

Expository Writing: Informational Article

Unit Introduction

Unit Overview:

Students will write an Informational Article about an “expert topic” using an expository organizational structure. The “expert topic” refers to a topic they already know well and do not need to research. The expository organizational structure consists of an introduction, a body and a conclusion which distinguishes itself from the beginning, middle and end of the narrative organizational structure.

Teachers may want to modify this assignment to address individual class/student needs. Suggestions for modifying include:

- Rather than leaving the topic open to student choice, pick a shared experience (a field trip, a unit of study, a familiar location) that allows you to build common vocabulary.
- Allow TAG students to research more information
- Several lessons ask student to share with a partner. You may want to pre-determine partners for the entire unit.

The lessons follow the steps in the writing process and call on the teacher to model an “expert topic” for students throughout the unit. Feel free to use our model topic of – The Gym with examples in the lessons. Or use another model for an “expert topic” which you will use throughout the unit.

The mentor texts chosen for this informational article unit follow a simple expository structure – introduction, body and conclusion. Note as to whether other informational texts you may read follow this same structure.

Student Goals:

1. Students will use an expository organizational structure to write a multiple paragraph article that: [4.2.2]
 - uses factual information about a familiar topic
 - includes an introductory paragraph with an effective lead
 - develops a topic with supporting details [4.4.1]
 - uses transitions to link paragraphs [4.2.4]
 - ends the article with an effective conclusion (summary, connecting to the lead, further questions to think about, etc.)
2. Students will demonstrate sentence fluency by creating a variety of sentence patterns by: [4.2.6]
 - using simple and compound sentences [4.2.5]
 - beginning sentences in a variety of ways
3. Students, with assistance from peers and teachers, will reread and revise writing for meaning, clarity and sentence fluency by: [4.1.8]
 - combining and moving sentences/paragraphs to improve the focus and organization of ideas
 - using effective transitional phrases [4.2.4]
4. Students will use an editing checklist for grade level conventions. [4.1.9]

Expository Writing: Informational Article

Table of Contents

Informational Article:

Unit Introduction.....	IA-1
Table of Contents.....	IA-3
IA1. Comparing Narrative and Expository Writing (ELA.4.WRT.1.1)	IA-5
IA2. Creating an Expert List (ELA.4.WRT.1.1 & 1.2)	IA-7
IA3. Selecting a Topic and Generating Ideas (ELA.4.WRT.1.1).....	IA-9
The Gym – Web.....	IA-11
IA4. Select and Sort Words under Main Ideas (ELA.4.WRT.1.1 & 4.1).....	IA-13
The Gym – Sort.....	IA-14
IA5. Graphic Organizer: Main Ideas and Details (ELA.4.WRT.1.1)	IA-15
Graphic Organizers with and without examples	IA-17
IA6. Drafting the Body - 3 paragraphs (ELA.4.WRT.1.5 & 2.2).....	IA-21
Writing Sample 1.....	IA-23
IA7. Adding Additional Details (ELA.4.WRT.1.5 & 2.2).....	IA-25
Graphic Organizer Example	IA-27
Writing Sample 2.....	IA-28
IA8. Writing Leads (ELA.4.WRT.2.2)	IA-29
Good Introduction Anchor Chart	IA-33
Types of Leads Anchor Chart.....	IA-34
IA9. Focus Statements and Completion of Introduction (ELA.4.WRT.2.2) .	IA-35
IA10. Writing the Conclusion (ELA.4.WRT.2.2)	IA-39
Writing Sample 3.....	IA-42
List of Transitional Phrases.....	IA-43
IA11. Sentence Fluency: Compound Sentences (ELA.4.WRT.2.4 & 2.5).....	IA-45
Compound Sentence Practice Sheet	IA-48
Writing Sample 4.....	IA-49
IA12. Sentence Fluency: Prepositional Phrases (ELA.4.WRT.1.8 & 5.4).....	IA-51
Prepositional Phrases Practice Sheet	IA-53
IA13. Revision Checklist (ELA.4.WRT.1.7)	IA-55
Revision Checklist	IA-57
Writing Sample 5.....	IA-58
IA14. Editing Checklist and Final Piece (ELA.4.WRT.1.9)	IA-59
Editing Checklist	IA-61
All About Bunnies – edited and unedited versions	IA-62

Teacher Resources:

Scott Foresman Fourth Grade Resources

TQW – Teaching the Qualities of Writing, JoAnn Portalupi and Ralph Fletcher

Expository Writing: Informational Article (IA1)

Comparing Narrative and Expository Writing

Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Compare narrative writing with expository writing.
- Elements of expository writing

Standard(s):

ELA.WRT.4.1.1 Use a variety of strategies to prepare for writing.

Materials:

- Chart paper and post-it notes
- Mentor Texts: SF Reading Street “Adventure on the Sea” p.519 (expository)

Connection:

“Earlier this year we wrote personal narratives. Now we will begin a new type of writing called expository writing. Expository writing is non-fiction writing that includes biographies, reports, newspaper articles, etc. In this unit, we will be writing a type of expository writing called an Informational Article. Today we will examine how narrative and expository writing are similar and different in order to help us understand how to write an informational article.”

Teach (modeling):

“Let’s make a T-chart to compare the two types of writing. We’ll start with narratives. What are the elements of a narrative?”

Teacher prompts students to think about the narratives they wrote as well as the narratives they have read. Teachers ask students to share and chart elements of narrative writing (See T-chart below for possible responses. Point out elements they missed.

Narrative	Expository
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational structure that uses a beginning, middle and end • Strong lead or opening • Sharing of a personal story • Has plot or events • Setting description • Character development • Figurative language, precise nouns, vivid verbs, sensory detail • Dialogue • Examples are personal narrative, imaginative stories, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose is to inform • True/factual information • Explains • No plot or conflict • Has main ideas with supporting details • Examples are reports, biographies, newspaper articles, etc.

“Now we’ll read an informational article to discover the elements of expository writing and compare it to narrative.”

Read “Adventure On the Sea”. *“Based on what we read, what do you think are the elements of an informational article? Let’s write your ideas on the T-chart.”*

See T-chart above for examples. Make sure students understand the purpose of an informational article is to inform. Remind them of a couple of expository text they have read. Explain why they are expository.

“The purpose of the text, _____, was to inform the reader about _____. It contained factual information about _____. The main ideas were _____.” Etc.

Direct students to think about informational/expository texts they have read this year and ask them to share what information the author explained to the reader.

Link to Independent Practice:

Have students work with partners or small groups to locate other examples of expository writing in Scott Foresman Reading Street with teacher guidance. Prompt students to identify what the author was informing the readers about.

“Your job today is to locate other examples of expository writing. This work will help us write our informational article.”

Closure:

Teacher calls students together. Each group shares an expository text they located and what elements of expository it possesses especially what the author was informing the readers about. Teacher confirms ideas on T-chart and possibly adds to their ideas. Remind students they will be writing a type of expository writing called an informational article.

Notes:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)

Expository Writing: Informational Article (IA2)

Creating an Expert List

Writing Teaching Point(s):

Brainstorm topics (expert topics) students know well.

- Students make lists of their expert topics.

Standard(s):

ELA.4.WRT.1.1 Use a variety of strategies to prepare for writing such as brainstorming and making lists.

ELA.4.WRT.1.2 Discuss ideas for writing with classmates and teachers.

Materials:

- Document camera or overhead
- Writing notebook

Connection:

“In our last lesson we saw that informational articles are non-fiction writing based on facts. In order to write an informational article, you need to know a lot of information about your topic. Sometimes you need to research and read about a particular topic to gain knowledge about it, but other times you are already knowledgeable about the topic.

We sometimes call it an ‘expert topic’ because we already know a lot about it. Today we will come up with, or brainstorm, a list of topics we already know a lot about, our expert topics.”

Teach (modeling):

Model for students, on an overhead/projector, writing a list of things you know a lot about. Use categories such as Activities, Places, Things I’m Good At, People, Animals, etc.

