



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1986 Volume IV: The Process of Writing

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## Joining Hands in Writing and Speaking

Curriculum Unit 86.04.13  
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Have you ever made the statement, “Give me a student who can truly read and write and the sky’s the limit for both of us?” If you have, then you know the obstacles which are in your way in reaching the sky.

Language can entertain, move, excite, enrage, and illuminate. For all its practical usefulness, the ultimate value of language lies in its unique role in both forming and expressing a part of us as we go about our daily lives. The first thing that we must do to use language properly is to have a reason or idea for its use. The second is to use language to explore that idea. Throughout this unit I will show how techniques can be used effectively to develop creativity.

All people have some spark of creativeness within them. In childhood, this creativeness is a powerful impulse which expresses itself in many ways, until the regimentation and responsibilities of adulthood inhibit and restrain these impulses. Our creativeness offers a means of escape from the daily task into a world of fantasy which could become a reality in the future.

Both home and the school have the responsibility of encouraging this inborn creativeness of the child and of giving it opportunity to develop. It is important for the progress of humanity that education is now considering the value of creativeness because studies show that there is a definite relationship between creativity and achievement of the child in other disciplines of the curriculum other than language and reading.

The young child takes delight in forms of creative expressions such as dancing, action songs, dramatics, painting, and modeling. The home is the best place for discovery and development of creativeness in our young children. However, school systems are developing curricula to bring out some creativeness through the writing process. One must be careful when describing writing as a process because it can be misleading. Writing is a process because it is considered a rational activity which the mind solves by thinking. It is misleading because the word process suggest a series of steps, each of which is completed before the next step is attempted. However, as you teach this unit think of writing as a process consisting of many steps depending on the other for success.

Creative writing has become a focus nationwide. Teaching the process of writing, rather than the product, has become a major goal of most school systems. Researchers have come up with a number of conclusive statements that students learn to write by writing. I will show how writing can be a valuable tool for thinking, if it is used effectively. In the development of this unit, I will also explain how writing can be correlated with other long-range objectives in improving skills in handwriting, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and word

usage.

The development of this unit will emphasize the Language Arts performance objective for grade six, which states that the students will be able to write one of each of the four basic paragraph types—narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive—according to specified listed criteria. Each of the four types of paragraphs will be defined with illustrative examples for better comprehension.

The unit has been broken down into seven specific topics. The suggested course of study is to be used in the presentation and completion of this unit.

First Week: Introduce the writing process and discuss why people write. During this time, the students can be allowed to do some free writing just to get the feel of what writing is all about.

Second Week: The students should be taught what a paragraph is and the four kinds of paragraphs. During this time, the students should be allowed to write paragraphs of any nature with little or no criticism.

Third Week: The students should begin to explore the four types of paragraphs, examining one type at a time. During this time, the students should be directed to specific techniques in developing expository writing.

Fourth Week: The students should advance to descriptive writing. During this time, the students should be made aware of adjectives and adverbs and what effect they have on this kind of writing.

Fifth Week: The students should be introduced to narrative writing and the techniques used to develop this type of writing.

Sixth Week: The students should be introduced to persuasive writing. During this time, the students should be made aware of propaganda techniques and their effect on this type of writing.

Although figurative language is included in this unit as a topic, it is not to be taught as a separate lesson. The students can be shown how the most common figures of speech can be used to improve their writing. The students should be allowed to use them as a means of developing their own style of writing.

Throughout this unit I mention how motivation, prewriting activities, skills, editing, and final copies are used in developing good writing skills and habits. If the students are expected to write good paragraphs, they must proceed through these stages. These stages move from creative exploration of an idea to a polished and logical expression in writing. The predicted outcome is that each student will be able to incorporate the teacher's and students' suggestions for improvement in his work. It is also predicted that each student will be able to apply skills already learned in order to produce quality creative writing.

When this unit is completed, the teacher and students will be able to:

1. Identify the basic stages of the writing process.
2. Identify the power that words can have in the writing process.
3. Develop writing skills using figures of speech more effectively.
4. Choose vivid settings and words to create lively and unforgettable writings.
5. Identify the four types of paragraphs.
6. Identify how punctuation usage can make creative writing more vivid.

