

ENGLISH STANDARDS OF LEARNING
ENHANCED SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

WRITING *LESSON PLANS*
Grade 7



Commonwealth of Virginia
Department of Education
Richmond, Virginia
2004

WRITING Lesson Plan → Ruffling Feathers

Organizing Topic Composing and Revising

Related Standard(s) of Learning 6.6, 7.8, 8.7

Objective(s)

- The student will practice brainstorming to generate ideas for writing topics.

Materials needed

- Chalkboard or overhead projector and transparency markers

Lesson procedure

1. Lead the students in a discussion of the writing process, explaining that first step is to generate an idea about which to write. Ask students how one gets and organizes ideas for writing, and list their suggestions on the board (e.g., webbing, clustering, sketching, listing, cubing, quick-writes).
2. Model a technique, called “Ruffling Feathers,” for generating ideas for persuasive and opinion papers: the teacher lists groups of people on the board and then asks students for some generalizations that would ruffle the feathers of each group. These generalizations are topics that could be used for a persuasive paper. For example, ask students to call out generalizations that are guaranteed to ruffle feathers of the following groups:
 - Dog owners: (People should be allowed to live in a dog-free zone.)
 - Mothers of kindergartners: (Kindergartners don’t need a teacher. They just need some toys, some snacks, and a naptime rug.)
 - Skateboarders: (Skateboarding isn’t really a sport. Anyone can do it.)
 - Hungry restaurant customers: _____
 - Musicians: _____
 - SUV owners: _____

Source

- Barry Lane and Gretchen Bernabei. *Why We Run with Scissors*.

WRITING Lesson Plan → Our Actions Show Who We Really Are

Organizing Topic

Composing and Revising

Related Standard(s) of Learning 7.8

Objective(s)

- The student will identify and select specific vocabulary and information to create a character description.

Materials needed

- Twelve grocery store items, e.g., vitamins, okra, baby food, kitty litter, frozen pizza, denture cleanser, shoe polish, soy milk, frozen turkey, lima beans, hair dye, snack chips
- Three pictures of individuals, e.g., a teenage skateboarder, a grandmother, a police officer
- Picture of shopping cart

Lesson procedure

- Display the grocery store items and the pictures of the individuals and the shopping cart. Ask students, What items would you *not* expect to find in the teenager’s shopping cart. In the grandmother’s cart? In the policeman’s cart?
- Facilitate discussion of who would buy which items and what this would reveal about that person’s life. Students will probably not expect a teenage skateboarder to select baby food, shoe polish, and okra. Lead a discussion of why these items might seem incongruous and what situation might prompt such a purchase.
- Discuss the writer’s technique of revealing a character through his or her actions. In the case of the shopping cart, the writer would be revealing information about the character based on what his/her shopping cart contains.
- Have students list on a graphic organizer some expected and unexpected shopping items for the characters, as shown in this example:

	Grandmother	Rock band drummer	School principal
Expected items in shopping cart	Bran cereal Toothpaste	Snack foods Bottled water	Lettuce Bread
Unexpected items in shopping cart	Blue fingernail polish	Frozen turkey	Movie star magazine

- Assign students to select a character and describe several items the character might be expected to have in his/her shopping cart that would reveal the personality of the character. Possible additional characters are minister, ballerina, athlete, nurse, truck driver, pharmacist, mother of twins, and Santa Claus.
- Assign students to put one unexpected or “out-of-character” item into their character’s shopping cart. This item should be so unexpected as to make the reader want to know why this item was purchased.
- Model composing some possible beginning sentences, for example: “The Buford students Alex and Alexis weren’t expecting to see their principal, Mr. Flynn, at the grocery store shopping so early in the morning. They watched as he looked at his handwritten list, and then he selected two fresh Roma tomatoes and added them to his cart. Then, he chuckled to himself and put the movie magazine, *Super Stars*, into his cart.”

WRITING Lesson Plan → Explaining a Process

Organizing Topic Composing and Revising

Related Standard(s) of Learning 6.6, 7.8, 8.7

Objective(s)

- The student will write a “how to” paragraph, using multiple steps.