“I’m going to work on my list right now. I’ll think out loud so you can see how I’m going about it. First I’ll ask myself what are some activities I like and do a lot? I’ll write these ideas down.” For example: gardening, camping, playing tennis.”

“Next I’ll ask myself what are some places that I have been to a lot and know really well.” For example, the beach, the zoo, and even our school gym.

“Now I’ll ask myself, what do I do really well?” For example I think I am good at...

“Finally, I’ll ask myself are there any people or animals that I know a lot about? Are there any family members such as my Grandma that I know a lot about? Or, maybe my pet cat or dog?”

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Have students begin their list of things that they know a lot about. They can categorize their expert lists by activities, places, things I do well, people, animals, etc. After students have finished their brainstorm list, have them share their lists with a partner.

Independent Practice:**Closure:**

Gather students together and have each students share one or two ideas from their lists with the whole class. Share out popcorn style.

Notes:**Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)**

TQW by Portalupi and Fletcher, I-1

Expository Writing: Informational Article (IA3) Selecting a Topic & Generating Ideas

Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Choosing one topic
- Generating words/phrases about expert topic

Standard(s):

ELA.4.WRT.1.1 Use a variety of strategies to prepare for writing such as brainstorming and making lists.

Materials:

- Expert lists from last lesson
- Class chart paper, markers and packages of post-it notes for table groups
- Large file folders

Connection:

“In our last lesson, we created a list of expert topics that we know well. We will now be choosing a topic from our expert list as our topic for our informational article. Then we will brainstorm and list all the words or phrases about that topic. This activity will help us gather facts for our informational article.”

Teach (modeling):

“Our first task is to choose a topic we know well for our informational article and one we think will interest our audience. For our whole class practice of this activity, let’s choose the topic of the gym. We all know this topic well and I think it would make for an interesting topic for an informational article. Now our job is to brainstorm all word or phrases associated or related to our topic.”

Teacher writes gym at the top of chart paper.

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Tell students to think about everything they know or could tell about their school gym. Ask a couple of students to share one word or phrase about the gym.

Pass out post-its.

“Now your task is to write down on the post-its any words or phrases associated with our school gym. Everyone should at least write one word and one phrase. I will let you know when it is time to come up and post them on our chart.”

After students have written a word or phrase about the gym, have a representative from each table collect them and post them on the chart. Share with students that this is a good topic because we have enough information about the gym to be able to write our article. Remark to students that this is one way to brainstorm ideas and it works well for an informational article.

Note: Other choices for topics to use with class could be content you've just studied with facts that students have committed to memory, such as owls, Oregon geography, etc.

Link to Independent Practice:

Direct students to work on their own brainstorm using their expert list, a file folder and post-its. Pass out file folders and post-it notes.

“Go back to your own expert list and I will give you some more post-it notes and a large file folder. Reread your list and choose one topic you know a lot about. Write the topic on the inside of your folder. Use the post-it notes to write all the words and phrases that come to mind about your topic. Put one idea, a word or phrase, on each post-it, and stick them on your folder.”

As students finish, they can share with a partner.

Closure:

Remind students about the following important ideas:

- Always consider the audience in our writing. In this case, choosing a topic that will interest them.
- Brainstorming words and phrases about our chosen topic lays the foundation for our informational article.
- During this prewriting stage of writing, authors collect many ideas.
- The list of expert topics gave them a lot of ideas to choose from.

Notes:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

Lesson adapted from Expository Writing: Informational Article, Tressa Bauer



Expository Writing: Informational Article (IA4)

Sorting Words/Phrases under the Main ideas

Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Sorting words/phrases under the main ideas.

Standard(s):

ELA.4.WRT.4.1 Develop the topic with simple facts, details, examples, and explanations that includes facts and details for focus.

ELA.4.WRT.1.1 Use a variety of strategies to prepare for writing, such as grouping related ideas.

Materials:

- Class chart paper with post-its on 'gym'
- New chart paper and markers
- Student file folders with post-its

Connection:

"In our last lesson, we each chose a topic from our expert lists. Then we recorded words and phrases about that topic. Today we'll sort the words and phrases into groups that have something in common. These groups and categories will become our main ideas."

Teach (modeling):

Teacher refers to class chart on 'gym' from the last lesson. *"I'm looking to see if I can sort these words into groups that have something in common. For example, I might sort soccer balls and jump ropes into a group. Why do you think so? They are types of equipment. What other words/phrases would go in this equipment group? Have students share other words or phrases to go into the equipment group.*

Active Engagement (guided practice):

"In partners, discuss other groups or categories we could create for the words or phrases on our gym chart." Give students a few minutes with their partners to come up with a category. Then ask pairs to share with the whole class the categories created and the words or phrases that fit into that category. Note how each group uses a variety of different categories and discuss and clarify any areas of confusion.

Link to Independent Practice:

"Return to your own file folders of words/phrases."

- Group or sort the words and phrases by looking for those that have something in common
- Next think and tell why. *"I put these together because...."*
- Label your groups with a word or sentence and write it above the group or post-its.

Closure:

Students share completed organized lists on file folders with partners. Remind students that their categories or groups will become their main ideas.

Notes:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements

Lesson adapted from "Expository Writing: Informational Article", Tressa Bauer

Gym

Equipment

nerf balls

Soccer balls

playground balls

jump ropes

basket ball hoop
Scooter boards

bowling pins

Uses of Gym

P.E

Assemblies

Dances

After School events

School Carnival

Activities

Running

basketball

bowling

Gym features

Shiny Wood floors

lights

bleachers

Gym sounds

whistles blowing

cheering

yelling

bouncing sounds

Expository Writing: Informational Article (IA5)

Graphic Organizer: Identifying Main Ideas and Details

Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Introduce graphic organizer (pillar)
- Identify main ideas and details in text
- Students will select main ideas and details for their informational article

Note: This lesson may be spread over two days. This is a good time to incorporate lessons in Reading on main ideas and topic sentences. See SF Unit 1, Week 6 or Unit 5, Week 4 for ideas.

Standard(s):

ELA.4.1.1 Use a variety of strategies to prepare for writing, such as using graphic organizers.

Materials:

- 2 copies of graphic organizer (pillar) per child
- Scott Foresman, Fresh Reads for Differentiated Test Practice, “National Parks” page 29
- Chart paper with sorted ideas on the gym from previous lesson

Connection:

“In our last lesson, we sorted our ideas into categories. When we start writing, those categories will be the main ideas of our informational article. Let’s look at this graphic organizer.”

Show organizer on overhead or projector.

“The three rectangles in the middle represent the body of our informational article. Each of these middle boxes will hold the main ideas that you sorted in our last lesson. Later, we will come back to this graphic organizer and fill in the boxes.”

Teach (modeling):

“Let’s read how an author uses main ideas in writing an informational article. Read “National Parks” and discuss together. Read each paragraph to determine the main idea. Record the main idea on a graphic organizer about national parks. Explain that we will be recording our main ideas about our topics using this organizer.

Active Engagement (guided practice):

“Now let’s look at the chart we created on the gym. What main ideas do you see? (Remember main ideas are the same as the categories or groups you created on your chart.) Each of these main ideas can be turned into paragraphs. Let’s pick three categories that we will later write as paragraphs. For example, we could write one paragraph on gym equipment, one paragraph on gym uses and one paragraph on gym activities.

Give each student a copy of the pillar graphic organizer to complete while you model filling out the main ideas of the informational article.

Link to Independent Practice:

“Now, you will pick three main ideas to write about in your informational article.” Pass out the 2nd graphic organizer. Students take out their file folders with their sorted lists that they have previously categorized, and choose their 3 paragraph main ideas. They should choose categories they have enough information about and that would be most interesting to the reader. They then write the main ideas on their graphic organizer.

Teach (modeling):

“Now we have our main ideas listed on our graphic organizer. However, we still need to add details that go with each main idea to have more information for our article. Let’s return to the text, ‘National Parks’ and think about the details the author wrote that go with each main idea we recorded.” Reread paragraphs and guide students to identify the details of each main idea. Record them on the graphic organizer.

