Tell a story about a time when you...

Lessons To Improve Narrative Descriptive Writing

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Improving Narrative Descriptive Writing

Narrative Writing Needs Structure:

One year when I was teaching fifth grade I thought it would be a great idea to end our mystery unit by having the students write a mystery of their own. After six weeks of planning, conferencing, drafting, editing, drafting, editing, conferencing, editing, re-writing, drafting, planning, drafting, editing, I was ready to kill myself. I could see the headlines: REAL LIFE MYSTERY: TEACHER DIES TEACHING MYSTERY UNIT. I didn’t literally kill myself, but the amount of work involved did kill a small part of my brain. In the end, the mysteries were written, most of them anyway, but I think I wrote huge sections for some students. Most of the mysteries made no sense and they were either way, way, way too long (18 chapters in one case) or way, way, way too short (4 paragraphs). I vowed I would never do it again.

The next year, new fifth graders arrived in my classroom asking, “Are we going to get to write mysteries like last year’s class? My friend said it was her favorite part of the year!” Sadly, I realized I needed to do it again. But I needed to do it differently. Students needed a structure, and they needed more practice on the sub-skills of writing. Since they had been reading mostly novels, they needed to understand what a SHORT mystery might look like. They needed a model of a five-chapter mystery in which each chapter was about two double-spaced pages. The whole thing would be about 10 double-spaced pages total! Once I figured out the structure, the rest was easy — well, not easy, but much, much more manageable.

That mystery unit taught me more than it taught the students. I learned that when teaching writing — the creative process is helped by structure. Many authors use a structure to guide their writing. The structure applies to the overall plan of a piece but also to the structure of sentences.

The Sub-Skills of Narrative Writing

In 1993, the state of Massachusetts developed a new writing test for fourth graders. The prompt called for narrative writing. I believe the question was something like:

*The summer is the favorite time of year for many children. Children like to do lots of different things in the summer like swim, ride bikes, play with friends or something totally different.*

*Write a story about a fun time that you had on a summer day. Give enough details to show the reader what happened and why it was fun.*

*You may use the space below to plan what you are going to write (notes, outlines, other pre-writing activities).*

In many of the schools I visited, students struggled mightily to write the multi-paragraph essay the state wanted. First of all, most students learned from their teachers that they needed to write a “five paragraph essay.” Their experience with the five paragraph essay led most students to write:
Summer is my favorite season for three reasons. I like it because it is really hot. I like it because we don’t have school. I like it because I can do fun things like ride my bike. I like all these things. That’s why I like summer… (and on and on until) Thank you for reading my paper.

The “stories” were by and large a disaster. The first and most obvious problem was that students had not responded to the prompt. They had interpreted “five paragraph essay” to mean a persuasive essay. In fact, the prompt wanted narrative writing – the kind of writing in which you tell a story. As a result, the stories lacked an attention-getting lead, setting, characters, action, transitions, and/or effective endings. They were simply not stories. Students had not understood the structure.

The second problem was that students seemed unable to add any specific detail. The stories lacked effective word choice and literary devices like similes or onomatopoeia. There was no attempt to appeal to the senses or add dialogue. Furthermore, the sentence variety was weak. In this piece, most sentences begin with “I” and are simple sentences. There is no sentence combining or effort to alter the sentence structure.

Why did this happen? Telling a story or responding to a narrative prompt can be very challenging for young writers. Even if they understand that you want them to tell a story (tell about your summer vacation) they often respond with a list of things they did. “After that we rode the roller coaster. Then we got cotton candy. Then we went on the merry-go-round. Then…” Vocabulary is often undeveloped in many young writers and they struggle to find original ways to show what they experienced. (“It was cool, fun, stuff…”) Furthermore, students don’t like to plan and it’s hard to write a coherent story without some kind of plan. Finally, when students realize that they will be graded on punctuation, grammar, and spelling they tend to freeze up, shut down, and resist taking any risks with their writing. In the end, many students have trouble producing one thoughtful paragraph much less a well-organized, multi-paragraphed composition that describes a time, a place, gives interesting details about an event, and ends with an insight or reaction.

What follows are lessons that help break down the task of writing a story by focusing on a smaller set of sub-skills (in the Collins Writing Program these are called focus correction areas, FCAs). Teachers can direct students’ attention to these very specific criteria, develop them with mini-lessons, and practice them in short assignments. It begins with a group of skills I refer to as the Writer’s Tools (in some places Tools Of Effective Description TOEDS). It includes short practice writing exercises and ways to teach planning.**

My approach is not intended to promote formulaic writing, rather to offer concrete and focused practice on skills that students can master and then hopefully move beyond. If you are worried about students just mimicking the writing that you’ve demonstrated in class and in this book, you would do well to heed the words of Stephen King, who said that for many artists and writers: “Imitation precedes creation.”

**The book references a very helpful companion book, *7 Sentence Building Activities*, by Gerry Morris which will help develop sentence power. The sentence-building book can be used alone or in combination with this book.

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1 *On Writing*, by Stephen King, Scribner Press, 2000
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**A survey:** Which narrative techniques do you know about?

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Writer’s Tools

When
Who
Where

- Dialogue (inner and outer)
- Vivid verbs
- Awesome adjectives
- Nifty nouns
- Similes and Metaphors
- Hyperbole
- Onomatopoeia and Alliteration
- Personification
- Punctuation for effect
- Senses (and Symbols)

- Don’t tell: show!

Closer
Pener
Mood
Writer’s Tools
A Simpler Version for K-1

When
Who
Where

Nifty nouns
Onomatopoeia and Alliteration
Vivid verbs
Awesome adjectives
Senses and Similes
Survey

I use the survey on the next page to get a sense of how much the students know about the techniques of effective description. The data is self-reported and students may inflate their scores. If fact, to get a truer sense you might eliminate the descriptors and just ask students to give examples of each technique. I wanted to involve the students in a more collaborate way as we begin the unit. I want them to set goals, to see how using these techniques can improve their writing, and to look for examples of these techniques as they evaluate the writing of others.

The survey, in its current form, does not address all aspects of narrative writing. I did not add questions about attention getting beginnings or powerful closers, nor did I address elements of planning and sentence combining (elements which are discussed in this book.) You could add questions on these ideas. But I often think less is more and perhaps the best place to start is just with the first page of the survey.

A trick to remember the most critical techniques is:

V Vivid verbs
A Adjectives (adjective combinations like big, black bear)
N Nouns the more specific the better
S Similes and metaphors
H Hyperbole (exaggeration)
O Onomatopoeia (sound words: for example, “Whack!”) and Alliteration (purple, plastic purse)
P Personification (“the clouds raced…”)
P Punctuation for effect!!
S Senses (“The dark-chocolate brownies were warm, sweet-smelling, and soft.”)

Then you can add:

www.vanshops.com

www = Who, when, where
1st DOT = Dialogue (inner and outer)
2nd DOT = Don’t tell us… show us  Don’t go fast: Don’t use and then, and then, and then!
C = great Closer!
O = great Opener!
M = Mood (For example: use the weather to create a mood for piece)
A Survey
Techniques of Effective Description

Put a 3 next to techniques you understand and use frequently in your writing
Put a 2 next to techniques you understand but don’t really use in your writing
Put a 1 next to techniques you’ve heard of…
Put a 0 if you have very little idea about it

1. Vivid verbs (limped to the finish line)
2. Terrific adjectives (spectacular day)
3. Adjective/adjective noun combinations (tired, old dog)
4. Adjective conjunction adjective (tired but determined...)
5. Hyphen adjectives (midnight-black, death-defying, bone-chilling.)
6. Specific nouns (He wore plastic flip-flops with little pink tulips)
7. Similes (The bully circled the playground like a shark looking...)
8. Hyperbole/exaggeration (It was hotter than the surface of the sun)
9. Onomatopoeia (The soft squish was followed by a loud crack)
10. Personification (Wakefield’s knuckleball danced and darted)
11. Sensory Language (I could hear the smacking of her lips...)
12. Use weather for mood (The fog gave everything a deathly look)
13. Metaphors (The idea of failing was a dark cloud over me.)
14. Alliteration (He swooned, slipped, and splatted onto the ice)
15. Slow down the action (Write 4-5 sentences about 1 moment: )
As I waited in the roller coaster line, I could hear the clicking of the seatbelts, the hiss of the breaks, and the gasps of the passengers...

16. **Dialogue** to develop characters (“Mom, can you bring me…”)

17. **Internal dialogue** What you were thinking/ or include a brain argument: *(I thought I should eat the cookie but then I said to myself, no, don’t do it your mom will kill you... or Where am I? I wondered as I rolled out of the tent)*

18. **Show don’t tell** (The car was old. It was dented, rusty, and covered in a thick, dusty grime.)

19. **Zoom in/zoom out** (Then I looked at his fingernails. They were long, dirty, appeared to be sharp. When I looked up he was…)

20. **Use Repetition** to build rhythm (It was dark—really, really dark.)

21. **Use a Symbol** (And then I saw the old basketball again. I couldn’t believe what I had lost.)

22. **Vary sentence length to create rhythm** Use a mix of long and short sentences or include one or more compound sentences and one really short sentence. (My dog rocks!)

23. **Add variety by varying sentence beginnings** Begin with an *ing* word, a prepositional phrase, an adjective conjunction adjective, a “to phrase”, a “when, since, dependent-type phrase”, an adverb, a simile

24. Include, but don’t overuse one of these: a **dash**, a colon, an exclamation mark, question mark, **ellipsis**, **appositive**, semi-colon

**TOTAL SCORE:**

**DATE:**
Lesson 1
Identifying the Writer’s Tools (www.VANSHOPS.COM)
Techniques of Effective Description (TOEDs)

Time: 15 minutes

Purpose: The purpose is to introduce the techniques of effective description.

Materials: an overhead transparency of a section of text that includes many effective descriptive techniques (possibly a copy for each student); chart paper and marker

Overview: In this first lesson, students will look at a piece of writing and identify some of the narrative techniques used by authors to create a picture in the reader’s mind. A list of these techniques will be posted on chart paper. As the unit unfolds the list will grow to include new techniques and examples.

Introduction: Have students prepare for a Type One writing. Explain that in Type One writing, the main point is to get ideas down on paper. Tell them they will have 3 minutes to try and get down 4 lines or more (adjust number of lines to be appropriate for your students). Then, put a passage like the one below on the overhead projector.

“AHHH!” screamed Jack and Annie.
The giant sea serpent arched its long neck into the sky. Its scaly green skin glistened in the late sunlight.
Staring at Jack and Annie, its eyes burned like bright yellow lamps.
Jack and Annie were frozen with terror.
The monster opened its mouth. Inside were hideous fangs and a purple forked tongue. The serpent made a terrible hissing sound!
Jack and Annie huddled together on the rock. Frantic seal barks came from far away.

From Magic Tree House: Summer of the Sea Serpent #31 by Mary Pope Osborne (page 79)

Read it to students. Then ask them, “Why is this good describing? What does the author do to create a picture in your mind? Try to be specific. Write at least 4 lines.” I often model a few ideas out loud as I pretend to write. The author uses good details, like … and she uses adjectives…” After the students write for 3 minutes, have them turn to a partner and share their ideas for another minute or two (they could check things they have in common, add ideas their partner had, and/or star the most important ideas). After some pair sharing, explain to the whole class that writers, like carpenters and painters, use tools to create things. In this passage, Mary Pope Osborne has used some tools as well. Ask them, “What techniques did she use?”

Development: Use the chart paper to collect student ideas. I try to get at least five or six ideas on the paper. Ask students for specific examples and ask them to explain their ideas. If possible give them the names for some of the parts of speech as they suggest them. “Yes, scaly, green skin– that is an adjective/adjective combination. Two describing words in a row.” Here is a list of some of the techniques I often draw out from the Magic Tree House story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>example</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>adjective, adjective combination</td>
<td>scaly green skin; bright yellow lamps; purple forked tongue; terrible hissing sound</td>
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<tr>
<td>simile</td>
<td>burned like bright yellow lamps</td>
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<tr>
<td>onomatopoeia</td>
<td>hissing sound</td>
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<tr>
<td>vivid verbs</td>
<td>screamed, arched, burned, huddled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention-getting beginning</td>
<td>“Ahhhhh…”</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
If your students are older than 5th grade I might use one of the other passages. (See the *Writing Samples* which follow.)

Tell students to keep their eyes peeled for other examples of these techniques as they read this year. We want to make this list grow!

**Wrap-up:** At the end of the lesson, ask students to take out a sheet of paper for a Type Two. Ask them to write down two techniques we discussed today and give an example for each.

It’s possible to give this short quiz at the beginning of the next class. It’s also possible to give every student a copy of the notes or have them take a few notes on the paper they used for their Type One.

**Follow up:** Make this activity a regular part of your class. Use your morning message, look for student examples or examples from your read aloud, or from your textbooks. Have students pay attention, find examples, and name the techniques that writers use. Have students make a poster or design colorful words on 8” x 11” card-stock for each of the tools.
1. Student work: Tell about a time when you found something
Note the vivid verbs, attention-getting beginning, simile, adjectives, specific nouns, ending, onomatopoeia, who/when/where in beginning...

“Hey get over here!” my brother screeched to me. It was last January and we were slipping and sliding on the ice by my school. My school has this big field that gets really swampy and mushy in the summer but in the winter it’s like an ice rink. I zipped over to my brother and crashed into him with a SMACK.

My brother was too focused on the ice to notice. He was pointing down at a green rectangle frozen in the ice. “That’s money!” I screamed. We jumped, pounded, chipped on that ice until our toes were like frozen popsicles. When we got it out it was mushy and soggy but it still worked. At the store we got a Hershey bar and a bunch of mini peanut butter cups. We raced back to the field and looked all day. There’s nothing better than free money!

2. From Magic Tree House: Summer of the Sea Serpent #31 by Mary Pope Osborne (page 79)
Note the adjective adjective combinations: scaly green, bright yellow lamps, purple forked tongue, terrible hissing sound. Also, simile (“burned like bright yellow lamps), onomatopoeia (hissing), vivid verbs (screamed, arched, burned, huddled), great opener (“Ahhhh”)

“AHHH!” screamed Jack and Annie.
The giant sea serpent arched its long neck into the sky. Its scaly green skin glistened in the late sunlight. Staring at Jack and Annie, its eyes burned like bright yellow lamps.
Jack and Annie were frozen with terror.
The monster opened its mouth. Inside were hideous fangs and a purple forked tongue. The serpent made a terrible hissing sound!
Jack and Annie huddled together on the rock. Frantic seal barks came from far away.

3. From Holes by Louis Sachar (page 206-207)
Note the verbs (beating, screamed, springing, shatter, scurried, flinch, dig) and the appeal to the senses (felt the blast, felt the tiny claws), adjectives (very still, tiny, closed), zooming in, sentence variety—mixing of long and short...

Five hundred seconds later, his heart was still beating.
Mr. Pendanski screamed. The lizard which had been in the cereal box was springing toward him. Mr. Sir shot it in midair.

Stanley felt the blast shatter the air around him. The lizards scurried frantically across his very still body. He did not flinch. Stanley felt tiny claws dig into the side of his face as the lizard pulled itself off his neck and up past his chin...The lizard ran across his closed mouth.

4. From the BFG by Roald Dahl (page 10-11)
Note the adjectives (silvery, bent, crooked, pale, ghostly, dim, misty), hyphen-adjectives (milk-white), simile (like houses in a fairy tale), specific nouns (Mrs. Rance’s, buttons, wool, bits of elastic), repetition...

In the silvery moonlight, the village street she knew so well seemed completely different. The houses looked bent and crooked, like houses in a fairy tale. Everything was pale and ghostly and milky-white.
Across the road, she could see Mrs. Rance’s shop, where you bought buttons and wool and bits of elastic. It didn’t look real. The was something dim and misty about that too.

Sophie allowed her eye to travel further and further down the street.
Suddenly she froze. There was something coming up the street on the opposite side.
It was something black...
Something tall and black...
Something very tall and very black and very thin.
5. From *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L’Engle Page 1
Note the mood and the weather, specific nouns (patchwork quilt), adjectives (wraithlike), personification/verbs (ripped, scudded, lashing, raced), sentence variety (short, long, and then short).

It was a dark and stormy night.
In her attic bedroom Margaret Murry, wrapped in an old patchwork quilt, sat on the foot of her bed and watched the trees tossing in the frenzied lashing of the wind. Behind the trees clouds scudded frantically across the sky. Every few moments the moon ripped through them, creating wraithlike shadows that raced along the ground.
The house shook.

6. From *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* by J.K.Rowling (Page 184-185)
Note the simile (as though it had, like a diagonal gash, as a coin), verbs, specific nouns (chisel, gash), color adjectives (vivid, electric blue), adjective series (small, dark, beady), verbs, zooming in (on they eyes)

The lightning had thrown the man’s face into sharp relief, and it was a face unlike any Harry had ever seen. It looked as though it had been carved out of weathered wood by someone who had only the vaguest idea of what human faces are supposed to look like, and was none too skilled with a chisel. Every inch of skin seemed to be scarred. The mouth looked like a diagonal gash, and a large chunk of the nose was missing. But it was the man’s eyes that made him frightening.