At the end of this unit, a variety of activities will be provided which will meet some of the needs of the students who are achieving at the levels of grades 5-8. Each activity will show how it can be adapted to other disciplines of the curriculum.

As you have seen, this unit is designed to be completed in six weeks. However, you, the teacher, have the option to teach this unit using the suggested sequence or you may use it as a supplement to the Language Arts program provided by the school system or a particular class during the school year. Depending on the type of students, this unit will prepare the students for more advanced types of writing styles.

### ***Why People Write***

As we go through life there are some things that we do automatically. If there is an object falling toward you, you will duck or move out of the way. If you hear a siren, you will look to see what is happening. If there is a bright light in your eyes, you will cover them for protection. In fact everything that you do, you do for a reason. Writing is like any other human activity, then; it happens because a person is motivated to do it.

A writer who has no purpose is like a traveler without a destination. A writer without a reason for writing will produce nothing but confusion for himself as well as his readers. Keeping this in mind, we should know why we are writing before we begin.

There are many reasons why people write. Some of the most common ones listed below can be used as tips for brainstorming with your students to promote creative thinking.

1. Some writers wish to tell a good story; therefore they write to entertain.
2. Some writers wish to tell about something that has happened.
3. Some writers enjoy giving directions to tell others how to do something.
4. Some writers write to explain what a word or idea means; therefore they write to define.
5. Some writers write to explain things by answering questions or giving information.
6. Some writers want to describe or tell about the physical appearance or qualities of a person, place, thing, event, or idea.
7. Some writers enjoy convincing others to change opinion or persuade others to do something.
8. Some writers like to request help, information, or a specific item.
9. Some writers like to write to shorten another person's words, articles, or books; as a result they

write to summarize.

When these reasons or combination of reasons arise, the writing process has already begun, because the individual is already beginning to frame ideas.

Although we may have a purpose for writing, experts claim that writing can be learned but not taught. Through the writing process, students discover that getting started is often difficult. Thinking, talking, and working in small groups are prewriting activities which can bring beneficial results. These activities allow the students to feel free to express themselves without restraints. Also the act of sharing will always make the writer see another person's point of view which can enlighten his own thinking. Therefore, these activities provide a stimulus for writing and assist students to generate ideas and focus on a topic. Displaying a picture, discussing current events, and discussing a television program that appeals to the students are great motivating factors to start the writing process. These types of stimuli allow the students to visualize a person, place, thing, or event which can easily influence the students thoughts while being transferred from their mind to the paper.

Group brainstorming sessions should follow the introduction of the stimulus because it provides a excellent atarting point for any discussion. During these sessions, the students can record feedback of their peers and teacher. Having been given the proper guidance and support, the student is now ready to formulate his ideas into a sequential order. Although there is the positive feedback of the group which reinforces the students sense and awareness of his ideas, the student may have to consult additional sources of information in order to develop his topic. In order to succeed in doing this phase of the writing process, the students must make use of library skills.

Writing is not a simple activity. It requires a vast amount of control of the mind and language. Some critics say that the writing process can never be mastered—but that skills are continually being developed during its mastery. This mastery of skills needed to produce quality writing is acquired by exploring and using techniques skillful writers have developed and used over the centuries, and by warning pitfalls. The greatest benefit of learning to write is developing as a human being. The writing process forces us to explore the world to enhance our capacity to think, feel, and perceive. Learning to express ourselves on paper is worth learning.

### ***Paragraphs***

Because this unit deals specifically with the students being able to write one of the four kinds of paragraphs, let's take a closer look at what a paragraph is and the steps in developing good paragraphs.

There is no simple definition for the term paragraph. There are times when a single sentence or word may

serve as a paragraph. When this occurs, the writer wants to emphasize something. In general, a paragraph is a group of sentences all relating to and developing a common thought or topic. Paragraphs are key organizational units: one paragraph—one idea. It is at this point of the writing process that the students begin to learn control of structure.