“Our task now is to add details to the graphic organizer under each main idea. Let’s practice with the gym example. Let’s look at our chart where we categorized the words and phrases about the gym.” Ask partners to turn and talk and identify the details for each main idea. Prompt students to share out what details should be placed under each main idea on the graphic organizer and make sure students understand why they are listing them this way.

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Students will return to their graphic organizers and file folders to choose supporting details for each main idea on their graphic organizers.

Closure:

Students share their graphic organizers with a partner. Explain to students how they have spent the last few lessons planning for their article and will begin drafting in the next lesson.

Notes:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

Pillar graphic organizer taken from, *Step by Step Strategies for Teaching Expository Writing*, by Barbara Mariconda, Scholastic 2001

Name _____

Date _____

Introduction

Main Idea #1 _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Main Idea #2 _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Main Idea #3 _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Conclusion

Step-by-Step Strategies for Teaching Expository Writing Scholastic Professional Books, page 26

Name _____ Date _____

Introduction

Main Idea #1 Gym Equipment

Detail _____ _____	Detail _____ _____
Detail _____ _____	Detail _____ _____

Main Idea #2 Gym Uses

Detail _____ _____	Detail _____ _____
Detail _____ _____	Detail _____ _____

Main Idea #3 Fun Activities in the Gym

Detail _____ _____	Detail _____ _____
Detail _____ _____	Detail _____ _____

Conclusion

Step-by-Step Strategies for Teaching Expository Writing, Scholastic Professional Books, page 26

Name _____

Date _____

Introduction

Main Idea #1 Gym Equipment

Detail playground balls Detail scooter boards

Detail soccer balls Detail bowling pins

Main Idea #2 Gym Uses

Detail school assemblies Detail school dances

Detail school carniva Detail _____

Main Idea #3 Fun Activities in the Gym

Detail running Detail basketball

Detail _____ Detail _____

Conclusion

Expository Writing: Informational Article (IA6)

Drafting the Body – 3 paragraphs

Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Drafting the body of the informational article using the main ideas and details from graphic organizer

Note: First, this lesson models the writing of a simple topic sentence and a supporting sentence using the main ideas and details from the graphic organizer for each paragraph. The next lesson focuses on adding detail and examples.

Standard(s):

ELA.WRT.1.5 & 2.2 Use drafting to write multi-paragraph compositions.

Materials:

- Student file folders with completed post-its.
- Student graphic organizers from the last lesson
- Writing sample 1 (Topic sentence and supporting detail)

Connection:

“In our last lesson, we selected our main ideas and details and wrote them on our graphic organizer. Today, we will use our graphic organizer to help us write the first draft of the body of our informational article.

Teach (modeling):

Teacher models how to write the first paragraph of the body using the information on the graphic organizer.

“Let’s start by writing the first paragraph of our Gym informational article. First we will turn the main idea into topic sentence. Then we will turn the details into supporting sentences.”

See Writing Example #1 at end of lesson for sample paragraph.

Teacher models on overhead how to craft sentences from the graphic organizer for the first paragraph. *“Our first main idea is Gym Equipment.’ How am I going to turn this main idea into a topic sentence for my paragraph? I could say... ‘In our gym we have lots of great equipment’. Yes, that is one of the main things that I am going to tell my readers about in this article.”* Teacher writes topic sentence.

“Now, I want to turn my details into supporting sentences. The details on the graphic organizer say ‘balls, scooter boards, soccer balls and bowling pins’. How am I going to turn this detail into a supporting sentence? I could say... ‘We have playground balls, scooter boards, soccer balls and bowling pins’. So now I have a topic sentence and a supporting detail sentence.”

Active Engagement (guided practice):

“Let’s write the 2nd paragraph together. Main idea #2 says ‘Gym Uses.’

Teacher continues to model and engage students in composing main and supporting detail sentences using notes from graphic organizer. Repeat for paragraph #3.

Link to Independent Practice:

“Now, it’s your turn to use the ideas from your graphic organizer to write the body of your informational article. Remember, you will use the main idea for your topic sentence. That way your readers will know what each of your paragraphs is about. Then you will use the details from your graphic organizer to write supporting sentence(s).

Note: The drafting process may take several days with students finishing at different times.

Closure:

Students share one of their completed paragraphs with a partner and partner identifies main ideas and supporting details from the paragraph. Teacher makes note of students that need more help.

Notes:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

Writing Sample 1 – The Gym

Example of using main ideas and details from graphic organizer to write topic sentence and supporting sentence(s).

Paragraph #1:

(Main idea) In our gym, we have equipment. (Supporting detail sentence) We have playground balls, scooter boards, soccer balls and bowling pins.

Paragraph #2:

(Main idea) The gym has many uses. (Supporting detail sentence) We use it for school assemblies, school dances and school carnivals.

Paragraph #3:

(Main idea) There's lots of fun activities in the gym. (Supporting detail sentence) We run and play basketball.

Writing Sample 1:

In our gym, we have equipment. We have playground balls, scooter boards, soccer balls and bowling pins.

The gym has many uses. We use it for school assemblies, school dances and school carnivals.

There are lots of fun activities in the gym. We run and play basketball.

Expository Writing: Informational Article (IA7)

Adding Additional Details

Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Students will identify interesting details in a mentor text that enhance in the writing
- Students will add additional details to their first drafts

Standard(s):

ELA.WRT.1.5 & 2.2 Use drafting to write multi-paragraph compositions.

Materials:

- Adventure on the Sea, Scott Foresman, page 519
- Complete Graphic Organizer for Adventure at Sea (see end of lesson)
- Writing Sample #1 – The Gym (see previous lesson)
- Writing Sample #2 – The Gym (see end of lesson)

Connection:

“Now that we have completed the first draft for the body of our informational article, we are going to learn how to make our writing more interesting to our readers by adding details.”

Teach (model):

“Let’s begin by taking a look at an informational article in our Scott Foresman anthology to see how adding more details makes the piece more interesting to read.”
Read aloud “Adventure on the Sea,” page 519. Use a blank graphic organizer to quickly identify main ideas and details. (See completed sample at end of lesson.)

“Now, let’s take a look at the additional details that the author adds to really engage the reader. Look at the first paragraph in the body of the article...it begins...‘The ship itself was interesting to look at.’ What details does the author add in this paragraph about the parts of the ship?”

Possible responses: ‘fancy carving of beautiful woman, quickly climbed up, sailors climbed, repaired and cleaned.’

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Students work with a partner to identify additional details in the next paragraph that begins... *“The captain, a dignified figure.....”*

Students share out engaging details.

Teach (model):

Teacher models how to evaluate first draft of *The Gym* informational article and how to add additional details to engage the reader. Put Writing Sample 1 – The Gym – from previous lesson, on the overhead.

“Last night as I was reading over the first draft of our informational article on the gym, I noticed some things.

- I noticed there are three short paragraphs - each with main idea and supporting detail*
- However, I also notice that it wasn't very interesting to read. I found myself wanting to add more details, just like the author of “A Life At Sea” did to make the writing more fun to read.”*

“So I did some more writing on my first draft to see if I could add some more interesting details. Let me show you what I did.”

Teacher reads first paragraph ONLY of Writing Sample 1, then reads first paragraph of Writing Sample 2. Teacher thinks aloud about the process he/she went through to add additional details.

For example: *“I know the gym has lots of equipment, but I wanted my reader to know that it is really great equipment and everyone loves to play with it so I tried to capture that in this sentence.”*

“The gym has loads of special equipment that all spell fun.”

“I also thought that the words ‘loads’ and ‘special’ painted a better picture about the amount of equipment in the gym and how great it is!”

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Teacher displays paragraph 2 of Writing Sample 1 and Writing Sample 2.

Students work with a partner to identify the additional details that were added to make the writing engaging.

Students share out. Discuss.

Link to Independent Practice:

“Now, it's your turn to start adding additional details to the first draft of your informational article.”

