)

---

---

---

---

---

**big** (adj.)

---

---

---

---

---



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Describing a Pet

## Lesson 2: Student Writing Skills Checklist

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

- ☐ Do all my sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Does my title capture the essence of my paragraph?

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

- ☐ Did I choose a strong topic sentence that introduces my paragraph?
- ☐ Did I use no more than three forms of "to be" words (*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 avoid writing in second person ("you" and "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 five to seven sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ 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 the right side of your page.)
- ☐ Did I remember to skip every other line?  
(If not, before you rewrite, 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 and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I ask an adult to draw a portrait of my pet?
- ☐ Did I finish and turn in my observation worksheet?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed?  
(This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** Did I staple my papers together in this order? (Pet drawing on the very bottom, brainstorming worksheet and mind map next, "sloppy copy" on top of that, neatly rewritten copy next, and this Writing Checklist on the very top.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Describing a Pet

## 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"/>	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"/>	Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others
<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 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"/>	Avoided writing in second person ("you" and "your")
<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"/>	<u>Name</u> 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 five to seven sentences long
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	First sentence of the paragraph is indented and margins are left around the paragraph
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remembered to skip 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 appropriate punctuation
<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
<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 \_\_\_\_\_

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> | _____ |
| • Graciousness  | <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 (homonyms, 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 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

## Lesson 3: Describing a Person

You have practiced with 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 studying 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.

1. Look carefully at 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 the attached observation worksheet.
2. Can you figure out your subject's mood (see "Emotions" word list)? 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.

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

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

8. **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."
9. Your paragraph must be between five and seven sentences long, and you must begin one of your sentences with **paired adjectives**. Be sure this sentence does not contain a misplaced modifier. The subject the paired adjectives describe must closely follow the comma. Ask your teacher for help if this is a new or unfamiliar concept. (You can find many excellent ideas for paired adjectives in your "Characteristics/Expressions/ Behaviors" and "Emotions" word lists.)
10. You will need to be creative in 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*, and *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 must be used more often.
11. **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.*

**Important!**

You may discover that the second paragraph contains a story line, which qualifies it as a narrative. However, you will also find 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 have done your job.

Authors know what they have in mind when they write a description, but sometimes they do not give the reader enough information. When you finish writing your paragraph, *ask someone 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 a similar mistake. If I were your teacher, I would make the following suggestions:

Dear Morgan,

You did a fine job of telling how your sister empties the dishwasher, but I think you got confused and missed the point of this assignment. Remember that you must concentrate on your *subject* (Katie) not on her *activity* (emptying the dishwasher).

After reading your paragraph, I should have been able to learn a little about Katie. However, there is 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 your sister, I don't know what she's wearing. I don't know what color hair or eyes she has. I don't know if 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.

I believe this may have been avoided had you more thoroughly filled in your "Observing a Person" worksheet. This was your brainstorming assignment, and one of the most important parts of writing. Brainstorming generates ideas. If you don't know what to write in the blanks, *you must sit down with someone and discuss it*. The brainstorming process becomes easier over time. Also, make use of the brainstorming material you did gather! Regrettably, the wonderful bits of information you *did* write on your worksheet (her hair and eye color, clothing, and attitude) never made it to your paragraph.



## **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**

Expand the following paragraph. When a part of speech or other instruction appears beneath a blank line, fill in the line with the appropriate word or words. You will end up with a paragraph that vividly describes this girl.

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, my \_\_\_\_\_ sister  
*paired adjective* *paired adjective* *adjective*

\_\_\_\_\_ unloads the dishwasher. Wearing \_\_\_\_\_  
*adverb telling how* *adjective* *clothing*

and \_\_\_\_\_, she carefully carries plates in her \_\_\_\_\_  
*adjective* *clothing* *adjective*

hands. Only as tall as \_\_\_\_\_, Katie stretches \_\_\_\_\_  
*what* *what or how*

to reach the high cupboards. Her \_\_\_\_\_ eyes \_\_\_\_\_ whenever  
*adjective* *do what?*

\_\_\_\_\_. As she puts away the silverware, she \_\_\_\_\_  
*what happens* *does what to*

her \_\_\_\_\_ hair. With a \_\_\_\_\_  
*adjective* *adjective* *adjective* *what*

on her \_\_\_\_\_ face, she \_\_\_\_\_ finishes her chore and  
*adjective* *adverb telling how*

\_\_\_\_\_ out to \_\_\_\_\_.  
*action verb like "skips"* *activity*

## Lesson 3: Observing a Person Worksheet

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

### The 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 "Textures" word list): \_\_\_\_\_

Colors: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

### Synonyms for My Subject

\_\_\_\_\_

## 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**, 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 the writing assignments of students like you. Create more interesting and concise sentences by beginning each of the following with paired adjectives:

1. The crunchy, salty 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. (try opposite pairs)

## DAY TWO

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

- ☐ Be sure that 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."
- ☐ Be sure to use different adjectives each time to broaden your vocabulary.

You will find that as you practice this new skill, your "Emotions" and your "Characteristics/Expressions/Behaviors" word lists 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 that 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. (In this case, "but" and "yet" mean "nevertheless.") 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 being only two, he's feeling fearful too!

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 loaf of banana bread cooled on the counter.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ yet \_\_\_\_\_, the loaf of 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

1. Find two magazine 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" word lists to make your own list of words to accurately describe the person in each picture. Choose carefully. Make this list to the right of each picture.
3. Under each picture, write two phrases or sentences, beginning with paired adjectives, 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.)*

- ☐ Do all my sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Does my title capture the essence of my paragraph?

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

- ☐ Did I choose a strong topic sentence that introduces my paragraph?
- ☐ Did I use no more than two forms of "to be" words (*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 vary my sentence structure by beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?
- ☐ Did I describe my subject's physical appearance?
- ☐ Did I describe my subject's activity *without* focusing on the activity itself?
- ☐ 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 *(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 five to seven sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ 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 the right side of your page.)
- ☐ Did I remember to skip every other line?  
(If not, before you rewrite, 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 and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I finish and turn in my observation worksheet?
- ☐ Did I find someone to draw a picture of my subject based on my descriptions? (not an optional activity!)
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed?  
(This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** 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.)

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

## 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"/> | 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"/> | Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others |
| <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 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 using paired adjectives                                      |
| <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"/> | 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"/> | <u>Name</u> 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 five to seven sentences long  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | First sentence of the paragraph is indented and margins are left around the paragraph    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Remembered to skip 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 appropriate 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"/> | Included someone's drawing of your subject, based on your description                    |
| <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 Writing Skills Checklist |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_



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> | _____ |
| • Graciousness  | <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 (homonyms, 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 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

## Lesson 4: Describing a Circus Performer

Last time you practiced describing a person. This lesson will take 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 circus troupers are seen from a distance by the audience, you will find that they rely a great deal on their dazzling, vivid clothing, overstated makeup, and exaggerated mannerisms and expressions to make an impact.

Use your "Visual Words" and "Texture Words" lists to help you choose concrete describing words, like *glimmering*, *glossy*, or *limber*.

The "Characteristics, Expressions, and Behaviors" word list 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" sheet to brainstorm.
3. Tips 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 Worksheet

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

### The Face

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

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 (satin, tulle, velvet, net, fur, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Textures (see "Texture Words" list) \_\_\_\_\_

Colors \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

### Synonyms for My Subject

\_\_\_\_\_

## 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, 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 spot 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 my 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

- ☐ Do all my sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Does my 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" words (*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 vary my sentence structure by beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?
- ☐ 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?
- ☐ 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 five to seven sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ 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 the right side of your page)
- ☐ Did I remember to skip every other line? (If not, before you rewrite, 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 and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I finish and turn in my observation worksheet?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed?  
(This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** 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"/> | 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"/> | Communicated clearly  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others |
| <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 two 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"/> | Varied sentence structure by using paired adjectives                             |
| <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 without focusing on the activity itself             |
| <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"/> | <u>Name</u> 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 five to seven sentences long   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | First sentence of the paragraph is indented and margins are left around the paragraph   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Remembered to skip 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 appropriate 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 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> | _____ |
| • Graciousness  | <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 (homonyms, 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 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

## Lesson 5: Describing a Food

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. Oatmeal, rice, or pretzels, for example, are bland and would probably not make interesting subjects.

### Food Topics (choose one)

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> fresh-baked bread   | <input type="checkbox"/> corn on the cob         | <input type="checkbox"/> popsicle                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> lemon meringue pie  | <input type="checkbox"/> cinnamon roll           | <input type="checkbox"/> pizza or lasagna        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fried chicken       | <input type="checkbox"/> spaghetti and meatballs | <input type="checkbox"/> tacos                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> barbecued hamburger | <input type="checkbox"/> sundae or banana split  | <input type="checkbox"/> 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," "Texture Words," and "Sound Words" lists! Pretending your readers have never eaten or seen your food, choose words that will help them experience it with their senses. **Tip:** Read food ads and restaurant reviews in magazines and newspapers to see how others describe foods.

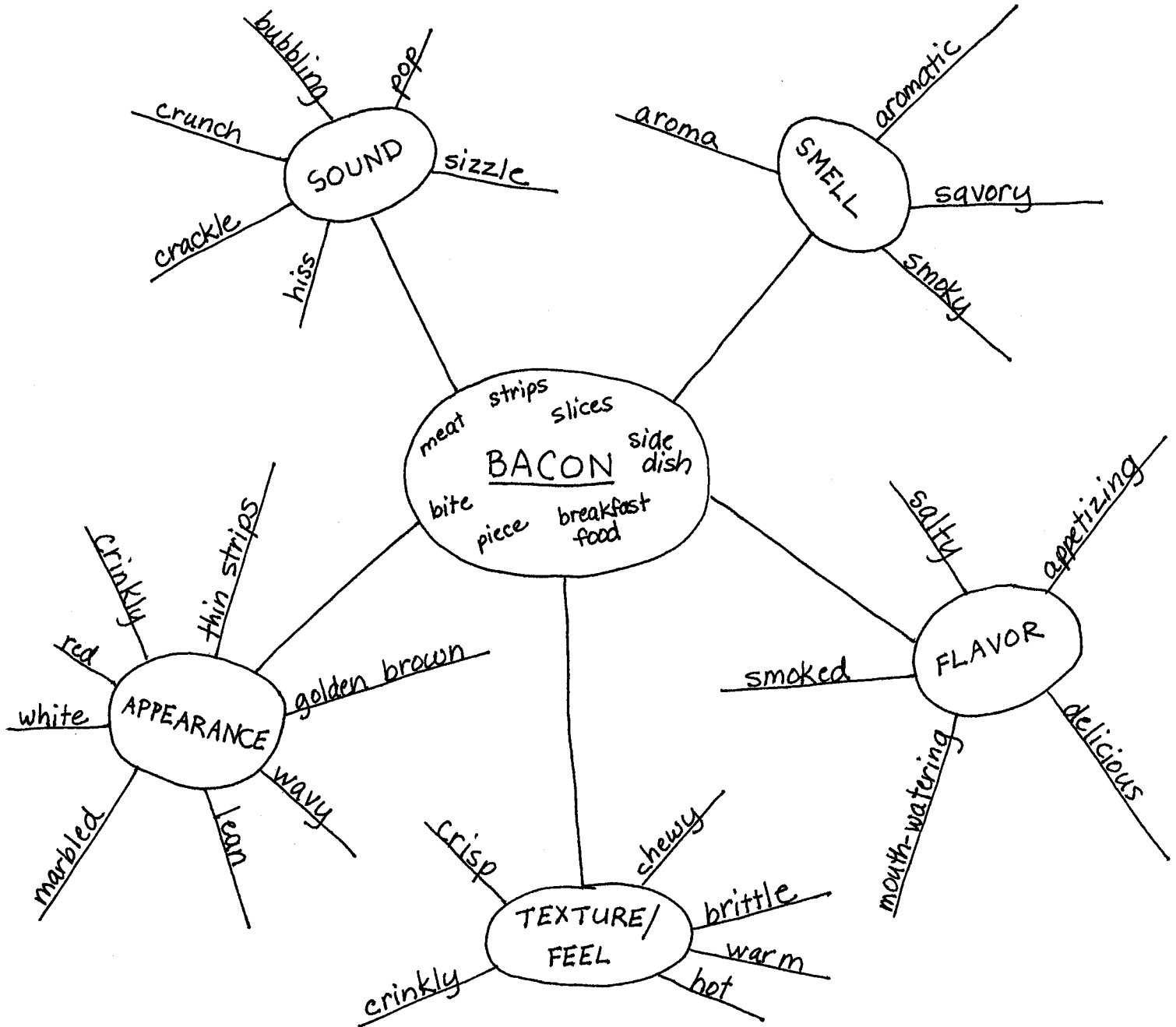
With the "Bacon Mind-map" sheet (p. 5-2) as an example, make your own mind-map. Write as many synonyms as you can for your food. Refer to your synonym finder/thesaurus to expand your list. Again, synonyms *rename* rather than *describe*.

