

GRADE 8 English Language Arts Proofreading: Lesson 6

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 6:

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- ◆ examine instructions for proofreading activities,
- ◆ develop proofreading strategies, and
- ◆ find and correct errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics

Equipment/Materials Needed:

- ◆ Student Worksheet: Proofreading Lesson 6-1
- ◆ Student Worksheet: Proofreading Lesson 6-2
- ◆ Tutor's Guide for Proofreading Worksheets 6-1 and 6-2
- ◆ chart paper on stand or chalkboard
- ◆ pencils

Introduction:

Today we will spend some more practice proofreading. You have had some practice proofreading for errors in sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling. Let's quickly review the meaning of *sentence formation, usage, and mechanics* to be sure you understand these concepts.

Briefly review the following explanations of sentence formation, usage, and mechanics.

Sentence Formation

- ◆ *Sentence formation* refers to the way we put words together to make a sentence. If the words are out of order, the sentence may not make any sense, or the meaning might be changed from what the writer intended.
- ◆ Other examples of errors in sentence formation are *run-on sentences* and *incomplete sentences*.

Usage

- ◆ Errors in *usage* are really errors in *word usage*, or the way we use words. Words that sound alike, but are spelled differently and have different meanings, are often used incorrectly. For example, students may get confused about using the words *to, too, and two*.
- ◆ Using the wrong tense is another example of an error in word usage. For example, *Yesterday, I go to the mall* is incorrect. Can anyone correct this sentence and explain why it is incorrect? Pause. (*Yesterday, I went to the mall* is correct. Since *yesterday* refers to the past, the predicate (verb) should be in the past tense. *Went* is the past tense of *go*.)
- ◆ One of the most common examples of incorrect word usage is using inappropriate subject–predicate (verb) agreement. For example, *Some fourth graders knows more about computers than their teachers do* does not have correct subject-predicate (verb) agreement. Can anyone correct this sentence? Pause. (*Some eighth graders know more about computers than their teachers do.*)

Mechanics

Errors in punctuation, capitalization, and formatting, such as indenting correctly for paragraphs, are examples of errors in mechanics.

When you see these terms on the LEAP English Language Arts Writer's Checklist, you will already be familiar with them.

Since the purpose of writing is to send a message, or communicate, you will be scored on composing. Composing is more about the message you want to send.

Composing

Composing well means that you

- ◆ write on the assigned topic,
- ◆ present a clear main idea,
- ◆ give enough details to support and elaborate your main idea, and
- ◆ present your ideas in a logical order.

Let's talk about each of these important points about composing. For example, suppose the writing instructions say, “*Write a letter to your parents to convince them to begin teaching you how to drive a car.*”

Writing on the assigned topic means that you must write only on the topic given in the writing instructions, or writing prompt. You must stick to the topic, convincing your parents to begin teaching you how to drive. You should not get distracted and write about anything else.

Presenting a clear idea means you must focus on the main point you are trying to communicate. For example, you must include a sentence that tells why you are writing the letter. You may write all about how your best friend has her driving license; but if you don't explain your reason for writing the letter, your idea will not be clear.

Giving enough details to support and elaborate your main idea means that you explain enough so that the reader can understand your point. For example, to convince your parents to begin teaching you how to drive a car, you should give as one of your main points the fact that you are mature enough to handle the responsibility of driving. For example, writing, "I am mature and responsible enough to begin learning how to drive" without saying anything else about proof of these qualities does not give enough support for your case. Can anyone come up with a sentence or two that will provide proof or support for the idea that the writer is responsible? Pause. (I have always been very careful to follow all of the rules when riding a bicycle or four-wheeler.)

It is important to *elaborate*, or give reasons for your main idea. You should give a few specific reasons to convince your parents that it is time for you to begin learning to drive.

(Ask students to give several reasons for beginning to learn to drive. Possible responses might include the following: *I'm almost old enough to get a driver's license. The sooner I begin learning to drive, the sooner I can get my license. I will be able to run errands for you. You will never have to go to the grocery store again. I will take my younger brothers and sisters anywhere they need to go. You will never have to spend your time chauffeuring us again. I have never had an accident while driving a four-wheeler.*

The more details and specific examples you supply, the more support you provide for your main idea, and the more convincing your composition will be.

Presenting your ideas in a logical order is necessary for your message to make sense. Thinking about what you want to say and developing an outline or drawing a web will help you organize your composition. You will be able to put your sentences in an order that makes sense if you take the time to think before writing.

Now we are ready to practice a proofreading exercise that is like one you might find on a test.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheets: Proofreading Lessons 6-1 and 6-2.

This passage is an example of a middle school student’s attempt to convince his aunt that he is ready to learn to drive a car. His assignment was to write a letter to convince someone of something. Read the letter quickly, but carefully. While you are reading, keep your pencil ready to mark any errors you see. When you have finished reading the letter, complete the *Checklist for Composing* below the letter; then answer the questions on Worksheet 6-2.