Materials needed

- An example of an expository paragraph explaining a multi-step process.
- Powdered drink mix
- Pitcher, water, and ice
- Sugar, if needed
- Measuring cup
- Spoon and glasses
- Chalkboard or overhead projector and transparency markers

Lesson procedure

1. Lead a discussion about expository writing, and give examples of expository writing that explains a process.
2. Demonstrate a task that requires several steps to complete, for example, how to make a drink from powdered drink mix.
3. While demonstrating the process, stop after each step and ask students to explain the step. Write and number the step on the board (or have a student do the recording on the board), as follows:
 - 1 — Gather the drink mix package, a spoon, sugar, ice, measuring cup, and a 2-quart pitcher.
 - 2 — Carefully open the drink mix package at the top, being careful not to spill any of the contents.
 - 3 — Pour the drink mix into the empty pitcher.
 - 4 — Measure one cup of sugar, and pour it into the pitcher.
 - 5 — Measure and add one cup of water.
 - 6 — Stir the drink mix into the water until all of the powder is dissolved.
 - 7 — Add ice cubes.
 - 8 — Add additional water until the 2-quart pitcher is full.
 - 9 — Pour drink into glasses.
 - 10 — Enjoy a refreshing drink.
4. Have the students choose a multi-step process about which to write, such as:
 - How to eat a fruit roll up (or any sandwich-type cookie) “properly.”
 - How to get your dog (or cat) to go outside.
 - How to convince a parent to let you stay up a half-hour past your usual bedtime.Instruct the students to number and write down the steps for their chosen task.
6. Follow this lesson with the next lesson on using transitions in writing, in which the numbers of the steps are replaced by appropriate transitions and a paragraph is written in standard paragraph format.

WRITING Lesson Plan → Adding Transitions

Organizing Topic Composing and Revising

Related Standard(s) of Learning 6.6, 7.8, 8.7

Objective(s)

- The student will add transitions in an expository paragraph.

Materials needed

- Chalkboard or overhead projector and transparency markers
- Transparency of the 10-steps-to-making-powdered-drink-mix list from the previous lesson

Lesson procedure

1. Display on the board or overhead the 10 steps to making powdered drink mix.
2. Lead students in a discussion about the use of transitions in writing, stressing that transition words are words dealing with time order.
3. Have the students replace the numbers of the steps with some transition words that are used in expository paragraphs, rewriting the list into an expository paragraph in proper format. Words to use include the following:

<i>afterwards</i>	<i>in the beginning</i>	<i>finally</i>	<i>after</i>
<i>secondly</i>	<i>at last</i>	<i>first</i>	<i>when</i>
<i>then</i>	<i>later</i>	<i>afterwards</i>	<i>at the same time</i>
<i>meanwhile</i>	<i>before</i>	<i>during</i>	

WRITING Lesson Plan → Vibrant Verbs

Organizing Topic Composing and Revising

Related Standard(s) of Learning 7.8

Objective(s)

- The student will replace ordinary verbs with “vibrant” verbs.

Materials needed

- Overhead projector and markers
- List of complete sentences
- Transparency of chart shown below

Lesson procedure

1. Lead students in a discussion about the use of “vibrant” verbs to create dynamic writing.
2. Ask students to suggest additional verbs that could be used instead of the verb *said*. This list might include *screamed, whispered, stuttered, mumbled, yelled, uttered, and shouted*.
3. Have the students locate the verbs in a series of sentences and replace them with more vibrant verbs. Several examples are shown below. During the next lesson, students will be asked to revise their own writing using vibrant verbs.

Verb	Vibrant Verb
Jane <i>said</i> that her cat was lost.	Jane <i>screamed</i> that her cat was lost.
Bob <i>walked</i> a mile.	Bob <i>huffed and puffed</i> for a mile.
Susan <i>ate</i> the candy.	Susan <i>savored</i> the candy.

WRITING Lesson Plan → Maintaining Consistent Pronouns

Organizing Topic Usage and Mechanics

Related Standard(s) of Learning 7.9

Objective(s)

- The student will choose pronouns to agree with antecedents.
- The student will differentiate between first and third person pronouns.
- The student will change the pronouns in writing from first to third person.
- The student will understand that writing should be in a consistent point of view.