One of them was small, dark, and beady. The other was large, round as a coin, and a vivid, electric blue. The blue eye was moving ceaselessly, without blinking, and was rolling up, down, and from side to side, quite independently of the normal eye — and then it rolled right over, pointing into the back of the man’s head, so that all they could see was whiteness.

7. From *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, by Mark Twain Chapter 9
Note adjectives, hyphen-adjectives, verbs, personification, senses…

It was a graveyard of the old-fashioned western kind. It was on a hill, about a mile and a half from the village. It had a crazy board fence around it, which leaned inward in places, and outward the rest of the time, but stood upright nowhere. Grass and weeds grew rank over the whole cemetery. All the old graves were sunken in, there was not a tombstone on the place; round-topped, worm-eaten boards staggered over the graves leaning for support and finding none. “Sacred to the memory of” So and so had been painted on them once, but it could no longer be read, on the most of them, even if there had been light.

A faint wind moaned through the trees, and Tom feared it might be the spirits of the dead, complaining of being disturbed...Then they waited in silence for what seemed a long time. The hooting of a distant owl was all the sound that troubled the dead stillness.

8. From *Bud Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis
Note onomatopoeia (tap-tap), specific nouns (high heels), simile (like firecrackers)

*HERE WE GO AGAIN.* We were all standing in line waiting for breakfast when one of the caseworkers came in and tap-tap tapped down the line. Uh-oh, this meant bad news, either they’d found a foster home for somebody or somebody was about to get paddled. All the kids watched the woman as she moved along the line, her high heel shoes sounding like little firecrackers going off on the wooden floor. (Pg 1.)

He’d left the car door open and I could hear the engine of the car grumbling, it was saying, *wugga, wugga, wugga, wugga, wugga.* Page 100

Look for more from your favorite read-alouds!
Lesson 2
Using Awesome Adjectives

Time: 15 minutes

Purpose: to introduce appropriate adjectives and have students experiment with them in their writing

Materials:
1. Adjective sample (make an overhead)
2. Adjective sort (copy onto index cards or have students copy them) use markers to color code each group to form four sentences (color code one group blue, another group black, red, green etc.)
3. Blank Adjective Sort (optional)
4. Adjective Chart Paper for Carousel (optional)
5. Type Three paper

Overview: This lesson will begin a pattern of lessons that introduces a technique of effective description and lays the groundwork for additional lessons. In this lesson, students silently organize themselves into four color-coded groups and then build an adjective-filled sentence that they dramatically read to the class.

Introduction: Ask students, “Do you know what an adjective is?” If you see blank faces, write on the board The old, disgusting, brown sneakers smelled like a sweaty locker room. Then say, “Ugly, disgusting, brown, sweaty… These are adjectives. Can you guess what an adjective is? Turn to your partner and try to work out a definition.” After a minute, point out that adjectives are very useful for a writer. Adjectives help the writer describe the details in a piece of writing. Adjectives can give more information about the senses: what something felt like, looked like, smelled like, tasted like or sounded like. These kinds of sense-adjectives are called sensory adjectives. Tell students that today they will experiment with using adjectives.

Development: Explain that you will be giving each student a card that has one or more words on it. The words will form a sentence once you find others who belong with you. Explain that the cards are color-coded and that once you give them the “go” signal they will have to silently walk around the room and find the others who have the same color card they have. Tell students that when they have found all the people in their sentence group, they should go off to a separate area of the room (make sure not to tell specifically where to go, just say go to a corner somewhere. This forces students to find the other people and then work together). After reviewing these directions, set them off. When they have found everyone in the group give the next instructions.

Get their attention and say, “Now, that you found everyone in your group, try to make a complete sentence out of your words. When you get in the right order, practice reading your sentence to the class. You must read it with some feeling, some passion, some emotion and please be loud!” You might model this briefly.

Let the students get organized and practice their sentences. When they are ready, share them and point out how the adjectives add great detail. You might ask each group if they think they have sensory adjectives, if so which sense?

Wrap-up: I usually make a big deal out of collecting the pieces. I might say, “When I give the signal, give all the pieces to the person in your group who is wearing the most red. Then, red-wearing people bring them to me and I will put them in this plastic bag. After collecting the adjectives, I remind them how important it is to use awesome adjectives not the same old tired adjectives like nice, fun, good, and big.

I always like to end with a quick quiz or ask them to do a worksheet or make up a sentence with adjectives. You can also use Jerry Morris Template #1 after this lesson.
Follow up on a later day (or in the same class): Show the passage below (BFG) and ask students to identify at least three adjectives in the passage and to explain how adjectives enhance the writing.

Next, tell students that you are going to read a selection from Roald Dahl’s The BFG and afterwards you are going to ask them to do a Type One Writing. “What are some of the ways Dahl makes this passage descriptive? What words jump out at you? Are there any adjectives? Make a list of the descriptive words and explain why they are good choices for the passage. You must include at least 5 words and 2 lines of writing or more.”

From the BFG by Roald Dahl (page 10-11)

In the silvery moonlight, the village street she knew so well seemed completely different. The houses looked bent and crooked, like houses in a fairy tale. Everything was pale and ghostly and milky-white.

Across the road, she could see Mrs. Rance’s shop, where you bought buttons and wool and bits of elastic. It didn’t look real. The was something dim and misty about that too.

Sophie allowed her eye to travel further and further down the street.

Suddenly she froze. There was something coming up the street on the opposite side.

It was something black...

Something tall and black...

Something very tall and very black and very thin.

After the Type One, have students quickly share their ideas with a partner then call on some pairs to share their thoughts. Draw out the idea of using carefully chosen words and discuss why they are used. (To give the reader a better idea of what something looked, smelled, sounded, felt, or tasted like.) In this passage note the descriptive words: silvery, bent, crooked, pale, ghostly, dim, misty and the hyphenated words (milky-white). You can also call attention to the simile (like houses in a fairy tale) and the specific nouns (Mrs. Rance’s, buttons, wool, bits of elastic), repetition. ) Tell them these describing words are called adjectives; they describe people, places, and things (nouns and pronouns). (Have them chant the word. Maybe point out that an adjective is no substitute for a good noun (big dog vs. Husky) but they can be very useful: ie. huge, slobbery Great Dane. Explain that adjectives can occur alone or in combinations. They can even be separated by little conjunction words like: and, but, nor (Tired but excited, cold and miserable; neither sad nor happy) and can be used with a little dash called a hyphen: milky-white. Then you should add adjectives the list of writer’s techniques if you haven’t already put it on the list.

Additional follow up:

Optional Follow up #1: Students can make their own sort by writing a sentence on index cards with at least 2 adjectives for other students to sort.

Optional Follow up #2: Write 1 paragraph about a favorite place or favorite food using sensory adjectives.
Make an Adjective Sentence I

Use a colored marker and copy each word onto an index card. Each group of words should be written in the same color.

Explain to students that you will be giving them a words written in different colors. Then, when you give the signal they will have to get up, without talking, and find others who have a word with they same color they have. Once they have found all the people with the same color they have, they should gather into a corner.

Have groups make a sentence then, read them together. Discuss the importance of specific adjectives.

Red group:
the
fajitas
sizzling
tasted
hot
delicious

Blue group:
the
cool
water
clear
was
refreshing

Black group:
the
tiny
poodle
yapping
was
irritating

Purple group:
the
fifty
skateboard
jump
cruel
foot
looked
and
dangerous

Green group:
the
damp
smelled
basement
socks
like
moldy

The sizzling hot fajitas tasted delicious.
The cool clear water was refreshing.
\textit{The tiny yapping poodle was irritating.}
The fifty foot skateboard jump looked cruel and dangerous.
The damp basement smelled like moldy socks.
Make your own sort

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The adjective-sorting sentences are below. Feel free to change them to fit your students

1. The old, dirty-yellow school bus rattled down the bumpy lane.
2. My heavy, overflowing backpack felt like a giant boulder crushing me.
3. The delicious, steaming-hot, pepperoni pizza tasted spicy and cheesy like it was from heaven.
4. The fluffy, new-fallen snow covered the long, steep hill like a white blanket.
Lesson 3
Picture Prompt  Harris Burdick: Through the Window
Using Adjective/Adjective Combinations

Time: 30-40 minutes

Purpose: The purpose is for students to write a short description of a narrative moment using Adjective/adjective combinations and other techniques of effective description.

Materials: overhead of picture prompt

Overview: In this lesson students will practice using the adjective/adjective combination while describing a picture prompt. Students will also learn to include who, when, and where at the beginning of their pieces.

Introduction: Tell students you are going to read them a passage from Chapter Two of The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle by Avi. Tell them the story is about a 13-year-old girl who must travel alone across the ocean for two months aboard a merchant ship with a crew of all men. Read the passage.

Ask students to do a quick Type One, “List as many adjectives as they can in the following passage. (2 minutes, list at least three adjectives and write 2 lines or more.)” When finished they should share with a partner. Discuss their ideas and then explain to students that in this lesson they will practice with the Techniques of Effective Description with a special focus on the adjective/adjective combination.

(2 adjectives in a row) in the following passage (there are three adj/adj—frayed green jacket; darting, unfocused eyes; narrow ferretlike face; weathered dark and possibly ill-shaven):

He was a small man—most seafaring men are small—barely taller than I and dressed in a frayed green jacket over a white shirt that was none too clean. His complexion was weathered dark, his chin ill-shaven. His mouth was unsmiling. His fingers fidgeted and his feet shuffled. His darting, unfocused eyes, set deep in a narrow ferretlike face, gave the impression of one who is constantly on watch for threats that might appear from any quarter at any moment.

From The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle by Avi (Chapter Two)

After a quick discussion, tell students that today they will get a chance to use adjectives to describe a scene and tell a short story. Explain that in this assignment, they will have to use a graphic organizer to generate some great adjectives. Have them set up their paper in the manner shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adjectives</th>
<th>Nouns</th>
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Explain that you will set the scene for their story. It’s last week or last month, or last summer… and you were on your way home from school. Maybe you missed the school bus and had to walk, or maybe you were walking home from soccer practice. Or maybe your mom forgot to pick you up, so you decided to walk home, it doesn’t matter, you decide. On your way home, you walked down—I don’t know—Maple Street or Elm Street—and you heard something, maybe a whacking sound, maybe a small scream, maybe a crash, or maybe you smelled something, but whatever it was it caused you to look over to your right where you saw a house, a mansion, a shack, an old apartment, it doesn’t matter, you decide. Maybe it’s the old Burdick Mansion and you know you shouldn’t but you decide to go closer to see about that sound. You walk through the grass and go up to an open window and look in, and this is what you see.

At this point, put up the overhead in dramatic fashion to reveal the old man with the chair over his head attempting to crush something under the carpet. After giving the students a moment to look at it, tell them that you don’t know what happens next, maybe the man looks up at you and you run, race, dash for home. When you get home, no one is home to tell the story to so you write it down.

Now, to describe this scene, we are going to need to identify the nouns that you can see. What are some nouns in this picture that need some describing? Have students suggest some of the nouns. I usually go for the man, the chair, the lump, and the lamp. As the students call out the nouns, show them how to record them on the graphic organizer. One noun goes in each box on the right. After the 4 nouns are on the sheet, tell them it’s time for another Type One. I’m going to give you 2 minutes to come up with at least 2 adjectives for each noun in this picture. They don’t have to be the best ever, just get 2 down for each and then go back and try to get more! For example, what could you say about the man? Crazy? Skinny? Angry? Teeth-clenching? If you want to add a phrase after the noun, you can do that also. Man (with old-fashioned spectacles) but make sure to get your two adjectives in front! Questions? Ready, set, go!

**Development:** After students get their adjectives down, have them share with a neighbor and add more to their list. Then, call on some groups to hear their best. Next, have them set up their papers for a Type 3 writing. Explain the Focus Correction Areas.

The first FCA is: “include who, when and where and show how you got to the window.” The best way to teach this FCA is to model it on the overhead. Write: *It was last summer, when I was on my way home from soccer practice. My mom said it was okay to walk home alone since the field was only a couple of blocks from my house.* Ask students, “Did I give you who, when, where?”

Say, “All I need to do now is get to the window…” Then write: *As I was walking home, I heard a loud crashing sound coming from this broken down house on the corner. It’s funny I had never seen this house before, so I decided to creep up to the side yard and take a quick look in the window.*

Ask, “Did I get you to the window? Did it take a long time? So far I’ve got 5 sentences and I’m ready to describe what I saw. Let’s see if you can do it. Who can give me a who, when, where statement? When might his happen?” *Students will call out last week, last summer, last Halloween, etc.* Ask, “What about where? Where could you be coming from?” *Students might suggest various practices: detention, the bus stop, a friend’s house… “So, it could go like this: Last week, I had to stay after school for detention. Because of this I had to walk home down Main Street. When I got there I saw a flashing shadow coming from the first floor window of the Old Harris cottage. I knew it was a bad idea, but I decided to creep up and peek in.”

Say, “Now, Let’s get back to my description. Remember I’m at the window. I’m going to start a new paragraph, because it’s new action.”
Write: When I looked in I couldn't believe it! There was an old, skinny, bald man holding a heavy antique chair high over his head! He looked either angry or afraid; I couldn't tell which. My eyes darted around the room. In the confusion, I could see a lamp teetering on a table. It was casting long, crazy shadows...And then I saw the lump. It

After writing a bit, tell the students that they should go on to describe the room. They do not have to tell a whole story all they need to do is use good description. As for the ending, they can just end with a reaction. You can model this as well...

Just then, the man looked up at me and said, “YOU!” I jumped back from the window and sprinted the whole way home. I’ll never, ever, ever, go by that house again!
(See Mysteries of Harris Burdick by Chris Van Allsberg drawing of man with chair)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wooden</th>
<th>Big</th>
<th>Scary</th>
<th>Crazy</th>
<th>Oval</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antique</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>Old</td>
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<td><strong>V</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Man</td>
<td>Lamp</td>
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<td>Has glasses</td>
<td>Under the rug</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lamp</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
It was a rainy Saturday last week, when I was walking home from soccer practice. My mom was late picking me up, so I decided to take the shortcut down Maple Lane. When I got to the corner by the old Burdick mansion, I heard a terrible, thumping sound. I knew I shouldn’t, but I crept over to the open window on the first floor and looked in.

I couldn’t believe my eyes. There was a skinny, bald man holding a heavy, wooden chair high over his head. What was he doing? I wondered. Then I saw it. Under the carpet was a head-shaped lump that was inching toward the man. The teetering, ginger-jar lamp on the table was casting weird shadows around the room, and then the man turned and looked at me! Was he angry or scared? I didn’t stop to find out. I turned and sprinted home. As I stood in my living room, I thought, Oh my gosh, I’ll never go back there again! And then, I looked around and wondered, where’s my cat!? 

Check this for FCAs and/or score paper.

Ask: What is good? What could be better?

Strengths: senses, adjectives, onomatopoeia, internal thoughts, ending, verbs

Add/change? Walking to strolling? Add a simile? Change “looked” to “stared?”
Last week I was coming home from soccer and I saw a man. He was a scary man. There was a lump on the floor. Everything was weird looking. There was a lamp that was falling. I ran really fast out of there. The next day I saw the man and he chased me. I ran away again. Then, I saw the lump and I killed it. The end.

Check this for FCAs and/or score paper.

Ask: What is good? What could be better?
Lesson 4
Revising and Editing

Time: 30 minutes

Purpose: The purpose is to model revising and editing and to teach the students how to peer edit by understanding the FCAs.

Materials: highlighters, student work or sample on overhead

Overview: This lesson sets the tone for all the short writing pieces in this collection. In this lesson, students will see how you score a paper and then they will work with a partner to score and edit a piece of writing. After learning to score, they will work alone or with an editing partner to check over their own writing for both content and conventions.

Introduction: Explain to students that you will be playing a game called, “You Be The Teacher.” In this game they will have the chance to be the teacher and give feedback to a student. Tell them, “First, I will model correcting a paper while you watch. Then you will work with another student to grade a second paper together. Finally, you will be the teacher and give a score that you think matches my score.”

Development: Students watch as you go through the piece and check for all FCAs. At the end you will show them how many points the piece receives and highlight a favorite part. Finally, sign your name at the bottom.

Ask students if they have any questions about how you scored the paper. Then, put up the second paper and have the students find a partner and practice scoring and explaining their feedback.

If time allows, try a third paper and have each student score it alone. Discuss results. By this point students should understand the FCA well enough to score and make suggestions to their peers.

In the final step, each student will pair off and peer edit with another student marking off the FCAs and highlighting a favorite part. At the end they will sign the paper, taking the responsibility of a peer editor.
Lesson 5  
Using Specific Nouns

Time: 15 minutes

Purpose: The purpose is to show the difference between specific nouns and general nouns; and the importance of using specific nouns in narrative writing.

Materials: The specific nouns cards

Overview: In this lesson, students will recognize the difference between a general noun and a specific noun and learn the importance of using specific nouns in their writing.