No one can say how long a paragraph should be. The length and complexity of a paragraph may differ depending upon such factors as fashion, occasion, and individual preference. Today, the trend is for shorter paragraphs in expository writing rather than longer ones which would have been used fifty or a hundred years ago. A person's style plays a major part on paragraph length also. Some writers like fewer but longer paragraphs, while others like numerous short ones.

To be more precise most researchers think that paragraphs should usually be between 120 to 150 words. They feel that numerous short ones are more likely to be disjointed and underdeveloped. On the other hand, if paragraphs are too long, they can become monotonous. When this happens the readers have a tendency to become bored or tired of reading about the same idea.

All paragraphs should have a topic sentence which is short and to the point. It shouldn't be any longer than the idea requires, and should stress the important word or phrase. Once the topic sentence of a paragraph has been stated, other sentences, called detail sentences, are used to support that idea by adding details, examples, elaboration, or support.

Now that we know what a paragraph is, the next question is: How to go about teaching the correct way in order to enable the student to formulate a good one? The one thing we must remember is that all paragraphs must always show unity, coherence, and emphasis of a topic. In teaching students how sentences are related to each other, the teacher could begin with speech. This type of brainstorming in small groups lends itself to peer and teacher immediate feedback which can be most beneficial to the writer.

The hardest part of writing is getting started. Most stories, articles, poetry, etc. answer at least five of the following questions: *Who* did it? *What* happened? *When* was it done? *Where* was it done? *Why* was it done? *How* was it done? Using the W-H questions is a good motivative factor for starting a story whether it is factual or fantasy.

Let us take a look at how students might develop a good paragraph. Here's an example of a first draft paragraph.

The smog in this city is terrible. We could solve the smog problem by keeping cars out of the city. For one thing, cars produce the worst kinds of air pollution. Another reason is that cars produce a greater volume of pollutants than any other source.

Every sentence in that paragraph generates a question. Let's see what questions can be asked from the first sentence.

The smog in the city is terrible.

1. What is smog?
2. Where does the word smog come from?
3. How can you tell that we have smog in this city?

4. Which city has smog?
5. Is this the only city that has smog?
6. If so, why?
7. If not, why not?
8. What makes smog so terrible?
9. Where is this city located?

There are other questions which can be asked from the third sentence of that paragraph.

For one thing, cars produce the worst kinds of pollution.

1. What are the worst kinds of air pollution?
2. What makes them so bad?
3. How do we know cars produce the worst kinds of air pollution?

Questions such as those above are known as the W-H questions. They are very useful in producing unity and coherence to any paragraph. In general, students should learn to formulate W-H questions and apply this method in developing good paragraphs. The following guides are also beneficial for writing a paragraph. <sup>2</sup>

1. Plan your paragraph: Think of a topic or subject then write about it.
2. Using a topic sentence, tell exactly what the paragraph is about.
3. Develop the main idea using one of these ways:
  - a. Give reasons to support the topic sentence. Make use of the W-H questions.
  - b. Give examples to support the main idea.
  - c. Tell a story to illustrate the main idea.
  - d. Give facts or details to support the main idea.
4. After writing the paragraph, proofread and edit it.
5. Rewrite your first draft paragraph making sure the structure, spelling, and punctuation are correct.
6. Share your final draft with your peers.

## ***Kinds of Paragraphs***

Good paragraphs depend so much upon the topic, the nature of the content, and the approach to writing about the topic. The problem of getting off to a good start can be solved easily if you allow the students to familiarize themselves with certain types of paragraph development. In this way you can provide the students a variety of ways to begin their writings. In developing their ideas in a logical way to create a well-organized paragraph the students need to be aware of figurative language. Organization and structure are essential for clarity and logic, but word choice and mastery are essential in making their writings come alive and be interesting. At this point, we will look at structuring ideas into a paragraph, however, the most commonly used figures of speech will be discussed later in the unit.

