

GRADE 8 English Language Arts Writing: Lesson 7

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 the 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 7:

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- ◆ compare responses to a survey probing students' perceptions of their writing ability,
- ◆ use a graphic organizer as a prewriting activity, and
- ◆ write a summary of the students' perceptions of writing.

Equipment/Materials Needed:

- ◆ chart paper on a stand
- ◆ paper
- ◆ pencils
- ◆ Student Worksheet: Writing Lesson 7-1
- ◆ Tutor's Guide for Prewriting Activity
- ◆ Student Worksheet: Writing Lesson 7-2
- ◆ Student Worksheet: Writing Lesson 7-3

Introduction

Who remembers what we did during our previous lesson? Pause. (answered a survey and had a discussion about it)

Now that you have had the opportunity to share your opinions about your writing and to listen to your classmates' opinions about their writing, did you notice that many of you have the same beliefs and concerns about writing? Pause. (yes)

Let's take a look at these surveys again and look for responses that we have in common.

⇒ Distribute completed surveys from the previous lesson. Give blank copies of the surveys (Student Worksheet: Writing Lesson 7-1) for any students who may have been absent during the previous lesson.

Use webbing or mapping to summarize students' responses to the survey (worksheet 6-1 or 7-1) and to organize them into categories. As you discuss each category, list students' comments under the appropriate box. (See Tutor's Guide for this activity on page 109.) This activity will serve as a prewriting strategy before students write a composition.

Let's list the reasons all of you included on your survey. Draw a box or circle and write *reasons for writing* in it. Write all students' responses, including those on the tutor guide, under the box.

Use the same procedure for each main category on the Tutor's Guide (fears about writing, best conditions for writing, ways to improve writing). Students responses will likely be very similar to those on the Tutor's Guide. However, you may include as many student comments as you feel necessary under each category.

Now that we have organized our responses to this survey about writing, we have the information needed for the writing assignment today. I would like for you to write a composition titled "Students' Views on Writing." Use this map that I have drawn to guide your writing. How many main categories do we have? Pause. (four)

We need one paragraph for an introduction and four paragraphs for the rest of the composition. Let's work together on the first paragraph. We'll make it very short. The introduction should be about the entire composition. Can anyone think of a good introductory sentence? Solicit student responses, anticipating some difficulty. Share the suggested introduction below if students don't offer an appropriate introduction.

Students' Views on Writing

To understand what students think about writing, a researcher gave a survey to a group of middle school students. The students made many comments about the reasons for writing, their fears about writing, the conditions for their best writing, and ways to improve their writing.

This paragraph is one suggestion for an introductory paragraph. You may use this paragraph if you wish, or you may make up your own paragraph. Remember that the introduction must tell what your paper will be about.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet: Writing Lesson 7-2.

What should the next paragraph be about? Pause. (reasons for writing)

Can anyone think of a good first sentence for this paragraph? Pause. (Students found that they wrote for many of the same reasons.)

What should you say next? Pause. (talk about the different reasons for writing; be specific)

Remember to include details in each paragraph to support your main idea.

I think you are ready to begin writing your composition. Here is a writing guide for you so you will remember some important tips about writing.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet: Writing Lesson 7-3.

Let's quickly review this guide so that you don't leave out any important steps in your writing process.

Review each step of the writing process on the writing guide.

You may begin writing now. If you get stuck, I will help you. When you have completed your composition, check to see that you have gone through all of the steps on the writing guide, especially proofreading and revising. You may also exchange papers with another student to get extra feedback on your writing. Good writers know they can always improve.

While students are writing, circulate among them and provide assistance as needed. Encourage them to help each other as well as seek help from you.

Word Bank

Establish a *word bank* by asking students to write correctly spelled words on the chalkboard so they are available for all students to use in their compositions. When you help a student with spelling, ask the student to write the correctly spelled word on the chalkboard, so that others may use it if they wish. You may also contribute some words to the *word bank*. Encourage students to spell the best they can, and then to get help as needed after they have written their main thoughts and ideas on paper.

Peer Editing

Encourage students to proofread each others' papers for **meaning first**, and then for grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

⇒ At the end of the lesson, collect the students' papers for the next proofreading lesson.

Student Worksheet: Writing Lesson 7-1 (continued)

7. The best example of my writing is...

This piece is the best example because....

8. Writing is easiest for me when...

9. Writing is hardest for me when...

10. The hardest things about writing are...

11. I could be a better writer if...

12. I wish my writing...

13. I wish teachers would...

14. I expect my writing to ...

Note. From *Self-Assessment Guide for Reading/Writing Portfolio*, June, 1997, developed by Deidra W. Frazier. Reprinted with permission

Tutor's Guide for Prewriting Activity

The Truth About Writing

Reasons for Writing *Send a Message*

School

- English assignments
- other subjects
- essay tests
- yearbook
- school newspaper
- LEAP
- Exit exam
- notes to friends

Home

- grocery list
- pay bills
- notes to family
- e-mail
- tax forms
- diary
- journal
- letter
- records
- other

Work

- job application
- e-mail
- McDonald's order
- records
- inventory
- order forms
- letters
- memos
- other

Fears about Writing

- spelling incorrectly
- not knowing what to write
- sloppy handwriting
- grammar
- not knowing enough "big" words
- red ink covers good ideas
- making bad grades
- other

Best Conditions for Writing

- topic is familiar
- choice of topics
- time to think before writing
- someone will read the message and not just check errors
- other

Improving Writing

- remember purpose (communication)
- focus on topic
- think, brainstorm before writing
- organize thoughts in outline or web
- write down thoughts first; elaborate
- proofread for meaning; revise
- proofread for correct spelling, grammar; revise

Student Worksheet: Writing Lesson 7-2

Sample Introductory Paragraph

Students' Views on Writing

To understand what students think about writing, a researcher gave a survey to a group of middle school students. The students made many comments about the reasons for writing, their fears about writing, the conditions for their best writing, and ways to improve their writing.

Writing: Sending a Message

- ◆ *overcoming the fear*
- ◆ *remembering the purpose*
 - ◆ *getting started*
 - ◆ *getting finished*

Step 1: Write down your important thoughts first. Think about what you really want to say; write down these important thoughts. Don't worry about spelling or writing in complete sentences at first; just write the words the best you can, and write in short phrases or sentences. ***Remember, the purpose of writing is to send a message.***

Step 2: Organize your thoughts into main ideas. Use an outline or a story map to organize your story into sections with main ideas and supporting details.

Step 3: Rewrite your thoughts in complete sentences. Be sure that your sentences connect and that they are in an order that makes sense. Be sure your main idea has details that support it.

Step 4: Read what you have written; revise. The most important thing about your writing is that it makes sense. If necessary, rewrite sentences to make better sense or provide more details. If possible, ask another person to read what you wrote to make sure it makes sense.

Step 5: Proofread for errors. After being sure that your writing makes sense, look carefully at it to check for correct spelling and punctuation.

Step 6: Correct spelling and punctuation errors. Do the best you can to find all of your errors and correct them.

If you can say it, you can write it. If you can write it, someone can read it. Writing your thoughts on paper is just another way of saying something.

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