After most students have completed the proofreading worksheet, go over the correct answers to the *Checklist for Composing*, and the correct answers to the proofreading worksheet, discussing reasons for each one. (See Tutor’s Guide for Proofreading Worksheets 6-1 and 6-2, page 163.)

Let’s look at your answers to the *Checklist for Composing* to see how well you proofread for meaning. Look at the first item on the checklist. Did Jaken do a good job of writing on the assigned topic? Pause. (Partly; he gave lots of good reasons to back up his main point, but got a little sidetracked when he wrote about his friends’ fast cars.)

You should have circled *partly* on the checklist.

Did he present a clear main idea? Pause. (Yes; the purpose of his letter was very clear; he wanted to convince his aunt to let him learn to drive.)

You should have circled *yes* on the checklist.

Did Jaken provide enough details to support his main idea? Pause. (Yes; he listed several reasons for learning how to drive and backed them up with specific examples.)

You should have circled *yes* on the checklist.

Were ideas presented in a logical order? Pause. (Students may respond *yes* or *partly*)

In the first paragraph, Jaken explained how he came up with his idea. In the second paragraph, he gave reasons for being allowed to learn to drive. Then he tied his ideas together at the end of his letter when he wrote that his aunt would have time for herself if she would allow him to learn to drive. The last sentence is a good example of a *concluding sentence*. The first sentence of his letter is a good example of an *introductory sentence*. Having a good introduction, explanation, and conclusion helps make writing clear and logical. These parts of Jaken’s letter were presented in a logical order.

However, four sentences in the second paragraph are out of place. Can anyone find these four sentences? Pause.

- *Did you see Kenny’s car?*
- *It needs some paint, but it doesn’t cost much.*
- *Donny’s father is giving him his old car.*
- *I got to ride in it yesterday.*

These sentences are out of place because they do not logically follow the previous sentence, *I won’t go fast*. His friends’ cars have nothing to do with his promise not to drive fast.

The sentence following these four sentences, *I always follow the rules*, has nothing to do with Jaken’s friends’ cars. However, this sentence does logically follow the sentence *I won’t go fast*.

To make this paragraph flow more smoothly, you could either omit these four sentences or make them part of a new, third paragraph about Jaken’s friends and their cars. What do you think Jaken was trying to say in these four sentences? Pause. (All his friends get to drive, so he should)

Do you think including another paragraph with details about this idea will help convince his aunt that he should begin learning to drive? Pause. (Students’ opinions will vary; many will likely say “no”; allow a few minutes for discussion.)

Remember, the purpose of writing is to send a message, or to communicate. Does everyone agree that Jaken was successful in sending a message? Pause. If you say yes, then you should be able to understand his message very easily. What was his message? Pause. (to convince his aunt to let him learn to drive)

Now, let's talk about whether Jaken was successful in *convincing* his aunt to allow him to learn to drive. After you read this letter, were you convinced that Jaken was ready to learn to drive? Pause. (Allow students to share their opinions; require students to explain why they have a particular opinion.)

If Jaken's letter was convincing to you, then you would have to say that he did a very good job sending his message, even if he did have a few errors in spelling and mechanics.

Now let's see how well you proofread the letter for sentence formation, usage, mechanics, and spelling.

Using the answer key to the student proofreading worksheet on the third page (page 166) of the tutor's guide, discuss the correct answers.

Student Worksheet Proofreading Lesson 6-1

Jaken's letter to his Aunt Tonya

Dear Aunt Tonya

I've been meaning to ask you something since I came up with this great idea. You work so hard to get everything done you always take good care of me and Lenny and Kaley you have to much drivin to do takin us everywhere. I have the anser to make life easier for you. So you have time to do things for yourself like gettin your hare done and just relaxing.

I'm ready to lern to drive. Don't worry you know I'll be careful I won't go fast. Did you see Kenny's car? It needs some paint, but it don't cost much. Donny's father is giving him his old car. I got to ride in it yesterday. I always follow the rules. I promise I will learn to drive safely. I can go to the store for you and take everyone anywhere you can get your hair fixed real pretty and put your feet up and just relax.

Love,
The best driver in the hole world,
Jaken

Complete the following checklist by circling the best choice concerning *Jaken's letter to his Aunt Tonya*.

Checklist for Composing:

- | | | | |
|---|-----|--------|----|
| ◆ Written on assigned topic. | yes | partly | no |
| ◆ Presented a clear main idea. | yes | partly | no |
| ◆ Gave enough details to support the main idea. | yes | partly | no |
| ◆ Presented ideas in a logical order. | yes | partly | no |

Student Worksheet Proofreading Lesson 6-2

NAME _____

Answer the following proofreading questions about *Jaken's letter to his Aunt Tonya*.

Paragraph one:

1. Find five misspelled words and correct them.
2. Find one word that is misspelled because it is incorrectly used (error in word usage).
3. Find one punctuation error (hint: in the greeting) and correct it.
4. Find one run-on sentence and correct it.
5. Find one sentence fragment (incomplete sentence) and correct it.