Introduction: Do a Type One writing. Write this sentence on the board:

One time we drove in the car to a restaurant to eat food.

Ask students to write down or draw what they were picturing in their minds. Tell them to draw or write for 2 minutes and write at least 3 lines. At the same time you write or draw what you were really thinking.

On a super hot day last August, my whole family piled into our tiny, Volkswagen beetle to head to Captain Willie’s Restaurant for the “all you can eat” seafood buffet.

The problem is that when you write you need to be specific and that starts with the nouns that you choose. If you want to put a picture in the reader’s mind, always choose the specific noun over the general.

Explain that they will receive a card with either a specific noun or a general noun written on the card. When you give the signal they will stand and then silently try to find the person who has a noun which matches the noun they have. When they find the person they will form a circle around the classroom.

Once they have the circle, give them a minute to practice, then have them read their nouns loudly and with some enthusiasm.

End the lesson by reminding them to always use specific nouns.

Follow up:

1. Complete the sheet on nouns
2. More sentence templates from Jerry Morris’ book
3. Do another picture prompt (use the messy bedroom…)
4. Have a “Noun-Off” or “Play Group Noun Off” or “Carousel Nouns” (see 5D)
5. Give a quick quiz (Type 2).
   A. Find the three nouns in the following sentence: The car whizzed down the road on its way to the restaurant.
   B. Pick one of the nouns and replace it with a more specific noun.
**Concrete Noun Sort 5B**

Print these out. Cut them up. Then give one to each student. Have them silently find the person who matches and make a circle. Have students read them. Discuss the importance of specific nouns over general nouns. Have students make their own for the next class. Challenge them to find their partner quicker (without talking). On the next day, repeat with verbs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>car</th>
<th>shoes</th>
<th>shirt</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dessert</td>
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<td>dog</td>
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<td>restaurant</td>
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<td>candy</td>
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<td>book</td>
<td>ice cream flavor</td>
<td>music</td>
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<td>carnival ride</td>
<td>bug</td>
<td>ball</td>
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<tr>
<td>Porsche</td>
<td>peanut butter fluff sandwich</td>
<td>mansion</td>
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<td>Burger King</td>
<td>poodle</td>
<td>Transformer</td>
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<tr>
<td>superball</td>
<td>David Ortiz</td>
<td>palm tree</td>
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<tr>
<td>work boots</td>
<td>lemonade</td>
<td>Hershey Kisses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recliner</td>
<td>Cat in the Hat</td>
<td>Hip Hop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sponge Bob</td>
<td>roller-coaster</td>
<td>sweater</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>apple pie</td>
<td>mint chocolate chip</td>
<td>cockroach</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SPECIFIC NOUN PRACTICE (5C)

This piece has a who, when, where beginning and has details about the car ride but it needs help! Change the general nouns to more specific nouns. If you want to add more information, or put in some similes, verbs, adjectives, onomatopoeia, hyperbole or personification, go for it!

One time, we drove in a car to a restaurant and ate food. In my car there is this hanging thing from the mirror. My mom thinks it makes the car smell like a tree. But I think it makes it smell like shoes. The smell in the car may be coming from the old fruit and candy under the seats. There are also papers and things on the floor. When we drive with the windows open, the paper flies around and you can’t see stuff. So we have to keep the windows closed unless we want to clean the car. After some time, my mom announces, “There is the restaurant!” Thank goodness!
Example of revision:

summer afternoon, my family our old mini-van Joe’s Diner to eat
One time, we drove in a car to a restaurant and ate
brunch. In my car there is this hanging thing from the
food. In my car there is this hanging thing from the
pine tree
mirror. My mom thinks it makes the car smell like a
tree.

But I think it makes it smell like shoes. The smell in
food. In my car there is this hanging thing from the
pine tree
the car may be coming from the old fruit and candy
under the seats. There are also papers and things on
the floor. When we drive with the windows open, the
the road, the other cars or the exit ramps
paper flies around and you can’t see stuff. So we have
which we don’t ever want to do.
to keep the windows closed unless we want to clean the
about 20 minutes of car riding torture
car. After some time, my mom announces, “There is
the restaurant!” thank goodness. I was always glad to
get to the restaurant until I realized that Joe’s Diner
is actually worse than the car ride.
Lesson 5D
The Noun-Off

Time: 5-15 minutes

Purpose: To build word choices; to practice the skill of looking for more specific nouns

Materials: For one-on-one Noun-Off: none
For Group Noun-Off: sheet of paper

Overview: In this very quick lesson, students compete to see who can give more specific nouns as they say them out loud in an alternating fashion.

Introduction: Do a Type One writing. Say, “In 45 seconds, write as many nouns as you can think of for the word, Shoe! Go!”

When students are finished, say, “Today, we are going to have a Shoe-Off. Who wants to go head to head with me?” After a brave volunteer steps forward explain the directions. When I say go, you say a more specific noun for shoe. Then, I say one, and then you say another. You cannot repeat. I will take anything that sounds reasonable. For example, brown shoes is not a specific kind of shoes. However, soccer shoes (cleats) would be different from ballet shoes. When someone cannot think of another, we’ll have a winner. This game is played lightning fast. So if you pause: umm, umm, umm… you lose. READY? GO!”

Sample game:
Me: cowboy boots
Student: high-heels
Me: glass slippers
Student: clogs
Me: sneakers
Student: high-topps
Me: tap shoes
Student: flip-flops
Me: sandals
Student: snow-shoes
Me: work boots
Student: umm, umm, umm
Winner: ME!

Development: After playing a few students, you can change nouns. You can have students play against each other. If you prefer non-competition, have students try to get as many as they can before they run out. Tell students to keep track on their fingers. Or you can have students play in pairs, or go around a circle.

If you want to play group Noun-Off, have students work in small teams with chart paper. After you announce the noun, all write. If another group has that noun, they have to cross it off. Like the game, Scattergories, you only get points for nouns that no other group had on their list. Again, if you prefer no competition, challenge your class to beat last year’s class. How many can we get all together?

Nouns to play with: car, snack, car, house/building, candy, (chain) restaurant, bread, dog, amusement park ride, desserts, things in the glove-compartment, music types,

End the lesson by reminding students that coming up with the perfect noun takes practice. But using the right noun is often the difference between a good piece of writing and a weak one. (You can also play with verbs!)
Lesson 5E
Carousel Writing

Time: 5-15 minutes

Purpose: To build better word choices; to practice the skill looking for more specific nouns

Materials: 4-5 sheets of chart paper posted on the walls or on desk-tops around the room. Also put a magic marker next to each chart paper. Divide the students into groups of four or five people.

Overview: In this very quick lesson, students work together to create a collection of specific nouns.

Introduction: Explain to students that today we will do something called a carousel. A carousel is a fancy name for the amusement park merry-go-round ride or the conveyor belt that brings your luggage around in the airport. It’s called a carousel because we will be going around and around the room writing very quickly at different stations.

Tell students that on each sheet of chart paper you have written a general noun. Say, “When I give the signal you will get into your group and go to the noun that I tell you. The marker you find there will be the marker that you take with you to each station on the carousel. After you arrive at your first station, wait for my signal. Then, you will begin writing as many specific nouns as you can for the general noun that you have on your paper. Don’t worry about spelling! After just 1 minute, I will say switch and you will quietly move counter clockwise to the next station. When you get there do not worry about repeating nouns that are already on the list, don’t even take the time to read the list. Just start writing more! If your eyes do see a good noun, don’t repeat it, but see if it leads you to think of a better one, maybe one that same category. For example, on the paper that has the noun heading, Drinks, you see someone has written lemon-aid it might make you think of lime juice or frozen Slushie or Gatorade.

You can decide who will be the recorder, or you can trade off. Again, don’t worry about spelling, but do worry about working together and being kind to one another! It’s a quick activity not a competition. We are trying to get as many as we can so that we can expand our vocabularies and make our writing better!

Are you ready? Go to your first station! (tell students where to go!)

Some nouns to use: (use the thesaurus after you are done to see if you can add others…)

Man: cowboy, priest, senior, delivery man, criminal, hobo, dude, surfer, teacher, executive…
House/building: cabin, lodge, apartment, trailer, mansion…
Halloween decorations: skeletons, gravestones, cobwebs, green lights…
Lunch: tuna sandwich, hamburger, pizza, chop-suey, potato soup…
Transportation (way to get somewhere) subway, car, plane, jet, hovercraft, helicopter, tank…
Body of water: lake, river, puddle, swamp, creek, stream, sea, pond, pool, hot-tub, tub, lagoon, brook, canal…
Hat: sombrero, cowboy hat, dunce cap, baseball cap, helmet, crown…
Games: monopoly, tag…
Car: VW, Porsche, buggy, wagon, matchbox car, monster truck, punch-buggy, clown-car, bus, jeep, hummer…
Pet: cat, dog, snake, fish, spider, tarantula…
Plant/Tree: pine, oak, maple, giant redwood, rosebush…
Boats: submarine, sailboat, ocean liner, cruise ship, surfboard, fishing boat, schooner, aircraft carrier, tanker…
Chair/things you can sit on: beanbag, couch, floor, stool, desk, ottoman, loveseat, overstuffed chair…
Kind of exercise: running, tai-chi, yoga, swimming, biking…
After you have moved about several times and students are back to where they started, have them circle some of their favorites and then present them to the class.

You might show students how you could use some of these in their writing. For example, you have a friend who is obsessed with cars. You are visiting his room and when you walk in you see:

When I walked into his room, I could tell his car obsession was out of control. On is bed, mantle, floor, closet, there were mini-cars everywhere. He had mini-monster trucks, motorcycles, tanks, unicycles, sports cars, backhoes, cranes, dune buggies. Everywhere there were cars!

Or, you might be taking a walk in the woods:

As we walked along I became aware that we were surrounded by trees. There were pine trees that blocked the sun, maples that flowed sap, giant oak trees that towered above us. I started to wonder what would happen to these trees if they put in that new mall.

My friend is an exercise nut. She does yoga in the morning, bikes to school, takes a jog at lunch, swims after school, then does weight lifting and soccer at night.
Lesson 6
Using Vivid Verbs

Time: 15 minutes

Purpose: To show the difference between vivid verbs and general verbs; and the importance of using vivid verbs in narrative writing.

Materials: The vivid verb cards

Overview: In this lesson, students will recognize the difference between a vague verb and a vivid verb and learn the importance of using vivid verbs in their writing.

Introduction: Do a Type One writing. Write this sentence on the board:

My mom said, “Are you awake?” Then, I didn’t get up. Then, she called me again. Then, I went downstairs.

Ask students to write down or draw what they were picturing in their minds. Tell them to draw or write for 2 minutes. At the same time you write or draw what you were really thinking.

My mom whispered in my ear, “Sweety, are you awake?” I grumbled and rolled into a ball under my covers.

Five minutes later, my mom blasted her voice into my bedroom, “ARE YOU AWAKE?” I leaped out of the bed, threw on my clothes, and dashed down the stairs.

Development: Explain to students that verbs are critical tools for writers to show how people act, move, speak, eat, and live.

Say, “This next activity is similar to the one we did with nouns. You will receive a card with either a vivid verb or verbs or a boring verb(s). (Some of the vivid cards, have more than one vivid verb on it.) When I give the signal you will stand and then silently try to find the person who has the verb that is either the more vivid or more general version of yours. For example, if you have the card that says run you will look for the person who has a card that says dash, sprint, zoom. When you find your noun partner, you will form a circle around the classroom.”

After reviewing, modeling where to stand, and reminding about silence… give the your signal. Once they have circled up, give them a minute to practice saying their verbs, then have them read their verbs loudly and with some enthusiasm. You might even have them try to put their verbs into sentences.

End the lesson by reminding them to always use specific verbs.
Follow Up Ideas:

1. Complete the sheet on verbs.

2. This would be a good place to show *School House Rock… Verbs*)

3. Play Verb Off (see Noun–Off in activity 5D)

4. Do a carousel activity (see 5E)

4. Give a short quiz/Type Two. Have students find in the passage below:

   a. Identify: 3 vivid verbs
   b. Identify: 1 other technique of description (VANSHOPS) with an example: Hint: specific nouns or senses!
   c. Add one more sentence with your own vivid verb. (continue the passage or write one of your very own)

*From Holes by Louis Sachar (page 206-207)*
Note the verbs (beating, screamed, springing, shatter, scurried, flinch, dig) and the appeal to the senses (felt the blast, felt the tiny claws), adjectives (very still, tiny, closed), zooming in, sentence variety—mixing of long and short...)

Five hundred seconds later, his heart was still beating.

    Mr. Pendanski screamed. The lizard which had been in the cereal box was springing toward him. Mr. Sir shot it in midair.
    Stanley felt the blast shatter the air around him. The lizards scurried frantically across his very still body. He did not flinch. Stanley felt tiny claws dig into the side of his face as the lizard pulled itself off his neck and up past his chin...The lizard ran across his closed mouth.

Sample answer to Type Two Quiz

a. **beating, screamed, scurried**
   b. **senses:** felt the claws dig into his face or specific nouns: cereal box, blast, lizard, claws
   c. **Stanley fainted.** He fell backward and crashed into the ground.
**Verb Sort**

Print these out. Cut them up. Then give one to each student. Have them silently find the person who matches and make a circle. Have students read them. Discuss the importance of specific nouns over general nouns. Have students make their own for the next class. Challenge them to find their partner quicker (without talking) on the next day. Next, write a great sentence with some of the verbs!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ran</th>
<th>spoke</th>
<th>ate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>drank</td>
<td>flew</td>
<td>walked</td>
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<td>threw</td>
<td>danced</td>
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<td>slept</td>
<td>cook</td>
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<tr>
<td>sang</td>
<td>kicked</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>laughed</td>
<td>barked</td>
<td>look</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beat</td>
<td>rained</td>
<td>wrote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>destroyed</td>
<td>booted</td>
<td>slam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shut out</td>
<td>passed</td>
<td>crush</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>chipped</td>
<td>punch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scrawled</td>
<td>stared</td>
<td>howled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>doodled</td>
<td>glanced</td>
<td>yelped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>giggled</td>
<td>drizzled</td>
<td>sliced</td>
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<td></td>
<td>poured</td>
<td>diced</td>
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<td>yodeled</td>
<td>snoozed</td>
<td>fried</td>
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<tr>
<td>rapped</td>
<td>napped</td>
<td>roasted</td>
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<tr>
<td>hummed</td>
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<tr>
<td>tossed</td>
<td>tapped</td>
<td>belly-flopped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hurled</td>
<td>stomped</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>waltzed</td>
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<tr>
<td>guzzled</td>
<td>strolled</td>
<td>soared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slurped</td>
<td>skipped</td>
<td>glided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gobbled</td>
<td>screamed</td>
<td>dashed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>munched</td>
<td>whispered</td>
<td>sprinted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>inhaled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION: (who when where)
I’ll never forget that day last summer when my family went to Six Flags Adventure Park.

1. My mom said to me, “Wake up! We want to be first in line for all the rides!”

2. I got out of bed and went down the stairs.

3. The breakfast was on the table and I ate it quickly.

4. My mom said to me, “Don’t eat fast! You look like something that eats fast and sloppily.”

5. I finished up and went outside to the car.

6. My mom, Mrs. Careful All The Time, drove slowly to the park while my brother hit me because I wouldn’t move over.

7. The radio was playing a song and we sang to it. Then we laughed because my brother told a joke.

8. After an hour, we pulled into the parking lot. I saw the park and yelled, “Wow!”
VIVID VERB PRACTICE (6A)

Revise the sentences by crossing out old, tired verbs and adding vivid verbs. You can also change the nouns, add similes, adjectives, onomatopoeia, hyperbole and rewrite the sentence if you want to.

INTRODUCTION: (who when where)
I’ll never forget that day last summer when my family went to Six Flags Adventure Park.

1. My mom **said** to me, “Wake up! We want to be first in line for **all the rides!**”

2. I **got out** of bed and **went** down the stairs **taking them two at a time.**

3. The **breakfast** was on the table and I **ate it quickly.**

4. My mom **said** to me, “Don’t **eat fast!** You look like **something** that eats fast and sloppily.”—a pack of wolves in a feeding frenzy.

5. I finished up and **went** outside to **the car.**

6. My mom, Mrs. Careful All The Time, **drove slowly** to the park while my brother **hit** me because I wouldn’t move over.

7. The radio **was playing** a **song** and we **sang** to it. Then we **laughed** because my brother told a **joke.**

8. After an hour, we pulled into the parking lot. I saw the park and **yelled**, “**Wow!**”
Lesson 7
The Simile

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Purpose:** To introduce the simile.

**Materials:** The simile cards, writing sample from *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*

**Overview:** In this lesson, students will use a similar sorting activity to learn about similes.

**Introduction:** Ask students if they remember what a simile is? If not, give them some examples from the first piece of writing, *The Magic Tree House*. Tell them it is a comparison between two different things and usually you use the word “like” or “as” in the comparison. Have them repeat the word SIM-MA-LEE. At the same time hold your right hand out, palm up as you say, SIM and then hold your left hand out, palm up say, MA-LEE. Say, FLUFFY (right hand) LIKE A CLOUD (left hand) SMART like EINSTEIN. STINKY LIKE A BABY’S DIAPER. Explain that a simile compares two things to help the reader really understand. You can use them with adjectives or with verbs…CHARGES LIKE A RHINO, ZOOMS LIKE A JET.