### ***Expository Writing***

A far better name for expository writing is explanation because its purpose is to instruct the reader and to explain ideas to him. A large proportion of all writing done anywhere is expository. This type of writing can be found in magazine articles, biographies, history, reference books, advertisements, and reports. Campaign and/or political speeches are expository. Specifications for a new house or structure of any kind are expository. Expository writing is not to be used to stimulate the reader nor to stir his imagination. Expository writing is essentially instructive and interpretive. It basically explains and teaches. <sup>3</sup>

Since expository writing is universally used every hour of every day, samples of it are all about us. Students can easily identify recipes, instructions for putting toys together, how to operate a VCR, and how to play games as expository writings. This type of writing is also found on washing machines, telephones, lawn mowers, telephone directories, and containers of food. Regardless as to where you are, you are most likely to find a sample of expository writing.

As the students are instructed to construct expository paragraphs, make sure to include not only how to do something but also why it should be done. When these two basic questions are used they present a mental picture of the task to be completed and break the instructions down using simple terms clear enough to be understood.

In developing expository paragraphs, we can use the restatement technique. This method simply involves nothing more than repeating the main idea. This method is quite common in that it emphasizes an important point within the paragraph. Let's take a look at how restatement can work.

Why does 1986 promises to be the most memorable year in history? The most memorable year in history is 1986 . . . . (Encourage the students to make use of the W-H questions to develop this type of paragraph.)

If the restatement is sufficiently extended, it will provide the substance of an entire paragraph. The students will discover that expository writing is the easiest to produce because they don't have to search for examples or comparisons. However, the students have to be careful in repeating the main idea without being monotonous. To help the students to cross this barrier, remind them to make their restatement passages brief.

Expository paragraphs can also be developed using comparison, contrast, and analogy. Comparison concentrates on the similarities between two subjects while contrast shows the differences. However, analogy is a type of comparison in which a second subject is introduced to show a similarity which explains something about the main topic. Using comparison, contrast, and analogy as writing techniques can cause a problem for the less able student due to the organization of thoughts focused on at least two subjects and the possibility

of doing several things at the same time. The first task is to encourage the students to focus their attention on whether they want to show the likeness or the difference of two items or events. The topic sentences below could be used as examples for developing such paragraphs.

1. The difference between Reebok sneakers and Puma sneakers is . . . .
2. A sign is like a symbol in that they . . . .
3. The North Pole and the South Pole are alike . . . .
4. The North Pole and the South Pole are different . . . .
5. A kitten and a puppy are . . . .
6. There is no difference between the comic strips “Bloom County” and “Peanuts” because . . . .
7. The difference between some video games and an arcade is . . . .
8. A box is different from a stereo in that . . . .
9. Spring water and faucet water are different in that . . . .
10. A condominium and a house are . . . .

As the students grasp the idea of writing expository paragraphs they should be introduced to synonyms, antonyms, metaphors, and similes to increase their vocabulary as well as to make their writings more vivid. Encourage the students to choose a topic that they can relate to in order for them to achieve a degree of success which is what we all need as a means to proceed or advance ourselves to bigger and more difficult tasks.

### ***Descriptive Writing***

Descriptive writing is the kind of writing that has to do with the way places, people, and things present themselves to our senses. When writing descriptive passages, the writer describes how something looks, sounds, tastes, feels, and smells. The descriptive writer makes vivid use of comparisons often in the forms of metaphors and similes to develop a mental picture for his readers.

When we write, “The rose is red”, we are referring to the sense of sight. If we write, “The rose has a nice fragrant”, we are waking up our sense of smell. To say, “The rose’s petals are velvety”, we are using our sense of touch. When we describe a rose as sweet, it is the sense of taste that we are seeking to arouse. If we describe the rustling sound of a rose bush against the wind, we are arousing the sense of hearing. These sentences are direct descriptions. If we want to encourage our students to become good writers, we have to help them create images of the things they experience such as people, places, and things.



Before introducing descriptive writing to your students, they must know that an adjective is used to describe a noun or a pronoun and answers the questions: What kind? Which one? and How many? An adverb describes a verb, an adjective, or another adverb and answers the questions: How something was done?, Where something was done?, When something was done?, and Why something was done? Through the use of adjectives and adverbs, the students can specify and differentiate or paint a mental image of general nouns and verbs.