Closure:

Students share out favorite sentence from today's writing

Notes:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

Adventure on the Seas

Name _____

Date _____

Introduction

Main Idea #1

Parts of a ship

Detail *bow*

Detail *stern*

Detail *mast and
sails*

Detail _____

Main Idea #2

Role of Captain

Detail *give orders*

Detail *navigate*

Detail _____

Detail _____

Main Idea #3

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Conclusion

Step-by-Step Strategies for Teaching Spelling Writing, Substantive Professional Product, page 26

Writing Sample #2 The Gym

Paragraph #1:

The gym has loads of special equipment that all spell fun. You can find playground balls for bouncing. There soccer balls for dribbling. The soccer boards can be used for fun. When the bowling pins come out, more action begins.

Paragraph #2

We use the gym for our fun P.E. activities. That's not all the gym is used for. We have large all-school assemblies like Sea World's visit to help us learn about whales. The school carnival fills up the gym with booths of games and prizes once per year. In our school, the older students love the dances in our gym.

Paragraph #3

There's no shortage of fun activities in our gym. We are running around most of the time. There's relay races and tag games like Freeze Tag. Some kids like shooting hoops. Some kids play H-O-R-S-E.

Writing Sample #2

The gym has loads of special equipment that all spell fun. You can find playground balls for bouncing. There soccer balls for dribbling. The soccer boards can be used for fun. When the bowling pins come out, more action begins.

We use the gym for our fun P.E. activities. That's not all the gym is used for. We have large all-school assemblies like Sea World's visit to help us learn about whales. The school carnival fills up the gym with booths of games and prizes once per year. In our school, the older students love the dances in our gym.

There's no shortage of fun activities in our gym. We are running around most of the time. There's relay races and tag games like Freeze Tag. Some kids like shooting hoops. Some kids play H-O-R-S-E.

Expository Writing: Informational Article (IA8)

Writing Leads for Informational Articles

Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Introductions for informational articles have two elements – lead and focus statement (also referred to as thesis statement)
- Students will learn to write three different types of leads – Ask a Question, Setting the Scene and An Unusual or Interesting Fact

Standard(s):

ELA.4.WRT.2.2 Write multi-paragraph compositions that provide an inviting introductory paragraph.

Materials:

- Prepared Anchor chart with elements of a good introduction – lead & focus statement (See end of lesson for example.)
- Chart paper and markers for Leads for Informational Article Anchor Chart
- Draft of body of Informational Article on the gym from previous lesson
- Scott Foresman anthologies
- Student drafts of informational articles and graphic organizers

Connection:

“In our last lesson, we added additional details to the body of our informational articles. Now that you have a draft of the body of your informational article, we are going to learn how to write effective introductions. In informational articles, the beginning is called the introduction. Today, we will study how authors of informational articles write good introductions.”

Teach (modeling):

*“The introduction is important for two main reasons: it can encourage curiosity and interest in the topic and make your reader want to read the article. This is called a **lead**.”*

*The second reason for writing an introduction is that it lets the reader know what information will be covered in the article. This is called the **focus statement**.”*
(Refer to definitions on the Informational Article Anchor Chart – elements of a good introduction.)

“Today, we are going to practice different types of leads. Just as in narrative writing, there are many different types of leads you can use in an introduction.”

(Teacher refers to Anchor Chart on Leads for Narrative Writing from earlier unit or has students find this information in their writing notebooks.)

“In the second and third grade, you learned how to write leads using a question. Take a minute and think about a time when you have started a piece of writing with a question. Now, let’s try starting our informational article about the gym with a question.”

Teacher puts draft of gym informational article on overhead and models/thinks aloud: “*How could I start this same article with a question?*” Write some examples: “*Where in the school building would you be sure to find kids running around and having fun?*” “*What room in our school is everyone’s favorite place?*”
Etc.

[Note: Examples of Question Leads in Grade 4 Scott Foresman: *Up, Up, and Down*, pg. 143, *Fall Harvest*, page. 269, *Living in a World of Green*, page 380.]

Active engagement (guided practice):

Have students work in partners to develop one question lead for the gym informational article. Students record their question lead in their writing notebook and share out.

Teach (model);

There are two other types of leads for informational articles that we are going to learn about today.

#1 Setting the scene

#2 Amazing or unusual fact

Let’s begin with ‘Setting the scene.’ Let’s take a look at an informational article lead from an article about gum.” Teacher shares author’s example on overhead, projector or chart:

“Here is one of my favorite examples of an author using ‘setting the scene’ as a lead.”

From “What’s That in your Mouth?” by Carrol J. Swanson

“The pink bubble swells from your lips. Carefully, you puff it full of air. It’s big. It’s getting bigger. It’s the biggest one you’ve ever made! Suddenly, “POP!” Now you’ll have to start over. Your mouth fills with delicious sweetness as you chew.”

[Note: Examples of “Setting the Scene” Leads in 4 Scott Foresman Anthology: *A Life at Sea*, page 517; in Trade Book Libraries: *Wildfires*, by Seymour Simon; *Under the Ice*, by Kathy Conlon, page 6; *Baseball in the Barrios*, by Henry Horenstein.]

Discuss with students the sensory details used by the author to set the scene about bubble gum. *“The author is describing what happens when you blow a bubble with your gum and how it feels. I can see the pink bubble, I can hear the sound of the pop and I can taste that sugary sweetness. As the reader I want to read more.”*

Teacher writes Setting the Scene introduction from *What’s That in your Mouth* on the Anchor. Continue to add strong examples to chart as appropriate.

Last night I worked on an introduction that includes a lead for the gym. Let’s take a

look at the sensory details I used. I decided to think about what I hear when I walk into the gym.”

Teacher puts draft of gym informational article on overhead and writes:

‘Whistles blaring and kids cheering! I know right away that I’ve walked into my favorite place in the school, the gym.’

“See how it describes what you hear in a gym setting. In this type of lead you use your senses to help the reader feel like he/she is in the scene. Notice that at the end of the first sentence there is an exclamation mark. This is an exclamatory sentence which shows a lot of emotion. It gets the readers attention and is an effective technique you could use for your informational article.

Teacher writes this example on the Anchor Chart.

When writing a ‘setting the scene’ lead use one or more of your senses - seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, or smelling.”

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Students work with a partner to develop one ‘setting the scene’ lead for the gym informational article. Students record their lead in their writing notebook and share out.

Teach (model):

“Now, let’s look at a third way that authors sometime begin their informational articles – with an ‘Unusual or interesting fact’. There are several examples in our Scott Foresman anthology.” Discuss each of the leads in the following pieces, identifying the ‘Unusual or interesting fact’ in each example:

Scott Foresman, page 241, *A White House History*

Scott Foresman, page 739, *The Other Side of the Moon*

Scott Foresman, page 715, *A Different Way to Fly*

Teacher adds these leads to Anchor Chart.

“Now, let’s go back to our gym article and try this type of lead.” Teacher models/thinks aloud about some interesting facts about the gym and how to write a lead that is an ‘Unusual or interesting fact.’

Examples: *“Over two hundred kids run and play in this room at school each day.”*
“When students went to gym in the 1800’s, they played games like Skip Away, Frog in the Middle, Hat Ball and Blind Man’s Bluff. Things have certainly changed!”

“The tricky part about this type of lead is that you have to know an interesting fact about your topic. Let’s take a few minutes to explore facts about the topics you are writing about so that you can use them to write a lead with an ‘unusual or interesting fact.’”

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Teacher selects 3-4 topics from student drafts and engages the class in a discussion of possible facts for each topic that could be used for this type of lead. Once class generates facts, students work in partners to write 1 or 2 leads using the facts charted. Students share out.

Link to Independent Practice:

“Now, I want you to write each type of lead we’ve practiced today. Start with a Question, Setting the Scene and Unusual or Interesting Fact- for your informational article draft. Start by rereading your draft. Refer to the examples on the Anchor Chart we created today to help you if you would like. Tomorrow you will select the one you like best for your informational article introduction.”