Next tell the students to listen to this passage from Harry Potter, where we first meet Mad Eye Moody. When you finish have them do a quick write: “Where do you see similes and how do they make the writing more vivid? Write four lines or more.”

*From Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire by J.K.Rowling (Page 184-185)*

The lightning had thrown the man’s face into sharp relief, and it was a face unlike any Harry had ever seen. It looked as though it had been carved out of weathered wood by someone who had only the vaguest idea of what human faces are supposed to look like, and was none too skilled with a chisel. Every inch of skin seemed to be scarred. The mouth looked like a diagonal gash, and a large chunk of the nose was missing. But it was the man’s eyes that made him frightening.

One of them was small, dark, and beady. The other was large, round as a coin, and a vivid, electric blue. The blue eye was moving ceaselessly, without blinking, and was rolling up, down, and from side to side, quite independently of the normal eye -- and then it rolled right over, pointing into the back of the man’s head, so that all they could see was whiteness.

**Development:** After the Type One, discuss how the similes make the writing clearer. You might note the following: similes (*as though it had, like a diagonal gash, as a coin*), verbs (*thrown, carved*), specific nouns (*chisel, gash*), color adjectives (*vivid, electric blue*), adjective series (*small, dark, beady*), and the zooming in technique where the writer focuses in on one feature, the eyes. (see introductory survey for Zooming-In technique). After the discussion, tell students that you will do a sorting activity. Similar, to the other sorting activities, they will either receive an adjective or verb ie, “smelly” or they will receive the other half of the simile, “like old shoes.” After passing out the cards, they must find their partner silently.

Follow up:

1. Simile Practice 1A

2. Do another glowing pumpkin. picture prompt like the Mysteries of Harris Burdick picture of woman carving a glowing pumpkin. This time use 3 columns. Noun; adjective/verb; simile.

Adj or verb
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Simile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>pumpkin</td>
<td>glowing like a small volcano</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**SIMILE SORT**

Print these out. Cut them up. Then give one to each student. Have them silently find the person who matches and make a circle. Have students read them. Discuss the importance of using similes. Have students make their own for the next class. Challenge them to find their partner more quickly (without talking) on the next day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bang!</th>
<th>Smooth</th>
<th>Floats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chewy</td>
<td>Stinky</td>
<td>Spicey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charges</td>
<td>Jumps</td>
<td>Tall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>Hot</td>
<td>Sweet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Itchy</td>
<td>Creepy</td>
<td>Dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like cotton candy</td>
<td>like fire</td>
<td>like 100 fire crackers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like a race car</td>
<td>like salsa</td>
<td>as a tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>as silk</td>
<td>like a cloud</td>
<td>like a rhino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like bubble gum</td>
<td>like old rotten cheese</td>
<td>like a kangaroo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>like a wool sweater</td>
<td>like a deserted cemetery</td>
<td>like a closet in a cave at night</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Simile Practice (7A)

Revise the sentences by adding a simile. You can also change the nouns, verbs, add adjectives, onomatopoeia, hyperbole or other VANSHOPS. Remember the simile can add information to the verb or the adjective. You can rewrite the sentence or add cross-outs and carets. When you are finished, take one of your favorites and try to expand it with several other sentences into a scene.

1. I was really tired.

2. My mom’s yell was loud.

3. The oatmeal was cold.

4. My bedroom was messy.

5. I skated down the ice really fast.

6. My mom smells pretty.

7. I walked slowly to the dentist’s office.

8. When he threw the football and it hit me in the chest it hurt.

Make up your own:
Similes in a Scene — Practice (7B)

Revise this story by adding similes. You don’t have to add too many (don’t overdo it!) You can also change the nouns, verbs, add adjectives, onomatopoeia, hyperbole or other VANSHOPS. You can rewrite the sentences or add cross-outs, carets, and even add other sentences. When you are finished, keep writing and continue the scene!

“Let’s go skate-boarding!” my brother said to me. It was early Saturday morning last summer and I was watching TV.

1. I didn’t feel like going outside because I was happy/cozy/comfy/tired...as...

2. I said, “I’m staying in.” My brother looked ready to get mad.

3. He said, “Let’s go. It’ll be fun. I built a jump that is really high!”

4. I got up and put on my shoes and helmet and headed out. It was really hot outside. But we got on our boards and went down the driveway.

5. The jump my brother made looked like
   He had it set up to cross a bunch of stuff and land in the thing.

6. I said, “Are you crazy? We are going to die on this jump.”

Decide if you have too many similes and eliminate the unnecessary or awkward parts. Then finish the scene on the back!
LESSON 8
Onomatopoeia

Time: 15-30 minutes

Purpose: to introduce onomatopoeia and have students experiment with its use in their writing

Materials:
Onomatopoeia poem (make an overhead)
Onomatopoeia sort (copy on card stock or write on index cards, or just copy and then cut them up so each student can have one)
Blank Onomatopoeia Sort (optional)
Type Three paper
Sample onomatopoeia story and poem (by me)

Overview: In this lesson students will do a sort with onomatopoeia, a worksheet, and then experiment with poems or a narrative about a time they did an activity.

Plan:

Tell students that you are going to read a poem and after you are going to ask them to do a Type One Writing. Put one of the onomatopoeia poems on the overhead and read it. Ask students to write 3 or more lines: “What did you notice about this poem?”

After the Type One, have students quickly share their ideas with a partner then call on some pairs to share their thoughts. Draw out the idea of sound words and discuss why they are used. (To give the reader a better idea of what something sounded like, to build suspense, to make readers laugh…) Tell them this is called “onomatopoeia” (have them chant it, ONO-WHACK-OPOEIA, ONO-THUMP-OPOEIA) and add it the list of writer’s techniques if you haven’t already put it on the list.

(If you have already introduced onomatopoeia, then ask students how the onomatopoeia in the poem, (or passage) made it better or more memorable.

Tell them you are going to give them either aN onomatopoeia word or the situation or the noun that caused the sound. When you have your word you will have to stand up without talking and find the person who has your match. When they find you, make a circle around the classroom.

When students are circled up, have them read their words with the actions. Tell them again, that using onomatopoeia will make their writing more memorable. (Use Bud Not Buddy passage. See selections in beginning)

Optional Follow-up #1: Students can make their own sort by adding two cards with a sound and an action or noun for tomorrow’s sort.

Optional Follow-up #2: Students can try to write a poem about sounds they hear. Include 3-5 sound words or more.

Optional Follow-up #3: Write one paragraph about a favorite sport/activity. Include at least 3 sound words in your paragraph.
**Onomatopoeia Sort**

Print these out. Cut them up. Then give one to each student. Have them silently find the person who matches and make a circle. Have students read them. Discuss the importance of specific nouns over general nouns. Have students make their own for the next class. Challenge them to find their partner more quickly (without talking) on the next day. Make up a sentence or a poem using the words.

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>bang</strong></td>
<td><strong>bzzzzzzzz</strong></td>
<td><strong>brrrring</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>slurp</strong></td>
<td><strong>squeeeek</strong></td>
<td><strong>tap tap tap</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>bub, bub, bubble</strong></td>
<td><strong>crackle</strong></td>
<td><strong>scraaape screeek</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>hisssss</strong></td>
<td><strong>crunching cracking</strong></td>
<td><strong>huffing</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>kersplash</strong></td>
<td><strong>thunk</strong></td>
<td><strong>chuga chuga</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>whoosh</strong></td>
<td><strong>pitter patter</strong></td>
<td><strong>screeeeech</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>hmmm</strong></td>
<td><strong>yap yap yip</strong></td>
<td><strong>snort</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>a pig breathing</strong></td>
<td><strong>a miniature poodle</strong></td>
<td><strong>car jamming on brakes</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>microwave oven</strong></td>
<td><strong>children’s footsteps</strong></td>
<td><strong>plane flying by</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>old car rumbling</strong></td>
<td><strong>dropped a rock on the ground</strong></td>
<td><strong>cannon ball into the pool</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>out of breath</strong></td>
<td><strong>teeth while eating gravel</strong></td>
<td><strong>throwing water on a fire</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>fingernails across a chalkboard</strong></td>
<td><strong>fire burning</strong></td>
<td><strong>fish tank sounds</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>typing on computer</strong></td>
<td><strong>old door opening</strong></td>
<td><strong>drinking water out of a hose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>alarm clock</strong></td>
<td><strong>hornets chasing you</strong></td>
<td><strong>fire-cracker</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Onomatopoeia Practice (8A)

Onomatopoeia is when you use sound-words that sound like the thing they are describing. They can be verbs or nouns. The snake hissed. I heard a BANG. They can come at the beginning, middle or end of a sentence. Sometimes writers use them as an exclamation with their own punctuation. Whack! My brother punched me. Try to rewrite these sentences with some onomatopoeia. As always, add in other TOEDs to make the sentences more descriptive. When you are finished, choose one sentence and expand on it with several other sentences to make a complete scene.

1. The bird made sounds.

2. The snowball hit me.

3. The bell rang.

4. The man sang.

5. The car started.

6. The sled went down the hill.

7. The roller coaster moved.

8. The food cooked on the grill.

9. I listened to the fire in the wood stove.
Revise this story by adding onomatopoeia. You can also change the nouns and verbs, add adjectives, similes, hyperbole or other VANSHOPS. *Remember the onomatopoeia can be a verb like rrrrumble.* You can rewrite the sentences or add cross-outs, carets, and even add other sentences. When you are finished, keep writing and continue the scene!

I will never forget this day, ever! It all started when my family went on a camping trip last summer. We were hiking on a trail in New Hampshire.

6. The first thing I noticed was the sound of the wind.

7. I said to him, “It seems like it’s getting a little windier, doesn’t it?” Just then, a tree made a noise like a branch breaking.

8. We got out of the way as it fell to the ground. “Maybe we should head back,” I said.


10. We started to go back to camp. It got more windy. It sounded loud. Then, there was lighting. I heard more thunder.

11. The rain started slowly. I could hear it.

Decide if you have too much onomatopoeia and eliminate the unnecessary or awkward parts. Finish the scene on the back!
Onomatopoeia Poems (8B)

**Crack an Egg**
Crack an egg.
Stir the butter.
Break the yolk.
Make it flutter.
Stoke the heat.
Hear it sizzle.
Shake the salt, just a drizzle.
Flip it over, just like that.
Press it down.
Squeeze it flat.
Pop the toast.
Spread jam thin.
Say the word.
Breakfast's in

**Tahquamenon Falls**
Water rushing,
gushing,
pushing
past the limits of the edge.
Water barrels off the ledge,
whipping up the bottom sludge,
makes the water look like fudge,
growling with a freight train's roar,
wildly rushes out some more.

Weather
by Eve Merriam

Dot a dot dot dot a dot dot
Spotting the windowpane.
Spack a spack speck flick a flack fleck
Freckling the windowpane.
A spatter a scatter a wet cat a clatter
A splatter a rumble outside.
Umbrella umbrella umbrella umbrella
Bumbershoot barrel of rain.
Slosh a galosh slosh a galosh
Slither and slather a glide
A puddle a jump a puddle a jump
A puddle a jump puddle splosh
A juddle a pump a luddle a dump
A pudmuddle jump in and slide!
Onomatopoeia Story (8C)
Tell about a time when you did something that had some sounds
Or tell about a favorite thing you like

FCAS
Who, when, and where (3 points)
3+ onomatopoeia words (3 points)
Use 4+ VANSHOPS (4 points) Use capitals and end marks (3 points)
Rum, rum, rummmumble, eeeeeccccchh, rrrrruuuuurrrrr, Crash!

Last week, I decided to play a video game with my son, Jacob. I don’t even know what the game is called. It’s something like Monte Carlo Car Racing game and it’s really fun. But I’m not very good. The first thing we did is get comfy cozy on the bean bag chairs. SQUISH, we collapse into them and then we can barely get up to get the controllers. Once we click the controls, the X-Box system comes on slowly with a bleep, bleep, bleep. By this time, I’m jumping with excitement. I know I’m probably going to lose, so just as the race is about to begin… FLICK, I thump my fingers into the back of my son’s head to distract him. “Hey!” he yells, but I’m off down the track.

“Yes!” I scream as I race into the first turn. But then, BLAM, CRUNCH. I crash. Game over.

Other ideas:
- waking up in morning
- cooking something
- basketball, baseball, hockey, sledding,
- fishing, the beach, the forest
- rainstorm
- sitting by the fire
- a carnival, shopping, a parade

BRAINSTORM FIRST: have students thi
Some poems
I love soccer.
I love soccer in the mud
I love the dull thud
As the ball hits the ground
Squish, squish, squish
My cleats tread across the field
My feet beat it and peel
The grass away
Now it’s like it’s chocolate frosting
WHACK
The ball is SMACKed
Into the net
HOORAY
For us today!

For more go to:

http://library.thinkquest.org/J0112392/omomatopoeia.html
Lesson 9
Using Personification

Time: 15 minutes
Purpose: To recognize and learn to use personification
Materials: The personification cards
Overview: In this lesson, students will do a personification sort, a worksheet, which leads to an expanded paragraph.

Introduction: Today, we will learn about another TOED. It’s an advanced writing technique called personification. Write the word “Personification” on the board. Can anyone guess what this word might mean? Turn to the person next you and make a guess. Point out the word person imbedded in the word. Electrification is the process of adding electricity to something. Personification is the adding of person qualities to something. As students guess, give them some examples. Here’s an example with weather:

- The wind howled and drove me backwards.
- The fog swirled, drifted, and then clung to the ground.
- The sun climbed slowly into the sky.

Here are some other examples with everyday objects:

- The vibrating cell phone danced on the table.
- My bed curled around me, pulling me back.
- The computer glowed, hummed and then died.

In this activity you will be given a boring sentence without personification or a sentence with personification. When I give the signal, get up out of your seat and find the person whose sentence matches yours. If you have the personified sentence you are looking for the person with a similar sentence without personification.

Example:

I saw the skateboard ramp.
The skateboard ramp seemed to stare at me as if to say, “Go ahead, try me, but you’ll probably die.”

After, reviewing the directions with the class: “No talking, find the person who matches you, and then form a circle around this part of the classroom. Be sure to hold your card up so people can find you and remember the personified cards are underlined. Remember, NO TALKING.”

To save time, while the class is sorting, put the worksheets on their desks. After they form the circle, give them 1 minute to practice reading their cards. The person who reads the un-personified card, should read in a boring, monotonous voice. The personified card reader should use their voice to bring the sentence to life. “Make sure you are loud and smooth, and get in order. We are going to go clock-wise around the circle. I would model with my partner. Show how to get in order and how to practice reading with some emotion (or lack of emotion). After they practice for a minute, go around the circle and listen. If you have time, you might ask the students which ones they liked the best. Or, you may want to go around the circle again but this time ask the students to make their own or to add another sentence to describe what might happen next (or just before) in the scene. The next sentence does not have to contain personification, but it should be a good sentence with some VANSHOPS.

Example: The clouds rolled, roared and rumbled across the sky.
(add) I shouted to my friend, “We’ve got to get out of here before lightning strikes us dead!”
(add): Then, there was a flash of lightning which blinded me.
(add): My brother and I jumped on our bikes and pedaled as fast as we could toward home.
(add): We watched as the skies grew dark and the sun was blotted out.
**Personification Sort**

Print these out. Cut them up. Then give one to each student. Have them silently find the person who matches and make a circle. Have students read them. Discuss the importance of personification. Have students make their own for the next class. Challenge them to find their partner more quickly (without talking) on the next day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The clouds moved across the sky.</th>
<th>The clouds rolled, roared, and rumbled across the sky.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The light shined in the room.</td>
<td>The light squeezed through the curtains and tickled my eyes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rain fell to the ground and also went sideways.</td>
<td>The rain pelted me, attacking me from every angle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The wind blew very strongly.</td>
<td>The wind howled and screamed, ripping my hat from my head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The toaster finished its cycle and the bread was ready.</td>
<td>The toaster spit the toast high in to the air as if to say, “I’m done with you.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sun shone through the clouds.</td>
<td>The sun beat down on my head, draining me of all my energy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The roller coaster went around the corners and down the slope.</td>
<td>The roller coaster flew around the track and its safety bar pushed me back.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My alarm clock rang.</td>
<td>My alarm clock screamed, “BRRRIIIING.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The car engine started.</td>
<td>The car gasped, sputtered, coughed and then roared to life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The water fountain produced only a small amount of water.</td>
<td>The water fountain drooled like an old man. There wasn’t enough water for a decent drink.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hockey net was empty.</td>
<td>The empty hockey net teased and challenged us to score on him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The refrigerator made a noise and I went to it.</td>
<td>The refrigerator, humming in the kitchen, called me toward it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The flowers grew toward the sun.</td>
<td>The flowers stretched their necks straight up toward the sun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fire was lit and it gave off heat.</td>
<td>The fire crackled, popped and sizzled, covering us with its long arms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The birthday candles were lit on the cake.</td>
<td>The birthday candles danced and darted on top of the cake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ketchup bottle was in the fridge but I could not see it.</td>
<td>The ketchup hid from me, like it didn’t want to be found.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Personification Practice (9A)

Personification is when you describe something by giving it person-like qualities. Try to rewrite these sentences with some personification. When you are done, choose one and expand on it with several other sentences to make a complete scene.