Clustering, the process of putting things of the same kind or relationship in a group, is quite effective in developing descriptive paragraphs. The main idea is placed in the center. From the central point, the students will write descriptive words or phrases which remind them of this main idea. Each word is related to its neighboring word in some manner.

This technique could first be done as a class activity. Once the students have mastered the concept of clustering, they can begin to work independently. The student's descriptive list will depend greatly on the ability of the student. A less able student should be limited to about eight to ten words to keep the level of frustration under control. A more capable student could concentrate on ten to twenty words. Once the descriptive list has been completed, the students are now ready to write statements about the main idea using all of the words to describe and support their topic. Let's see how this technique works. The main idea is summer.

*(figure available in print form)*

### **A Summer Day**

This was my first day without having to go to school. Lying in bed, I could tell it would be one of those *hot* , *hazy* days. The curtains moving so *gently* was an indication that there was a slight breeze outside. Everything about me seemed so *calm* , *peaceful* , and *serene* . It had been a long time since I'd been able to enjoy such *lovely* , *peaceful* conditions. All of a sudden I realized this *beautiful* day would be interrupted by a usual *summer thunderstorm* . The *gentle breeze* began to whistle annoyance of its sudden change. The curtains were trying desperately to get away from the windows. A *shadow* crept across my bed as the *rain* began to fall outside. The pelts of *rain* and the cries of *thunder* brought fear into my heart. The sight of lightning caused me to hide deep into the covers. The sounds and sights were turning my *serene* thoughts into gloomy disaster. As suddenly as the *rain* , *thunder* , and lightning arrived, they left. I was no longer afraid. As I continued to lie there, I smiled because the thought came to me, this is only one of my *summer* days.

### **Narrative Writing**

Everyone likes a story. The story is even better when it tells of events that are happening to other people. Narrative writing is a meaningful sequence of events told in words.

Before a narrative can be written, it must be planned. This step is important and it also helps to keep details in sequential order. A good plan should include: 1) time—when the event occurred; 2) place: where the event occurred; 3) people—who was involved; 4) what happened; and 5) emotional expressions. This type of plan serves as an outline. Each part of the plan should be clear and definite.

The typical narrative writing has three distinct parts. <sup>4</sup>

1. The exposition or beginning: This part contains the opening sentence and arouses interest

without revealing the outcome. The beginning should give the time, place, and people involved.

2. The conflict or middle: In this part of the paragraph there is action told by presenting facts in chronological order and full of suspense. In general, the middle tells what happened. In his paragraph or story, he must make it possible for the reader to get the meaning of his story. In general, the climax will tell how the writer felt about the events of the story.

As the students grasp the concept of narrative writing there are a few techniques which will be beneficial in writing longer narratives or short stories.

1. The background information doesn't have to be given right away. The students can develop the skills of telling who, what, when, where, and why, so gradually that the readers will scarcely be aware of it.
2. If the students are narrating a nonfiction paragraph or story, they should use verbatim quotes rather than paraphrasing the statement.
3. The students should learn to limit the incidents which occur in their paragraphs or stories. Encourage them to choose highlights and use strong descriptive words to provide vivid details. This will hold the interest of the reader much better and much longer.
4. Let the main characters have a definite goal, object, or desire in mind. Keeping this in mind, the students can show that narrative writing is concerned with action. The energy, pace, and movement of this action are vital to all story telling.
5. In narrative writings, there is natural suspense in hopes, fears, and efforts of the main character. The greater the suspense, the more interested the reader. Encourage the students to limit the number of main characters in order to provide a better margin of suspense.

Below is an example of a narrative paragraph. Note how the techniques were used to develop actions with a lot of suspense.

