Thoughtful Learning - Basics of Writing Grade 3

Content Area: **English**
Course(s):
Time Period: **September**
Length: **8 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

The Basics of Writing unit focuses on writing sentences of varying types and lengths. Students will learn the four types of sentences, how to combine simple sentences, expand sentences, and to write a basic paragraph. Students will also be introduced to different text structures.

Enduring Understandings

- Students will understand the four types of sentences and the correct punctuation marks.
- Students will learn to combine simple sentences into compound and complex sentences.
- Students will understand how to expand sentences using question words (who, what, when, where, why, and how)
- Students will learn the parts of a paragraph and how to formulate a topic and concluding sentence.
- Students will learn about different text structures.

Essential Questions

What are the four types of sentences?

What are compound and complex sentences and why do we combine simple sentences?

How should a paragraph be structured?

What are text structures and why are they important?

Instructional Strategies & Learning Activities

Basics of Writing - Start - Up Activity

It is important to help students develop their sentence sense, and you can do this by immersing

them in reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities.

To gauge their understanding of sentences, display the following groups of words.

- Josie ate her lunch
- A cheese sandwich and an apple
- Mickey giggled
- Rolled down the hill
- Scruffy barked and wagged his tail
- An angry robin

Read each group of words aloud and ask students if the words form a complete sentence. Then ask them how to turn the incomplete sentences into complete ones. Then read and discuss the chapter introduction.

Parts of a Sentence - Silly Sentences Activity

Read and discuss this page, which identifies the basic parts of a sentence: subjects, verbs, and modifiers. Refer to pages 350–353 for more information about sentences. Then ask students to identify the basic parts of the sentences they discussed for page 47.

Next, list these subjects, verbs (predicates), and modifiers. Have students combine these parts to create fun sentences.

Subjects	Predicates	Modifiers
the duck	swam	across the pond
Uncle Max	flew	to Australia
Samantha	limped	into the doctor's office

Sentence Problems - Sentence Fragment Activities

Carefully review page 49, which identifies three common sentence problems: sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and rambling sentences. Then display the following groups of words that illustrate sentence problems. Work with students to correct each one.

- Is dripping all over my hand.
- My favorite team.
- The ball was hit to me I leaped to catch it.
- Scruffy dug a hole in the garden I quickly filled it in.
- My family rode bikes on the trail and the trail was really long and my bike was really small so I was way behind everybody else and I was really mad and tired.

Combining Sentences - Start-up Activity

Display these sentences:

- **Apple pie is juicy.**
- **Apple pie is sweet.**
- **Apple pie is fun to eat.**

Ask students how these short ideas can be combined into one longer sentence. Then have each student write three short sentences about a favorite food. Display some of these sentences for further sentence combining. Next, read and discuss the chapter introduction.

Four Ways to Combine Sentences

Page 51 lists four ways to combine sentences: using a series, using compound subjects or verbs, and using key words. After reading and discussing each method, provide sentences for students to combine in these different ways. Start with the sentences from this activity:

1. The soup is chunky. The soup is spicy. The soup is hot.
2. Saturday was cold. Saturday was cloudy. Saturday was rainy.
3. My dad plays the guitar. My brother plays the guitar.
4. Thanksgiving is an important holiday. Fourth of July is an important holiday.
5. My sister makes jewelry. My sister sells jewelry.
6. On our vacation, we swam every day. On our vacation, we fished every day.
7. Our team wore new uniforms. We wore them yesterday.
8. Our dog ran away. He ran away last night

Writing Paragraphs - Start-up Activity

Share with students a funny or interesting story from your own life. Then show them a written version of the story in the form of a paragraph. Inform them that this paragraph tells a true story. Ask them if they can find the topic and two or three interesting details. Then read the chapter introduction.

Basic Parts of a Paragraph

Read and discuss this page, which identifies the three parts of a paragraph: the topic sentence (beginning), body (middle), and ending sentence. Ask students to identify the three parts in the paragraph you shared with them for page 52

Closer Look at Parts

After discussing this information, share with students a picture of a piece of pie and show them how it relates to the parts of a paragraph. The top and bottom crusts hold the filling in place, just as the

topic and ending sentences hold the body sentences in place. Ask students if they can think of and/or draw pictures of other foods that illustrate the parts of a paragraph. (Possible responses: a filled donut, a pot pie, a sandwich, etc.)

Types of Paragraphs

Pages 55–58 include narrative, descriptive, explanatory, and persuasive paragraphs. Page 55 includes a **narrative paragraph**—or a paragraph that tells a story. As you read this paragraph aloud, ask students to listen for the details: Do the details help them enjoy the story? Then consider having students write a paragraph about their own funny experience. Refer them to pages 59–60 for writing guidelines

Descriptive Paragraph - Pumpkin Paragraph

This **descriptive paragraph** shares details about a favorite restaurant. Display the words *smells, sights,* and *sounds*. As you read this paragraph aloud, ask students to listen for words that share these types of details. After the reading, list some of these details. Then consider having students write a paragraph describing one of their favorite places. Refer them to pages 59–60 for writing guidelines.

Explanatory Paragraph - How to paragraph

This explanatory paragraph explains the challenges of living with a younger brother. Before you read this paragraph aloud, display the topic in a circle. As you read this paragraph aloud, ask students to listen for examples that explain the topic. After the reading, cluster the examples and other details about the topic. Then consider having students write a paragraph explaining something. Refer them to pages 59–60 for writing guidelines.

Persuasive Paragraph - Why they're famous - biography

This **persuasive paragraph** gives an opinion about the need for sidewalks in a neighborhood. Before you read this paragraph aloud, display the opinion. As you read this paragraph aloud, ask students to listen for reasons that support the opinion. Then after the reading, have students identify the reasons. Consider having students write a paragraph in which they support an opinion about their neighborhood or community. Refer them to pages 59–60 for writing guidelines.