1. The tea kettle was hot and it made a noise.

2. The trees moved in the wind.

3. The ocean waves came into the beach.

4. Snow fell to the ground.

5. The brownies were on the shelf. I was tempted by them.

Make up your own.

6.
Examples of Personification:

1. The rattling, old tea kettle sat on the hot stove and screamed, “I’m ready!”

2. The maple trees lashed about like whips.

3. The furious ocean waves pounded the innocent beach.

4. Light, fluffy snowflakes danced through the night air.

5. The warm, chocolate brownies pulled me toward them like a magnet.

Example of expanded scene:

Hungry and tired, I walked into my kitchen. A powerful wave of chocolate hit my nostrils and almost knocked me over. I looked up and saw them sitting on the counter. **The warm, chocolate brownies pulled me like a magnet.** I was thinking, “no don’t do it, Mom will kill me! Those brownies are for the picnic on Friday...” But I couldn’t resist and before I knew it I was digging into the pan. My hands were like a steam shovels. Before I knew it, the pan of brownies was completely gone.
Lesson 10
Building Sentences with a Sentence Sit and Sort

Time: 15-30 minutes

Purpose: to review great sentences and their parts and have students experiment with building and rearranging words and phrases.

Materials:
Prepare index cards with words written in colors (similar to Lesson 1). You can decide to add punctuation or not. I usually leave off punctuation so students can practice moving the phrases around.

Overview: In this lesson students will work with a partner to put sentences together paying careful attention to the simple subject, simple predicate, and descriptive phrases.

Introduction:
Tell students that you’ve got some great sentences in this bag, but you need help putting it back together. You might review what a sentence needs (subject, predicate, complete thought). Then tell them that each of these sentences has that and more. Their job is to find a way to put it together. There might be more than one way!

Development:
After you pass out the bags of sentences, have them work on putting them together. When a group finishes give them another set. Continue for 5-10 minutes. Then have groups read their sentences and compare how the sound or ask students to identify the subject, vivid verb, simile, etc.

Follow up:
Have students make their own sentences and put them on index cards.

Here are some sentences to get you started:

1. The fast and scary roller coaster flew around the tracks at the speed of light.
2. Thick dark clouds rolled across the sky.
3. Fluffy, white snowflakes danced through the air.
4. A small, brown and white mouse raced across the kitchen floor.
5. BANG, the thunder boomed outside, and I ducked under my covers.
6. Hot and tired, I splashed into the refreshing pool.
7. My old, broken-down sled inched down the hill.
Copy onto colored card stock and then cut up and put in zip lock bags.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>the</th>
<th>fast</th>
<th>and</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>scary</td>
<td>roller coaster</td>
<td>flew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>around</td>
<td>the</td>
<td>tracks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at</td>
<td>the</td>
<td>speed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of</td>
<td>light</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>thick</th>
<th>dark</th>
<th>clouds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rolled</td>
<td>across</td>
<td>the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sky</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>fluffy</th>
<th>white</th>
<th>snowflakes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>danced</td>
<td>through</td>
<td>the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>air</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a</th>
<th>small</th>
<th>brown</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td>white</td>
<td>mouse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raced</td>
<td>across</td>
<td>the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kitchen</td>
<td>floor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BANG the thunder
boomed outside and
I ducked under
my covers

hot and tired
I splashed into
the refreshing pool

my old broken-down
sled inched down
the hill
Blank sorting activity.
Put these words and phrases onto index cards and see if students can put them back together.

The fluffy, pink cotton candy tasted like clouds of sugar.

I munched greedily on the hot, crispy, brown French fries until there was just salt left in the bag.

Like clowns on the way to the circus, we piled into our seasick-green mini-van.

Like a steam shovel, I plowed my spoon into the huge mound of chocolate-fudge brownie ice cream.

*Crunch,* I bit into the cherry-red candy apple like I was eating delicious, sugary glass.

*Barroom,* the loud roar of our beat-up Chevy truck sounded like a jet about to take off.
**Appealing to the Senses**  
**11 Sorting activity:** Cut these up and then match the phrase to food.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>pizza</th>
<th>fried eggs</th>
<th>mashed potatoes</th>
<th>corn</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>looks like a triangular piece of cardboard</td>
<td>looks like a big white and yellow eyeball looking up at you</td>
<td>looks like a big mound of clay</td>
<td>looks like mini pieces of yellow candy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burns the roof of your mouth</td>
<td>the white part is slippery and the yellow yolk is gushy</td>
<td>fluffy and buttery or can feel heavy like glue</td>
<td>feel the kernels getting stuck in your teeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>smells hot and cheesy</td>
<td>hear them sizzling in the pan</td>
<td>gravy smells sweet</td>
<td>hear them crunching and crunching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 11
Create a Setting by Adding Senses

Time: 25 minutes

Purpose: To learn to use the senses to create a story with detail.

Materials: Large index cards or paper. Optional: overhead photo of a beautiful place.

Overview: In this activity, students will learn to describe places by using their senses. Each student will add one sentence to create a paragraph about a place.

Introduction: Tell students that when authors write they use the senses to make their scenes vivid so the reader can really experience them. Show the students a sample of a writer using the senses. Example:

*Stanley felt the blast shatter the air around him. The lizards scurried frantically across his very still body. He did not flinch. Stanley felt tiny claws dig into the side of his face as the lizard pulled itself off his neck and up past his chin...The lizard ran across his closed mouth.*—Holes by Louis Sachar page 206-207

Next tell the students that today we will all try to build a good description of a place using all five senses. Tell them that the first one we will model together and then each student will add one sense to a paragraph.

Show the picture of the apple orchard. Have students do a Type One, brainstorming as many senses as they can for the scene. Divide the paper into four sections (4 squares). Write: see/hear/feel/smell/taste at the top of each square. (taste and smell can be joined)

1st story: the beach
2nd story: the library
3rd story: amusement park
4th place: amusement park
5th place: swimming pool
6th place: school
7th place: forest
8th place: inside car
9th place: your room
10th place: restaurant

Sample:

*Last year, my family went apple picking at Joe’s Apple Farm.*
When we got out of the car I saw miles and miles of little green trees with red polka dots. Those must be the apples! I thought.
I immediately took a deep breath and smelled the sweet flavor of apple cider, candy apples, and corn bread. Then, there was a great ROAR and RUMBLE as I heard a giant Tractor motor up along the path where I was standing. I jumped out of the way, but wet, dirty mud splashed all over me. It felt wet and soft like play dough. It was kind of gross but I didn’t mind. The farmer tossed me an apple and I bit in as sweet flavor exploded in my mouth it was like I was starring in a Starburst commercial.

Tell students that each person in each row/circle/table students will get a place. The first job is to write a who when and where statement. Each student will write it and then pass the card counter clock-wise (or backwards
if in rows). The next student will read what has been written and then add a sensory description for the place. They should underline the key words so the next student will know which sense it is. After a minute or two, pass again and the next student will add another sensory detail different from the first (if possible). If not, then just add another sense of your choice. Then pass again. After five passes each student should read theirs to group. The group should vote on which 1 or 2 should be read to the whole class.

If time allows tell them to write a terrific description of a place where they have spent time. (see above list)

FCAs:
Attention getting beginning and then who when where (4 points)
Use 3-5 senses effectively (10 pts)
Use 6+ VANSHOPS from list (6 pts)
Attention-Getting Beginnings
Lesson 12

**Introduction:** Explain to students that first impressions count. Whether composing a story, a description, or a persuasive piece of writing, an interesting, attention-grabbing lead is essential. Leads can be one sentence, one paragraph, or several paragraphs in a longer piece. Explain that leads can accomplish any of several goals for the writer.

- Introduce a story: when, who, where (setting and characters)
- Establish a mood
- Give topic background information
- Tell how the topic came to be of interest
- Tell feelings about the topic
- Reveal why the topic is important to the writer
- Explain the organization of the writing
- Give an overview of the main points of the writing

In fictional or narrative writing, leads try to draw the reader in, orient him or her, and establish a mood. Tell students that you will read or show them a few samples of the beginnings of books and they will do a quick write (Type One): “What kind of beginning did they author use? Why was it effective? Why?” Or you can read a piece of writing and ask “What did you notice about how the author chose to begin the story?” Write 4 lines. You can choose some of the following or read from a book on your shelf.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Have you ever fallen out of bed? Have you ever fallen out of the top shelf of a triple bunk bed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition</td>
<td>mne·mon·ic n a short rhyme, phrase, or other mental technique for making information easier to memorize. I think the secret to life is mnemonics. When I was young, I…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exaggeration</td>
<td>In the summer, the streets in my neighborhood can be hotter than the surface of the sun. One hot day last June…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puzzle/insight</td>
<td>It’s a funny thing about mothers and fathers. Even when their own child is the most disgusting little blister you could ever imagine, they still think that he or she is wonderful. <em>Matilda</em> by Roald Dahl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riddle</td>
<td>What’s harder than skateboarding on a broken skateboard down a killer hill? Skateboarding on a broken skateboard down a hill in the middle of winter on a sheet of ice. I’ll never forget when I was 12 years old and…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>As the school bus got near my bus stop, I could see that everyone was smiling and waving to me. Then I watched as the bus went right past me without even slowing down. Everyone was still waving to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quotation</td>
<td>“An apple a day, keeps the doctor away” that’s what Benjamin Franklin said or at least I think he said that. Anyway, last week my mom decides to make apples a part of every meal in our house. I was coming down for breakfast when…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>“Where’s Papa going with that axe?” said Fern to her mother as they were setting the table for breakfast.— <em>Charlotte’s Web</em> by E.B. White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action</td>
<td>I woke up and the house was still. Had I overslept? I ran downstairs to my brother’s room. His bed was empty. I yelled for my mom and raced into her bedroom. She wasn’t there and her bed was already made up. I ran to the front door…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Noises**

Ba-room, ba-room, ba-room, baripity, baripity, baripity—Good. His dad had the pickup going. He could get up now. —*Bridge to Terabithia* Katherine Patterson

---

**Exclamation**

%##&*@! Yikes!

**Alliteration**

Clever and cuddly, cats make great pets. Unless they are on your head at 4:00 in the morning.

**Setting/description**

It was a dark and stormy night.

**Series of words/fragment**

Angry, broke, desperate. These were my feelings as I stood at the Disney on Ice concession stand.

**Begin mid-scene**

The shark swam by again.

**Imagine**

Imagine a world where...

**Little anecdote**

When I was seven, I was sent to Catholic School where we had to wear uniforms.

**Sarcasm**

I love getting up at 4:00 in the morning when it’s freezing cold and dark outside, don’t you?

**Amazing fact**

Car accidents are the leading cause of death for teenagers. Fortunately for me, last summer I did not become one of those deaths...

**Statistic**

Sixty-five percent of Americans can’t name more than four of the Ten Commandments. I learned about this last week, when I...

**Pose a problem**

How does one actually have a good time at Disney World? Well, last summer…

**Use a metaphor/simile**

The Red Sox were a swarm of bees hovering relentlessly below the Yankees. It was late August and my cousin Kate and I were...

**Begin at the end**

One day last spring, Louis A. Butcher, turned into a fish. Silvery scales. Big lips. A tail. A salmon.—*Louis the Fish* by Aruthur Yorinks

**The misleading lead**

The morning of my birthday was a beautiful day. The sun was shining and the birds were singing. Except, that day was in my imagination, the actual day was rotten. The wind was howling wind, driving rain...

**Introduce the narrator**

Here I am, in the fourth grade at the Longfellow School, just a regular kid trying to remember a time when I learned something new. You know we’ve been reviewing in school, it seems all we do is review… So I don’t know if I’ve actually learned anything new in school. So I guess, I have to go way back to when I learned how to talk to dogs.

---

**Development:**

Tell students, “There are many ways to start stories. In fact, in this bag I have several stories with attention-getting beginnings and I also have cards which describe the type of attention-getting beginning. Your job, with a partner is to match the two cards.” As students finish, challenge them to create one of their own.

**Follow-up:**

1. Record examples from literature, magazines, newspapers or text books. Challenge students to come up with their own examples.
2. Students create their own sorting activity.
3. Give a quick quiz

Be aware that not all leads fall into a neat category. Writing is more than following a formula.
### Attention Getting Beginning Sort 12A
Cut these up and have students work in pairs to put them back together matching the Attention Getting Beginning to an example. Challenge students to create their own examples for the categories and/or to finish off these by giving the who when and where.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question:</th>
<th>Have you ever made a huge mistake?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sounds/</td>
<td>Crunch, crunch, crunch. That’s the sound my brother makes when he’s eating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onomatopoeia:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue:</td>
<td>“Billy, wake up this minute!” my mom yelled to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interjection:</td>
<td>Yikes! The big brown pit bull woke up and looked at me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action:</td>
<td>Suddenly, my mom slammed on the brakes as a deer leapt in front of the car!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description:</td>
<td>It was the darkest night. There was not a moon, a star, or even lights from the city. I couldn’t even see my hand in front of my face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imagine:</td>
<td>Imagine a day so perfect, so enjoyable, so excellent you would want to do it all over again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series of words/ fragment:</td>
<td>Huge. Delicious. Dripping with gravy. Those words describe all you need to know about my Thanksgiving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictionary Definition:</td>
<td>Friend: Noun, someone you can trust. Someone you like. I always knew what a friend was but I didn’t have one until last summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It all started…</td>
<td>It all started last summer when my sister said she wanted to go camping. I didn’t want to go but my parents made me.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following “who, when, where” sentences are the beginnings of short narrative stories. The writer needs help with better attention-getting beginnings. See if you can try an attention getting beginning for each of them. Then try another one. Label which kind of attention-getting beginning you used.

Last summer, I spend a lot of time with my brother skateboarding on our street.

1.

2.

Last year, I went to a Mexican restaurant for the first time.

1.

2.
I was in third grade when I met my best friend.

1.

2.

Last year in the middle of January we had a snow day.

1.

2.

Last fall, I went fishing with my grandfather on a lake in Massachusetts.

1.

2.
Sentence Template
Beginning with Dialogue (12C)

Use this template to practice using dialogue to start a story.

Realistic dialogue indented (4 points)
who when where (3 points)
3+ VANSHOPS (3 points)

“_________________________________________,”

(Indented) Dialogue

________________________________________________________________________

person verb for said (to someone?)

It was ________________________________________________________________

when

and ________________________________________________________________.

who where

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
It was early Sunday morning last summer, ____________ when

and my mom was trying to get me out of my cozy bed. ____________

“I don’t want to get up,” I mumbled but then I ____________ remembered. This was the day we were going camping. I

leaped like I had been poked with a needle, flew into my

clothes, and rocketed down the stairs.
Sentence Template
Beginning with a Fragment (12D)

Use this template to practice using fragments to start a story.

Great Fragment. (1, 2, or 3+ words with period.) (2 points)
Main idea of story (3 points)
Who when where (3 points)
2+ VANSHOPS (2 points)

__________________________________________.

Fragment (for example 3 words or 1 word...)

__________________________________________.

Significance of the word(s)

It was _____________________________________________
when

and _________________________________________________.
who where/what?

details...

__________________________________________.
Sentence Template
Beginning with a Fragment (12D example)

Great Fragment. (1, 2, or 3+ words with period.) (2 points)
Main idea of story (3 points)
Who when where (3 points)
2+ VANSHOPS (2 points)

Amazing, beautiful, and warm. ______________________
Fragment (for example 3 words or 1 word...)

These words pretty much describe my trip to the beach.
Significance of the word(s)

It was happened last year when my brother and sister and
when

and I all piled into our old beat-up van and drove to Cape
who where

Cod. It was the hottest day of the year, so hot your sneakers

would fry on the sidewalk.
Lesson 13
Conclusions and Powerful Closers
Strategies for Ending a Piece of Writing

Introduction: Explain to students, when an author is finished, the reader should know it! When you are finishing a story, it is essential to signal to the reader that you have come to the end. Conclusions can be a single sentence or they can be a paragraph, and they may be the only thing that your reader remembers.

Explain that writers use many techniques to finish their work effectively. In fictional or narrative writing, closers try to wrap things up, add a satisfying finish, or maybe leave the reader dangling wanting more! In this lesson you will learn several ways to close up your stories and look for the ways that feel most natural for your story. Remember not all conclusions fit a neat category and writing is not a formula; these are just some possible techniques to try out.