Closure:

Students popcorn share their favorite lead.

“Remember, a good introduction for an informational article has TWO parts. We have learned about writing the first part, or lead. Next time, we will write our focus statement.”

Notes

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

Lesson adapted from: “What’s That in Your Mouth?” by Carrol J. Swanson, Boys’ Quest, August/ September 1999
Step-by-Step Strategies for Teaching Expository Writing, by Barbara Mariconda, Scholastic, copyright 2001

Anchor Chart:

Elements of a Good Introduction Informational Article

Two elements of an Effective Introduction

1. Purpose of Lead: *The lead encourages curiosity and interest in the topic and makes your reader want to read the article.*

2. Purpose of Focus Statement: *The focus statement lets the reader know what information will be covered in the article.*

Examples of Strong Introductions from Mentor Texts

A White House History, Scott Foresman, pg.

The White House is where the U.S. President lives and works in Washington, D.C. (example of focus statement) However, our first President, George Washington, never even lived there! (example of lead)

The Other Side of the Moon, Scott Foresman, pg. 729

There is a side of the moon – called the far side – that no one standing on the Earth has ever seen (example of lead). Astronauts have gone behind the moon to see th other side, and they have brought back pictures. However, no one simply looking up at the sky has ever seen the back of the moon. Why? (example of focus statement)

(Add additional examples from mentor texts and student writing)

Anchor Chart:

Types of Leads for Informational Article

1. Ask a Question:

Examples: (Add examples both from mentor texts and students)

2. Setting the Scene:

Examples:

3. An unusual or interesting fact:

Examples:

Expository Writing: Informational Article (IA9) Focus Statements & Completion of Introduction

Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Students will learn to write a focus statement (also known as thesis statement)
- Students will select a lead and write the introduction paragraph for their informational article

Standard(s):

ELA.4.WRT.2.2: Write multi-paragraph compositions that provide an inviting introductory paragraph

Materials:

- 2 graphic organizers that have been completed by students
- Completed graphic organizer from The Gym (see previous lesson)
- Anchor Chart on Elements of Effective Introductions

Connection:

“Today we are going to continue to work on the introduction of our Informational Article. Remember, an effective introduction has two elements or parts – a Lead and a Focus Statement. Yesterday you wrote three different leads – A Question, Setting the Scene and An Unusual or Interesting Fact.

Before you decide which lead you are going to choose for your introduction, you are going to learn how to write an effective Focus Statement.

Teach (modeling):

Teacher shows the completed graphic organizer about “The Gym” (see earlier lesson) and models how to write a focus statement that includes the main ideas from the graphic organizer.

“Remember the focus statement lets the reader know what information will be covered in the article. One way to do this is to write it like a list using the main ideas from our graphic organizer. This sentence should include the three main ideas which are the topics of each one of your paragraphs.”

Teacher thinks aloud: *“For example, in our gym article, we have three different main ideas listed on our graphic organizer: gym equipment, use of the gym, and activities in the gym. The focus statement for our gym article could be: The gym has lots of equipment, is a place that is used for many fun things, and there are always exciting activities happening.”*

Teacher uses 1 completed student graphic organizer to provide an additional model for writing a Focus Statement. Teacher thinks aloud and models writing a focus statement by using the main ideas listed on the graphic organizer.(same as gym example above)

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Teacher displays the 2nd student example of a completed graphic organizer. Students work with a partner to write a Focus Statement using the main ideas listed on the organizer.

Popcorn share: Have students stand up and read Focus Statement to share.

Teach (modeling):

“Now that we have written a variety of leads and have learned one way to write a focus statement, it’s time to put them together to write the introduction to our informational article.”

Teacher uses the leads and focus statement(s) previously written for “The Gym” and models the process of selecting a favorite lead and combining it with the focus statement to make an effective introduction.

Example: *“As I look over the many different leads that we wrote for our informational article about the gym, I think the one that will capture the interest of the reader best will be this one that Sets the Scene ...’ Whistles blaring and kids cheering! I know right away that I’ve walked into my favorite place in the school, the gym’. I like the way it makes me hear the sounds and feel the action and excitement of walking into the gym!”*

“Now, I am going to combine the lead with the focus statement to make the complete introduction” Teacher models writing the introduction:

(Lead) *“Whistles blaring and kids cheering! I know right away that I’ve walked into my favorite place in the school, the gym. (Focus Statement)The gym has lots of equipment, is a place that is used for many fun things, and there are always exciting activities happening.”*

Link to Independent Practice:

“Now, it is time for you to complete the introduction to your informational article. You have two things to do.

One, select your favorite lead – the one that you think will really make the reader excited about reading your article.

Two, use your completed graphic organizer to help you write your Focus Statement. Then put the two elements together to write the introductory paragraph for your informational article.

Closure:

Students share their introductory paragraphs with a partner.

Notes:

Note: For practice punctuating items in a series, see pages 109-112 Scott Foresman Grammar and Writing Practice Book.

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)

Expository Writing: Informational Article (IA10)

Writing the Conclusion

Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Points to include in an effective conclusion
- Writing a conclusion

Standard(s):

ELA.4.WRT.2.2: Provide details and transitions to link paragraphs. Conclude with a paragraph that summarizes the main points.

Materials:

- Premade Anchor Chart: Parts of a Good Conclusion
- Writing sample #3- Conclusion (see end of lesson)
- Copies of Conclusion for *The Gym* for each student
- Transitions written on chart paper
- Student copy of transitional phrases for Writing Notebooks
- 3 colors of highlighters

Connection:

“In our last few lessons, we’ve learned to write an introduction for our informational article that includes a lead and a focus statement. Now we’re ready to complete the entire article by writing the last paragraph, called the conclusion. The purpose, or reason for writing a conclusion is for the author to once again, remind their readers of the important ideas – or main ideas- in their article and to keep the reader thinking.”

Teach (modeling):

Teacher displays prepared Anchor Chart of the three important points to include in a good conclusion.

“When we read a good conclusion paragraph, we should be able to tell what the whole article is about including the three main ideas. The conclusion should:

- 1. Repeat the three main ideas.*
- 2. Have a transitional phrase at the beginning of the conclusion*
- 3. Have an ending statement that is a question, which ends with a question mark, a wish or hope, which ends in a period, or a strong statement, which ends with an exclamation point.”*

Teacher reviews transitional words and phrases. *“I know that you practiced using transitional words and phrases in third grade. So let’s review some transitional phrases that you might want to use when writing your conclusion.* Teacher displays Chart: List of Transitional Words to Use to Start Conclusions.

“Transitional words and phrases are very important for writers to use. They help us and our readers connect the ideas in the paragraphs that we write. They help us understand how all the parts of our writing fit together.”

“Last night, I wrote a conclusion to our gym informational article using these three

important reminders. Let me read it to you.” Teacher puts conclusion on overhead and class reads aloud. (See Writing Sample #3 at end of lesson.) *“Now I want to see if you can find these 3 points in my conclusion.”*

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Teacher hands out copies of the conclusion for *The Gym* along with three colors of highlighters to each student. Students work with a partner to identify and highlight the following 3 parts of a good conclusion:

Yellow – transitional phrase

Pink – repeats the three main ideas

Blue – Ending statement (question (?), wish or hope (.), or strong statement (!))

“Now that you have worked together to identify and highlight each of these three parts, let’s make sure we all agree.” Teacher highlights each part, clarifying any confusion that students might have had.

Active Engagement (guided practice):

1st important part of conclusion:

“Now it is time for you to write your own conclusion. Take out your draft. Let’s look back at our Anchor Chart about Conclusions. The first thing we do is write a sentence that repeats the three main ideas. Refer to your graphic organizer if that helps you remember your main ideas.”

Students write a sentence for their conclusion that includes their 3 main ideas. Students share out.

Note: Remind students to check for commas in a series when listing 3 main ideas.

2nd important part of conclusion:

“Look at our list of Transitions and choose one that sounds good in your sentence then add it to first sentence in your conclusion.” Students read completed sentence (transition + 3 main ideas) to a partner.

