

GRADE 8 English Language Arts Writing Lesson 8

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 8:

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- ◆ connect oral language to written language,
- ◆ practice strategies for overcoming the fear of writing,
- ◆ practice prewriting strategies, and
- ◆ practice writing descriptive paragraphs.

Equipment/Materials Needed:

- ◆ chart paper on a stand
- ◆ paper
- ◆ pencils
- ◆ Student Worksheet: Writing Lesson 8-1

Advance Preparation:

Write the names of all the students on small pieces of paper and fold them so the names are not visible; the names will be drawn later during the lesson to determine writing assignments. Include your name also for the drawing.

Introduction:

Before we begin our writing activity, let's review some important points about writing.

First of all, what is the purpose or reason for writing? Pause. (to give a message)

What is a strategy for overcoming the fear of writing? Pause. (tell about something before writing about it) **Yes, remember: *what you can talk about, you can write about; what you can write about, someone can read about.***

What is the first step in any writing assignment? Pause. (getting your thoughts written on paper without worrying about everything being perfect)

What should you do if you don't know how to spell the words you want to include in your writing? Pause. (spell them the best you can and mark them so you won't forget to come back and check for correct spelling) **If you worry too much about writing perfectly, you might forget about your good ideas.**

After you have written your thoughts down in complete sentences, what should you do next? Pause. (Reread what you wrote to be sure your sentences connect and make sense; rewrite sentences that don't make sense.)

What is the next step? Pause. (proofread for spelling and punctuation errors and make corrections)

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet: Writing Lesson 8-1.

Here is a list of important things to remember about writing. If you do not have your copy from the last lesson, you can use this one to help you remember these things when you do the next writing activity.

Your assignment today is to write a description of someone in this room. Before beginning writing, we will draw names. You will write about the person whose name you draw. My name will also be included in the drawing.

Before we draw names, let's take a few minutes to brainstorm a list of writing prompts.

Write the following list on the chalkboard, including any student suggestions that are appropriate. (If necessary, caution students against saying or writing anything insulting or offensive.)

Description:

- ◆ hair, eyes
- ◆ clothes
- ◆ personality (shy, quiet, talkative, funny, friendly...)
- ◆ interesting or different things about the person
- ◆ anything else you can think of (*that is not offensive*)

Now you have something to help you remember about what you will write. If you think of something else, you can add it to the list. The list is just to help you get started.

Your assignment is to write three or four paragraphs about the person whose name you draw. Each paragraph should have at least four sentences. Make sure you include enough details to give the reader a mental picture of the person you are describing. Remember to use the writing guide that I gave you earlier. You may not have enough time to proofread your papers very carefully. At the end of the lesson, I will collect your papers and save them for a proofreading lesson.

When we have finished writing our descriptive paragraphs, we will take turns reading them aloud. After each paper is read aloud, the rest of us will try to identify the person described.

Place folded papers with names on them in your hand or a container and ask each student to draw one name.

After you have chosen your piece of folded paper, carefully open it. Don't allow anyone to see it; read the name silently. If you drew your own name, put it back and draw another name. Keep the person's name you have drawn a secret.

Does everyone understand the assignments? Pause (Clarify instructions as needed.)

While the students are writing their paragraphs, circulate among them to encourage and assist as needed. You may have to prompt some students to get them started. If a student doesn't know what to write, ask her to tell you what the person looks like. Listen to her describe the person and prompt her to elaborate.

After most of the students have written their paragraphs, begin allowing them to read their descriptions while others try to identify the person.

Student Worksheet Writing Lesson 8-1

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.

Note. Developed for Middle School Reading/Writing Workshop, November, 2000, by Deidra Frazier. Reprinted with permission.