Tell students that you will read or show them a few samples of the endings of books and they will do a quick write (Type One): “What kind of ending did they author use? Why was it effective? Why?” Or you can read a piece of writing and ask “What did you notice about how the author chose to end the story?” Write 4 lines. You can choose some of the following or read from a book on your shelf.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reaction</td>
<td>As I think back on that day, I realize it was the best day ever!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restate your opening</td>
<td>So that is why I could never change my mind. Stealing is always wrong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call for action</td>
<td>Go right now, and unplug your television.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Finish with a thought provoking question  | Wouldn’t we all be better off if we all took out time and enjoyed the moment?  
                                          | What is wrong with standing up for what you believe in? Isn’t that what make this country strong in the first place? |
| Summarize your story                      | The day was endless: the giant breakfast, the bungy jumping, losing my tickets, finding my tickets, the IMAX movie, and the best every birthday cake. I’ll never forget it, ever. |
| Share a personal insight                  | There is a little bit of Maniac Magee in all of us. Or 
                                          | In Amazing Grace I learned that I can be whatever I want to be. I have the courage for it. |
| Offer a solution                          | All of these are good ideas but the best way to have friends is to work hard at being a friend yourself. |
| Make a prediction                         | If you ever decide to spend the day at the library, I know you’ll have as good a time as I had. |
| Make a recommendation                     | So, if I could make one recommendation to you, it would be to go right now and try the Ben and Jerry’s ice cream. |
| Short Clinchers/closing sentences (end with Zip) | My dog is the coolest. Or 
<pre><code>                                      | He was not lonely anymore |
</code></pre>
<p>| Use a quotation                           | My dad was right. “You should always think before you act.” |
| End by answering a question you raised at the beginning | Should we extend the school year? No, because summer days like the one I just described are the best. |
| End by circling back to the beginning     | It’s been three minutes since you began reading this, six more thefts have occurred. Isn’t it time we did something? |
| Cliff hanger                             | And as we turned to swim back to the shore, I realized it was feeding hour for the sharks... |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Imagine</th>
<th>Imagine a world where...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Finish by beginning another story</td>
<td>When we got home, tired, freezing, and wounded my dad greeted us at the door. “Who wants to go sledding?” he asked. So we smiled, turned around, and charged back out the door...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>We brought the dog back in the house, set her in her crate, then collapsed on the floor. Just then, my little brother woke up from his nap and said, “</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Development:**
Tell students, “There are many ways to end stories. In fact, in this bag I have several stories with great endings and I also have cards which describe the type of ending. Your job, with a partner is to match the two cards.” As students finish, challenge them to create one of their own.

**Follow up:**
1. Record examples from literature, magazines, newspapers or text books. Challenge students to come up with their own examples. Note: Some of the Lead/Grabber techniques can also be used as closers (sarcasm, description...)
2. Students create their own sorting activity.
3. Give a quick quiz.
4. Try sample worksheets/activities: 13 B, 13 C, 13 D.
5. Students take an old piece and revise it adding a better closer.

   Last year in the middle of winter, my brother and I were walking on the ice by my school. My school has a big field in front of it and it’s good for sliding on. My brother suddenly yelled that there was something green in the ground. I ran over to him and saw a dollar bill frozen down there. We spent the rest of the day digging that thing out. When it came out, we went to the store and bought candy.

   - Imagine this, we spent the rest of the day, searching for more money. **End with imagine**
   - “It’s just like my dad always says, “Some days are just lucky.” **End with dialogue or quote**
   - Wow, what a day! **Short clincher**
   - That candy was delicious, and it got me thinking, could there be more money in that ice? **End with a reflections/ cliff hanger/question**


Powerful Closers  Sort 13A
Cut these up and have students work in pairs to put them back together matching the Attention Getting Beginning to an example. Challenge students to create their own examples for the categories and/or to finish off these by giving the who when and where.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Call for action</th>
<th>If you want to have a day like mine, go right now, and unplug your television.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make a prediction</td>
<td>If you ever decide to spend the day at the library, I know you’ll have as good a time as I had.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reaction</td>
<td>As I think back on that day, I realize it was the best day ever!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short Clinchers/</td>
<td>My dog rocks!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>closing sentences (end with Zip)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summarize your story</td>
<td>The day was endless: the giant breakfast, the bungy jumping, losing my tickets, finding my tickets, the IMAX movie, and the best every birthday cake. I’ll never forget it, ever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finish by beginning another story</td>
<td>When we got home, tired, freezing, and wounded my dad greeted us at the door. “Who wants to go sledding?” he asked. So we smiled, turned around, and charged back out the door…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series of words/fragment:</td>
<td>Best Day Ever!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Working on Better Endings (13B)

Try adding a better ending to these stories:

1. When I came home from that long trip I was tired. The end. (end with a reflection on the day)

2. When I came home at the end of the baseball game I was happy. (end with recalling events…)

3. When the day was over, I felt happy. (end with a question)

4. At the end of that long day, I got out of the car, went to my room, and fell asleep. (end with short clincher, reaction, prediction, recommendation, or description)
Sentence Template
Ending with a Fragment (13C)
Model how to think about an ending as a short clincher or fragment. Talk about how it can add power to leave your reader with a vivid image or just one word.

Transition phrase 2
Quick review of the day 6
Short powerful closer 2

Boring ending: That was a great day at the amusement park. The End.

Transition phrase (When I think back on that day… Remembering that day… So I sat on my bed and thought…)

review of events…

One Word/ short phrase ending.
Sentence Template

Ending with a Fragment (13C)

Model how to think about an ending as a short clincher or fragment. Talk about how it can add power to leave your reader with a vivid image or just one word.

Transition phrase 2
Quick review of the day 6
Short powerful closer 2

Boring ending: That was a great day at the amusement park. The End.

As I sat on my bed ready to fall asleep, I thought back on the

Transition phrase (When I think back on that day… Remembering that day… So I sat on my bed and thought…

Day. I remembered the all the details, the amazing roller-

Review of events

coasters, the fluffy cotton candy, and the motorcycle guy

review of events

riding in the cage. I’ll never forget that day. AMAZING!

One word or short phrase ending.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I remember the day I met my best friend. It was last summer and I was in school.</th>
<th>Last week, my brother John and I were sitting on the back porch.</th>
<th>I was about seven years old when my mom took me horseback riding.</th>
<th><strong>INTRODUCTION WHICH GIVES WHO, WHEN, WHERE</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My school is called Ripper School. We call it “the rip.” It’s bright red, with crooked, jagged bricks daring to slice you as you walk by.</td>
<td>The porch is crammed with old cans, bottles, rubber tires, rusty hammers and crooked nails.</td>
<td>The place is called Red’s Riding Ranch, and it took hours of zigging and zagging down dusty, country roads to get there.</td>
<td><strong>SPECIFIC NOUNS, VERBS, AND DETAILS WITH ADJECTIVES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>So, on this first day, I was standing in the hall feeling confused, and then I saw this kid running at me.</td>
<td>After we sat for a while with the junk all around us, we decided to walk down to the corner store.</td>
<td>After miles of driving, we arrived and the next thing I knew giant horses were surrounding the car.</td>
<td><strong>ORGANIZING PHRASES AND TRANSITIONS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He’s running like a deer desperate to escape an attacking wolf.</td>
<td>The corner store is like paradise to us. You can get everything and anything you would ever want there.</td>
<td>The horses looked like dinosaurs with long necks and fire breathing noses.</td>
<td><strong>SIMILES</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 14
Planning Your Story

Overview: In this lesson students will learn how to plan their stories. They will work on finding an organizer which works.

Introduction: Explain to students that planning a story is probably one of the most important parts of writing. Most authors outline or think a lot before writing. JK Rowling scrawled tons of notes on napkins in a coffee shop before she wrote *Harry Potter*. Andrew Clements (author of *Frindle, School Story, Lunch Money*…) always carries a small notebook with him to make notes for future stories. Explain that in this lesson we will practice planning a story.

Development of Lesson:

Step 1: Use one of the prompts below and model how to brainstorm ideas for choosing a topic. Ask the kids to make a similar list.

Step 2: Model thinking them over and picking the one that seems like it offers the most interesting possibilities. Make it something that will be fun for the writer and the reader.

Step 3: Offer a possible plan for writers who can’t think of a structure. Box 1: Who, When, Where, details about who when where
Box 2: Getting there or getting ready
Box 3: Event 1 (a problem might be revealed)
Box 4: Eating something (problem might become more complicated)
Box 5: Event 2 (problem might be solved?)
Box 6: Event 3 or reflection heading home…

I think dividing the paper into 4 sections front and back might be better than a 4 square model. They can fold the paper into this shape. On the MCAS maybe just divide it up. This might allow for more ideas and adding in of TOEDs.

Model going through a possible plan. At first just get some general ideas at the top of each section. Then go back and add lots of details written in phrases and words. Think about the senses. Think about putting in your thoughts. Think about adding dialogue. Can I slow down the action? Can I build suspense? What else would people want to know? Can I make this funny?

Then, think about going back and starring the most important details. You can’t put in everything and some details just aren’t interesting. What should you really focus on? Is tying your shoe that important?

When you are finished, take a break. You should have filled up a lot of lines with quick little phrases and even quick sketches, bits of dialogue, and lots of adjectives, verbs, nouns, onomatopoeia, maybe a simile or two!
Tell a story about a time you tried or learned a new thing
bike
snowboard
dog training class
new food in restaurant (japanese!)
played Nintendo
drums, piano
**lemonade stand
baseball
dodgeball in gym
*field trip to aquarium and touched starfish
*fishing
swim
helped mom cook
new sled
# First time planning

## WWW (plus attention-getting beginning) and details about who/where
begin with me waking up
happened last summer, me and my brother, in our front yard by the street

## Getting there/getting ready
Getting Mom to take us shopping at Stop and Shop
Tell about car ride

## Event 1
buying the stuff
buying candy
eating stuff on way home

## Food
making huge mess while making lemonade: problem, making huge mess!
eating food (peanut butter, and all the candy) while supposed to make lemonade

## Event 2 (problem?)
building stand, signs?
wagon
moving stuff to street
getting hot

## Event 3 (solving problem?)
going swimming instead
small plastic pool
running through sprinklers

## Coming home? Event 4 (solution?)
having the sale
no one coming
we get bored
finally a customer
big tip $5.00

## Wrap up (reaction, thoughts, go back to beginning?)
so happy but then owed Mom money for supplies
had to clean up
don’t think I’ll do it again
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Second time planning</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WWW (plus attention get begin) and details about who/where</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>last summer, my brother and me, front yard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>waking up began with tell about my room, super dark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>brother in my face, let’s go it’s going to be 100 degrees today</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sun in my eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>burning hot feels like heater “get out of here!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Getting there</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finally thinking a good idea make tons of $</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>go shopping with mom (our car ride, rumble need muffler)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stuff is expensive “we’ll pay you back!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Event 1</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>buying the stuff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asking/begging for candy (we’ll sell it!)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eating stuff on way home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gobbled like starving man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Food</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>making huge mess sugar everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eating food while supposed to make lemonade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>peanut butter fluff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>looked like bomb hit kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mom was out of house! “whew!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Event 2 (problem?)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not cleaning up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>building stand, need paper, can’t find</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>markers, glue, use wood, nails, ouch hit my hand, band-aids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get wagon?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getting hot (temp like 1000 degrees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Event 3 (solving problem?)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>going swimming instead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>small plastic pool fill with water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>running through sprinklers (little rainbows see)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tell how water feels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>love summer then remember about stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coming home? Event 4 (solution?)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>having the sale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no one coming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finally a customer big pick up truck (its my dad? or just some guy?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>big tip $5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wrap up (reaction, thoughts, go back to beginning?)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“we’re rich!” but then mom said we owed Mom money for supplies mom exploded when she saw kitchen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>had to clean up kitchen too/don’t think I’ll do it again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWW (plus AGB attention getting beginning) and details about who/where</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>getting there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>event 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event 2 (problem?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event 3 (solving problem?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coming home? Event 4 (solution?)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>Wrap up (reaction, thoughts, go back to beginning?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Intro include Attention Getting Beginning, www, details (20 points)
Writing Style: Good mix of TOEDs sprinkled throughout (50 points)
Ends with an ending technique or reaction (10 points)
Organized: Follow multi-paragraph form, transitions (20 points)

Lemonade Stand

“Hey, get up you loser!” my brother yells to me. I was sound asleep on a Sunday morning last summer when my brother, John, jumps on my head.
“Get out of here!” I mumble back, covering my head with a pillow. But he doesn’t leave. He tells me that it’s going to be 100 degrees today and that we need to have lemonade stand and make millions of dollars.
Because I love money, I leap like a kangaroo out of bed and land in my clothes. Then, I zip downstairs to find my mom. We need her to take us to the Stop and Shop to buy the lemonade supplies.
My mom says, “I’ll take you, but you have to pay me back out of your profits.”
We tell her, “No problem.” Next, we pile into our old, dented Ford pick-up truck. Our truck is barely drivable. First of all, it is incredibly rusty. You can barely find a spot on the car that isn’t brown and cracking. Also, it’s really muddy.
When we get to the super market, my brother grabs a cart and BANG, he crashes it into my leg. “Hey cut it out!” I yell. But he tells me to get in before Mom changes her mind and makes us help with the grocery shopping.
We race around the store like NASCAR drivers throwing all kinds of things in the cart. We buy chocolate bars, lemons, sugar, Mike and Ike’s, ice cubes, Oreo cookies, napkins, paper, markers, and just about anything we think of. When Mom sees us she just shakes her head NO. We take out everything except the lemonade mix and the chocolate bars. We tell her that we are going to sell the chocolate bars with the lemonade.
On the drive home, we eat the chocolate bars.

When we get back to the house it’s already like 90 degrees. Mom goes out to do some errands and we start making the lemonade. This is a big project. We start splashing around, slopping the water into the sugary mix and before you know it there is about 6 inches of water on the floor. It looks like a swimming area in the kitchen.
We agree that we’ll clean it up later and dash outside like we’re late for the bus. When we get out there with our lemonade, we see no one. Not a car, bus, truck, bike, or person walking. We don’t even see a squirrel. After about 15 minutes we decide this is boring so we grab the hose and fill up the little plastic pool. This turns out to be tons of fun because we decide to add lemonade to the water and try and drink the pool water. It’s really pretty disgusting because when we get out we are all sticky and hot.
Then we see a car coming! We jet back down to the lemonade table in time to sell one glass of lemonade. It’s pretty watered down because we used most of it in the swimming pool. Anyway, the guy gives us 20 dollars and says, “Keep the change!”
We run inside and scream to our mom, “We’re rich!” But then she comes down and demands we pay her back for the supplies which cost 22 dollars. She says we still owe her 2 dollars. Then she goes into the kitchen and sees the mess.
I hear her scream, “Who blew up my kitchen!” I can picture here in the kitchen. Her face is red, her eyes are popping out, and there is steam coming out of her ears.
It might have been hot that day, but my brother and I ran like the wind. We bolted down Maple Street, took a left on Grant, and headed straight for the highest tree in the park. We might not be headed home for a while and I look back longingly at our house.

Turns out the lemonade stand might have been a bad idea. We ended up broke, hot, sticky and in big trouble. But it was fun and we did get to eat the chocolate bars. And, hopefully, those bars will give us the energy that will help us stay in the tree until my mom cools down.
More Planning

Tell about when you did something surprising

Tell about when you were brave

Tell about when you did something you’ve never done before

Tell about a time when you saw something amazing

Tell about a time when you visited someone

Tell about a time when you did a job

Tell about a time when you read a book

Tell about a time when you solved a problem

Tell when you experienced a storm

Tell about a time when you went on a field trip

Tell about a time when you got in trouble
In this scenario, students write about a day from their imagination. They are told to imagine a perfect day, a perfect party or what they would do if…

Here, students need to think carefully about what they might include. Remember less is more! A few really well described ideas can be more powerful than a long list of things. Also, remember that the imagined events have a beginning, middle and an end. It would be good to start with an interesting beginning, and then back up and refer to the prompt:

_Slam, Bang, Whack!_ The little moles are coming up faster than I can whack them. I’m sweating and twitching, slapping at air more often than at moles. I’m having a blast.

My perfect day would start with playing Whack a Mole at Six Flags Amusement Park. I would get my mom to start her brand new, shiny, black Jeep and we would cruise to all my best friends’ houses. It would be a beautiful fall day, crystal clear, no clouds in the sky. My mom would have hot chocolate ready for all my friends as they climb into the jeep. It’s a little chilly because it’s late September. We are skipping school on this day so that we can go to the amusement park without any crowds.

This kind of prompt allows you to be really creative and add in any details of your choosing. It get a little complicated because you have to write, “I would… it would…” or you need to write in the present tense, like it is happening now: “We ride the roller coaster until we can’t even stand up. Next, we head to the French Fry Shack. After some discussion, we decide to order the super, super, super large size…”

**Imagine one of your toys came to life**

**You won a million dollars**

**You are going on a trip to outer space**

**You are President of the United States**
Planning a Story with a Problem or a Conflict or Action

Often the best stories have a problem to be solved. Writing like this takes extra time to plan because you have to think first about the problem and how it will be solved. Often, writing about something that happened to you can be a good place to start. Think about a time when something unexpected happened and it forced you to take some action. You decided to climb a tree and got stuck. You played in a soccer game but got behind by two goals. You went on a fishing trip but forgot your fishing pole. You went on a car trip but the car broke down.

