

ENGLISH STANDARDS OF LEARNING
ENHANCED SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

WRITING *LESSON PLANS*
Grade 6



Commonwealth of Virginia
Department of Education
Richmond, Virginia
2004

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 → Replacing Anemic Words

Organizing Topic Composing and Revising

Related Standard(s) of Learning 6.6

Objective(s)

- The student will identify passages with “anemic words” and replace such words with precise vocabulary.

Materials needed

- Overhead projector and transparency markers
- Transparency of a descriptive paragraph with insufficient elaboration
- A large “Rest in Peace Gravestone” poster or “Garbage Dump” poster
- 3-by-5 cards

Lesson procedure

- Display the following sentence on the board or overhead: “We went on a nice trip and saw a lot of interesting things and learned a lot of stuff.” After reading the sentence several times, quiz the students on its meaning:
 - Who went?
 - Where did they go?
 - What did they see?
 - What did they learn?
 - Would you like to go on a similar trip?

The answer to the last question should be “Who knows?” because the students should recognize that the other questions are impossible to answer precisely — insufficient information is given.

- Display on the board a chart like the following one, and ask students to replace weak, “anemic” language with stronger, specific language like that shown:

Anemic language	Specific language
we	my little brother and I
went	hiked
nice	for three hours
trip	on the Appalachian Trail
a lot	four
interesting	wild
things	orchids
a lot of stuff	grow in lower elevations

Rewrite the sentence as follows: “My little brother and I hiked for three hours on the Appalachian Trail and located four different kinds of wild orchids that grow in lower elevations.”

- Display the RIP Gravestone poster or Garbage Dump poster on a bulletin board. Write anemic words on 3-by-5 cards, and pin them on the visual display. Pin all words that should be replaced on this poster, adding additional words as lessons continue throughout the unit. Such words might include *pretty*, *nice*, *stuff*, *things*, *interesting*, and *good*.

WRITING Lesson Plan → Elaboration

Organizing Topic Composing and Revising

Related Standard(s) of Learning 6.6

Objective(s)

- The student will identify passages that have insufficient elaboration.

Materials needed

- Overhead projector and transparency markers
- Transparency of descriptive paragraphs with insufficient elaboration (see “Original writing” column below)

Lesson procedure

- Have a student read the paragraphs about Johnson Beach (shown in the left-hand column below).
- Lead students in a discussion about insufficient elaboration in the writing. Highlight words and phrases that show a lack of elaboration.
- Reveal the rewritten first paragraph, and analyze it with the students, pointing out how the elaboration helps the reader “see” the setting and anticipate what may come next.
- Have students work in cooperative groups to take a paragraph and rewrite it, using more specific information. A completed example is shown below:

Original writing with little elaboration included	Revised writing with elaboration and explanation included
An event that has affected my life was the summer I went to Johnson Beach with my family. I don’t know why this has affected me, nothing really big happened.	My summer vacation with my family to the beach resort at Johnson Beach affected my life and attitude. Although nothing spectacular happened, I experienced first hand the vastness of the ocean and the uniqueness of Johnson Beach.
We took a ferry from Cape Anna to Johnson Island, and the ocean was so vast and beautiful . It was windy and wet. When we got to the island, it was not anything really special, or so I thought.	We took a ferry from Cape Anna to Johnson Island. The trip lasted only twenty minutes, but half way, I could see only water. I had never been out of sight of land before, and I felt tiny and insignificant in all the vastness. I loved the feeling of the wind and the ocean spray on my face. When we got to the island, it was not anything really special, or so I thought.
My first trip to the beach was wonderful . The water was so warm and crystal clear. It was sandy.	I thought I knew what to expect when I went to the beach because I had read about the beach. I had only knowledge and not experience. The water was warm and crystal clear. The water tasted salty on the tip of my tongue. The salt water made my whole body sting. The sand was so white it blinded me with the glare from the sun.
When we went into town to find a restaurant, the people were so nice and all of the little shops were so wonderful . At night I would walk along the beach and it was so peaceful and beautiful . The ocean was so haunting at night.	After swimming and sunbathing all afternoon, we straggled into the town of Johnson sunburned, sandy, and starving. We didn’t find the usual chain restaurants or food courts. We discovered Mama Mia’s Pizza Parlor. The owner insisted we call her Mama, and she treated us like her own hungry family. After dinner we walked along the dark beach and heard the rhythmic pounding of the waves.
Now all I can think about is the ocean and going back to Johnson Beach. I loved it there. It was so pretty .	Now all I can think about is the ocean and going back to Johnson Beach. For the first time, I didn’t just read about the ocean, but I experienced and loved it.

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 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.