### **A Day To Remember**

Today, at Quimmsy Park, the little league teams, the Blues and the Chips, were playing baseball. They were competing for the 1981 Championship. The game's lead had been bouncing back and forth throughout the innings. It was the bottom of the ninth with a score of 8 to 6 in favor of the Blues. The Chips were now at bat with the hope of a miracle to win the game. The four best hitters had already been to bat and Bill, who had been waiting his turn, was now approaching home plate. There were two men on base and two men out. The outcome of the game rested on the swing of his bat. The pressure was even greater because Bill was a poor hitter. Before he knew what was happening he heard the umpire yell, "Strike one!" His teammates were yelling, "Why didn't you hit that ball!" The pitcher threw a curve ball and Bill swung and missed. At the next pitch, Bill swung and hit the ball sending it high into the sky toward right field. Bill stood and looked dismayed. He was shocked that he

had hit the ball. The crowd cheered for Bill had hit his first home run which meant victory for his team. As he rounded third base, his teammates were waiting for him with open arms. Bill's face was beaming with pride for this was a glorious day to remember.

### **Persuasive Writing**

Persuasive writing differs from expository, descriptive, and narrative in that it emphasizes the way a writer relates to the reader. The writer's purpose is to change the reader's point of view to coincide with his point of view. The persuasive writer must use impressive words which will affect the reader's emotional state of mind.

Another name for persuasive writing is argument. There are basically two types of persuasive writings: personalized persuasion and narrative persuasive. In the personalized persuasion, the students will use the pronouns "you" and "your" and focus the argument directly to the reader. They also use the pronouns "I", "me", and "my" to persuade the reader to favor their point of view.

Let's take a look at examples using the personalized persuasive technique. The situation involves a mother and her twelve year old daughter. The mother had given her consent for a slumber party a week ago and all necessary preparations had been made. On the day of the party, the mother checked out the appearance of the room to organize space for six sleeping bags. To her surprise, there was no space available. Records and books were everywhere. The mother was furious and shouted these angry words to her daughter.

"What is this, the universal floor maze? With these books and records everywhere, it makes me wonder what kind of party you are having! I know this is your room, but do you have room for six more people? Do you think that your guest will be willing to substitute their soft pillow for a hard record or book? Look around you! Do you feel comfortable to bring your guest into this maze? Only you can make that decision."

In the second example the situation deals with a set of twins, Jean and Joan, who are looking for something exciting to do on a rainy Saturday afternoon. Jean comes up with the bright idea of going rollerskating, but Joan opposes because she wants to go to the movies instead.

"Joan, why is it that most of the time we have to do things that you suggest? Do you remember the last time it rained and we went to the movies, how much you complained about not enjoying yourself because you were so cold. Anyway, now would be a good time to exercise to help us lose the couple of pounds we've put on in the last few months. If we go to the movies, the buttered popcorn and candy bars will only add to this weight gain. We'll be sorry when school opens if we can't fit into anything. Come on, Sis, what do you want to look like a blimp?" Joan pondered the thoughts as she looked at herself in the mirror. With a flash of a smile she said, "Okay, skating rink here we come."

If you take a look at the narrative persuasion you find this form is more effective in an argument. In this form the students will choose words to make the reader see his point of view. Below you will find an example of narrative persuasive writing.

### **Why "Bloom County" is considered a good comic strip**

"Bloom County" has what other comic strips lack. The strip is set in a town called Bloom County. Its main characters are Opus, a large nose, herring eating penguin; and Steve Dallas, a criminal defense lawyer. Other characters are Bill, the cat, a drug addict currently living in Moscow; Oliver Wendel, a computer whiz; John Cutter, a handicapped war veteran; Milo Bloom, and other animals. Bloom County deals with many worldwide issues in a humorous way without being overly offensive. The comic basically is about the characters and how they are

affected by those issues. Bloom County is a light-hearted strip for a person who wants a good, not so clean, but decent humor.

There are a few common techniques which the students should be introduced to which would make their persuasive writing more effective. Some of these methods are: <sup>6</sup>

1. The students should have something specific to argue about. This statement which is also called a proposition can be a belief, something doubted, or denied.
2. The proposed statement must and should not express more than one basic idea. This will enable the student to present a more persuasive argument.
3. The student should not imply a conclusive argument has already been reached concerning the proposition. This makes it difficult to argue his point of view.
4. The student should make sure that his proposition is clear. If there is any question as to the meaning and condition of the situation, the argument will not be complete.
5. Encourage the students to present factual statements to support their arguments.
6. The students should make use of comparison and contrast in the same manner as they used in writing expository paragraphs. This makes a strong and impressive argument.