Adding a problem creates interest in the story because your audience wants to find out what happened. How did you solve the problem? One way to plan for this kind of story is to use a simple organizer:

Setting:

Characters:

Problem:

Solution:

Climax/ Most exciting part where everything comes to a head:

Next, plan your story the same way you have done before. Think about the details for each part. Launch your story with an attention-getting beginning, then include details about your characters (you), and your setting. Then set off on your adventure or present your problem (initiating event). Have the problem lead to new actions and new events. In the end, try to build the tension until the reader is dying to find out what happens next.

Remember, the key is the details in your writing. The reader has to feel they are right there with you. The way to do this is to add VANSHOPPS and vivid details to slow down the action. Sample:

Setting: begins at home with getting up, having breakfast, heading out to school…
Characters: me, mom, sister, brother
Problem: As we head out for school, we forget that we left the toaster-oven on. We come back because my sister forgot her homework book and find the toaster on fire.
Solution: Mom throws toaster out the window into the snow
Exciting moment: Seeing the flames.

Model it with a weekend moment or event. Try it for a perfect day, for a day when you were brave, for a day when you learned a lesson, for a great meal, or a favorite holiday.
Other Ideas for Planning/Revising:

1. Have students use a color-coded system to find TOEDs and VANSHOPS. Have them use highlighters or crayons to mark up a piece of writing to find and add VANSHOPS. Start with the same one for everyone. Use the following assignment or one of the students.

Colors:
- Pink/red = specific nouns
- Green = vivid verbs (think green…go)
- Orange = onomatopoeia (O for Ono)
- Blue = adjectives (blue sky)
- Yellow = similes (like a daisy)
- Purple = personification

Underlines for inner thoughts

Other techniques can be marked in margins. Have students write these abbreviations next to the techniques.

AGB = attention getting beginning
Zoom in (write “zoom”)
Slow down action = use an arrow going down
Senses: draw or write an ear (sound), eyeball (see), nose, (smell) mouth (taste), hand (feel)

2. Do another lesson (or two or three) on planning the story. Show how to brainstorm in the small spaces at the top or on the side. Then model dividing the sheet into six sections vertically. Then divide in half. On the left side, write a basic outline of the story. Then on the right side add attention-getting beginning, TOEDS (sensory details, bits of dialogue, inner thoughts, adjectives, similes, etc.)
Other ideas for writing prompts:

1. Take students outside. Have them write what they see using the TOEDS!

2. Take photos of your school, your school yard, the busses, the classrooms. Project them or print them. Have students describe these using lots of TOEDS!

3. Have students write about their rooms, their cars, their houses, their favorite places. Have them bring in photos.

4. Have students write about favorite foods, places to eat! See if a local restaurant will display pieces of writing about their foods!

5. Bring in menus and look for vivid words about foods. See if students can write a description of food for a menu.

6. Have students write about an activity they enjoy. See how many TOEDS they can work in.

7. Have students write about a favorite person and a time they spent with them.

8. Tell about a time they went somewhere in car or on bike or on foot. What was the trip like?

9. Tell about a time when someone did something nice for them. Tell about that person and what they did.

10. Have students write about a time they were kind, brave, happy, tired, angry, sad, surprised, generous, grateful…

11. Tell about a time when you got hurt

12. Tell about a time when you got into trouble

13. Tell about a time when you were really nice or helpful to someone or something

14. Tell about a time when you were in a storm

**Persuasive**

15. Tell a story that would convince someone that summer vacation should be longer

16. Tell a story that would convince your principal to start your favorite activity as an afterschool program

17. Tell a story that would convince someone to try your favorite restaurant

**Fantasy**

18. Tell what you would do for your dream birthday party

19. Tell what you would do on the day someone said they would take you into outer-space

20. Tell about what happened the day you got a wish that would come true

21. Tell about a day when a toy of yours came to life

22. You put on a pair of shoes and found out that you could fly in them
Old Prompts for Practice

WRITING PROMPT
Think about your favorite thing to do in your free time. Maybe you like to pretend, play sports, read, play a musical instrument, dance, or do something totally different.

Write a story about a fun time that you had doing your favorite thing. Give enough details to show the reader what happened and why it was fun.

You may use the space below to plan what you are going to write (notes, outlines, other pre-writing activities).

WRITING PROMPT
Think about a time you tried something new. Maybe it was your first day of school, your first time on a bike or bus, the first time you tried a skill learned in class, or the first time you tried a new sport.

Write a story about when you did something for the first time. Give enough details to show the reader what happened.

You may use the space below to plan what you are going to write (notes, outlines, other pre-writing activities).

WRITING PROMPT
Think about a friend who has been an important part of your life. How did you become friends with this person? Think about when you met, what you did, and how your friendship grew.

Write a story about this friendship. Give enough details to tell the reader about this friendship.

You may use the space below to plan what you are going to write (notes, outlines, other pre-writing activities).

WRITING PROMPT
You woke up one morning and learned that it was snowing. School was closed for the day! It was a dream come true. Suddenly you had time to take a break from the usual routine and do what you wanted to do.

Write a story about a snow day off from school that you remember. Give enough details in your story to show what you did and how wonderful the day was.

You may use the space below to plan what you are going to write (notes, outlines, other pre-writing activities).

WRITING PROMPT
All of us have had a special time or adventure in our lives. It could be anything such as a visit with a friend or relative, a party you went to, or a game you watched or played. Or it could be something completely different.

Write a story about a special time or adventure that you have had. Give enough details in your story to show what it was like and what made it so special.
Writing Prompt 2010:

Think about a time when school was closed and you had the day off.

Write a story about your day off from school. Give enough details to show readers how you spent your day.

You may use the space below to plan what you are going to write (notes, outlines, other pre-writing activities).

Writing Prompt 2009

Think about a time when you were helpful, maybe you helped a new student feel comfortable in school, helped a teacher with a job in the classroom, helped with a project in your neighborhood or school, or helped to care for an animal.

Write about a time when you were helpful. Give enough details for readers to understand how you were helpful.

You may use the space below to plan what you are going to write (notes, outlines, other pre-writing activities).

Writing Prompt 2008

Think about a tradition or an experience that is important to you. For example maybe you have a special meal that you eat, a holiday that you celebrate, or a certain place you go each year on vacation.

Write a story about a tradition or an experience that is important to you. Include enough details for readers to understand why it is important to you.

Writing Prompt 2007

Think about the best time that you have ever had. Maybe you played all day with friends outside, went on a special trip, participated in a game, or spent some time at camp.

Write a story about this best time. What were you doing? Who was with you? Where were you? Why was this the best time ever? Give enough details in the story to show the reader what happened.
Writing Prompt 2008 make up

There are many fun activities to do outside. Maybe you like to fly a kite, play outside at school, go camping, or build a snowman. Maybe there is something else you like to do outside.

Write a story about a time you had fun doing an outside activity. Give enough details to show readers what you did and why the activity was so much fun.

Writing Prompt 2009 make up

Think about a time when you gave a special gift to someone. It may have been a gift for a holiday, a gift of thanks, or a gift just to show that you cared about the person.

Write a story about a time when you gave a special gift to someone. Include enough details in your story to show why giving the gift meant a lot to you.

Writing Prompt 2010 Make Up

Write a story about a time when something funny or unusual happened.

   Give enough details in your story to show readers why the event was funny or unusual.
Lesson 15
Move over American Idol It’s…
AMERICAN LAWER

Summary: American Idol is yesterday’s news and there is a new talent show on the horizon. It’s American Lawyer where small law firms compete to see who can make their case and convince a jury. In this activity you will need to use relevant and specific detail to support your ideas. And, because the jury is often uninformed you will need to and explain your evidence. Work carefully with your law firm and prepare a brief two to three minute presentation.

Purpose: This is evidence-based writing and should be both informative, analytical and persuasive.

Writer’s Role: You are writing as a lawyer who is part of a new law firm. This is your first big case. A family has shown you a piece of writing that they feel should have been scored higher by the Board of Examiners, and they want you to prove they are right in court. If you convince the jury you win the case and go on to Hollywood (or Washington DC where the lawyers are).

Audience: The audience is members of a jury who know very little about what makes good writing. You need to explain to them very clearly and specifically why the piece of writing is excellent.

Form: This is a short presentation of no more than 3 minutes total. Each person will have a job to do. Jobs may include: 1) opening and closing statement 2) idea/example or evidence/explain how the evidence proves the point 3) second idea/example/explain 4) third idea/example/explain. Someone should also point to the piece on the screen as evidence is presented. “As you can see the simile in line 4…”

Possible FCAs (for presentation):
Loud (later this FCA could become energetic, include dramatic gestures, don’t read it, eye contact, or good posture) 2 points
Smooth (includes transition and feels rehearsed so everyone knows the speaking order, includes thank you at end, and could also include work together ie. help each other out if someone is nervous) 2 points
Each person does job: opener/closer; provides ideas; includes specific details/examples; explains (could become relevant details, include quotes and section, explain where necessary) 6 points
FCAs for a written piece: (sometimes jury or judge wants a summary of your case)

Topic sentence with position [1]
Include sufficient ideas [3]
Provide relevant, specific examples and explain where necessary [6]
Transitions [one bonus point for “to begin with, furthermore, most importantly etc. [1]
Always in play FCAs (check it over and clean it up, no missing words, obvious capitals/end marks, spelling, indent) [automatic deduction of up to 1.5 points]

Procedures:
1. After putting you into groups of 3 or 4; I will introduce you to your client and read the piece. (4 minutes.)
2. You I will model filling out the chart with an idea from the piece, and then you will do a quick type one: “What is good about this piece?” Fill out the idea/ example/ explain chart. (3 minutes)

| idea | ex. | exp. |

3. You will share your ideas with your law firm adding to your charts. (3 minutes)
4. I will quickly model how to choose roles, put together and present a case using the chart above. (2 minutes)
5. You will rehearse with your group. (8-10 minutes)
6. I will review the FCAs (and maybe model an error(s) in presentation) and give you 2 more minutes to practice
7. Each group will each present and get feedback using the FCAs. (20 min)
8. You may be asked to write a summary of your case for homework. See FCAs for written piece above. (If we do written piece, I will show you a model, and give you time to read your work back to yourself before turning it in. You will also have your chart from class.)

Follow up or begin with: You might begin with the sorting activity 15B before trying this activity.
MODEL OF CHART

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Idea</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Explain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use of dialogue</td>
<td>“This is going to be best…”</td>
<td>Interesting to hear what author is thinking/saying</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example of Written Piece

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, this piece clearly deserves the highest score because of its fantastic writing style. From the very first paragraph you can tell the writer knows how to use dialogue to show keep our attention. At the bottom of the first paragraph, she writes, “This is going to be the best day of my life.” This bit of dialogue is very interesting because reader likes to know what the author is thinking. It also sets the mood for the piece. Another reason it deserves a high score is the terrific word choice. The adjectives in line 3, “yellow polka dotted” and line 11, “rainbow, flashing lights” add much detail to the paragraph. The author also uses similes and personification. She writes, “alleys lit up like flashlights” and “lights danced on the black rug below.” These techniques bring the scene to life. Furthermore, the verbs add action. Words like “jerked”, “swooped”, “giggling”, and “whispered,” make the passage fun to read. Finally, the piece has much sentence variety. Sentences don’t always begin with I. Hanging bells, the alleys, rainbow flashing, suddenly are some of the first words of sentences. This keeps the paragraph from becoming boring. If this piece keeps going at this quality it should not only get a high score, it should be published!
The car pulled into the parking lot at [Town Name] Bowling Alley. I yanked my friends pink and yellow polka dotted birthday present out of the trunk and headed for the entrance. Hanging bells chimed as I jerked the door open. The alleys lit up like flashlights in the gray waiting room. I looked around to find all of the things the bowling alley had. My eyes drew to attention when I spotted the arcade. Rainbow flashing lights danced on the black rug below. A clear box held all sorts of colorful stuffed animals and prizes. A large shiny painted red crane would swoop down every now and then and try to receive a prize. Many other games lined the colorful walls of the arcade. Suddenly I heard girls giggling. My ears perked up. I spun around to find all of my friends bunched up waiting for me. “This is going to be the best day of my life,” I whispered as I ran down the steps to join them. “In order not to slip you have to wear these special shoes,” my friend explained.
LESSON 15B
Sorting Activity and Analyzing

Copy the following passages onto card stock or heavy paper and then give a set of three to pairs. Ask them to put them in order from best to worst and then be prepared to support their arrangement with specific details from the passages. Remind that longer is not always better and that they should have a more substantial reason why something is better than “It’s longer!” The prompt was, “Tell about a time when you found something.”

One time we found some money. We were looking on the ground. The dollar was there. There wasn’t any change. I picked it up. I went to the store. I bought candy. It tasted really good. I looked for more money. I didn’t find any. That’s what happened. The end.

Last year in the middle of winter, my brother and I were on the ice by my school. My brother suddenly yelled that there was something green in the ground. I ran over to him and saw a dollar bill frozen in the ice. We spent the rest of the day digging and chipping that thing out. When it came out, we went to the store and bought candy. It tasted really good. It was so good that we went back to look for more money. We didn’t find any, but every time I walk on that field I’ve got my eyes glued to the ground.

“Hey get over here!” my brother screeched to me. It was last January and we were slipping and sliding on the ice by my school. My school has this big field that gets really swampy and mushy in the summer but in the winter it’s like an ice rink. I zipped over to my brother and crashed into him. He pointed down to a green rectangle frozen in the ice. “That’s money!” I screamed. We jumped, pounded, chipped on that ice until our toes were like frozen popsicles. When we got it out it was mushy and soggy but it still worked. At the store we got a Hershey bar and a bunch of mini peanut butter cups. We raced back to the field and looked all day. There’s nothing better than free money!
Lesson 16
Too Many Adjectives

Purpose: To recognize when a writer has used too many adjectives and revise accordingly


Introduction: Explain that one problem with cooking is adding too many spices. When you cook, it might seem that if a little salt makes it taste good, more salt will make it taste better. At some point, more salt will make the food taste worse; it will be too salty and you won’t want to eat more than one bite. In this activity, the writer has used too many adjectives. See if you can take out some adjectives or change sentences to make it sound better.

Put this sentence on the overhead and read the beginning.

It was a dark, stormy, loud, hot, weird, crazy night. I was listening to interesting, fun, rocking, dance-able, fun, music on my white, shiny, excellent I-Pod.

Does this sound like a case of too much salt?

Let’s see if we can eliminate some of these adjectives to bring some of the flavor back.

How about:

It was a loud and crazy night.
It was a dark and stormy night?
It was a hot night, one of the hottest nights of the summer, and I could not sleep.

I was listening to strange songs on my I-Pod and I was playing them, loud, very loud.
I was listening to dance-able music on my I-Pod, except I wasn’t dancing. It was just too hot.

Development: Tell students, “Next, we will look at a story, where there are simply too many adjectives and see if we can’t do an adjective-ectomy. We are going to cut, trim, and revise to bring the patient back to life.” Pass out papers and then model a bit together. After have students work independently on in pairs to make the necessary changes. Discuss how you know if there are too many adjectives and how to know which ones to leave in.

Follow-up: Have students design a sheet with too many adjectives and then have another group revise.
Directions: Revise this passage by removing some of the adjectives to make it sound more natural.

“Wow, this big, fat, juicy, delicious, grade A hamburger tastes like fluffy, excellent, snow-white heaven!” I said to my nice, fun, smart dad. Memorial Day weekend was always my favorite time of the beautiful, warm, fun spring because my dad fired up the old, black, reliable, steel, Coleman grill.

We were on the beautiful, warm, sunny back patio and my dad was asking me to be his taste-tester for the big, round, thick, juicy burgers he was making on the grill. I love this job and even though the pay is low, there are great benefits.

“How about some delicious, thick, red, Heinz ketchup on that sizzling, hot, brown, round burger?” my dad asked. I love ketchup and my dad knows it. Since it was Memorial Day and we were expecting about one thousand relatives, we had plenty of ketchup on hand. As I was grabbing the ketchup I heard a strange, funny, unusual, loud sound…
“Wow, this big, fat, delicious, grade A juicy hamburger tastes like fluffy, excellent snow white heaven!” (dialogue has to sound like normal people talking) I said to my nice, fun, smart dad. Memorial day weekend was always my favorite time of the beautiful, warm, fun spring because my dad fired up the old, black, reliable, steel, Coleman grill. (too many adjectives breaks the flow of the writing)

We were on the beautiful, warm, sunny back patio and my dad was asking me to be his taste-tester for the big, round, thick, juicy hamburgers he was making on the grill. I love this job and even though the pay is low, there are great benefits.

“How about some delicious, thick, red, Heinz ketchup on that sizzling, hot, brown, round burger?” my dad asked. I love ketchup and my dad knows it. Since it was Memorial Day and we were expecting about one thousand relatives, we had plenty of ketchup on hand.