3rd important part of conclusion:

Teaching (modeling):

Hope:

*“Let’s look back at the conclusion I wrote last night about *The Gym*. My last sentence is a hope. ‘Those shiny wood floors have had many kids playing on them for years and I hope it will for years to come.’”*

Active Engagement (guided practice):

“Now, you try writing a final sentence for your informational article that is a hope. ” Students write a sentence for their conclusion that includes a hope. Popcorn share.

Question:

Teaching (modeling):

Teacher models using a question as a way to end a conclusion using The Gym. *“Remember, your very last sentence could be a hope OR a question OR a strong statement. Here are some examples of how I might end our Gym article with a question.”*

Possible Examples: “What is your favorite thing to do in the gym?”

“Can you imagine what school would be like without our gym?”

“What would school be like without a gym?”

Active Engagement (guided practice):

“Now, you try writing a final sentence for your informational article that is a question.” Students write a sentence for their conclusion that is a questions. Popcorn share.

Strong Statement:

Teaching (modeling):

Teacher models using a strong statement as a way to end a conclusion using The Gym.

Possible Examples: “A school without a gym would be boring!

“Gyms are the best place in the school!”

“The gym is my favorite place in the school!”

Active Engagement (guided practice):

“Now, you try writing a final sentence for your informational article that is a strong statement.” Students write a sentence for their conclusion that is a strong statement. Popcorn share.

Link to Independent Practice:

“Now that you have practiced writing the important parts of a conclusion, I want you to finish writing your conclusion. You have some ideas to start with from the work we just did together. Remember, the purpose of a conclusion is to remind your readers of the main ideas in your article and to leave them with something to keep thinking about.”

Note: As teacher sees strong examples of conclusions, or parts of conclusions, have students add them to an anchor chart.

Closure:

All students turn and share their conclusion and possibly their articles with a partner.

Notes:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)

Writing Sample #3

Conclusion:

As you can see, no matter what equipment you have or how the gym is used, or what activity you're playing, you're sure to see kids having fun and cheering in the gym. Those shiny wood floors have had many kids playing on them for years and I hope it will for years to come.

List of Transitional Phrases to Start Conclusions

As you can see...

It is clear that...

Certainly...

Clearly...

Without a doubt...

Most would agree that...

Indeed...

Surely...

Unquestionably...

Obviously...

All in all...

Definitely...

In conclusion...

It is clear that...

Expository Writing: Informational Article (IA11) Sentence Fluency - Writing Compound Sentences

Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Developing sentence fluency by using simple/compound sentences and varying beginnings of sentences.

Standard(s):

ELA.4.WRT.2.5: Use simple sentences and compound sentences in writing.

ELA.4.WRT.2.4: Begin to use conjunctions (and, or, but) to connect ideas.

Materials:

- Prepared chart with sentences from article on dogs (see below)
- Scott Foresman Grammar and Writing Practice Book pgs. 101-104, 13-17 and 125. Compound Sentence Practice Sheet

Connection:

“We’ve finished our draft of our informational article. Now we are ready to revise, that’s when we reread our writing and work on it more to see if we can make it even better. One of the ways writers make their writing better is by combining short sentences into longer, more interesting ones for their readers to read. Today, we are going to see if we can make our sentences more interesting by combining some of our short sentences into longer ones.”

Teach (modeling):

“Take a look at these sentences from an article on dogs.”

Teacher displays chart paper with the following:

Dogs are fun. Dogs can play with you. Dogs can be trained. Dogs can do tricks. Dogs need care. Dogs need food. Dogs need exercise. Dogs need a place to sleep. Dogs need love.

“What do you notice?” (Students turn and talk about what they notice. Take a few responses.)

“These sentences are short and choppy. Let’s make them more interesting for the reader by combining some of the sentences into one longer sentence.

For example: Dogs are fun. Dogs can play with you. These two sentences can be changed to:

Dogs are fun, and they can play with you.

This is an example of a compound sentence. Compound sentences are two sentences that are put into one by using a word like and.”

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Students work with a partner to practice combining sentences.

“Try this method with the next two sentences.” Dogs can be trained. Dogs can do tricks.”

Teach (modeling):

Teacher defines conjunctions and models other conjunctions that can be used to join sentences. Teacher explains and models how compound sentences are punctuated.

“A compound sentence is two complete sentences that are joined with words called conjunctions. Other conjunctions are: but, although, so, because, as, or and while. There should always be a comma before the conjunction in a compound sentence. Let me show you how to use other conjunctions to join sentences.”

Teacher points out that dogs (or the subject) can be replaced with a pronoun (they) in order to avoid over use of the word dogs.

Possible examples:

Dogs need food, *but* they also need exercise.

Dogs can be fun to play with *but* they need to be well trained.

Dogs are fun, *although* they also need care.

Dogs need care *so* they must have food, exercise and love.

Use Writing Sample #4 – The Gym - to model thinking aloud about which sentences might be good to combine (see Writing Sample #4 at end of lesson for ideas).

“Now, let’s read our informational article about The Gym and look for short sentences that we could combine into longer, compound sentences.”

Teacher models example 1 from Writing Sample #4 (see end of lesson). “I think these two short sentences can be combined into a longer, more interesting one. *How about....* You can find playground balls for bouncing and soccer balls for dribbling.”

Teacher models choosing Examples 2 and 3 for sentence combining.

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Have students work in partners to come up with possible combining ideas for examples 2 & 3.

If needed, teacher directs students to use conjunctions to make compound sentences by completing: Compound Sentence Practice Sheet (see end of lesson).

Note: For student practice on the use of conjunctions and compound sentences: refer to Scott Foresman Grammar and Writing Practice Book, pages 101-104, 13-17 and 125.]

Link to Independent Practice:

“Now I want you to read your informational article and find some places where you can make your writing more interesting to read by making the sentences different lengths. Remember, good writers use short, more direct sentences sometimes. Other times, they use longer sentences. You should use both.”

Note: During writing time, add strong student examples of sentence combining to an Anchor Chart.

Closure:

Students share examples of sentence combining from their informational articles.
“In later lessons, we will learn other ways to improve our sentences.”

Notes:

Note: For student practice on the use of conjunctions and compound sentences: refer to Scott Foresman Grammar and Writing Practice Book, pages 101-104, 13-17 and 125.]

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

Lesson adapted from 25 Mini-Lessons for Teaching Writing

by Adele Fiderer, Scholastic 1997

Scott Foresman, Grammar and Writing Practice Book, Grade Four, pages 101-104, pages 13-17 and page 125

Directions: Use a conjunction from the list below to combine the two sentences. You may want to move word phrases and eliminate unnecessary words. There might be more than one word that can be used as the correct response. Words can be used more than once.

and
as

but
while

so
or

although
because

1. I may jog to school. I may ride the bus.

2. The bus was running late. I ran to school.

3. Jamie carefully planted the seeds. The flowers didn't bloom.

4. The St. Bernard was huge. He was a sweet dog.

5. Ben hated cabbage. He threw it in the garbage disposal.

6. The kids were watching a show on TV. They heard a loud crash.

7. We were walking to the park. We saw two cars collide.

8. He was still hungry. He had eaten a large breakfast.

9. Terry was tired. She was starving. She was glad to get home.

Writing Sample 4

The Gym: Revising by combining sentences

Whistles blaring and kids cheering! I know right away that I've walked into my favorite place in the school, the gym. The gym has lots of equipment, is a place that is used for many fun things, and there are always exciting activating happening.

The gym has loads of special equipment that all spell fun. **You can find playground balls for bouncing. There soccer balls for dribbling.** The scooter boards can be used for fun. When the bowling pins come out, more action begins.

We use the gym for our fun PE activities. That's not all we use the gym for! We have large all-school assemblies like Sea World's to help us learn about whales. The school carnival fills up the gym with booths of games and prizes once per year. In our school, the older students love the dances in our gym.