Materials needed

- Examples of writing in consistent first person and third person points of view
- An existing piece of writing from each student
- Teacher-collected student examples of pronoun-antecedent agreement errors

Lesson procedure

1. Lead the students in a discussion about the need to maintain consistent point of view and pronoun-antecedent agreement in writing.
2. Have the students pick one sentence from the examples and change it from one point of view to another, for example:
 - “I always knew I was special.” (first person) becomes “The girl always knew she was different from the other people in her village.” (third person)
 - “We had walked for several miles before we noticed the sky was growing purple.” (first person) becomes “The hikers were so intent on following the bear tracks that they did not noticed the changing color of the sky from blue to purple.” (third person)
3. Distribute a paragraph of writing with a strong and consistent first person point of view, and ask students to highlight all the pronouns.
4. Ask students to revise the paragraph to make the point of view third person.
5. Lead students in revising the following sentences to keep pronouns consistent with their antecedents:
 - A teenager should not always expect success when you try hard.
 - People often get lazy when we go on vacation.
 - When one engages in stealing, you should be prepared for the consequences.
6. Distribute teacher-collected student examples of pronoun-antecedent agreement errors. Ask students to revise them to keep pronouns consistent with their antecedents. When students have finished, ask for volunteers to share their revisions. Discuss their revisions with the class.
7. Ask students to revise pieces of their own writing to maintain consistent point of view and pronoun-antecedent agreement.

WRITING Lesson Plan → Identifying the Verb

Organizing Topic Usage and Mechanics

Related Standard(s) of Learning 6.7, 7.9, 8.8

Objective(s)

- The student will identify the verb in the sentence.

Materials needed

- Overhead projector and transparency markers
- List of complete sentences

Lesson procedure

- Display the question, “Where’s the verb?” on the overhead. Suggest to students that a useful technique for locating the verb in a sentence is make the sentence negative by adding *does not* (*do not*) or *did not*. The verb phrase usually will follow the word *not*, for example: “Simon tried to put the bike in the garage.” “Simon did not **try** to put the bike in the garage.”
- Provide practice by giving students sentences and asking them to use this technique to locate the verb. Some examples are:

Sentence	Sentence with <i>does not</i> (<i>do not</i>) or <i>did not</i> added	Word following <i>not</i> is the verb
Jane lost her cat	Jane <i>did not</i> lose her cat.	<i>Lose</i> follows <i>not</i> ; <i>lose</i> is the verb (in its past-tense form, <i>lost</i>).
They hiked a mile	They <i>did not</i> hike a mile.	<i>Hike</i> follows <i>not</i> ; <i>hike</i> is the verb.
Susan and Marie eat candy.	Susan and Marie <i>do not</i> eat candy.	<i>Eat</i> follows <i>not</i> ; <i>eat</i> is the verb.

This verb search technique is a suggestion from the National Council of Teachers of English in their article “Some Questions and Answers about Grammar.”

WRITING Lesson Plan → Combining and Diagramming Compound Sentences

Organizing Topic Usage and Mechanics

Related Standard(s) of Learning 7.9

Objective(s)

- The student will identify and diagram compound sentences.
- The student will edit writing so that it contains compound sentences.
- The student will use sentence diagramming as a graphic organizer to edit writing to achieve sentence variety.

Materials needed

- Overhead projector and transparency markers
- Transparency of diagrammed sentences
- Grammar book with examples of diagramming
- Internet site for diagramming sentences, such as <http://www.netmagic.net/~taz/files/diagrams.pdf>
- Power Point presentation for diagramming sentences, such as that found at <http://ccc.comnet.edu/grammar/>
- Examples of writing from student writing or a grammar book containing numerous simple sentences

Lesson procedure

1. Read a paragraph that contains a series of simple sentences. Lead students in a discussion of the impact of the writing. Students will probably say that it is boring or babyish.
2. Show diagramming of simple sentences on the overhead to show students the repeating pattern of such simple sentences.
3. Ask students to combine the ideas and sentences, using one of the following coordinating conjunctions, *and*, *but*, *or*, or *so*. Identify the combined sentence as a compound sentence. An example is the combining of the two simple sentences, “I like all animals.” and “I especially like my cat.” into the complex sentence “I like all animals, but I especially like my cat.”
4. Lead the students in a discussion about the fact that a compound sentence varies the rhythm of a paragraph, making the writing less monotonous and more interesting to the reader.
5. Demonstrate diagramming this compound sentence.
6. Provide examples of simple sentences that can be made into compound sentences. Have students rewrite the simple sentences as compound sentences and then diagram them.

WRITING Test Items from the Virginia Standards of Learning Assessment

Released writing test items can be accessed at <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/VDOE/Assessment/releasedtests.html>. Reviewing these assessment items and using them in the classroom will allow educators and students to become familiar with the types of questions being asked as well as the testing format.

Teachers should also review the electronic format with students to acquaint them with the tools and functionality of online testing. Released writing online testing can be accessed at http://etest.ncs.com/Customers/Virginia/pat_home.htm.