As I was grabbing the ketchup I heard strange, funny, unusual, loud sound…the sound of a dog barking. No, it was more like a pack of dogs barking. Maybe the burgers were smelling a little too good. Then next thing I knew…
Lesson 17
Using Specific Colors

Read the piece below and see if you can get out your Crayola box to make these color adjectives more specific or change them altogether. Use similes and exaggeration and expand the sentences if you want to!

Examples: The sky was blue.
- The sky was a faint blue, the color of someone’s eyes.
- The sky was aqua-blue like you could dive into it.
- The sky was neon-blue like an electric sign flashing.
- The sky was a deep blue, almost purple.
- The sky was dark blue, the kind of blue you only see in mooshed blueberries.
- The light blue sky shimmered above us.

1. The setting sun looked red.

2. The car was green.

3. I picked up the black toast.

4. Her fingernails were red.

5. The dog was brown.
6. The tablecloth was white.

7. His teeth were yellow.

8. The leaves were colorful.

9. The cheese was orange.

10. The carpet was green.

11. The house was red.

12. The uniforms were ugly. They were _________.

Try describing the color of something you ate today or your favorite food or least favorite food in a couple of sentences below.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Lesson 18
Sentence Variety

Time: 15 minutes

Purpose and Overview: In writing it is important to learn to vary sentence beginnings. If all sentences start the same way, readers become bored and writing can sound immature, simplistic, and choppy. In this lesson students will be able to vary their sentences using three or more techniques.

Materials: Sheet 18B

Introduction: Explain to students that in today’s lesson we will work on a critical revising skill. Then, post a short paragraph where all the sentences are similar in their beginnings and in their lengths.

We went to a farm last year. We saw a lot of animals. We ate pie and some candy apples. We didn’t get to ride the horses. We rode the bus home.

Ask students to do a quick-write (Type One). What do you notice about this piece? What could make it better? (4 lines or more in 2 minutes) After sharing their ideas with a partner, have a quick discussion about the need for sentence variety both in terms of sentence beginnings and sentence lengths.

Development: As you work on fixing the paragraph above, show students some of the techniques below.

1. Start with a transitional word or phrase: First, Another, Finally, Most importantly, However, Furthermore, On the other hand, Later in the day…
2. Start with a prepositional phrase: (Think where a squirrel can go… in, on, above, beside, below, beneath, over, in, out, by, down, during) During class, you should raise your hand. Below the fraction bar, you will find the denominator.
3. Start with a dependent clause (For example: a phrase that starts with WAWABABSUI: When, After, While, Although, Because, As, Before, Since, Unless, If…) Since earning good grades is important for college, students should put more focus on…
4. Start with a “To phrase” (indefinite): To understand the water cycle, you need… To improve your diet, you…To stop water pollution, cities and towns must…
5. Start with an “Ing phrase” (participle): Understanding the water cycle is important… Purring loudly in my ear, my cat demanded breakfast. Winning the game is never as important as playing hard. Challenging the authority of the church, Darwin went ahead and published his Origin of Species. Fearing the worst, Japan spent millions preparing for earthquakes and tsunamis.
6. Start with an adjective, adverb series of adjectives or adverbs: Tired but determined, the teacher climbed the stairs to her classroom. Quickly and efficiently, the pulley can lift tremendous weight.
7. Start with a simile (comparison): Like a brave soldier, the teacher entered the classroom. Like a giant magnet, gravity holds each planet in its orbit.
8. Start with Onomatopoeia (sound word): Whack, my brother slapped me with his book bag. Bang, bang, bang, shots rang out as the colonists were slain by the British troops.
9. Start with an absolute phrase (has a subject predicate but no subordinating conjunction) His muscles straining, Tom Brady threw a touchdown pass. Its tires squealing, the card raced around the track.

Then have them practice with a partner to fix the sentence on the next page: A good teacher should care about her students.

Wrap Up: Have students try to fix the “I want to be a doctor when I grow up” sentence.
Practicing Sentence Variety 18B
Together let’s rewrite the beginning of this sentence in three different ways. Use the suggestions from our chart. Feel free to add some information to the sentence.

Example:

A good teacher should care about their students.

1. The first ingredient for good teaching is __________________________

_____________________________(tran)

2. Above all else, __________________________

_____________________________(prep)

3. Unless you care________________________

_____________________________(dep. Wawa..)

4. To be a________________________

_____________________________(to/inf).

5. Caring for __________________________

_____________________________(ing)

6. Like a __________________________

_____________________________(sim)

7. __________________________

_____________________________(your own)
Practicing Sentence Variety 18C

Try adding some sentence variety to one of the sentences below. Be sure to label which technique you used. Feel free to add information to the sentences as needed.

I want to be a doctor.
The dog ran.

1. _____________________________________________________________
                                             _______________________

2. _____________________________________________________________
                                             _______________________

3. _____________________________________________________________
                                             _______________________

4. _____________________________________________________________
                                             _______________________

5. _____________________________________________________________
                                             _______________________

6. _____________________________________________________________
                                             _______________________

7. _____________________________________________________________
                                             _______________________

name
Possible Answers for 18B
1. The first ingredient for a good teacher is caring. (transition)
2. Above all else, caring for your students is most important for good teaching. (prep)
3. Unless you care about your students, you won’t be a good teacher. (unless/ dep clause)
4. To be a good teacher, you must care about your students. (to phrase)
5. Caring for students is what makes a good teacher. (“ing” phrase/ gerund)
5. Caring for her students, the teacher moved about the classroom. (“ing”/ participle)
5. Caring and concerned, the good teachers are easy to spot. (adjective series)
6. Like a doctor in a hospital, good teachers care about their students. (simile)

Other: Bing, the survey says, “good teachers care about their students.” (onomatopoeia)
Her eyes watching all, the good teacher cares about her student. (absolute phrase)

Possible Answers for 18C

The first thing I want to do when I grow up is be a doctor.
After I graduate from college, I want to be a doctor.
When I grow up I want to be a doctor. Since I love fixing things, I want to be a surgeon.
To help people and cure diseases, I want to be a doctor.
Being a doctor is the only job for me.
Like most of my friends, I want to be a doctor.
Like Dr. Jonas Salk who cured Polio, I want to be a doctor.

First of all, the dog ran.
Down on the street, the dog ran.
When he saw the cat, the dog ran.
To catch up with the car, the dog ran.
Running to catch the cat, the dog was almost hit by a car.
Exhausted but energized, the dog chased the small cat.
Like a greyhound in a race, my tiny puppy chased the ball of string.
Huffing and puffing, the dog sprinted after the rabbit.
The dog, tongue dangling on the ground, ran.
Lesson 19
Sentence Combining Basic

Put these sentences into one sentence:

1. The field was wet.
2. The field was muddy.
3. The field was for soccer.
4. We looked at the field.

______________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________


1. The man was mean.
2. The man was old.
3. The man was wrinkled.
4. The man chased us from his yard.
5. He waved his long cane.

______________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________

_____________________________________________________________________________


Some Possible Answers: (Cover these when copying)

We looked out at the wet, muddy soccer field.
The wet, muddy field meant there would be no soccer today.
The wet, muddy field stood before us.
The mean, old man with wrinkles chased us from his yard by waving his long cane. (“ing” phrase as end participle)

Waving his long cane, the mean, old, wrinkled man chased us from his yard. (“ing” phrase at beginning)
The mean, wrinkly, old man waved his cane at us and then chased us from his yard. (compound predicate)
To chase us out of his yard, the mean, old, wrinkly man waved his cane at us. (“to” phrase… infinitive phrase)

(advanced)
His long cane waving in the wind, the mean, old, wrinkled man chased us from his yard. (absolute phrase)
Sentence Combining Advanced (19B)

When combining sentences remember the FANBOYS: **for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so**
(coordinating conjunctions for joining independent clauses)

When adding subordinate clauses remember WA WA BABSUI: **when, after, while, as, because, although, before, since, unless, if**
(subordinating conjunctions for adding information before, during or after an independent clause)
When I’m thirsty, I love to drink water. I, when thirsty, drink water. I drink water when I’m thirsty.

Put these sentences into one sentence.

1. The dog was brown
2. The dog had floppy ears.
3. The dog was a beagle.
4. The dog ran down the sidewalk.
5. The dog looked like he was flying.
6. The cat chased the dog.
7. The cat was big.
8. The cat was old.
9. The cat was mean.
10. The cat had sharp claws and long teeth.

____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________

Try making your own short choppy sentences for others to combine on the back!

**Possible Answer: (cover when copying)**
The floppy-eared, brown beagle flew down the sidewalk because he was being chased by a big, mean, old cat with sharp claws and long teeth.
More Sentence Combining (19C)

FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)
WA WA BABSUI and (when, after, while, as, because, although, before, since, unless, if)

Try to combine these sentences into one sentence. Use only one “and” per sentence!
Example:
   1. I was under the covers.
   2. The covers were warm and thick.
   3. I was asleep.
   4. My mom woke me.

I was asleep under the warm thick covers when my mom woke me.

1. I looked down at the cereal.
2. The cereal was Captain Crunch.
3. The cereal was mushy and orange.
4. Then I ate it really fast.

1. I got in the car.
2. The car was red.
3. The car was a Ford.
4. The car was a pick-up truck.
5. The car belonged to my grandfather.
6. We drove away.
7. We went to school.
1. My grandfather likes to play music in the car.
2. The music is old Rock and Roll music.
3. The music is really loud.

1. We get to the school.
2. Then I jump out of the truck.
3. I run up the sidewalk.
4. The sidewalk is busy.

Hint: Try starting with “When…"

Make your own 4-6 short choppy sentences for someone else to combine:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6.
Lesson 20
Show Don’t Tell

**Purpose:** Authors want their readers to “see” the scenes they are imagining when they write: the settings, the actions, and feelings of their characters. Instead of writing, “old house”, authors “show” the details of the house: peeling paint, broken shutters, and cracked windows. The reader then makes the connection, “Oh, that house is really old!” In this lesson, students work to verbally identify details that “show” different things. They use vivid language (the VANSHOPS) to bring a scene to life.

**Materials:** Nothing is needed. But you could supply some images (pictures on the overhead or from calendars, books, internet) for students who might have trouble visualizing scenes.

**Overview:** In this lesson, students will learn to use all the techniques to describe something vividly without using general descriptions like she was angry.

**Introduction:** Tell students, “In this activity I will call out some descriptions; I will “tell” you some things and I want you to provide the details so I can see it! I want to be in that scene, see it, feel it, hear it, smell it, taste it!”

I begin with “old house”. I ask students to turn to a partner and go back and forth. “What are details that would be associated with an old house?” Then, after a couple of minutes of thinking with a partner, I call on some students to give me details.

**Development:** Next, we try another one. This time, students work in pairs and write down their descriptions for 1 minute. After a bit, I challenge students to a detail duel. Here, two people go back and forth, until one person can’t think of any more details. It can be competitive or it can be a cooperative effort to get as many as you can. You can also record all the details that come out and the class can vote on the best two or three. Then we can try to put them together into a scene!

Here are some to get you started:

- old house
- mean dog
- kid about to cry
- scary roller coaster
- messy room
- angry mom
- old car
- new car
- bad food
- beautiful day
terrible weather
fun party

Other ideas:

You could record as a class on chart paper, how many can we get in 1 minute? Then choose the best ones or write a class description! Or it could be a Type One writing assignment. You have 90 seconds, get as many as you can! (or a type 2: use at least 3 todes or 3 senses...)

You could put the scenes on 5 sheets of chart paper posted around the room. Like the carousel activities (See Lesson 5E), students can move around the room in quick bursts to build a scene.

Here are some of the details a class of 4th graders came up with:

old house: broken shutters; cracked windows; cobwebs covering everything like a blanket; peeling paint, missing shingles
mean dog: ears back, hair raised, fangs showing, drooling, low growl like a car engine, staring eyes; muscles tensed
kid about to cry: lower lips pushed out; eyes big and wet and blinking; quivering lip; high whiny pitched breaths
scary roller coaster: huge twisting turns; flashing lights; speeding like a bullet; screaming people; upside down dangling
messy room: half eaten sandwich; old, moldy clothes; four feet of papers; smells like a basement; unmade bed...
angry mom: screeching voice; red ears; smoke coming out of nose and ears; eyes narrowed; brow furled; staring
old car: cracked bumpers; broken seatbelt; dented fender; bouncy seats; thick, dusty film of dirt; old bugs dead on windshield
new car: shiny; scratch-less; beaming; smooth; smells like laundry detergent; leather seats; clean windows
bad food: smells like someone died; green; moldy cheese; cold, bouncy beef,
beautiful day: clean, crisp air; puffy clouds; crunching leaves...
terrible weather: bullet-like rain; whipping wind; freezing hail; dark as midnight...
fun party: Giant piñatas; blaring music; tons of candy in giant class bowls; twinkling white lights hanging from the walls; Nerf-gun war; silly games; huge chocolate cake with fudge brownie ice-cream and make your own sundaes.
Lesson 20B
Show Don’t Tell Part II

Purpose: To extend the oral component to Show Don’t Tell and have students write quick scenes with plenty of details.

Materials: Just plenty of paper and a timer.

Introduction: Tell students, “We have been practicing including details in our writing so our readers can understand and picture feelings, actions, and settings. In this activity I am going to give you a scene and you will have five minutes to write a short paragraph describing in detail what the situation looks, feels, smells, sounds, and maybe even tastes like. Remember, you can use vivid verbs, adjectives and specific nouns as well as similes, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, and personification. Use the senses! Be creative and be quick! I will model what I mean…”

Take out sheet of paper and model for students what you mean. Here is a sample you might write:

1. Organized and or strict classroom:

I walked into the classroom on the first day of school and I couldn’t believe it. The desks were in perfectly straight lines. It looked like they might be glued to the floor. The bulletin boards were bright blue, with neat wavy trim all around them. Every letter of WELCOME FOURTH GRADE was cut perfectly and was exactly one inch apart. The teacher’s desk had a flower, a pen, and a stapler. That’s all. There was not a single piece of clutter, not an old homework, permission slip, lunch menu, or post-it note. Nothing. The room smelled of disinfectant, like it had been sprayed by a pine mist. It was quiet — too quiet, as if even the gold fish didn’t want to splash. I swallowed hard and stepped in.

Development:
Tell students it’s their turn. When their papers are ready give them this one: Messy Classroom. Let them write for five minutes and then have them share with a neighbor. Have some students read their papers aloud.

Wrap-up: Consider using the crayons to mark up examples of VANSHOPS in their writing. Or give them a quick assessment with one of the samples.

A. Identify at least 3 VANSHOPS
B. Add one more to the piece that the student did not include. Label which technique you used.
Lesson 21
Tell a Verbal Story

Purpose and Overview: In this activity, students practice verbally everything they have learned. Partners take turns telling a really good story.

Introduction: Explain to students that today you will learn to make up and tell to tell a good story aloud. You will practice it in your head, thinking “on your feet!” Explain that practicing the skill of making up details as you go helps you when you write.

Development: You will set the stage with a Who When and Where. Then, you create an initiating action. After that you model with a student (or another teacher) a back and forth telling of what you see/do next. Each person gets one or two sentences.

For example:

Scene with who/when/where and initiating event: It was a dark Halloween night last year, when my friend Jim and I, went by the old Jones mansion. The mansion was mostly dark, but there was a small glowing blue light coming from the second floor. Jim and I decided to check it out.

We crept up to the large, heavy door that looked like it could be on a castle. Amazingly it was ajar and so we tip-toed inside…

Person one adds details related to smell
Person two adds details related to touch
Person one adds details related to sight
Person two adds details related to sound
Person one adds details related to taste?

Smell: When I walked in to the room, I smelled a heavy, damp odor of musty socks. It seemed like I had walked into an old closet with moth balls.

Touch: As I crept forward, I felt a sticky gooey thing hit me in the face. It was spider webs!

Sight: Next, as my eyes adjusted to the dark, I saw a big, black cat staring at me. His eyes were glowing green and his fur was standing straight up like a porcupine.

Hear: I heard him softly hissing, and I started to back away. Just then, there was a loud, thumping sound coming from upstairs. It sounded like, “Bump, thump, bump, thump.”

Now students try it:
**Scene:** Last summer my family visited Six Flags Adventure Park. We the first ones at the park and we raced to the roller coaster named, Mind Eraser. There was no line, so we stepped nervously onto the wooden platform as the coaster pulled up.

**Smell:**
**Feel:**
**See:**
**Hear:**

**Sample:** Smell the sweat of previous riders, faint odor of popcorn, cheese dogs left behind, I worried about my stomach. Feel the pinch of the bar on my chest as the seat belt tightened; I looked at the tears on my sisters face, saw the huge upward slope, heard the screams of others…

**Wrap up.** Have students write short parts and pass them back and forth. Go back and try the senses activity again.
Lesson 22:
Sample Sentence Template
For more information on how to use see Gerry Morris Book (Seven Sentence Building Activities: www.collinsed.com)

______________________________________________

sentence base (subject/simple predicate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>article</th>
<th>adj</th>
<th>adj.</th>
<th>noun (subject)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb (predicate)</th>
<th>simile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(when/where/how)

Final Sentence:

______________________________________________