Write a five- to seven-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 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 the "Visual Words" and "Color Words" lists for ideas)

1. What color(s) is it?
2. How is it shaped or formed?
3. What are its features?
4. What is its skin or surface like? What does it look like inside?
5. What does its appearance remind you of?
6. Other \_\_\_\_\_
7. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Texture** (use the "Texture Words" list)

1. What does it feel like? Is it smooth or rough, soft or hard, delicate or flaky or?
2. How does it feel in your mouth? Juicy, moist, or dry? Crisp or creamy? (Be gracious!)
3. What does its texture remind you of?
4. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Flavor** (use the "Taste and Smell Words" list)

1. How does it taste? Is it sweet or sour? Tangy, spicy, or bland? Or?
2. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Smell** (use the "Taste and Smell Words" list)

1. Does it have a particular aroma?
2. How does the smell make you feel or react?
3. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Sound** (use the "Sound Words" list)

1. Does it make an appetizing sound?
2. How does it sound when you bite it? Chew it? (Again, be gracious!)
3. What do its sounds remind you of?
4. 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.

Here are some more helpful guidelines:

- ☐ 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**

The following paragraphs were written by students like you. 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

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 that God created here. 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. \_\_\_\_\_

As I tended my flocks of sheep in a field, a courier arrived with a message from my dad. Quickly obeying the order, I led my flocks home. My father wanted me to take some food to my brothers at their army encampment. Gathering all the provisions my father prepared, I left for my journey. When I arrived at the Israelite camp, I was dismayed to see the many soldiers who did not have enough trust in God to fight this giant called Goliath. Brave and determined, I approached King Saul and told him that I would battle the Philistine. The king dressed me in his armor like a soldier, but it was too heavy for me. Refusing his heavy armor, I took my sling shot and went to defeat Goliath. On that day, all of Israel rejoiced to see the Philistine army flee in terror.

*by T.C.*

**DAY TWO** *Is it "its" or "it's"?*

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

it's - 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 - 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 the words "it is" to see if it makes sense in the sentence. For example, "The dog wagged \_\_\_\_\_ tail. Ask: Does "The dog wagged it is tail" make sense?" The answer, of course, is no! Therefore, the correct word is "its."

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

1. \_\_\_\_\_ a beautiful day today.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ beautiful fur is long and silky.
3. The baby dropped \_\_\_\_\_ rattle onto the floor.
4. I can tell by \_\_\_\_\_ spots that \_\_\_\_\_ a Dalmatian.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ easy to see that the collie loves \_\_\_\_\_ master.
6. From what I have seen so far, \_\_\_\_\_ an interesting place to visit.
7. Since \_\_\_\_\_ so cold, I'm sure \_\_\_\_\_ going to snow tonight.
8. Tell me when \_\_\_\_\_ time to leave for church.
9. The train blows \_\_\_\_\_ whistle, announcing that \_\_\_\_\_ pulling out.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ feathers ruffled at the sight of the cat.
11. Because I'm color blind, \_\_\_\_\_ hard to tell if \_\_\_\_\_ a green shirt or a red one.



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

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

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

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

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

1. Write one sentence that *correctly* uses both "it's" and "its."
2. Remember to substitute "it is" to double-check yourself.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

## Lesson 5: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Do all my sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Does my 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" words (*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 vary my sentence structure by beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?
- ☐ Did I carefully describe the food in a tempting way, using each of my five senses?
- ☐ Did I describe the food *without* focusing on its preparation?
- ☐ Did I write concisely, avoiding wordiness? (~~Gross-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 five to seven sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ 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 and avoid run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I finish and turn in my mindmap?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed?  
(This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** 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<br>improvement     |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <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"/> | Communicated clearly  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the paragraph                               |

### STYLE

- | OK                       | needs<br>improvement     |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong topic sentence that introduces the paragraph                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used no more than two 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 using paired adjectives                          |
| <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 without focusing on the preparation                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely, avoiding wordiness   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong closing sentence   |

### MECHANICS

- | OK                       | needs<br>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"/> | Followed proper page format (placement, spacing, font style/size)                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is five to seven sentences long   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | First sentence of the paragraph is indented and margins are left around the paragraph   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Remembered to skip 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 appropriate 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 of Composition \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPOSITION EVALUATION

### Content 15 points

Points Possible    Points Earned

- |   |          |       |
|---|----------|-------|
| • Followed directions for assignment                            | <u>2</u> | _____ |
| • Communicated clearly  | <u>4</u> | _____ |
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| • Title (descriptive= 2; adequate=1; poor or no title=0)        | <u>2</u> | _____ |

### Style 20 points

- |   |          |       |
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| • Sentence variation and style (including limiting "to be" words) | <u>4</u> | _____ |
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| • 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 (homonyms, 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 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

## Lesson 6: Describing a Season

Whether you wish 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!

The two 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?

**Activity:** 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. Christmas 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 Christmas 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 clouds.
- 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, gray skies, 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!

- ☐ Brainstorm by making a mind-map (see "Season Mind-map," for example).
  - 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.
  - Your Day One Skill Builder may offer you some ideas to use when mind-mapping.

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

- ☐ 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!"
- ☐ 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, etc. that make your season unique. Appeal to readers' senses.

- ☐ Include a variety of sensations and experiences.

☐ 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. Here's an example:

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). However, 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.

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, as well as with cool colors and foods. Contrast a grey winter day with a warm fire, nubby knitted scarf, evergreen trees, or red birds.

Avoid **season confusion**. Do not 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 do not occur all at once. Focus on a short period of time and stick to one type of weather!

### Adding Sentence Variations

- ☐ \*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 ideas for paired adjectives.)
- ☐ \*Use a simile to compare two things. ("The arctic wind howled as fiercely as a wolf.")
- ☐ Try starting a sentence with a subordinate conjunction like *while*, *when*, *as*, or *meanwhile*.
- ☐ Try other sentence variations like "Wrapped in fleecy blankets," "Listening to the waves crash," "Melting ice cream dripped," "Swirling lazily, golden leaves"

\* required

Here is an example of a descriptive "Season" paragraph:

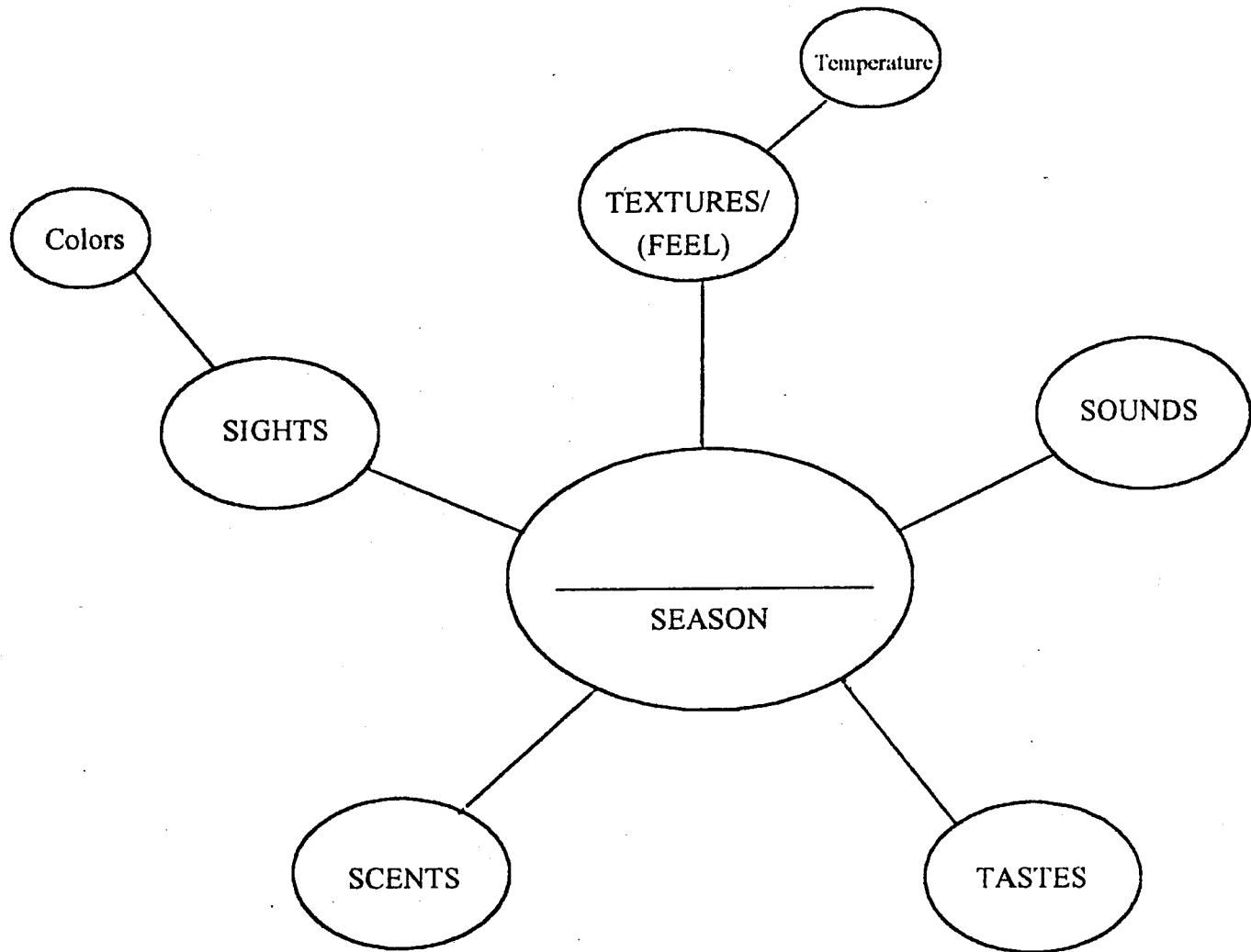
#### **Winter's Pleasures**

*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 lounge around our colorfully decorated Christmas tree. 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 Great Lion of God, as we nibble our warm and chewy treat. Enjoying these holiday pleasures with my family makes winter a relishable season.*



## 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:** Here 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.

The author talks about what she thinks and feels more than what she experiences with her senses, using 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."

The author does not use descriptive details.

- No description: "Her mom will make cocoa, a *perfect fall treat*." (What makes it such a perfect treat?)
- Vivid description: "*Creamy cocoa sends swirls of chocolate-scented steam into the cozy room*."

The author mentions sensory experiences without 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 pumpkin pie wafts to my nose*."

Notice the frequent use of "I + verb" ("I stroll," "I think," etc.).

When you begin to write this week, focus carefully on what you see, hear, taste, smell, and touch. **You will be asked to rewrite nondescriptive narrations.**

## Lesson 6: Skill Builder

### Choosing Concrete Season Words/Using Similes

#### DAY ONE Choosing Concrete Season Words

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

**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:

1. Each star twinkled *like* a jewel. (compares a twinkling "star" with a twinkling "jewel")
2. 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:

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

A. Circle "as" or "like"; underline the two things being compared.

**Example:** Autumn leaves twirled like acrobats.

(*Twirling leaves* are compared with *twirling acrobats*.)

1. The snow sparkled like crystals.
2. The field looked like a quilt of flowers.
3. Our 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:**

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

- ☐ Do all my sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly?
- ☐ Did I use at least three of the five senses in describing my season?
- ☐ Did I avoid "season confusion"?
- ☐ Did I include contrasts in color and/or texture?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Does my 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" words (*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 vary my sentence structure by  
    \_\_beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?  
    \_\_using a simile?
- ☐ 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?
- ☐ Is my paragraph five to seven sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ 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 and avoid run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I finish and turn in my mindmap?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed?  
(This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** 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 Writing Checklist on the very top.)



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

## 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"/>	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"/>	Communicated clearly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Used at least three of the five senses in describing the season
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Avoided "season confusion" (see Lesson Instructions for explanation)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Included contrasts of color and/or texture
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others
<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 two 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 using each of the following: ___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"/>	<u>Name</u> and <u>date</u> in the upper right-hand corner
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paragraph is five to seven sentences long
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	First sentence of the paragraph is indented and margins are left around the paragraph
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remembered to skip 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 appropriate 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 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> | _____ |
| • Graciousness  | <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 (homonyms, 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 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

## 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. (Sentence starters 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. Fill in the chart on p. 7-3 with sensory words to help you brainstorm.
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 (pp. 14-15) for ideas.
7. Remember to follow instructions:
  - Do not focus on *your* activity; the paragraph **is not** to be about what *you* are doing. (Your hike, walk, etc. is just a means for you to describe what your senses experience.) It helps to avoid using "I" as the subject of your sentences.
  - Do limit yourself to a *brief period of time* in *one place*. This should be a sort of "snapshot" that describe the place itself instead of a *day* 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

**Directions:** 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.

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" on three *concrete verbs*.
5. Place a **blue** "X" on 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

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

## Lesson 7: Sensory Worksheet for Describing a Place

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

1. Walking along a rocky path, I . . .
2. Sitting on a dusty (rough, park, wooden, etc.) bench, I . . .
3. Strolling along the sandy shore, I . . .
4. Passing through a dense forest, I . . .
5. Hiking down a desert trail, I . . .
6. Entering a woodland clearing, I . . .
7. Discovering a peaceful meadow, I . . .
8. Collapsing in a field of flowers (bed of leaves), I . . .