There's no shortage of fun activities in our gym. We are running around most of the time. There's relay races and tag games like Freeze Tag. **Some kids like shooting hoops. Some kids play H-O-R-S-E.**

As you can see, no matter what equipment you have or how the gym is used, or what activity you're playing, you're sure to see kids having fun and cheering in the gym. Those shiny wood floors have had many kids playing on them for years and I hope it will for years to come!

Example 1

Short Sentences: You can find playground balls for bouncing. There soccer balls for dribbling.

Possible Revision: You can find playground balls for bouncing and soccer balls for dribbling.

Example 2

Short Sentences We use the gym for our fun PE activities. That's not all we use the gym for!

Possible Revision by Combining Sentences: We use the gym for our fun PE activities, but that's not all.

Example 3

Short Sentences: Some kids like shooting hoops. Some kids play H-O-R-S-E

Possible Revision by Combining Sentences: Some kids like shooting hoops *while* other kids play H-O-R-S-E-

Expository Writing: Informational Article (IA 12)

Sentence Fluency Using Prepositional Phrases

Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Students will improve sentence fluency with the use of prepositional phrases.

Standard(s):

ELA.4.WRT.1.8 & 5.4 Revise drafts by combining sentences to improve the focus and progressing of ideas using prepositional phrases.

Materials:

- (Optional) *Mastering the Mechanics* by Linda Hoyt and Teresa Therriault, page 157, Scholastic, copyright 2008
- Student Practice Sheet (see end of lesson)
- Anthology and/or other student texts
- Sentence Strips
- Chart paper and marker

Connection:

*“Good writers use many different methods to make their sentences more varied and interesting. In previous lessons, we have learned how to write compound sentences. Does anyone remember what those are? (Sentences that are made by joining complete sentences using a conjunction.) Today, we are going to practice using prepositional phrases in our sentences to make them more interesting. A preposition is a word that helps the reader connect a noun or a pronoun to another word in a sentence. For example, Sam placed the book **on the round table.**”*

Teach (modeling):

“Let’s begin finding examples of prepositions in the books we read. I have listed all the words that are prepositions on this page.” Teacher displays practice sheet (see end of lesson) that has prepositions listed in a box. *“Take a minute and read all these words to yourself.”*

Teacher puts a book on the document camera, and models locating prepositions and prepositional phrases. Model how to cross off a preposition from those listed in box once an example has been found in a text. (See box on practice sheet at the end of the lesson.)

Active Engagement (guided practice):

“I want you to take your Reading Street Book (anthology) and another one of your favorite books. Begin searching for prepositional phrases. Remember, prepositional phrases must contain a preposition. Use the preposition chart that we just looked at. As you find the prepositional phrase in your books, highlight the preposition on your chart.”

Teach (modeling):

“Now write your favorite sentences that include prepositional phrases on your practice sheet, and include where you found them.” For example:

On the Oregon Trail, the pioneers traveled in their wagons. (Sentence)

Oregon Text Book- (Book)

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Students complete practice sheet by selecting three favorite sentences that include prepositional phrases. Students share three favorites with a partner.

Teach (modeling):

“I am going to share how you can use prepositional phrases in your expository article. Sometimes writers put the prepositional phrase at the beginning of a sentence, other times at the end. Let me show you.”

Teacher writes this sentence on a sentence strip: The black dog jumped.

*“Now I am going to add a prepositional phrase to my sentence. “(Teacher gets another color sentence strip and writes the prepositional phrase: **with his tail wagging** Then the teacher calls two students up, one holds the original sentence and one holds the prepositional phrase. The teacher shows the students how you can change the sentence by putting the phrase at the beginning of the sentence or the end of the sentence.*

For example: 1.) The black dog jumped with his tail wagging.

2.) With his tail wagging, the black dog jumped.

Link to Independent Practice:

“Now, it’s time to continue revising your informational articles. Read through your draft and find places where you can make your sentences more interesting to read by adding a prepositional phrase. Remember to try it out both at the beginning and the end of the sentence to see which sounds best to you.”

Students are directed to take out their informational articles and revise their sentences by adding prepositional phrases to their sentences when it makes sense to do so.

Note: During writing, teacher has students add strong examples of revised sentences to an anchor chart – Making Our Sentences More Interesting.

Closure:

Teacher has a few students share out their new sentences that contain prepositional phrases.

Notes:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

Adapted from: Mastering the Mechanics by Linda Hoyt and Teresa Therriault, pg. 157, Scholastic, 2008.

Practice Sheet: Prepositional Phrases

Name _____

A preposition is a word that relates a noun or pronoun to another word in the sentence. (She placed the book on the round table.)

A prepositional phrase is a group of words that include a preposition, its object, and any describing words that come in between. (She placed the book on the round table.)

Here are some common prepositions:

about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, at before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, by, down, during, except, for, from, in, in front of, inside, instead of, into, like, near, of, off, on, on top of, outside, over, since, through, to, toward, under, underneath, until, up, upon, with, within, without
--

Highlight prepositions in the box above that you found in your reading.

Write your favorite sentences that include prepositional phrases below, and include where you found them.

_____ (sentence)

_____ (book you found it in)

_____ (sentence)

_____ (book you found it in)

_____ (sentence)

_____ (book you found it in)

Expository Writing: Informational Article (IA13) Creating and Using the Revision Checklist

Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Creating and using the revision checklist

Standard(s):

ELA.4.WRT.1.7 Use a revision checklist to review, evaluate, and revise writing for meaning and clarity.

Materials:

- Chart paper for revision checklist
- Copies of Prepared Revision Checklists
- Markers
- “Gym” writing samples 5
- Anchor charts from unit

Connection:

“We have been working hard on our informational articles. In our last few lessons, we have been revising our articles so that the words and sentences are interesting and varied. In today’s lesson we will create a checklist to help us to finish revising our articles.”

Teach (modeling):

“Let’s start by making a list of all the things we have learned are important to include when writing informational articles. Our anchor charts can help us. We will then turn that list into a Revision Checklist. Everyone can use that to be sure they haven’t left out any thing important from their article.

We won’t include things like capitals and periods. That’s part of the editing process that we will do later.”

Active Engagement (guided practice):

“First, turn and talk with a partner. List all the important things that should be included in all informational articles.”

Teacher elicits from students the important elements of Informational Articles, creating a revision checklist. (See sample checklist at end of lesson.)

“Look at your draft. What is the first paragraph called? (Introduction) Let’s write that as our first item on our checklist. What two things should the introduction include? (lead and focus statement) Those will be the next two items to check. (Review the definitions and use of leads and focus statements.) What are the next three paragraphs called? (the body) Each paragraph should have a main idea. What’s our last paragraph called? (the conclusion) How did we start the conclusion? (with a restatement starting with a transitional phrase) Next we repeated the three main ideas. Finally, we ended with a statement that is a question, wish or hope, or strong

statement.”

“On our checklist, we should also check for our length of sentences and how our sentences start. We also need enough information written to check.

“Now that we’ve created our revision checklist, let’s try using it with our informational article about The Gym. Teacher hands out individual copies of The Gym (Writing Sample #1 -see IA Lesson 6) and copies of the premade Revision Checklist.

“Work with a partner, read over Sample #1 and complete the Revision Checklist for this piece of writing together.” Teacher reviews with class the elements that are present and those that are missing. Repeat for Sample #5 – The Gym (see end of this lesson).

Link to Independent Practice:

“Now you will use a new revision checklist sheet to check to see if you have covered all of the items that we have listed in your own informational article. If you have not, you will later work to revise, or add, those parts.

Closure: Begin a class discussion, and have students discuss the areas that were not checked off. They can exchange papers with partners, and use the checklist on a peer’s paper. The teacher should check the final revision with each student to determine who is ready for the final draft.

****To modify this lesson for more explicit instruction, students can be directed to highlight the items on their drafts as they follow along with their checklist. They can be color-coded by items.**

For example: the introduction could be pink, the body, green etc.

Notes:

Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgments)

Revision Checklist

- Did I write an **introduction** paragraph?
 - Does it have an interesting **lead**?

