

GRADE 8 English Language Arts Writing: Lesson 3

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 3:

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- study several key elements of composition: punctuation, capitalization, usage;
- examine sentence structure;
- use the English Language Arts Writer's Checklist; and
- examine a piece of student writing for the key elements of composition.

EQUIPMENT/MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Student Worksheets Writing Lesson 3 – 1 and 3 - 2
- English Language Arts Writer's Checklist (one per student)
- Pencils

After your introductory remarks to students, say:

Today we will work on your ability to communicate through writing. On some activities, you will have to write a composition in response to a writing prompt. This writing prompt tells you what to write about.

One of the first things you need to do is think up lots of ideas. This activity is called brainstorming. There are lots of ways to brainstorm. You may make a list, you may do a cluster, or you might even make yourself an outline. Once you have written down possible ideas and thoughts, go back and reread the prompt to be sure that you are responding to it.

Then it's a good idea to look at your brainstorming and circle or underline those ideas that are most important. This activity helps you to get organized before you begin your writing. The next step involves putting words together to make sentences, then putting the sentences together to make paragraphs and finally, putting paragraphs together to make a composition.

Once you have done all those steps, you need to check to be sure that you have not made a careless error. Let's begin with an activity that reviews sentences.

⇒ Distribute student worksheet Writing Lesson 3 – 1. Be sure every student has a pencil.

Then say:

Look at the group of words in number 1. Is that group of words a sentence?

teacher the on the wrote board

(Response: no.)

Why not? (Possible responses: It doesn't make any sense; there isn't a capital letter or a period.)

You are right; it doesn't make any sense. On your paper, write the words correctly to form a sentence.

Pause to allow time for students to write.

(Written response: The teacher wrote on the board.)

Sentences should begin with a capital letter and should have an end mark.
Encourage students to write in their best handwriting.

Then say:

**Now, look at number 2. Is that group of words a sentence?
your when birthday is**
(Response: No.)
On your paper write the words correctly to form a sentence. Pause
to allow time for students to write.

(Written response: When is your birthday? or Your birthday is when?)

Say:

**Look at the sentence you just wrote. Did you begin it with a capital
letter? Did you end it with a question mark?**
Pause to allow students to make corrections.

Say:

Take a look at number 3. Is that group of words a sentence?
When it started to rain.
(Response: no.)
Why not?
(Response: It doesn't express a complete thought; it doesn't say
anything.)
**Right. This group of words might *look* like a sentence because it has
a capital letter and a period, but it is not a sentence. It does not
express a complete thought.**
Write number 3 correctly on your paper.
Pause to allow time to write.

If a student is having difficulty, you might say:
What happened when it started to rain? or What did you do when it started to
rain?

Now look at number 4 on your worksheet. I studied my history notes earlier today. This group of words is a correct sentence, but let's see about changing or revising it. Think of a way to rewrite that sentence so that it no longer begins with I. Pause. Write it on your paper.

Allow time for students to write.

(Response: Earlier today I studied my history notes.)

**Did you begin with a capital letter? Did you end with a period?
Look closely at your response and make any necessary corrections.**

Let's examine a student composition now.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Writing Lesson 3 – 2.

Say:

**A teacher made this assignment to an 8th grade English class:
Write a paragraph about a time when you were afraid.**

On your worksheet is the rough draft of a composition written by an 8th grade student. Please read it silently now.

Allow time for reading.

Let's look at this composition together to see how well this student communicated in writing.

Say:

**Did the student write on the assigned topic? (Response: yes)
Yes, the teacher assigned a composition about being afraid.**

**Did the student have a topic sentence? (Response: yes)
Yes. Underline the topic sentence. Pause.**

What is the topic sentence?

(Response: "I have acrophobia, fear of heights.")

This sentence tells the reader what the paragraph is going to be about.

Did the student include details to support the topic sentence?