**Examples** Notice that the topic sentence should be fairly broad. Use the paragraph, not the topic sentence, to give specific details about the scene.

- a. Passing through a dense forest, I scatter fallen oak leaves with my feet.
- b. Entering a woodland clearing, I gaze at the enchanted scene before me.
- c. 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)

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### 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. These are not optional.
- ☐ 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. For example:

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

### Directions

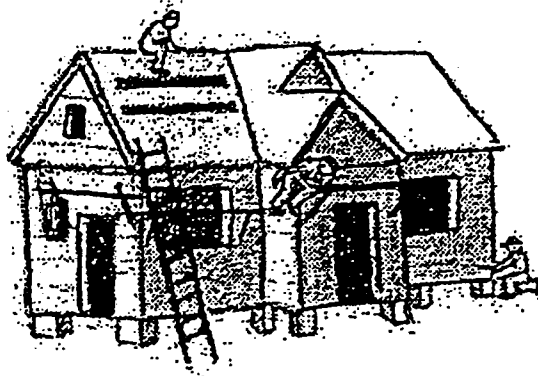
- The pictures on the next page display an action. For each of these pictures, choose one or two action words and add "-ing." An example has been given for you.
- Then, use your thesaurus to find synonyms for those words. (NOTE: When looking up verbs, always look up the infinitive form. If you want to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

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

1



2



3



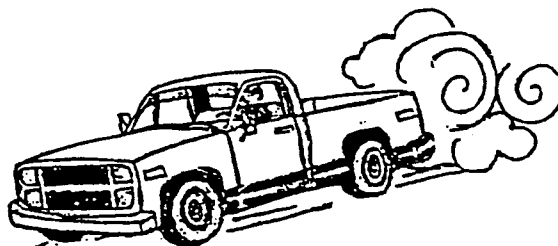
4



5



6



**DAY TWO** *Converting 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.

- to fly      Flying overhead, the gull cried loudly.
- to dance      \_\_\_\_\_, Louisa performed in the ballet.
- to swim      \_\_\_\_\_, I caught up with my older brother.
- to shout      \_\_\_\_\_, the toddler stood up in her crib.
- to pray      \_\_\_\_\_, Pastor Edwards bowed his head.

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

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



### 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. (Note: 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.

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*.

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

Right: Squealing noisily, the car needed 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 right after the participial phrase that modifies it.

- A. In each of the following sentences, decide whether the sentence is written correctly. If it is, circle the ☺. If not, circle the ☹. Then underline the subject that the participial phrase modifies.

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

1. ☺ ☹ Eating juicy oranges, the children licked their sticky fingers.
2. ☺ ☹ Waiting for her mother, the rain began to drizzle on Becky.
3. ☺ ☹ Limping painfully, John took his hurt pup to the vet.
4. ☺ ☹ Helping in the church nursery, Janie and Pam rocked the babies.
5. ☺ ☹ Sobbing as if her heart would break, Leslie told her Dad the whole story.
6. ☺ ☹ Stuffing the turkey, Thanksgiving was clearly Mark's favorite holiday.
7. ☺ ☹ Melting rapidly in the hot sun, Shannon quickly finished her ice cream cone.
8. ☺ ☹ Shivering from the cold, the swimmers hurried into the gym.

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

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

## Lesson 7: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Do all my sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly?
- ☐ Did I use at least three of the five senses in describing my place?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Does my 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" words (*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 vary 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 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?
- ☐ Is my paragraph five to seven sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_
- ☐ 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, avoid run-on sentences, and avoid misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I finish and turn in my brainstorming sheet?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed?  
(This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** 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 Writing Checklist on the very top.)

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

## 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"/>	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"/>	Communicated clearly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Used at least three of the five senses in describing the place
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title captures the essence of the paragraph

### STYLE

OK	needs improvement	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wrote a strong topic sentence that begins with one of the required sentence starters
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Used no more than two 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 using each of the following: __began one sentence with paired adjectives      __used a simile __began topic sentence with one of the suggested "-ing" sentence starters
<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"/>	<u>Name</u> and <u>date</u> in the upper right-hand corner
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paragraph is five to seven sentences long
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	First sentence of the paragraph is indented and margins are left around the paragraph
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remembered to skip 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 appropriate punctuation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Used complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences, avoided 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 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> | _____ |
| • Graciousness  | <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 (homonyms, 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 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

# **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. Bible study guides help you understand the Bible better. Instruction manuals tell you how to program a VCR, work a calculator, 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 wish 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 will teach you to write a paragraph that explains a process. *Follow the directions carefully.* Here are some suggestions, in case you have trouble thinking of a topic:

- ☐ how to wash the car, the dishes, or the dog
- ☐ how to prepare a simple dish, like pancakes or an ice cream sundae
- ☐ how to play a simple game
- ☐ how to make an easy craft
- ☐ how to treat a small cut or scrape
- ☐ how to perform a household chore
- ☐ how to make a simple repair
- ☐ how to 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: Have the film developed soon; you will need the photos when you write the final draft.*
4. Pretend that people are interested in your topic. Think of a broad question they might ask, like, "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.
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. On the attached form, write these steps in Boxes 1, 2, 3, and 4. (Note: you might not have four main steps.)
8. Now think of how these steps can each 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. 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 is not necessary to



mention tying a knot in the thread before clipping it, or using a knife to slice an apple.

10. Brainstorm for descriptive details on p. 8-6.

### Writing the "Sloppy Copy"

1. Write a topic sentence. Consider using *paired adjectives* to begin the topic sentence "Fragrant and colorful, scented potpourri makes a unique homemade gift." Note: *Do not* say anything like, "I am going to tell you how to cook scrambled eggs."
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 are 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, like greasing a pan or turning on the stove. Focus on what is most important, and what can be described most vividly. For instance, write: "Next, pour the (adj.) mixture into the greased and heated pan and let it cook (adv.) until . . ." *instead of:* "Grease a frying pan with oil. Turn on the stove and heat the pan. Next, pour the mixture into the pan and . . ." 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*. This is a creative writing assignment and not a technical manual! Refer to p. 8-6 where you brainstormed for details.
8. Also, be sure to include *articles* (a, an, the). They tend to be easily omitted. Instead of, "Place pan in oven," say, "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*. Ask someone to follow the steps and perform the same task, if possible. Make any necessary changes.

### **Writing the First Revision and Final Draft**

1. Write your first revision and have your parent/teacher evaluate 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, then 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 four to six 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" is to be a duplicate of your best rewrite.
  - Assemble your "manual." Design and decorate a colorful cover, being as creative 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 enliven your writing to add a few well-chosen details. 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?

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2. Repeat the process above, using a brown colored pencil to underline verbs. Brainstorm for synonyms and adverbs that clarify your meaning. 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*? Perhaps *beat, fold, whip, or blend* would better define the action.

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## Lesson 8: Skill Builder

### *Arranging in Time-Sequence Order*

**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 wash cloth, 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

- ☐ Do all my sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Does my 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" words (*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 vary 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 write concisely, avoiding wordiness? (~~Cross out~~ unnecessary words or phrases.)
- ☐ 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 five to nine sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_
- ☐ 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, avoid run-on sentences, and avoid misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I finish and turn in my planning sheet?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed?  
(This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)

- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** 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 Writing 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"/>	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"/>	Communicated clearly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others
<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 two 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 using each of the following: __began one sentence with paired adjectives __began one sentence with an "-ing" participle __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

### 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"/>	Paragraph is five to nine sentences long
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	First sentence of the paragraph is indented and margins are left around the paragraph
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remembered to skip 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 appropriate punctuation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Used complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences, avoided 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 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> | _____ |
| • Graciousness  | <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 (homonyms, 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 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

## 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, 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

☐ Now, when you write *your* sentence, combine these facts into your *own* words, 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.*

Notice how the same facts were written using different words. Use this technique to write your factual paragraph. You will find it useful when writing future reports!

For this lesson you will need a Wildlife Fact File™ card, short book, chapter, or encyclopedia/magazine article about one particular animal. Make sure this resource provides you with the following information: size, color, special body features; habitat (home); living habits (eating, sleeping, moving, parenting, etc.).

Follow the instructions on the "Fact-Gathering Worksheet."

**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 do not necessarily have to sequence your facts in this order, but you must 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.

Use sentence variations:

- Begin one sentence with a present participle ("-ing" action verb)
- Use a simile
- Use paired adjectives

**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:**

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

*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*

---

---

---

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

**Topic sentence.** Begin with a topic sentence **QUESTION** that includes your animal's most interesting fact. Here are some ideas---follow this format:

- *What strange mammal lays eggs like a bird? This **funny** creature is the duckbill platypus.*

- What water animal can stay submerged for 15 minutes? This **amazing** mammal is the dolphin.
- What reptile can eat a whole deer at one time? This **unusual** animal is a Komodo dragon.

**Now 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)

**Maintaining 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

its

This

1. What land mammal needs to keep mud on ~~their~~ skin for sunburn protection? ~~These~~ animal is astounding animals are the Indian rhinoceros.

tigers live

2. Siberian tiger ~~lives~~ in frigid climates. They have warm coats to 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.

**A word about capitalization.** 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.

Look at 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: Use the following participial phrases as sentence starters, complete each sentence. Avoid using "to be" words in your sentences.

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



It is important that the subject of the participial phrase always follows closely. Misplaced modifiers are common to young writers, but they are easily avoided when you make sure to 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. 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. Again, avoid using "to be" words in the sentences.

1. Buying donuts for breakfast \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Decorating the Christmas tree \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Singing at the retirement home \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Sobbing uncontrollably \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Wearing a suit and tie \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**DAY THREE** *Using Participles as Similes*

Complete the following sentences. Notice that each phrase begins with a participle (an "-ing" verb). Also notice 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, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Finish these participial phrases **with an ending simile**.

Example: Posing for the camera, Janna stood *like* a statue.

1. Wrestling wildly, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Dancing gracefully, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Finally, 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. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Informative (Animal)

## Lesson 9: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Do all my sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly?
- ☐ Did I put the facts into my own words?
- ☐ Did I include information about the animal's appearance, habits, and habitat?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Does my title capture the essence of my paragraph?

### STYLE

- ☐ Do my first two sentences follow the required "question-answer" format?
- ☐ Did I use no more than two forms of "to be" words (*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 vary my sentence structure by
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a present ("-ing") participial phrase?
  - \_\_\_using a simile?
- ☐ Did my composition follow a logical, orderly sequence?
- ☐ 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?
- ☐ Is my paragraph five to seven sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ 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, 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, avoid run-on sentences, and avoid misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I finish and turn in my animal worksheet?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed? (This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** 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 Writing Checklist on the very top.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Informative Factual (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"/>	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"/>	Communicated clearly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wrote facts in own words
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Included information about the animal's appearance, habits, and habitat
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title captures the essence of the paragraph

### 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 two 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 using each of the following: __began one sentence with paired adjectives      __used a simile __began one sentence with an "-ing" participle
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Composition follows a logical, orderly sequence
<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"/>	<u>Name</u> and <u>date</u> in the upper right-hand corner
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Paragraph is five to seven sentences long
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	First sentence of the paragraph is indented and margins are left around the paragraph
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remembered to skip 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 appropriate punctuation
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Used complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences, avoided 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 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> | _____ |
| • Graciousness  | <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 (homonyms, 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 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

## 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 simple paragraph. For this exercise, you will not need to write a book or even a long report! As a matter of fact, you will only be required to write a short paragraph. Please follow the directions carefully.

### Directions

1. Choose a figure from the past for your biography. Your mom may ask you to write about someone whom you are studying in history, science, or Bible. For ideas, look at the categories on the attached Biography Worksheet.
2. Read about this person in the encyclopedia or other source, like a history book or library book. *Choose simple, concise reading material for this exercise.*
3. Fill in the Biography Worksheet.
4. Write your topic sentence. Be sure to include information that introduces your character. **IMPORTANT: Your topic sentence must contain an appositive!** Here are some examples:
  - 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 closing sentences. See student samples in this lesson 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 he/she overcame
  - character qualities he/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 "-ly" adverb from your "-ly Adverbs" word list.
9. Include an interesting title. Do not merely write *Joan of Arc* or *Florence Nightingale*. One idea is to use an appositive with a character quality or other identification, like *Leonardo da Vinci, Renaissance Man*; or *Magellan, Brave Explorer*. Other ideas include descriptive titles, such as *A Noble King* or *Israel's Faithful Servant*.

## Lesson 10: A Five-Sentence Biography

Writing about a person's life in only five sentences seems like an impossible task. In truth, you are 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 man's contributions. Although short, both paragraphs still sound interesting.