Writing a Paragraph

The next two pages provide step-by-step guidelines for writing any type of paragraph. Page 59 covers prewriting and writing a draft. Make sure students understand the specific form presented in each writing assignment. Narrative, descriptive, explanatory, and persuasive paragraphs require different types of ideas and details. Review the strategies for collecting details for the different forms

Read and discuss the questions students should ask as they revise and edit their paragraphs. Afterward, have students follow all of the steps to write a new paragraph.

Text Structures - Start-up Activity

Text structures help students form and develop their ideas in writing. The structures covered in this chapter include time order, cause and effect, order of importance, compare and contrast, and giving examples.

Display these topics:

- Making a peanut butter and jelly sandwich *(time order)*
- No kickball for the next two weeks *(cause and effect)*
- More computers are needed *(order of importance)*
- Kickball is a lot like softball *(compare and contrast)*
- Whole milk is only one form of white milk *(examples)*

Ask students how they would write about these topics. That is, what would they say first, second, and so on? Then read and discuss page 61. During your discussion of time order, have students determine if they would employ this text structure to explain any of the above topics. Also point out the value of using certain transitions with time order. Finally, consider having students explain something using time order.

Cause and Effect / Order of Importance

This page covers two text structures: cause and effect and order of importance. During your discussion of cause and effect, have students determine if they would employ this text structure for any of the topics listed for page 61. Note that they can use a cause-effect chart to gather details for this type of text structure. Also point out the value of using certain transitions with cause and effect. Consider having students explain something using this text structure. Discuss order of importance in the same way.

Downloads:

Cause-Effect Chart.doc

Compare and Contrast / Using Examples

This page covers these text structures: compare and contrast and using examples. During your discussion of compare and contrast, have students determine if they would employ this structure for any of the topics listed for page 61. Also point out the value of using certain transitions with compare

and contrast. Consider having students explain something using this text structure. (A Venn diagram can help them gather details.) Discuss using examples in a similar way.

Downloads:

Venn Diagram Template

Integration of 21st Century Themes and Skills

The 21st century skills are a set of abilities that students need to develop in order to succeed in the information age. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills lists three types:

Learning Skills

- Critical Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Collaborating
- Communicating

Literacy Skills

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy
- Technology Literacy

Interdisciplinary Connections

These writing steps and skills can be utilized in science and social studies assignments.

Differentiation

Modify expectations: Shorten or lengthen assignment depending on abilities.

Require basic or extended vocabulary.

Small group teacher instruction based on student's writing ability.

Pair students heterogeneously for centers to encourage students to learn from peers.

Allow for speech to text for longer writing assignments.

Provide choice extension projects as necessary to extend learning

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/fixing-sentence-fragments

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/fixing-run-sentences

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/combining-choppy-sentences

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/discovering-narrative-strategies

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/writing-descriptions-show-instead-tell

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/using-transitions-add-information-and-emphasis

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/using-time-order-transitions

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/analyzing-cause-effect-chart

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/using-transitions-add-information-and-emphasis

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/comparing-venn-diagram

Modifications & Accommodations

Refer to QSAC, EXCEL SPED Accommodations spreadsheet in this discipline.

IEP and 504 accommodations will be utilized.

Formative Assessments

You can provide this formative assessment during different types of writing conferences:

- **Desk-Side Conferences** occur when you stop at a student's desk to ask questions and make responses. Questions should be open-ended. This gives the writer "space" to talk and clarify his or her own thinking about the writing.
- **Scheduled Conferences** give you and a student a chance to meet for 3 to 5 minutes in a more structured setting. In such a conference, a student may have a specific problem or need to discuss or simply want you to assess his or her progress on a particular piece of writing.
- **Small-Group Conferences** give you a chance to meet with three to five students who are at the same stage of the writing process or are experiencing a similar problem. The goal of such conferences is twofold: first, to help students improve their writing and, second, to help them become better assessors.

Summative Assessments

Decide which assignments require summative assessment, and then grade the writing following this process:

- Ask students to submit prewriting and rough drafts with their final drafts.
- Scan final drafts once, focusing on the writing as a whole.

- Reread them, this time assessing them using the qualities of writing.
- Make marginal notations, if necessary, as you read the drafts a second time.
- Scan the writing a third and final time. Note the feedback you have given.
- Complete your rating sheet or rubric, and, if necessary, write a summary comment.

Instructional Materials

Writer's Express Skills Book

Writer's Express Handbook

Standards

L.WF.3.3	Demonstrate command of the conventions of writing including those listed under grade two foundational skills.
L.KL.3.1	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.W.3.1	Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.
LA.W.3.1.A	Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons.
LA.W.3.1.B	Provide reasons that support the opinion.
LA.W.3.1.C	Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.
LA.W.3.1.D	Provide a conclusion.
LA.W.3.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
LA.W.3.2.A	Introduce a topic and group related information together; include text features (e.g., illustrations, diagrams, captions) when useful to support comprehension.
LA.W.3.2.B	Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
LA.W.3.2.C	Use linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within categories of information.
LA.W.3.2.D	Provide a conclusion.
LA.W.3.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using narrative technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
LA.W.3.3.A	Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
LA.W.3.3.B	Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
LA.W.3.3.C	Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.

LA.W.3.3.D	Provide a sense of closure.
LA.W.3.4	With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.3.5	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
	Conventions of Standard English
LA.L.3.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.3.1.A	Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences.
LA.L.3.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.3.2.A	Capitalize appropriate words in titles.
LA.L.3.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.L.3.3.A	Choose words and phrases for effect.