 - Does it have a clear **focus statement** that includes the 3 main ideas for the paragraphs?

- Did I have at least 3 paragraphs for the **body** of my article?
 - Does each paragraph have a clear **main idea**?

- Did I have enough **supporting details** to explain and describe?

- Did I write a **conclusion** paragraph?
 - Does it start with a **transitional phrase and restatement**?
 - Does it **repeat the 3 main ideas**?
 - Does it end with a statement that is a **question, wish or hope, or strong statement**?

- Did I vary my **sentence beginnings**?

- Did I vary the **length of my sentences**?

The Gym

Whistles blaring and kids cheering! I know right away that I've walked into my favorite place in the school, the gym. The gym has lots of equipment, is a place that is used for many fun things, and there are always exciting activating happening.

The gym has loads of special equipment that all spell fun. You can find playground balls for bouncing and soccer balls for dribbling. The scooter boards can be used for fun. When the bowling pins come out, more action begins.

We use the gym for our fun PE activities but that's not all! We have large all-school assemblies like Sea World's to help us learn about whales. The school carnival fills up the gym with booths of games and prizes once per year. In our school, the older students love the dances in our gym.

There's no shortage of fun activities in our gym. We are running around most of the time. There are relay races and tag games like Freeze Tag. Some kids like shooting hoops while others kids like playing H-O-R-S-E.

As you can see, no matter what equipment you have or how the gym is used, or what activity you're playing, you're sure to see kids having fun and cheering in the gym. Those shiny wood floors have had many kids playing on them for years and I hope it will for years to come!

Expository Writing: Informational Article (IA-14)

Writing the Final Copy and Creating the Title

Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Editing for conventions
- Writing the final copy of the article
- Creating the title

Standard(s):

ELA.4.WRT.1.9 Use an editing checklist to edit and proofread own writing.

Materials:

- Editing checklist chart
- Copies of editing checklist
- Student copy of “All about Bunnies”
- Copy of “Those Bouncing Bunnies”

Connection:

“In our last lesson, we used the revision checklist and made our work sound more clear for the reader. Today, we are going to go through our article and edit it for conventions. The word conventions refers to making the spelling correct, the punctuation correct, checking the grammar and usage, and finally, capitalizing the words that need it.”

Teach (modeling):

Note: Model editing one item at a time.

Teacher models editing the first paragraph from All About Bunnies (Writing Sample – see end of lesson). Teacher puts article on document camera and passes out individual copies of All About Bunnies and Editing Checklist to students. Students work along with teacher.

“Today, we are going to take a piece of student writing and using this editing checklist, we are going to go through it and check each item on our list together.”
Teacher explains each item on the editing checklist.

Paragraph #1: Teacher models the editing process using the unedited version called, “All about Bunnies.” For example: *“Let’s go through the entire first paragraph looking for ending punctuation. Where do you think the first sentence should end? Etc.* Once you have checked the entire paragraph for this start over and edit for capitalization. Continue through list checking one item a time.

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Paragraphs #2 and #3: Students work with a partner to go through these two paragraphs using the editing checklist. When students are ready, teacher asks individual partners to come to the document camera and share their findings.
Note: Please refer to the final edited piece called, “Those Bouncing Bunnies” which could be eventually shared with the class.

Teach (model):

Paragraph #4: Teacher models editing paragraph #4.”

Active Engagement (guided practice):

Paragraphs #5: Students work with a partner to go through these two paragraphs using the editing checklist. When students are ready, teacher asks individual partners to come to the document camera and share their findings.

(OPTIONAL):**Teach (modeling):**

“The last thing we are going to do is make our title more exciting. There are a couple ways to do this. One way is to make the title more specific. For example, our first informational article was called, “The Gym.” We could have called it, “The Gym, My Favorite Room in the School.” Another way to make our title more catchy is to use an adjective that starts with the same letter as your subject. For example, if your article was called, “The Slug.” It could be changed to, “The Slippery Slug”. This technique is called, alliteration. It is used in poetry. Alliteration can create a title that is fun to say out loud. How could we rename, “All about Bunnies”? (“Those Bouncing Bunnies”.) This would be a logical place to share the edited version of the article on bunnies.

Active Engagement (guided practice):

“Let’s try making this title more exciting by trying some alliteration. “Dolphins” Possible example: “Those Diving Dolphins”)
Teacher can create more examples for students to change.

Link to Independent Practice:

Students are asked to take out their revised copies of their completed drafts and edit using editing checklist. Use whatever system you have set up in your classroom for editing. When teacher confirms piece is edited, students rewrite or word process final drafts.

Note: This editing process may take several days.

Closure:

Students will have a celebration and share their writing. Some examples of celebrations could be: An Author’s Tea, making bound books, or anything that will celebrate their writing.

Notes:**References & Resources: (adapted from, acknowledgements)**

Lesson adapted from Non-Fiction Craft Lessons by JoAnn Portalupi and Ralph Fletcher, page 53

Editing Checklist

Reread your entire article **out loud**. Notice the natural stop signs, or breaths, you want your reader to take. These are spots that may need a comma or period. Then check for the following:

- ❑ Did I use proper ending punctuation? (periods, question marks, and exclamation points)
- ❑ Did I use capitals at beginnings of sentences and with proper nouns?
- ❑ Did I indent at the beginning of the introduction, conclusion, and the 3 body paragraphs?
- ❑ Did I check the tenses for regular (live/lived) and irregular verbs (swim/swam)?
- ❑ Did I check for spelling? (Read your article backwards and circle any words that “look wrong”. Refer to a dictionary or get assistance.) Pay attention to the use of apostrophes. For example: Tom’s book or doesn’t

All about Bunnies

(1)Have you looked at the pet shop lately and all the cages are empty except for one cage in the middle of the shop you see red eyes and hair as white as snow and you see it's a bunny! You buy it then you remember you don't know anything about bunnies. Before you get one you might need to know what bunnys eat, how they jump and how you can win ribbons with your bunny.

(2)Bunnies are most remembered for their jumping. Its amazing that some bunnies can jump up to five feet, that's even taller than me! You may think that is not true but their hind legs is kept tucked in and there front legs push them forward. when they jump it's a powerful jump. if I could only do that.

(3)Bunnies are vegetarians. They can eat weeds and dandelions. They would just need to find a grassy area and it could be a free snack. They do not eat meat at all. Dont give them that, please.

(4)Sometimes people enter there Bunnys at the oregon state fair. Bunnies need to be a good weight have clear eyes and a shiny coat. If your bunny is healthy, they might get a blue ribbon. So take good care of your bunny and you could enter it!

(5)It is clear that you need to know about bunnys before you buy one. bunnies are good at jump, they are vegetarians and you can enter them in the oregon state fair. I hope you have learned something about bunnies, now you know they are more than red eyes and hair as white as snow?

Edited Version of Student Sample

Those Bouncing Bunnies

Have you looked at the pet shop lately, and all the cages are empty except for one cage in the middle of the shop?! You see red eyes and hair as white as snow, and you see it's a bunny! You buy it. Then you remember you don't know anything about bunnies. Before you get one, you might need to know what bunnies eat, how they jump, and how you can win ribbons with them.

Bunnies are most remembered for their jumping. It's amazing that some bunnies can jump up to five feet. That's even taller than me! You may think that is not true, but their hind legs are kept tucked in, and their front legs push them forward. When they jump, it's a powerful jump. If I could only do that!

Bunnies are vegetarians. They can eat weeds and dandelions. They would just need to find a grassy area, and it could be a free snack! They do not eat meat at all, so don't give them that, please

Sometimes people enter their bunnies at the Oregon State Fair. Bunnies need to be a good weight, have clear eyes, and a shiny coat. If your bunny is healthy, they might get a blue ribbon. So take good care of your bunny, and you could enter it!

It is clear that you need to know about bunnies before you buy one. Bunnies are good at jumping, they are vegetarians, and you can enter them in the Oregon State Fair. I hope you have learned something about bunnies. Now you know they are more than red eyes and hair as white as snow!