### **Christopher Columbus, Famous Explorer**

*by Ricky, age 13*

*Christopher Columbus, an adventuresome navigator, discovered America in 1492. Bold and diligent, he and his men set sail, determined to find a shorter trading route to the Indies. Traveling for weeks with no sign of land caused the crew to begin talking of mutiny. Before an uprising occurred, Christopher finally landed on what he thought was the Indies, but he actually discovered America. Courageously, Columbus started a chain of events that led to the birth of a new nation.*

### **Abraham, Mighty Man of God**

*by Jessica, age 12*

*Abram, a mighty man of God, had many struggles during his life. God changed Abram's name to Abraham, promising to make him a great nation. Faithful and honest, Abraham received a covenant from God that he and his wife, Sarah, would have a child. Testing him, the Lord told the patriarch to kill that child, his only son. Just as he raised his arm to slay his offspring, the Lord stopped him and provided a ram to sacrifice instead. Truly, we can learn to have faith in our Creator from this noble man's example.*

**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 Worksheet

I am writing about (name) \_\_\_\_\_

This person is a/an (check one)

\_\_\_scientist \_\_\_politician \_\_\_humanitarian \_\_\_inventor \_\_\_religious figure

\_\_\_composer or artist \_\_\_athlete \_\_\_other \_\_\_\_\_

Three to 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/ "-ly" Adverbs*

#### DAY ONE

- An appositive is a specific kind of explanatory word or phrase. It identifies or renames a noun or a pronoun.

**Example:** Rebecca, *the girl in the second row*, plays the violin.

- Always place an appositive right next to the word it renames.

**Example:** John and Max 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.

**Example:** Gene Edwards, *a gifted author*, wrote A Tale of Three Kings.

Jessie's best friend *Laura* lives on the next block.

The comic strip Peanuts appears in our daily newspaper.

- A. 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. Christmas is Jesus' birthday. Christmas is celebrated December 25.

Christmas \_\_\_\_\_ is celebrated December 25.

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. Write your own appositive in each blank space below.

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. Moses \_\_\_\_\_ led the children of Israel out of Egypt.
5. Dr. Brooks \_\_\_\_\_ arrived early to set up his display.

## DAY TWO

A. 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. 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 Sunday school 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 \_\_\_\_\_.

Use your "-ly" adverbs Word List to do the following assignments:

B. Fill in the blanks with a word from your list. 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 Smith's 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. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject Biography

## Lesson 10: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Do all my sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ 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?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Did I write an eye-catching title?

### STYLE

- ☐ Did I choose a strong topic sentence that introduces my paragraph?
- ☐ 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.)
- ☐ Did I vary my sentence structure by using *each* of these in my paragraph?  
    \_\_ 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 write concisely and communicate clearly? (~~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?
- ☐ Is my paragraph exactly five sentences long? (If not, revise to make it 5)
- ☐ 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, avoid run-on sentences, and avoid misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I finish and turn in my Biography Chart?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed?  
(This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** 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 Writing Checklist on the very top.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Biography

## 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"/> | 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"/> | 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"/> | Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote an eye-catching title   |

### 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 one "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 the use of weak words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Varied sentence structure by using <u>each</u> of the following:<br>__began one sentence with paired adjectives      __used an appositive in topic sentence<br>__began one sentence with a present participle      __began closing sentence with an "-ly" adverb |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely and communicated clearly   |
| <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"/> | Paragraph is <u>exactly</u> five sentences long   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | First sentence of the paragraph is indented and margins are left 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 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"/> | Appropriate punctuation marks   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences, avoided misplaced modifiers          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Finished and turned in "Biography Chart" brainstorming sheet                            |
| <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 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> | _____ |
| • Graciousness  | <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 (homonyms, 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 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



## Lesson 11: Introducing Journalism

You have been learning about **informative writing**, which provides the reader with information that is educational, inspirational, and practical. One type of informative writing is called **journalism**. Journalism is the style of writing typically found in newspapers and magazines. 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**.)

Every news story is 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; it could be an animal, a corporation, etc.) 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 the situation resolved? How did people respond?

This lesson will give you practice as a journalist. As with previous informative assignments, you must concentrate on the **facts** when writing a news article.

News articles are often writing "rule-breakers." People read the newspaper more for education and information than for entertainment. Therefore, many of the techniques you have learned for descriptive writing will not be useful nor applicable when writing a news story. For example, as you skim various newspaper articles at home, you will notice that most sentences are the "subject-verb" type. It is uncommon for a news reporter to use a variety of sentence structures, although you may spot one now and then. Likewise, news articles do not usually rely on the colorful vocabulary common to descriptive writing.

**Use the following tips to help you write your article.**

1. **You may use four "to be" words.**
2. **Use actual newspaper articles for guidance.** Look at both content and form.
3. **Consider your audience.** Most newspapers are written at a fifth to eighth 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 are writing about a scientific, political, or historical topic, it is often helpful if you familiarize your reader with unfamiliar words. If you are quoting a historical figure, some of his or her words may be less familiar; this is acceptable.
4. **Do not editorialize.** Your job is to present the reader with the facts about the situation (the 5 Ws). It is not the time to give your opinion, analyze, explain, or otherwise interpret information. In addition, do not 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, do not refer to the complete date (August 27, 2003). Simply write "yesterday" or "Saturday." Exact time of day is also rarely important. Furthermore, do not mention facts that would not 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 will 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 will not be able to fill in the "why" section of your worksheet.
7. **It is often unnecessary to name a city's state or country.** Do not mention the state (or country) if the event took place in any well-known national or international city. London, Moscow, Rome, Seattle, Chicago, St. Louis, New York, and Charleston are among many familiar cities whose countries or states are common knowledge. Furthermore, 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 local 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. Do not be fooled by extraneous 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" does not 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

**Write the article** ("sloppy copy"), adding details and description to your "5 Ws."

- ☐ Begin with your headline as the title. Capitalize according to your local newspaper's headline format.
- ☐ Write the byline (this is the reporter's name; it goes under the headline in longer articles).
- ☐ Use transition words to connect paragraphs (see "Transition Words" list).
- ☐ Watch your tense agreement!
- ☐ 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?
- ☐ Write primarily in a **subject-verb style**. 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 fire crews worked to free the trapped occupants, . . .*
- ☐ In a news article, you are permitted to use more "to be" words. You may use up to **four**.
- ☐ Use concrete words, but be **EXTREMELY CAREFUL** to avoid verbosity and flowery prose, which are not appropriate for journalistic articles.
- ☐ Write concisely and to the point.
- ☐ Write an article of seven to twelve sentences.
- ☐ Write a minimum of three paragraphs for seven sentences (use more paragraphs if you write more sentences).
- ☐ Keep your paragraphs short.
- ☐ As always, pay attention to margins, spacing, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar.
- ☐ Place the date in the upper right-hand corner (remember, your name goes in the by-line).

**Write a summary statement** to conclude your article.

## Lesson 11: News Article Planning Worksheet

Below you will find an assortment of events that may be worthy of a news story. Pretend that you are a reporter for a local newspaper. Choose one of the following scenarios. 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
- ☐ a 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/teacher might like 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.*

- ☐ Pierre and Marie Curie discover radium
- ☐ Abraham Lincoln is reelected
- ☐ Japan has bombed Pearl Harbor
- ☐ Thomas Edison invents the light bulb
- ☐ Howard Carter discovers the tomb of King Tutankhamun
- ☐ 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 you quote
- 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

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." Read the following newspaper article and fill in the worksheet with the proper information.

**DAY ONE** *No Skill Builder today because of the many pre-writing activities.*

**DAY TWO** *Reading the News*

### **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? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Write the lead: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**DAY THREE** *Writing a Lead Paragraph*

1. Pretend you are a reporter for the *Daily Times*. Use the information in the box to answer the questions.
2. Then, using the notes you have taken, write the lead paragraph for your article on the lines provided below.
3. Fill in your lead paragraph with any other necessary information.

severe snowstorm

sleet, snow, and freezing rain

Thursday

flights delayed at O'Hare Airport

Chicago

holiday travelers stranded

☐ Who? \_\_\_\_\_

☐ What? \_\_\_\_\_

☐ When? \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Where? \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## Lesson 11: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT (Check your "sloppy copy" against this list.)

- ☐ Do all my sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Did I answer *who, what, when, where, why, and how*?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly, including avoiding pretentious or unfamiliar terms?
- ☐ Did I stick to the facts and avoid giving my opinion?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Does my headline capture the attention of the reader and give clues about the content of the article?

### STYLE (Check your "sloppy copy" against this list.)

- ☐ Did I choose 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 avoid the use of weak words? (**Underline** any of these in green.)
- ☐ Did I use transition words?
- ☐ 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* in my article?  
    \_\_\_ began with a present participle      \_\_\_ used an appositive  
    \_\_\_ began with a subordinate conjunction (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- ☐ Did I avoid wordiness by ~~crossing out~~ unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences?
- ☐ Did I write a strong summary statement that gives a feeling of ending?

### MECHANICS (Check your first revision against this list.)

- ☐ Did I put the date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Did I put my name (by-line) under the title and then skip a line?
- ☐ Did I use correct headline *format*? Is my headline *concise*? Does my headline *avoid* "to be" words?
- ☐ Is my article seven to twelve sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I write three paragraphs (more for a longer article)? How many? \_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent and leave margins, and remember to skip every other line?
- ☐ Did I use good spacing between words and sentences? (If not, draw two **vertical lines** || to separate.)
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? (Circle and **look up** suspected words.)
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? ( **Correct** any errors.)
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences, avoid run-on sentences, and avoid misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this checklist, including using colored pencils, circling, and underlining as directed? (This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** 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 composition one more time, making any necessary changes or improvements.

### CONTENT

- | OK                       | needs improvement        |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <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"/> | Answered <i>who, what, when, where, why, and how</i>                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Communicated clearly (including avoiding unfamiliar or pretentious terms)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Stuck to the facts and avoided editorializing (giving opinions)               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others     |
| <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 four "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"/> | Used each of the following sentence variations   |
|                          |                          | ___ began with a present ("-ing") participle                      ___ used an appositive                                 |
|                          |                          | ___ began with a subordinate conjunction ( <i>although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while</i> ) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely by eliminating unnecessary words, phrases, or sentences  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Strong summary statement   |

### MECHANICS

- | OK                       | needs improvement        |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>Date</u> in the upper right hand corner  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <u>Name</u> (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"/> | Article is seven to twelve sentences long   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote three paragraphs (more for a longer article)                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | First sentence of each paragraph is indented; margins are left around the paragraph     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Remembered to skip 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"/> | Correct use of capitalization and punctuation   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences and 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 sheet, all drafts of this composition, and your checklist        |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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>	_____
• Graciousness	<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

• Form (margins, indentation, spacing, name and date)	<u>10</u>	_____
• Spelling, punctuation, and capitalization		
• Grammar (homonyms, 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 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

# **Unit 3:**

# **Narrative Writing**

## Lesson 12: Writing a Narrative of an Emotional Event

Both of the paragraphs on p. 12-2 are called narratives. 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 cannot adequately describe every flower, bush, and tree in your garden in a single paragraph, you cannot 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 daisies or roses. In the same way, you could write a short, focused narrative about a single experience or event.

Did you notice the vagueness of the first snorkeling paragraph? It did not contain colorful, descriptive words nor did it focus on a single event. Rather, it gave a general overview. The second paragraph, however, zeroed in effectively 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**, **time**, and a **plot**. Let's talk about each of these.

1. **Characters:** Since you will begin writing one-paragraph narratives, it makes sense to stick to one or two main characters. You will not have time to develop more than this. As you progress to longer compositions, you may wish to include more characters.
2. **Setting:** When you write a narrative, you must establish a location for your action. Because you are writing one paragraph to begin with, limit yourself to one setting. This will help you stay focused. Beginning writers tend to jump around when writing narratives. Choosing one location will eliminate this temptation.
3. **Time:** When writing a single paragraph, you will be wise to focus on the events of a few hours or less. As you expand to longer compositions, it will be natural for you 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 places your character(s) in an activity.

## Lesson 12: Details of a Narrative Event

Skilled gardeners have the ability to draw your eye to a bower of cascading roses or a planter of brilliant pansies. They carefully plot out their garden 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 did not 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.

