

GRADE 8 English Language Arts Writing: Lesson 2

Read aloud to the students the material that is printed in **boldface type** inside the boxes. Information in regular type inside the boxes and all information outside the boxes should **not** be read to students. Possible student responses are included in parentheses after the questions.

Any directions that ask you to do something, such as to turn to a page or to hand out materials to students, will have an arrow symbol (\implies) by them.

Purpose of Lesson 2:

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- examine the English Language Arts Writer’s Checklist,
- practice prewriting techniques, and
- use clustering as a prewriting tool.

Equipment/Materials Needed:

- Student Worksheets Writing Lesson 2 – 1 and Writing Lesson 2 – 2
- Pencils and unlined paper
- English Language Arts Writer’s Checklist (one per student)

LESSON 2: Writing

After your introductory remarks to students, say:

Today we will work on your ability to communicate through writing. Sometimes that type of communicating can be difficult; but, fortunately, we will use the English Language Arts Writer’s (ELA) Checklist. This checklist is a lot like a map in that it will guide you through the writing process. It will be very useful to you, so I want to be sure you know how to use it.

⇒ Distribute the English Language Arts checklists to students.

Say:

Turn to the side that says “Directions for Writing.” We are going to use this card to help you write well on the test.

Pause. Check to see that everyone is on the correct side of the card.

Look at Step 1: Planning and Drafting.

Follow along while I read aloud. “Read the writing topic in your test booklet carefully. Think about what you will write before you begin.”

It may help you to read the writing topic more than once so that you can be sure you understand it.

Then say:

Now, look at the next statement. “Use the space provided in your test booklet for planning your composition and writing your rough draft.”

Let’s figure out what this instruction means for you. It might mean to make a list of ideas that come to mind when you read the writing topic. It might mean clustering, outlining, drawing, or listing.

You may have heard your teacher use the word *brainstorm* to refer to this part of writing. It really doesn’t matter what words we use as long as we think and plan what we will write about. We will practice using some of these methods so that you can find a way that works best for getting your ideas onto the paper.

⇒ Distribute paper and pencils to students.

Then say:

Let's pretend it is test day and you have read the writing topic or writing prompt in your test booklet. Now you begin to plan your composition. You won't write a composition today; we are focusing on what we do *before* writing the composition.

Say:

Clustering is one way to prepare to write. *Clustering* means you concentrate on one subject or topic. Then you write down all the details that pop into your mind.

Start by writing your topic or subject in the middle of the page. Draw a circle around your topic or subject. Then think about that topic in the circle. Think about how it might sound, or taste, or feel, or what it looks like. Let your brain wander. Sometimes your brain comes up with some silly off-the-wall details, but that is okay. What you want is lots of details!

Say:

Let's practice clustering. Here's your subject: SPORTS.

Write the word *SPORTS* in the middle of the page and draw a circle around it. Other words or ideas related to sports will come into your mind. Write them down and draw circles around them. Then use lines to connect those words to SPORTS.

If a student is struggling, you may want to give a hint. You might suggest other sports like baseball, football, tennis, soccer, softball, or gymnastics. Other ideas that might be developed include equipment used in sports activities, team names, playing positions, or even rules of the game. The goal of this writing activity is to help students develop a bunch of ideas.

The examples shown in the Tutor’s Guide (page 145) are only to give you an idea of what a cluster for SPORTS might look like.

Then say:

Let’s share some of the sports you wrote on your cluster. Remember our purpose was to come up with lots of ideas. If you hear a sport you didn’t think of, add it to your cluster at this time.

Ask for a volunteer or call on a student to share.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Writing Lesson 2 – 1.

Then say:

When planning your composition, another method you might use is Listing. Begin with the topic or the subject and then list words or phrases that are related to that topic or subject.

Look at your worksheet. Here is an example of what a list on SPORTS might look like.

Pause to allow time for students to scan the activity sheet.

Say:

You also have another example from a student who made an outline for prewriting. An outline helps you organize ideas and thoughts.

It really doesn’t matter which method you use, as long as you spend the time discovering ideas *before* you start to write the composition.

Students may add items to the outline, list, or cluster.

Put your worksheet aside and look back at the blue card. I want to be sure you read the last step under Planning and Drafting.

Follow along as I read aloud. “Remember that your planning notes and rough draft will not be scored.”

Then say:

Now, it may seem strange to you to spend so much time doing something that won't be scored, but you need to remember that this step (prewriting) is probably the most important step in your success when writing.

Spend your time thinking and planning and writing down ideas. These prewriting activities certainly will make writing the composition easier.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Writing Lesson 2 – 2.

Then say:

This writing topic is like one you might be given by your teacher. Read the prompt to yourself.

Pause to allow time for students to complete task.

Circle the key words or phrases in the prompt.

Pause to allow time for students to complete the task.

(Possible responses: one-day trip; story; telling; in the order in which the events happened)

Now, brainstorm as many words or ideas as you can about this topic. You may make a cluster or make a list or make an outline. It doesn't matter what method you use. Just be sure you come up with lots of ideas!

Allow time for students to work. After about four minutes or when everyone has finished, call time.

Ask each student what form of brainstorming he or she used.

Then have students share some of their responses.

Then say:

You are off to a great start with the prewriting activities you did today. The next step would be for you to begin writing your composition.

Student Worksheet Writing Lesson 2 – 1

Student Worksheet Writing Lesson 2 – 2

NAME _____

Think of a time when you went on a one-day trip with some friends or family. Maybe you went on a shopping spree or on an outing to an amusement park.

Before you begin writing, think about the various parts of the day, including leaving for the trip and getting to your destination. Think about everything you did during the day.

Now write a story telling about your one-day trip. Remember to present the events in the order in which they happened.

Do your prewriting in the space below.