(Response: yes)

Put a check mark before each detail. Pause. What details did you find in this paragraph?

(Responses: My hands get sweaty; I have a funny feeling in my stomach; I feel as if I were going to be sick.)

Let's examine this paper for complete sentences. Did the student write in complete sentences? Pause to allow students time to look at the paper. Here's a technique you can use with any paragraph.

You will need to guide students sentence by sentence through this paragraph.

Then say:

The easiest way to check for complete sentences is to start with the first sentence. Here's the pattern. Is that a sentence? (Response: yes)

What about the next sentence? (Response: yes)

What about the one that begins "I get this feeling"? (Response: yes)

Now, the next one? Is that a sentence? (Response: yes)

Notice how we go step by step through these sentences.

Good. What about "Once I went bungee jumping I went to the top of the John Hancock Building, the second tallest building in Chicago"?

Is that correct? (Response: no)

You are right, it isn't a sentence. What should we do to correct it?

Pause. (Response: add a period after bungee jumping)

Then read the sentence aloud correctly.

Let's continue. Is the next group of words a sentence? (Response: yes)

And, the next? (Response: yes)

What about the end "Maybe one day I won't have to deal with my acrophobia." Is that a sentence? (Response: yes)

Good. Now, do you think there are any sentences that don't belong in this paragraph on fear? Is there anything that seems out of place?
Pause.

Ask for a volunteer.

The sentence that says “Chicago is a fun place to visit and I like to go there.” doesn’t seem to fit in with the topic of fear.

Scratch that sentence out. Pause.

You want to be sure that all of your sentences are related to the topic.

Let’s check for spelling. Circle any misspelled words. Pause.

If necessary say: “There are three spelling errors in this paragraph.”

Ask for volunteers to identify the spelling errors. If necessary, spell the word correctly. Students should write the words correctly on their paper.

Spelling Errors

Funy should be *funny*; *felling* should be *feeling*; and *wo’nt* should be *won’t*.

Say:

Next, look for errors in capitalization. Sometimes when we are writing, our brain forgets about the capital letter rules. That’s why we go back and reread, recheck what we have written.

Do you see any capital letter mistakes? Pause.

Ask for volunteers.

(Responses: John Hancock Building should be capitalized.)

I noticed one other thing that needs to be changed. Look at the next to the last sentence: “Once I reached the top, I want to go down.” That doesn’t sound right to me. What needs to be changed? Pause.

(Response: *Want* should be changed to *wanted*.)

Students may be able to make the correction, but not be able to tell you why it was wrong.

Yes, please draw a line through *want* and write *wanted* above it. You want to be sure that all your verbs are in the same tense. Since *reached* was past tense, you needed another past tense verb.

Say:

You did a great job of proofreading that composition. Take your time and look closely at the composition. Don't try to find everything at once. Start off by looking just for spelling errors. Then do punctuation errors. That procedure might make the proofreading easier.

On the day of the test, your teacher will distribute this English Language Arts Writer's Checklist. Use it to help you check your composition. You may even want to put a check mark in the box after you have checked your composition.

Remember how important it is to recheck your paper!

Student Worksheet Writing Lesson 3 – 1

NAME _____

DIRECTIONS: Rewrite these groups of words correctly. Use your best handwriting. Be sure to include capital letters and end punctuation.

1. teacher the on the wrote board

2. your when birthday is

3. When it started to rain.

4. I studied my history notes earlier today.

Student Worksheet Writing Lesson 3 – 2

NAME _____

FEAR

I have acrophobia, fear of heights. My hands get sweaty and I got this funny feeling in my stomach. I get this feeling as if I were going to be sick. Even though I suffer with acrophobia, I have tried to conquer it. Once I went bungee jumping I went to the top of the John Hancock Building, the second tallest building in Chicago. Chicago is a fun place to visit and I like to go there. Once I reached the top I want to go down. Maybe one day I won't have to deal with my acrophobia.