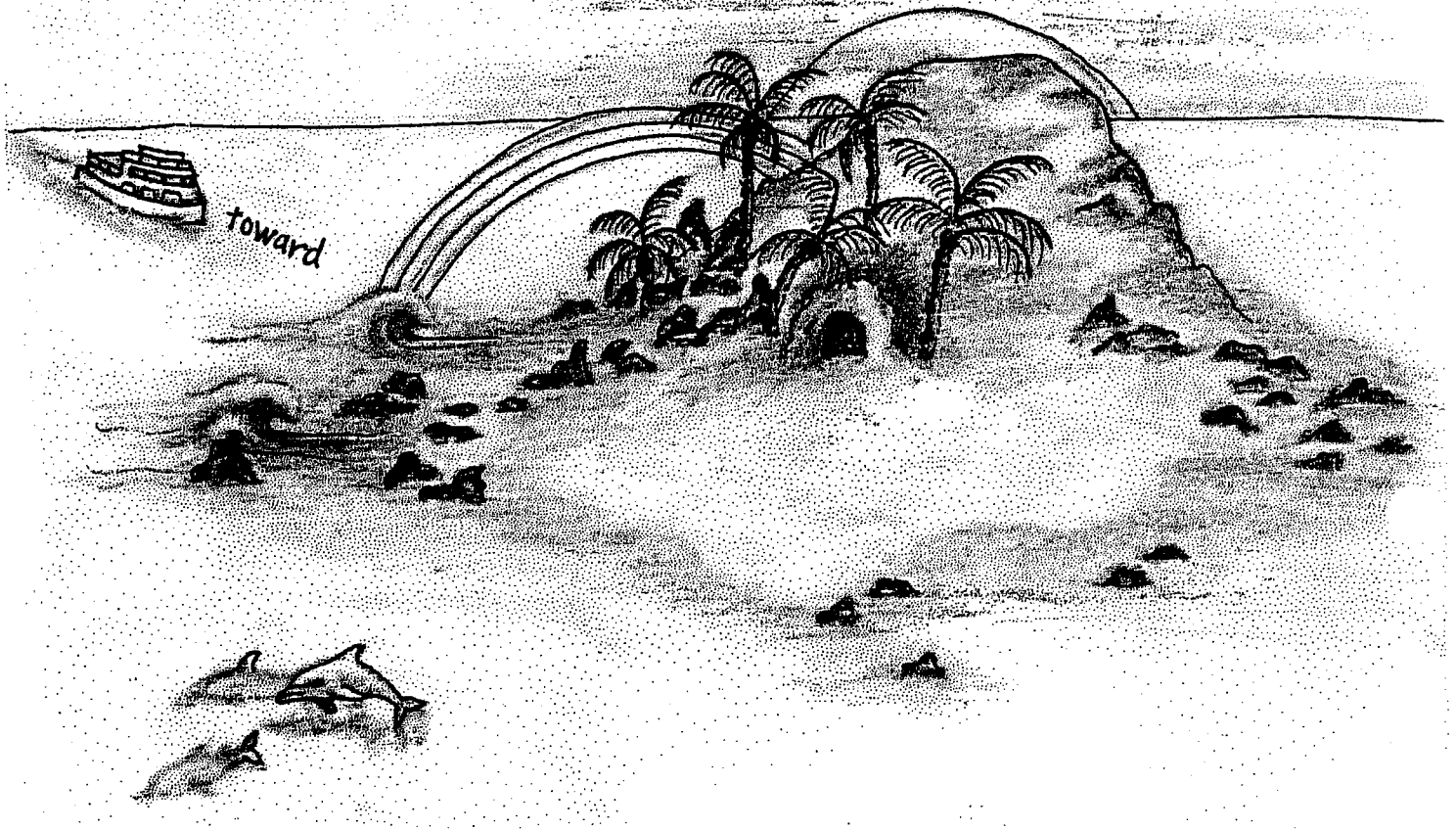
On our trip to Maui, my family and I went to Lahaina for a day of snorkeling. I looked forward to my new experience because it combined two of my favorites, swimming and fish. I have a tropical fish tank at home. We put on our masks and fins and waded into the water. It was hard at first. I could not 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 thrills 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 we launch into a discussion of narrative paragraphs, let's see what you can discover about narrative writing through the following exercises.

1. How much time elapses 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 you *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



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** which took place during that 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. Choosing 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 birthday party, a memorable holiday event, doing something for the first time, like riding a bike or skating)

My broad topic is: \_\_\_\_\_

Next, narrow your topic to **ONE INCIDENT** that lasted only a few hours or less.

### Examples:

Broad topic	<u>A visit to Disneyland</u>	→	Narrow topic	<u>Riding on Space Mountain</u>
Broad topic	<u>Christmas</u>	→	Narrow topic	<u>Cutting down our Christmas tree</u>
Broad topic	<u>Yosemite</u>	→	Narrow topic	<u>Hiking to Vernal Falls</u>

My narrow topic is: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Choosing the characters.** Besides yourself, decide on another main character (optional). These characters participate in the *primary action*. On the other hand, minor characters, including 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 want *any* minor characters.

Main character(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Minor character(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Choosing emotions.** Tell what you felt during this experience. Some events produce stronger feelings than others. Sometimes we can identify these feelings in physical ways. For example, waiting in the dentist's chair to have your tooth filled may produce feelings of **anxiety** that you recognize as knots in your stomach. Other emotions, like **fear** or **embarrassment**, might make you feel shaky, cold, clammy, light-headed, or dizzy. Your heart could pound from **guilt**, **fear**, or **excitement**. You could feel butterflies in your stomach from **nervousness** (singing a solo) or **eager anticipation** (Christmas morning).

Emotions that this experience produced \_\_\_\_\_

Physically, how or where you felt those emotions \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Choosing the setting.** Select the main location for your action. Keep it narrowed. "Disneyland," for example, 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. Determining 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. Determining the plot.** Decide on the primary action for your paragraph. Who interacts with whom (or with what)? If you write about *Vortex*, the main action is the ride itself. You, the passenger, interact with the ride.

Main action: \_\_\_\_\_

(Who) \_\_\_\_\_ interacts with (whom/what) \_\_\_\_\_?

**7. Writing a topic sentence.** Write a topic sentence that introduces your emotionally-charged narrative.

---



---



---

**8. Sequencing.** 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 seven to ten sentences.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Writing 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! ☺

**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
- Simile (a comparison of two very different things; uses "like" or "as")  
*I bounced along the rough ice like a stone skipping on water.*
- 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.*

## Lesson 12: Skill Builder

### *Prepositional Phrases*

#### DAY ONE

A **preposition** is a relational word, usually telling "where" or "when." (See "Prepositions" word list.) 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.

- ☐ *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*?"
- ☐ *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.

- ☐ *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).
- ☐ *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. *John 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.
  - **A 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.

*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, like:

"We huddled together DURING THE STORM to keep safe."

"Sharks lurked silently BENEATH THE DARK SEA."

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.

1. M E We searched behind the barn for the stray cow. (EXAMPLE)
2. \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ Our dog slept under the table after dinner.
3. \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ At noon the parade will march past the general store.
4. \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ He has only practiced for two hours since Monday.
5. \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ The children played with building blocks until nap time.
6. \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ By tonight your room must be completely in order.
7. \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ In the theater, please sit behind the woman wearing the red sweater.
8. \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ 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 orange Prepositions Word List to complete the sentences below. Add a prepositional phrase *sentence starter* to each. Do not use the same preposition more than once.

1. \_\_\_\_\_, Mom hid the Christmas presents.
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, 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

- ☐ Do all my sentences support the topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Did I narrow my topic to **one** incident?
- ☐ Did I limit my paragraph to **one** or **two** main characters? How many? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I limit my paragraph to **one** setting?
- ☐ Did I limit my time frame to a **few hours or less**?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly?
- ☐ Does my title capture the essence of my paragraph?

### STYLE

- ☐ Does my first sentence do a good job of introducing my narrative?
- ☐ 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 and avoid weak words? (**Underline** vague or weak words in green.)
- ☐ Did I let the reader know exactly how I felt by using specific emotion words?
- ☐ Did I describe the physical aspects of my emotions? (butterflies in stomach, etc.)
- ☐ Did I vary my sentence structure by
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a present participle
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with an "-ly" adverb?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a prepositional phrase?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a subordinate conjunction? (*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
  - \_\_\_using a simile (optional)?      \_\_\_using an appositive?
- ☐ 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 (*Check your first revision against this list.*)

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Is my paragraph seven to ten sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent my first sentence and leave margins around my paragraph?
- ☐ Did I skip lines and use good spacing between words and sentences?
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? (**Circle** and **look up** suspected words.)
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? (**Correct** any errors.)
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences, avoid run-on sentences, and avoid misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed?
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** Did I staple my papers together in proper order?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Narrative of Emotional Event

## 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"/> | 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"/> | Limited topic to one incident   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited paragraph to one or two main characters                           |
| <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"/> | Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Communicated clearly  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures the essence of the paragraph                               |

### STYLE

- | OK                       | needs improvement        |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Began with a sentence that introduces the paragraph  |
| <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 and avoided the use of "weak" words  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used <i>specific</i> emotion words to let the reader know exactly how you felt   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described <i>physical</i> aspects of your emotions   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Varied sentence structure within the paragraph:<br>__began with an -ly adverb phrase      __used an appositive<br>__began with a subordinate conjunction      __began with a prepositional phrase<br>__began with paired adjectives      __began with a present participial phrase<br>__used a simile (optional) |
| <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"/> | <u>Name</u> and <u>date</u> in the upper right-hand corner                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Paragraph is seven to ten sentences long  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | First sentence of the paragraph is indented and margins are left around the paragraph   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Remembered to skip 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 appropriate punctuation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences, avoided 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 <u>all</u> drafts of this paragraph and your Writing Skills Checklist          |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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> | _____ |
| • Graciousness  | <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 (homonyms, 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 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

## 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 grandpa about a war memory.
- ☐ Interview a grandparent or older family friend about a memory of the Depression.
- ☐ Interview a parent, grandparent, friend, etc. about his/her most anxious, frightening, exciting, etc. 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 Christmas memory.
- ☐ Interview someone about an exciting, anxious, or adventurous vacation memory.
- ☐ Interview someone about his/her memory of learning to ride a bike, drive a car, etc.
- ☐ Interview someone about the first time he/she sang a solo or played an instrument or recited a poem.

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.** Decide 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.**

- ☐ **Write a topic sentence** that grabs your readers' attention and makes them want to read for details.
- ☐ **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.
- ☐ **Write in third person.** Write about the person you interviewed. You may refer to him or her by first name (John/Mary), affectionate name (Uncle Bob/Grandma), or formal name (Mr./Mrs. Johnson). 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.
- ☐ **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 "Emotions" or "Characteristics, Expressions, and Behaviors" word lists.
  - Also describe the physical aspects of emotion as they relate to your subject's emotional state (stomach in knots, sweaty palms, tension in shoulders or neck, trembling hands or knees, . . .)
- ☐ **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.
- ☐ **Write in past tense.** Keep your tense consistent throughout the composition.
- ☐ **Write a paragraph of seven to ten sentences.**
- ☐ **Vary your sentence structure** to make the narrative interesting. *Use each one of these at least once in your composition, if not more:*
  - Paired adjectives sentence starter (You can find many 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)

- 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).
- Simile (use only one simile)

**NOTE: Most sentence starters may be used more than once in a paragraph if they are not used back-to-back.**

As an example, 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:** Read the Interview Sheet before beginning so that you are familiar with what will be asked.

1. Begin by addressing the person you are going to interview. Say:

*"I would like to interview you and write a short narrative of an interesting event that you remember. This experience must have happened to you personally. It must be narrow enough that it took place in a few hours or less, and in one setting or location. You must also be able to tell me some emotions you experienced during this situation."*

2. Give the person some ideas of broad topics (from the first page of Lesson 13: Writing a Narrative of Another Person's Experience).
3. Ask the following questions. Take thorough notes as you listen.
4. You are 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? \_\_\_\_\_

1. **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>Christmas</u>	→	Narrow topic <u>Uncle Max's surprise puppy</u>
Broad topic <u>Yosemite</u>	→	Narrow topic <u>Jason'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 going on.)*

2. **Who were the important characters?** Besides you, was there another main character (optional)? You would be the one(s) who participated in the *primary action*. Were there any minor characters, like ticket takers, flight attendants, people in a crowd, and others, who *interacted casually (or not at all)* with you? (You may not want to include *any* minor characters.)

Main character(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Minor character(s): \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Let's choose the setting.** What was the main location for the action? We must keep it limited to one place. "Grandpa's house" is too broad; "his garden" or "the kitchen table" are narrow locations.

The setting is: \_\_\_\_\_

4. **How much time elapses 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, interacts with the car.)

Main action: \_\_\_\_\_

(Who) \_\_\_\_\_ interacts with whom/what) \_\_\_\_\_?

6. **What emotions did you feel during this experience?** If you were **anxious**, did you have *knots in your stomach*? If you were **afraid** or **embarrassed**, did you feel *shaky, cold, clammy, light-headed, or dizzy*? Did your heart pound from **guilt, fear**, or **excitement**? Did you feel *butterflies in your stomach* from **nervousness** (singing a solo) or **eager anticipation** (starting a new job)?

Emotions that this experience produced \_\_\_\_\_

Physically, how or where emotions were felt \_\_\_\_\_



7. **What was the sequence of events?** You should be able to tell me this information in about 10 sentences. If your sequence is too long, you will need to narrow your incident even further.

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 will help me describe it in a colorful, interesting way?** (setting, circumstances, time of day, weather, etc.)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

## Lesson 13: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Do all my sentences support the topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Did I narrow my topic to **one** incident?
- ☐ Did I limit my composition to **one** or **two** main characters? How many? \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I limit my composition to **one** setting?
- ☐ Did I limit my time frame to a **few hours or less**?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly?
- ☐ Does my title capture the essence of my composition?