Paragraph two:

6. Find one misspelled word and correct it.
7. Find one word that is misspelled because of an error in word usage and correct it.
8. Find two run-on sentences and correct them.

Original Version of Jaken’s letter

Dear Aunt Tonya

I’ve been meaning to ask you something since I came up with this great idea. You work so hard to get everything done you always take good care of me and Lenny and Kaley you have to much drivin to do takin us everywhere. I have the anser to make life easier for you. So you have time to do things for yourself like gettin your hare done and just relaxing.

I’m ready to lern to drive. Don’t worry you know I’ll be careful I won’t go fast. Did you see Kenny’s car? It needs some paint, but it don’t cost much. Donny’s father is giving him his old car. I got to ride in it yesterday. I always follow the rules. I promise I will learn to drive safely. I can go to the store for you and take everyone anywhere you can get your hair fixed real pretty and put your feet up and just relax.

Love,
The best driver in the hole world,
Jaken

Checklist for Composing:

- | | | | |
|---|-----|--------|----|
| ◆ Written on the assigned topic. | yes | partly | no |
| ◆ Presented a clear main idea. | yes | partly | no |
| ◆ Gave enough details to support the main idea. | yes | partly | no |
| ◆ Presented ideas in a logical order. | yes | partly | no |

Revised version of Jaken's letter

Dear Aunt Tonya,

I've been meaning to ask you something since I came up with this great idea. You work so hard to get everything done. You always take good care of me and Lenny and Kaley. You have too much driving to do taking us everywhere. I have the anser to make life easier for you, so you can have time to do things for yourself, like gettin your hare done and just relaxing.

I'm ready to lern to drive. Don't worry. You know I'll be careful. I won't go fast. Did you see Kenny's car? It needs some paint, but it doesn't cost much money. Donny's father is giving him his old car. I got to ride in it yesterday. I always follow the rules. I promise I will learn to drive safely. I can go to the store for you and take everyone anywhere. You can get your hair fixed real pretty and put your feet up and just relax.

Love,
The best driver in the whole world,
Jaken

*Note:

- **Highlighted sentences** indicate that were out of sequence in the original version.
- **Highlighted spaces, periods, and first letters** of words indicate punctuation and capitalization errors in the original version.
- **Underlined words** indicate misspelled words in the original version.

Answers to Student Worksheet Proofreading Lesson 6-2

Paragraph one:

1. Find five misspelled words and correct them.

- *Drivin* should be spelled *driving*.
- *Takin* should be spelled *taking*.
- *Anser* should be spelled *answer*.
- *Gettin* should be spelled *getting*.
- *Hare* should be spelled *hair*.

2. Find one word that is misspelled because it is incorrectly used (error in word usage). (Some students may have found two.)

- *To* should be spelled *too*, since the word needed should mean *also*.
- *Hare* means *rabbit*; *hair* refers to the covering on the human head. (Some students may have included the error in the word *hare* for this question.)

3. Find one punctuation error (hint: in the greeting) and correct it.

- A comma is needed after the word *Tonya* in the greeting.

4. Find one run-on sentence and correct it.

- Run-on sentence: *You work so hard to get everything done you always take good care of me and Lenny and Kaley you have to much drivin to do takin us everwhere.*
- Corrected sentence: *You work so hard to get everything done. You always take good care of me and Lenny and Kaley. You have too much driving to do taking us everywhere.*

*** (There are several ways to correct these run-on sentences; the example above is only one example of an acceptable correction. Be sure to accept students' answers that are appropriate, even if they are different from this example.)

Tutor's Guide for Proofreading Worksheets 6-1 and 6-2 (continued)

5. Find one sentence fragment (incomplete sentence) and correct it.

- Sentence fragment: *So you have time to do things for yourself like getting your hare done and just relaxing.*
- Corrected sentence: *I have the answer to make life easier for you, so that you will have time to do things for yourself, like getting your hair done and just relaxing.*

*** (This correction is only one example of an acceptable revision. Be sure to accept students' answers that differ from this one, but that are correct.)

Paragraph two:

6. Find one misspelled word and correct it.

- *Lern* should be spelled *learn*.

7. Find one word that is misspelled because of an error in word usage and correct it.

- *Don't* should be replaced by *doesn't*, for appropriate subject-predicate (verb) agreement.

8. Find two run-on sentences and correct them.

- First run-on sentence: *Don't worry you know I'll be careful I won't go fast.*
- Corrected sentence: *Don't worry. You know I'll be careful. I won't go fast.*
- Second run-on sentence: *I can go to the store for you and take everyone anywhere you can get your hair fixed really pretty and put your feet up and just relax.*
- Corrected sentence: *I can go to the store for you and take everyone anywhere. You can get your hair fixed really pretty and put your feet up and just relax.*

*** (Be sure to accept students' answers that are correct, even if they vary from those suggested above.)