### STYLE

- ☐ Does my first sentence do a good job of introducing my narrative?
- ☐ 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 and avoid weak words? (**Underline** vague or weak words in green.)
- ☐ Did I let the reader know exactly how my subject felt by using specific emotion words?
- ☐ Did I describe the physical aspects of my subject's emotions? (sweaty palms, etc.)
- ☐ Did I vary my sentence structure by
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a present participle?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with an "-ly" adverb?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a prepositional phrase?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a subordinate conjunction?  
(*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
  - \_\_\_using a simile?      \_\_\_using an appositive?
- ☐ 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?
  - ☐ Is my paragraph seven to ten sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ 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? (**Circle** and **look up** suspected words.)
  - ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? (**Correct** any errors.)
  - ☐ Did I use complete sentences, avoid run-on sentences, and avoid misplaced modifiers?
  - ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed?  
(This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** Did I staple my papers together in proper order?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Another Person's Experience

## 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"/> | 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"/> | Limited topic to one incident   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited composition to one or two main characters                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Limited composition 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"/> | Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Communicated clearly  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures essence of paragraph                                       |

### 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 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"/> | Used specific emotion words to let reader know how main character felt          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Described the <i>physical</i> aspects of the subject's emotions                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used each of the following sentence variations                                  |
|                          |                          | __began with an -ly adverb phrase      __used an appositive                     |
|                          |                          | __began with a subordinate conjunction      __began with a prepositional phrase |
|                          |                          | __began with paired adjectives      __began with a present participial phrase   |
|                          |                          | __used a simile   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely by eliminating unnecessary words, phrases, or 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"/> | Paragraph is seven to ten sentences long  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | First sentence is indented and margins are left around the paragraph                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Remembered to skip 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 appropriate punctuation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences, watched for 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 <u>all</u> drafts of this composition and your Writing Skills Checklist        |

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

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> | _____ |
| • Graciousness  | <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 (homonyms, 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 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

## 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 the 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.
- The newspaper delivery boy said the red car ran a red light and was speeding.

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.

Did you see the movie *Toy Story*? 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 would not 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 will focus 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 like *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 some examples:

*"As our plane climbed higher, cars and people became like ants crawling below us."*

*"When I was seven years old, my grandfather took me on my first fishing trip."*

Sometimes you can use the 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 *he*.

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*

*John 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, John 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 article.

- ☐ a piece of candy in a bag or dish
- ☐ a piece of furniture
- ☐ a mirror
- ☐ a vehicle (fire truck, mail truck, jet ski, race car, etc.)
- ☐ a kitchen utensil (fork, electric mixer, can opener, etc.)
- ☐ an appliance (vacuum, refrigerator, washing machine, alarm clock, etc.)
- ☐ an overstuffed or messy drawer or closet
- ☐ sporting equipment (hockey puck, basketball, baseball bat, etc.)
- ☐ a toy
- ☐ a pencil or crayon
- ☐ a fruit or vegetable
- ☐ a stamp or a letter being mailed
- ☐ an article of clothing (shoe, hat, jeans, etc.)
- ☐ a sewing needle
- ☐ 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 elapses? One night? A few minutes? Keep the time frame short, unless you're a stamp, for instance, 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 Worksheet

1. What object will you be? (no animals, please) \_\_\_\_\_
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 are not human. Too often, students will 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 with "words."

### 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

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

(example) cylinder of pen

(example) pen point

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Human Counterpart

body (or neck or arm or leg)

tongue (or finger or foot)

---

---

---

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---



Think about how this object would express itself if it were human. If an alarm clock were smacked 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. A truck might wince in pain when someone kicks its tire (you do not need to call the tire a "shoe" or a "foot" to still use effective personification). Consider ways your object can express itself *like a human*. Ask yourself some questions:

- ☐ **Action.** What action done by or done to this object would make it feel ticklish, nervous, achy or itchy, or would give it pain, goosebumps, chills, etc.?
- ☐ **Behavior.** How could its physical characteristics behave like a human's? (A pen can skate on its "foot"; an object can collect dust, making its "nose" itch; an old chair can be sanded, scratching its "back"; a curling iron can take a "mouthful" of hair; a machine could use its "voice" to roar 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? (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; a CD could sing for joy every time it is placed in its player.)
- ☐ **Physical sensations.** What *physical sensations* might this object feel if it were a human in the same situation? (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.** Is there any other human quality your object possesses? (An answering machine has a good memory; a Bible is wise; a computer is intelligent, etc.)

Write down a minimum of five 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. \_\_\_\_\_

**Important:** You will find it especially helpful to use the following Word Lists when using personification:

- "Sound Words," "Visual Words," "Texture Words," and "Taste and Smell Words"
- "Personification" word list
- "Characteristics, Expressions, and Behaviors" and "Emotions" word lists

What will be the main plot (action) in your story? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

**Sequencing:** Write down the main steps of the plot.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

### Other Reminders

**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)" *Note: Do not use the parentheses!*
- ☐ "A/An \_\_\_\_\_ Experience"
- ☐ "I Am a/an \_\_\_\_\_"

My Title: " \_\_\_\_\_ "

☐ **Use specific personification** in your paragraph when writing as the object, like:

- *a baseball*: "Throbbing and bruised, every fiber of my being aches at the end of a game."
- *a 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."

☐ **Write a seven to ten sentence paragraph.**

☐ **Use descriptive words** to help give your reader a vivid mental picture.

☐ **Use each of the following sentence variations:**

- use a simile
- use an appositive (optional), like "The rock, *a huge granite boulder*, . . ." or "The soft rug, *a thick Persian carpet*, . . ." (remember that an **appositive** renames the noun just before it).
- begin one sentence with a present participle ("-ing" verb)
- 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 1) contains no verbs, 2) begins with a preposition, and 3) ends with a noun, which is the object of the preposition--- "After the party . . ." "After dinner . . ." and "After a long pause . . ." are all prepositional phrases.

**These are NOT prepositional phrases:** "After eating dinner . . .," "After Tom ran home . . .," and "After swimming to the rock . . ." These are subordinate clauses. There is no object of the preposition. It cannot be a prepositional phrase if it contains 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:  
"God bless me! 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 Man 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."

1. Simile                      **Like** fingers, the branches of the tree reached toward the hiker.
2. Personification      The **branches' fingers reached** out toward the hiker.

Human characteristics can be given to objects and, sometimes, to animals.

1. The breeze **whispered** in a soft **voice**. (*whispering* is a human trait; *voice* is a human quality)
2. Tiny fireflies **winked** in the night. (*winking* is a human trait)
3. Low waves **crawled** up the shore. (*crawling* is a human trait)
4. The windows of the old house **watch** over the street. (*watching* 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. Megan's cat scowled and complained.
7. The squirrel laughed at me from its perch in the tree.

B. The Bible is filled with examples of personification. In the following verses, 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. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice. *Psalms 96:11*
2. The mountains and the trees will break into shouts of joy before you, and all the trees of the field will clap their hands. *Isaiah 55:12*
3. The meadows are clothed with flocks, and the valleys are covered with grain; they shout for joy, yes, they sing. *Psalms 65:13*
4. Lift up your heads, O gates . . . *Psalms 24:7*
5. Wisdom has built her house . . . she has prepared her food. *Proverbs 9:1,2*
6. Awake, O north wind! *Song of Songs 4:16*

## DAY TWO

A. Tell what object or animal is being given human traits. Then tell what that trait is.

	<u>object(s) or animal(s)</u>	<u>human trait</u>
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 danced gracefully 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

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.

This image shows a single page of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

## Lesson 14: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ Do all my sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Does my title capture the essence of my paragraph and give a clue about the personification of my object?

### STYLE

- ☐ Did I choose a strong topic sentence that introduces my paragraph?
- ☐ 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 and avoid weak words? (**Underline** vague or weak words in green.)
- ☐ Did I write in first person?
- ☐ Did I use personification by giving human qualities to my object?
- ☐ Did I vary my sentence structure by
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a present participle?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with an "-ly" adverb?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a prepositional phrase?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with paired adjectives?
  - \_\_\_beginning one sentence with a subordinate conjunction? (although, as, because, if, *since*, though, unless, when, where, while)
  - \_\_\_using a simile?      \_\_\_using an appositive? (optional)
- ☐ 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?
  - ☐ Is my paragraph seven to ten sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_
  - ☐ Did I indent my first sentence and leave margins around my paragraph?
  - ☐ Did I skip lines and use good spacing between words and sentences?
  - ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? (**Circle** and **look up** suspected words.)
  - ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? (**Correct** any errors.)
  - ☐ Did I use complete sentences, avoid run-on sentences, and avoid misplaced modifiers?
  - ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed? (This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)
- 
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** 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 Writing Checklist on the very top.)



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject 1st Per. Personification

## Lesson 14: 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"/> | 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"/> | Communicated clearly   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Title captures essence of paragraph; gives a clue to personification of the object |

### 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 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"/> | Wrote in first person   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used personification by giving human qualities to the subject             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used each of the following sentence variations                            |
|                          |                          | ___began with an -ly adverb phrase      ___used an appositive (optional)  |
|                          |                          | ___began with a subordinate conjunction                                   |
|                          |                          | ___began with a prepositional phrase      ___began with paired adjectives |
|                          |                          | ___began with a present participial phrase      ___used a simile          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Wrote concisely by eliminating unnecessary words, phrases, or 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"/> | Paragraph is seven to ten sentences long  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | First sentence of the paragraph is indented and margins are left around the paragraph   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Remembered to skip 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"/> | Appropriate punctuation   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences, avoided 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 sheet, 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 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>	_____
• Graciousness	<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 (homonyms, 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 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

## Lesson 15: First-Person Point of View (Limited Omniscience)

On the following pages you will find an account of the well-known story of David and Goliath. Although the Bible is filled with interesting, adventurous narratives, these stories only contain basic information. Personal emotions and detailed descriptions are not often included. This is the case with the account of David and Goliath.

This assignment will ask you to write your story in first person. Remember that this means writing using "I." You may write in present tense, as if it is happening now, or in past tense. You will choose one person from whose perspective you will write. You may write as though you are David, King Saul, an Israelite soldier, or a Philistine soldier. (It would be difficult to write as Goliath, because he dies. But if you can figure out how to do this, you may write from the perspective of Goliath as well.)

This narrative is too long to write as one paragraph. You will write it as two paragraphs. It is not necessary to retell the entire account from start to finish. Instead, choose the parts of the story you wish to include. Maybe you only want to describe the battle between David and Goliath. Maybe you would like to include a little bit of background information in an opening paragraph and write the second paragraph in greater detail.

Keep in mind that your character has **limited omniscience**. This means he cannot know what anyone else is thinking or doing. He can only write about what he sees or experiences or hears about. Ask yourself, "How would I know this?" If your character didn't observe the action, he can't write about it in a firsthand manner.

### Tips for Writing a First-Person Narrative

- ☐ Carefully **read the account** that follows.

#### David and Goliath

The Philistine army had gathered to fight Israel. Their leader was a huge giant named Goliath, who stood close to ten feet tall. The Hebrew soldiers were terrified of him because of his threats and his size.

*Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified. (1 Sam. 17:8-11)*

While David's older brothers were serving in Israel's army, fighting against the Philistines, David remained at home and tended the sheep. One day, David's father sent him to his brothers with some food and a message from their father. David reached the army camp just in time to see Goliath.

*Goliath, the Philistine champion from Gath, stepped out from his lines and shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it . . . David asked the men standing near him . . . "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he should defy the armies of the living God?" (v. 17:26)*

David looked around to see how many soldiers were coming forward, willing to fight the giant. But there was no one. Even Israel's commanders were afraid.

*But David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine; your servant will go and fight him."*

*Saul replied, "You are not able to go out against this Philistine and fight him; you are only a boy, and he has been a fighting man since his youth." (vv. 17:32-33)*

David told Saul how, as a shepherd, he killed a bear and a lion to protect his flock. He knew God had prepared him to face Goliath, who had defied the armies of God. Saul dressed David in his own armor so he could fight the giant, but David could hardly walk because he was small and not used to such weight. He took off the armor.

*Then he took his staff in his hand, chose five smooth stones from the stream, put them in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.*

*Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to David. He looked David over and saw that he was only a boy, ruddy and handsome, and he despised him. He said to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. "Come here," he said, "and I'll give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field."*

*David said to the Philistine, "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the Lord will hand you over to me, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head . . . and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that is not by sword or spear that the*

*Lord saves, for the battle is the Lord's and he will give all of you into our hands."*

*As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine in the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell face down on the ground.*

*So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone, without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him . . . When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran.  
(vv. 17:40-51)*

- ☐ Remember: You will be David, a Philistine, a Hebrew soldier, or the king. Put yourself in his place and write as if you are that person. Include your emotions, thoughts, and feelings.
- ☐ On your "David and Goliath Worksheet," write out a **list telling the sequence of events**. Figuring that each item in your list will probably be a sentence, you will be able to decide what information to eliminate and what to keep. Remember, write only what your character knows. You may only use the information on these pages.
- ☐ Use concrete, specific, **descriptive words**
- ☐ Use **different kinds of sentence starters** and sentence variations. Each paragraph must use five of these SENTENCE STARTERS.
  - subject-verb sentence
  - sentence beginning with a present participle ("-ing")
  - sentence beginning with a prepositional phrase
  - sentence beginning with an adverb (see "Adverbs" or "'-ly' Adverbs" word lists)
  - sentence beginning with paired adjectives (You can find many excellent ideas for paired adjectives in your "Characteristics/Expressions/ Behaviors" and "Emotions" word lists. Use them to describe one of the *characters* in the narrative, not the scenery, the pebbles, or the armor.)
  - sentence beginning with a subordinate conjunction (*though, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)

In addition, you must use all of these other variations somewhere in the composition.

- sentence using a simile (no more than one in the entire paper)
- sentence using an appositive
- sentence of six words or less (this will be new for you---you may find it a challenge!)

- ☐ **Practice writing concisely.** Eliminate all unnecessary sentences, words, or phrases. Keep your descriptions crisp and clear, yet simple. You do not need to cover the entire story in your narrative. Be willing to cross out anything that does not add to the tone of the story.
- ☐ Be sure your **tenses agree**. *Choose one tense and stick with it.* (Hint: Read your "sloppy copy" out loud and listen for accidental changes in tense.)
- ☐ Write an **interesting title**. "David and Goliath" may be adequate, but it is certainly not descriptive. See what you can do!

## Lesson 15: David and Goliath Worksheet

### 1. Choose your point of view:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> David                       | <input type="checkbox"/> a member of the Philistine army |
| <input type="checkbox"/> King Saul                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Goliath                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a member of the Hebrew army |  |

### 2. List some synonyms for the different characters in the story (see the story for clues).

David: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Goliath: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Saul: \_\_\_\_\_

men in the army: \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Choose a tense for your narrative: \_\_past tense \_\_present tense

### 4. List sequence of events (use short phrases; be sure your character witnessed each event).

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 15: The Tale of Peter Rabbit

*by Beatrix Potter*

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 bedtime."

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 **pray** 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 **prayed** for a cool drink of water.

*(Now notice how the **verbs** show that the action took place in the past.)*

It is not unusual for beginning writers to confuse tenses within a story, even within a single sentence. Making sure your tenses agree causes your paragraph to flow smoothly. When proofreading 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. Watch and 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 **prayed** 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 are paragraphs written with mixed tenses. Your job is to correct them so the tenses agree.

## DAY ONE

The tenses in the following sentences have been mixed up. Sometimes the tenses agree, and sometimes they don't. If the sentence does not contain 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:

                     *jumped* *turned*  
PAST I ~~jump~~ into the lake to rescue a boy, but what I thought was a boy ~~turns~~ out to be a wet, fat 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. \_\_\_\_\_ Customers paid one dollar and received a book of coupons.
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 Sunday school class saves pennies and gives them to the mission fund.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ When Becky's family visited Aunt Ruth, they took a large chicken dinner to share, and they also bring apple pies for dessert.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ On Saturday night we curled up in front of the TV, ate popcorn and watched a favorite video, and go to bed by 10:00.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Dr. Logan carefully examined the X-rays before he can determine if Bobby's leg is broken.

**DAY TWO** *Past Tense*

The tenses in the following two paragraphs have been 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.

Today's activity will be to correct the paragraphs so that each one is in **past tense agreement**. Using a *colored* pencil, circle each verb that is incorrectly written as PRESENT TENSE. In the space above it, write in the correct PAST TENSE of that word. When you are finished, reread the paragraphs 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*

Here are the same two paragraphs, 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.

Today's activity will be to correct the paragraphs so that each one is in **present tense agreement**. Using a *colored* pencil, circle each verb that is incorrectly written as PAST TENSE. In the space above it, write the correct PRESENT TENSE of that word. When you are finished, reread the paragraphs 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

- ☐ Do all my sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Did I communicate clearly?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Does my title capture the essence of my composition?

### STYLE

- ☐ Did I write two paragraphs?
- ☐ Did I choose a strong topic sentence that introduces my composition?
- ☐ Did I use no more than one "to be" word in each paragraph? (**Circle** to be words in red.)
- ☐ Did I avoid the use of repeated words? (**Underline** repeated words in blue.)
- ☐ Did I use concrete words and avoid weak words? (**Underline** vague or weak words in green.)
- ☐ Do all my tenses agree? (I wrote in \_\_\_\_present tense \_\_\_\_past tense)
- ☐ Did I vary my sentence structure by using *each of these* in my composition?
  - \_\_\_\_began with a prepositional phrase
  - \_\_\_\_began with a past or present participle
  - \_\_\_\_began with paired adjectives
  - \_\_\_\_began with an "-ly" adverb
  - \_\_\_\_began with a subordinate conjunction  
(*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
  - \_\_\_\_used a subject-verb sentence
  - \_\_\_\_used a simile                      \_\_\_\_used an appositive
- ☐ Did I write a sentence of six words or fewer?
- ☐ Did I write concisely, avoiding wordiness? (~~Gross-out~~ unnecessary words or phrases.)
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence?

### MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Is **each paragraph** five to seven sentences long? How many? \_\_\_\_
- ☐ Did I indent first sentence of each paragraph and leave margins around my paragraph?
- ☐ Did I skip lines and use good spacing between words and sentences?
- ☐ Did I double-check my spelling? (**Circle** and **look up** suspected words.)
- ☐ Did I double-check capitalization and punctuation? (**Correct** any errors.)
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences, avoid run-on sentences, and avoid misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed?  
(This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** 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 Writing Checklist on the very top.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Subject Limited Omniscience

## Lesson 15: 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"/>	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"/>	Communicated clearly
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Title captures the essence of the composition

### STYLE

OK	needs improvement	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wrote two paragraphs
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Used no more than one "to be" word per paragraph
<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"/>	Began with a sentence that introduces the composition
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tenses agree (student wrote in ___present tense ___past tense)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Varied sentence structure within the paragraph:
		___subject-verb sentence
		___began with an -ly adverb phrase
		___used an appositive
		___began with a subordinate conjunction
		___began with a prepositional phrase
		___began with paired adjectives
		___began with a present participle
		___used a simile
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Included one 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"/>	Each paragraph is five to seven sentences long
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	First sentence of each paragraph is indented; margins are left around the paragraph
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remembered to skip 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"/>	Appropriate punctuation
<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 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 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> | _____ |
| • Graciousness  | <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 (homonyms, 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 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



## 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* points of view. For this story you will act as the narrator by writing in third person. Using *limited* omniscience when you wrote your David and Goliath narrative, you did not have the capability of knowing 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, it is permissible 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. He is having trouble, however, holding back his enthusiasm, and is therefore increasing the animal's nervousness. Finally, the child leaves the pet alone, and it calms down and begins to adjust to its new surroundings.*

**Directions:** You will write a narrative with the following guidelines:

1. **Three paragraphs in length** (for a total length of 12-15 sentences)
2. **Past tense**
3. **Third person**

Here is a summary of the information each paragraph should contain:

☐ **First paragraph** - *the child brings home the new pet*

1. 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)
2. the child may be a boy or girl
3. write the first paragraph in such a way that the reader identifies with the enthusiastic child

☐ **Second paragraph** - *the pet's observed behavior*

1. describe the pet's reactions and anxious behaviors
2. write the second paragraph in such a way that the reader sympathizes with the frightened, or nervous animal
3. Note: Do *not* write about what the animal is *thinking* since personification is not the focus of this lesson.

☐ **Third paragraph** - *the pet calms down*

1. the story should end with the child leaving the pet alone
2. the pet calms down and begins to adjust to its new home

☐ Use **different kinds of sentence starters** and sentence variations. You must use all of these starters and variations somewhere in the composition. Be sure to 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")  
**Note:** You can find many past participles in the "Characteristics/Expressions/Behaviors" or "Emotions" word lists.
- sentence beginning with a prepositional phrase
- sentence beginning with an adverb (see "Adverbs" or "'-ly' Adverbs" word lists)
- sentence beginning with paired adjectives  
**Note:** You can find many excellent ideas for paired adjectives in your "Characteristics/Expressions/ Behaviors" and "Emotions" word lists. Use paired adjectives to describe the child or the pet, not the parent, the cage, or the surroundings.
- sentence beginning with a subordinate conjunction (*after, though, as, because, before, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- sentence of six words or less
- sentence using a simile (no more than one in the entire paper)
- sentence using an appositive

As with all narratives, be sure to 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 little 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:

\_\_\_\_\_

1. Use a *green* pencil to circle words that describe Bobby's **behavior or actions**.
2. Underline words in *red* pencil that describe Bobby's **feelings and emotions**.
3. Circle in *blue* pencil words that describe the *parakeet's* **behavior or actions**.
4. Underline in *yellow* pencil the words that describe the *parakeet's* **emotions**.
5. Place an *orange* "X" on **past or present participles that begin sentences**.
6. Place a *purple* "X" on **-ly adverbs that begin sentences**.
7. Draw a *brown* line through any **prepositional phrases that begin sentences**.
8. Circle the **appositives** in gray.
9. Name the **paired adjectives**: \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

## Lesson 16: Pet Narrative Worksheet

### Choosing the Settings

- ☐ What is the setting for your FIRST paragraph? (pet store, yard, bedroom, garage, den, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ What is the setting for your SECOND paragraph? (cage, box, bag, crate, basket, kennel, lap, pen, confined or gated area, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

### Describing the Child

- ☐ This child is a (circle one)      BOY      GIRL
- ☐ The child is approximately \_\_\_\_\_ years old.
- ☐ The 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.")

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

### Describing the Pet

- ☐ What kind of pet will you choose? \_\_\_\_\_  
(It helps to write about an animal with which you are familiar; however, this is not 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.)

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

☐ Describe your animal's **physical traits**.

1. Color \_\_\_\_\_
2. Markings \_\_\_\_\_
3. Texture \_\_\_\_\_
4. Sounds it makes when afraid \_\_\_\_\_
5. Sounds it makes when content \_\_\_\_\_
6. How it moves \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Make a list of **emotion words** to describe this frightened animal. (Hint: use your "Emotions" word list; look under "*Fearful*.")

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

☐ 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*, *quiver*, etc.)

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

- ☐ List **actions or behaviors** this animal would display when *calm* or *content* (snuggling, sleeping, chewing a bone, etc.).

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

- ☐ What would calm an anxious pet (specifically, the pet you are writing about)?

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### Writing Your Narrative

Tell the *sequence of events*, *emotional displays*, and *actions* of the characters in each paragraph. Don't be discouraged with having to write 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** - *The child brings home the new pet.*

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

☐ **Second Paragraph** - *The pet's observed behavior (remember: not its thoughts).*

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

☐ **Third Paragraph** - *The pet calms down.*

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

## Lesson 16: Skill Builder

### Past Participles

**DAY ONE** *Using past participles as adjectives.*

A **verbal** is a verb form used as a different part of speech. The past participle form of a verb becomes a verbal when used as an adjective to describe a noun. Here is an example:

infinitive		past participle		verbal
to weaken	=	had weakened	=	a <u>weakened</u> climber
to lock	=	had locked	=	a <u>locked</u> door

This adjective form (verbal) can also begin a sentence. It is used to modify, or describe, the subject of the sentence. For instance:

verbal		subject
<b><u>Locked</u></b> securely,		the heavy <b><u>door</u></b>

refused to budge.

verbal (paired adjectives)		subject
<b>Exhausted</b> and <b>weakened</b> ,		the <b>climber</b>

collapsed upon reaching the summit.

Complete the following sentences. A verbal (past participle form) has been written for you. A comma and a subject have also been provided. Whenever possible, choose **active, concrete** verbs to finish your sentences.

1. Tired, a jogger \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Cornered, the frightened raccoon \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Surprised and delighted, the children \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Terrified, the three girls \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Endangered, the rare birds \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Crushed, the glass figurine \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



## DAY TWO

A past participle plus a group of words is called a **participial phrase**. When writing a sentence beginning with a participial phrase, the phrase must be followed by a comma and the subject of the sentence.

PATTERN: Past participle + word(s) + comma + subject + rest of sentence

Examples: Raised on a farm, Matthew knew how to grow alfalfa.

Banished to the yard, Wags peered sadly from her doghouse.

Delighted to meet the senator, I enthusiastically shook his hand.

Charred and blackened, the old house suffered terrible damage from the fire.

1. Taught to sew, Tara \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Followed by a growling dog, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Determined to win, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Hurt by their unkind remark, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Braided tightly, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In the following sentences, the past participle and a word have been written for you. Add each of the following: 1) a word or words to complete the phrase, 2) a comma, 3) the subject of the sentence, and 4) the remainder of the thought.

1. Stranded in \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Painted with \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Taken by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Trapped inside \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**DAY THREE**

A participial phrase may be incorporated into other places in a sentence.

Example: Mailed last week, the package finally reached its destination.

The package, mailed last week, finally reached its destination.

Complete each sentence. In the first sentence, place the verbal before the subject. In the second sentence place the verbal after the subject. Remember to use active, concrete verbs whenever possible to complete the sentences.

1. A. Defeated again, the Tigers \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

2. A. Caught in a tree, Mike's kite \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

3. A. Nestled beneath a warm blanket, the puppy \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

4. A. Trained as a lifeguard, Matt Smith \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject: 3rd Person (Omniscient)

## Lesson 16: Student Writing Skills Checklist

### CONTENT

- ☐ 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 my sentences support my topic sentence (no "carrots in my cookie jar")?
- ☐ Are my topic and choice of words pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others?
- ☐ Does my title capture the essence of my composition?

### STYLE

- ☐ Did I choose a strong topic sentence that introduces my composition?
- ☐ Did I use no more than two "to be" words in the composition? (**Circle** to be words in red.)
- ☐ Did I avoid the use of repeated words? (**Underline** repeated words in blue.)
- ☐ Did I use concrete words and avoid weak words? (**Underline** vague or weak words in green.)
- ☐ Did I write in past tense? Do all my tenses agree?
- ☐ Did I vary my sentence structure by using each of these *once or twice* throughout my composition?
  - ☐ began with a past participle
  - ☐ began with a present participle
  - ☐ began with paired adjectives
  - ☐ began with a prepositional phrase
  - ☐ began with an "-ly" adverb
  - ☐ used an appositive
  - ☐ began with a subordinate conjunction
  - ☐ subject-verb sentence(*although, as, because, if, since, though, unless, when, where, while*)
- ☐ Did I use a sentence of six words or fewer?
- ☐ Did I write concisely, avoiding wordiness? (~~Cross-out~~ unnecessary words or phrases.)
- ☐ Did I write a strong closing sentence?

### MECHANICS

- ☐ Did I put my name and date in the upper right-hand corner?
- ☐ Is **each paragraph** three to five 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 by circling and looking up suspected words?
- ☐ Did I double-check **and correct** capitalization and punctuation?
- ☐ Did I use complete sentences and avoid run-on sentences and misplaced modifiers?
- ☐ Did I correctly use this Checklist, including using colored pencils to underline and circle as directed?  
(This includes making corrections before I write my revision.)
- ☐ **BEFORE TURNING MY WORK IN:** 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 Writing Checklist on the very top.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Subject 3rd Person (Omniscient)

## 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"/> | First paragraph is about the enthusiastic child                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Second paragraph is about the anxiety of the pet                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Third paragraph tells how the pet calmed down                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | All sentences support topic sentence (no "carrots in your cookie jar")    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Topic and choice of words are pleasing to the Lord and edifying to others |
| <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 composition                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Avoided the use of repeated 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 <u>yes</u> <u>no</u> )                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Varied sentence structure by using <i>each of these once or twice</i> in the composition |
|                          |                          | <u>subject-verb sentence</u> <u>began with an -ly adverb phrase</u>                      |
|                          |                          | <u>used an appositive</u> <u>began with a subordinate conjunction</u>                    |
|                          |                          | <u>began with a prepositional phrase</u> <u>began with paired adjectives</u>             |
|                          |                          | <u>began with a present participle</u> <u>began with a past participle</u>               |
| <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"/> | First sentence of each paragraph is indented; margins are left around the composition   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Remembered to skip 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"/> | Appropriate punctuation   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Used complete sentences, avoided run-on sentences, avoided 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 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 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> | _____ |
| • Graciousness  | <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 (homonyms, 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 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

# Word Lists

## Adverbs

### "HOW" ADVERBS

(most -ly words tell "how;" these are only examples)

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	essentially	positively	strictly
accordingly	eventually	possibly	substantially
amazingly	evidently	predictably	surely
apparently	fearlessly	presumably	tentatively
assuredly	finally	previously	thankfully
boldly	fortunately	primarily	typically
carefully	frequently	probably	ultimately
cautiously	fundamentally	progressively	unbelievably
certainly	gradually	regretfully	undeniably
clearly	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/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

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### 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

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### Funny/Silly/Delighted

amused, amusing  
animated  
beaming  
bubbling  
cheerful  
comical  
congenial  
delighted, delightful  
droll  
foolish  
frivolous  
gay  
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

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

**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

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

**Cool**

aloof  
casual  
cautious  
cheerless  
cold  
detached  
disinterested  
distant  
indifferent  
introverted  
remote  
removed  
reserved  
shy  
unapproachable  
withdrawn

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

**Uncertain/Afraid**

afraid  
anxious  
ashamed  
bashful  
bewildered  
cautious  
careful  
confused  
discreet  
discouraged  
distracted  
embarrassed  
fearful  
flustered  
frantic  
frightened  
indecisive  
insecure  
isolated  
lonely  
nervous  
perplexed  
puzzled  
queasy  
questioning  
quivering  
rattled  
scared  
self-conscious  
sensitive  
serious  
shy  
submissive  
suspicious  
tearful

tense  
timid  
touchy  
troubled  
uncomfortable  
unpredictable  
unstable  
unsure  
vague  
vulnerable  
wary  
weak  
weepy  
wishful  
wistful  
yearning

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

**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  
breathtaking  
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  
spry  
strenuous  
vigorous  
wiggly  
wiry

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

**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  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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

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

**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  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

<u>Neat</u>	<u>Attractive</u>	<u>Stature (Appearance)</u>	<u>Misc. (Negative)</u>
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	Purple	Brown	White	Black
brick	amber	burgundy	auburn	blanched	coal-black
cardinal	banana	grape	bittersweet	bleached	ebony
cherry	blond	lavender	brick	chalky	inky
crimson	butter, buttery	lilac	bronze	cottony	jet-black
maroon	buttercup	mauve	brunette	dove-white	onyx
mulberry	canary	orchid	chestnut	milky	pitch-black
rouge	dandelion	plum	chocolate	pale	pitch-dark
ruby	flax, flaxen	violet	cinnamon	pallid	raven
ruddy	gold, golden	wine	cocoa	pasty	sable
scarlet	goldenrod	_____	coffee	pearl, pearly	sooty
strawberry	honey	_____	copper	powdery	_____
tomato	lemon, lemony	_____	drab	snow-white	_____
	ochre	<b>Green</b>	fawn	snowy	
	straw	apple	ginger	sugary	<b>Gray</b>
<b>Pink</b>	sunflower	aqua	mahogany	whitened	ashen
blush	sunny	celadon	mocha	whitewashed	charcoal
carnation	topaz	celery	mousy	_____	cloudy
flamingo		emerald	nut-brown	_____	colorless
flesh		evergreen	nutmeg		dove-gray
flushed	<b>Blue</b>	forest	rust	<b>Off-white</b>	dusky
fuchsia	azure	kelly	sepia	beige	granite
magenta	baby blue	lime	sienna	buff	gunmetal gray
rose, rosy	cerulean	mint	spice	cream, creamy	pearl gray
salmon	Delft	moss, mossy	tan	ecru	silver, silvery
	denim	olive	terra-cotta	eggshell	slate
<b>Orange</b>	indigo	pea green	umber	ivory	smoke, smoky
apricot	navy	sea green	walnut	oatmeal	smudged
burnt orange	periwinkle	spring green	_____	sandy	steel
butterscotch	powder blue	teal	_____	unbleached	_____
melon	royal	verdant	_____	vanilla	_____
peach	sapphire	_____		_____	_____
pumpkin	sky blue	_____			
tangerine	turquoise	_____			

## 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

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### Brave

audacious  
bold  
courageous  
daring  
dauntless  
determined  
encouraging  
fearless  
gallant  
hardy  
heroic  
intrepid  
persistent  
plucky  
resolute  
spunky  
stalwart  
stouthearted  
unafraid  
valiant  
valorous

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**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  
peeved  
piqued  
rabid  
raging

riled  
seething  
simmering  
sizzling  
smoldering  
sore  
stormy  
surly  
vengeful  
vexed  
wrathful

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

**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

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



## Personification

*Possible word choices when giving human traits to an object/animal.*

ache	gaze	pout	stumble
agree	giggle	preside (over)	supervise
argue	glance	prowl	think
believe	grasp	pursue	throw
blow	grin	push	tickle
boast	groan	reach	tiptoe
bow	guide	reside	toss
breathe	hear	rest	tremble
browse	hiss	run	trip
chase	hug	scowl	trust
claw	inhale	search	tumble
complain	insult	see	twirl
comprehend	jump	serve	understand
cough	kick	shake	walk
crawl	lament	shove	waltz
creep	laugh	sigh	watch
cry	leap	sing	wave
dance	listen	sleep	weep
doze	live	smile	welcome
eat	moan	sneeze	whisper
enjoy	mope	snore	whistle
escape	mumble	sob	wrestle
feel	nibble	soothe	wriggle
frolic	notice	spy	yawn
frown	observe	stare	yield
fumble	oversee	step	_____
fuss	perceive	stretch	_____
gape	play	stroke	_____

## Prepositions

aboard	but (meaning <i>except</i> )	outside
about	by	over
above	concerning	past
across	despite	regarding
after	down	since
against	during	through
along	except	throughout
amid	for	till
among	from	to
around	in	toward
at	inside	under
atop	into	underneath
before	like	unlike
behind	near	until
below	of	up
beneath	off	upon
beside	on	with
between	onto	within
beyond	out	without

## Said Synonyms

added	declared	moaned	shouted
advised	defended	mouthed	shrieked
announced	demanded	mumbled	sighed
answered	disclosed	murmured	snapped
argued	exclaimed	muttered	snarled
asked	explained	noticed	snickered
asserted	exploded	observed	snorted
barked	fussed	ordered	sobbed
begged	giggled	pleaded	squawked
bellowed	gripped	pointed out	squeaked
blurted out	groused	prayed	squealed
boasted	growled	predicted	stammered
bragged	guessed	proposed	stated
breathed	hinted	queried	suggested
called, called out	hissed	recited	told
cautioned	implied	remarked	uttered
challenged	implored	repeated	wailed
chimed in	indicated	replied	warned
chuckled	inquired	requested	wept
claimed	insinuated	responded	wheezed
commanded	insisted	retorted	whimpered
commented	interjected	returned	whined
complained	interrupted	revealed	whispered
confided	lamented	roared	yelled
contended	laughed	sang	_____
cried, cried out	maintained	scolded	_____
croaked	mentioned	screamed	_____

## 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 Tuesday, by March,  
by the time John arrived)

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 Monday, on April 2, on  
Sharon's birthday)

once

originally

previously

progressively

second

since

soon

suddenly

then

third

to begin with

today

tomorrow

ultimately

until

until this time

when

yesterday

**To Connect Ideas**

additionally  
 again  
 also  
 besides  
 furthermore  
 in brief  
 in fact  
 in addition  
 in short  
 in conclusion  
 in summary  
 indeed  
 likewise  
 moreover  
 similarly

**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  
  
 both...and  
 either...or  
 neither...nor  
 not only...but also  
 whether...or  
  
 accordingly  
 also  
 anyhow  
 besides  
 consequently  
 furthermore  
 hence  
 however  
 indeed  
 instead  
 likewise  
 meanwhile  
 moreover  
 namely  
 otherwise  
 still  
 then  
 therefore  
 thus

**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.)  
cool (as in: What a cool car you drive!)  
neat (as in: I thought his shoes were neat.)  
(plus other currently used slang terms)

### Overused Words/Phrases

get/got/gotten  
good  
great (OK sometimes)  
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/Verbs)

- Many of these words are also *verbs*, depending on 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 the Sound Words (Adjectives/Verbs).
- The adjective page will also give you hints on how to 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	thundercrack	_____
clink	holler	roar	tick	_____

## Taste and Smell Words

### Taste Words

acidic	iced, icy
appetizing	juicy
baked	luscious
biting	mild
bitter	moldy
bland	nasty
boiled	palatable
bubbly	peppery
candied	pleasant
coagulated	rich
cold	roasted
congealed	rotten
creamy	salty
curried	savory
delectable	scrumptious
delicious	seasoned
dried	sharp
effervescent	sizzling
flat	smoked
flavorful	sour
foul	spicy
fresh	spoiled
fried	stale
frosty	stewed
gamy	succulent
honeyed	sugary
horrid	sweet
hot	sweet and sour

### Smell Words

syrupy	acrid
tainted	aromatic
tangy	balmy
tart	caustic
tasty	fermented
tender	fetid
tough	foul
unpleasant	fragrant
unsweetened	fresh
vinegary	fruity
watery	malodorous
yummy	mildewed
zesty	musty
_____	odorous
_____	peppery
_____	perfumed
_____	piquant
_____	pungent
_____	rancid
_____	rank
_____	redolent
_____	scented
_____	smoky
_____	spoiled
	stinking, stinky
	strong
	sweet-smelling

## Texture Words

abrasive	fibrous	limber	saturated	stubbly
angular	firm	lumpy	scaly	supple
blunt	flabby	malleable	scratchy	textured
bony	fleecy	matted	shaggy	thorny
braided	flexible	metallic	sharp	tough
bristly	flimsy	moldable	silken	unbendable
bumpy	fluffy	mushy	silky	uniform
calloused	fragile	nappy	sleek	unyielding
coarse	furry	nubby	slippery	upholstered
cold	fuzzy	peaked	smooth	velvety
concrete	glossy	pebbly	soaked	warm
cool	gnarled	pliant	sodden	waxy
cottony	grainy	plush	soft	wet
creamy	gravelly	pointed	solid	whiskered
crinkly	greasy	porous	spiny	wiry
crusty	gritty	prickly	spongy	woolly
delicate	hairy	raised	springy	woven
dense	hard	resilient	squishy	wrinkled
doughy	humped	rigid	starched	wrinkly
downy	jagged	rocky	stark	yielding
dry	knobby	rough	sticky	_____
dull	knotty	rugged	stiff	_____
elastic	leathery	rusty	stony	_____
embossed	level	sandy	stretchy	_____
feathery	light	satiny	stringy	_____

## Visual Words

Bright	Pale	Dull	Big	Attractive
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	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____