As the students grasp this form of writing, they will soon discover that although persuasive writing is different from expository writing, they are closely related. As you've seen, expository writing is factual and fair and doesn't show biased feelings. However, persuasive writing is also based on facts but the writer will pick one point and use facts to emphasize his point of view.

Because all students are familiar with commercials, probably the best way to introduce persuasive writing would be through the use of propaganda techniques. Some of the most commonly used ones are listed below.

*Bandwagon* —This technique implies that everyone is using a particular product or doing a particular activity so why not you.

*Testimonial* —This technique uses a famous person to promote the product or activity by saying something positive about it. Bill Cosby is one such person used to promote the sales of coke and jello pudding.

*Transfer* —This technique uses a picture of a famous person to promote a product or activity. Although the person does not make any statements, the implication is that that person stands behind the product or activity.

*Emotional words* —This technique makes use of emotional words to play on the senses of the reader. This technique is quite effective when it arouses the feelings of the reader to promote a product or activity.

Whether the argument is oral or written, it gives the students an opportunity to begin to respect the opinions and values of their peers. Below is a list of debatable topics which the students can express their opinions in a brainstorming section.

1. A Mercedes is a better car than a BMW.
2. The cyclone ride at Riverside is more exciting than the thunderbolt.
3. Which is the more frightening movie, "Nightmare on Elm Street" or "Friday the 13th"? Why?
4. A drum set is easier to play than the bass guitar.
5. Washing your hair everyday will cause it to become brittle.
6. The best candy bar on the market is Mr. Goodbar.
7. Girls are smarter than boys.
8. Fall is the best season of the year.

### **Figures of Speech**

I mentioned earlier in this unit that figures of speech can be quite effective in the writing process. Its effectiveness depends upon all of the words used. Figurative language can't be used loosely in any composition. It must be woven into the content in order to paint a mental image for the reader. First of all using figurative language clarifies a relatively unfamiliar idea by expressing it in a striking image that the reader can visualize and understand. Second, figures of speech can spruce up ordinary writing to add delight and meaning for the students as well as the readers. Below is a list of the most common figures of speech used in our everyday conversations and how they can be used to make the students' writings come alive.

### **Similes**

A simile is a brief comparison of two objects. The preposition *like* or the conjunction *as* are used to show these comparisons. Similes are used to: 1) clarify an unfamiliar idea, 2) expand an idea, and 3) express feelings and to entertain.

Students enjoy producing comparisons in an oral form as well as in a written form. You can help them to make use of similes by having them to fill in the blanks of the following statements during a brainstorming session.

1. The rain fell like \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The car started up like \_\_\_\_\_.
3. He ate like \_\_\_\_\_.
4. She ran like \_\_\_\_\_.
5. I'm as hungry as a \_\_\_\_\_.

6. My sister is as thin as a \_\_\_\_\_.
7. They are as busy as \_\_\_\_\_.
8. He walks like a \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The clouds look like \_\_\_\_\_.
10. He is as quick as a \_\_\_\_\_.

Teaching the students to let their imagination run away with them will be great in producing interesting compositions.

### **Metaphors**

A metaphor is also a form of comparison. When using this type of comparison, the implications are that two things are the same. Metaphors show comparison of images which are connected to something they literally cannot be. This type of figurative language creates tension and excitement by providing a mental picture for the reader. A form of the verb "to be" is always used to show metaphorical comparison. Examples of metaphors are: 1) His muscles are steel bars. (Steel is hard and doesn't bend under normal conditions. This is what is implied of the muscles.) 2) Your hand is sandpaper rubbing against my face. (The implication is that the hand is rough.) 3) The kitten's claws are fishhooks caught in the curtain. (The implication is that the kitten's claws are very sharp and pointed.)

During a brainstorming session, the students can be directed to complete the statements below. In parentheses are possible comparisons.

1. Your mouth is a (*motor*) .
2. Her fingernails are (*steel spikes*) .
3. You are a (*doll*) .
4. Jo is a (*fish*) in the water.
5. The floor is (*a block of ice*) under my feet.
6. This towel is a (*sponge*) .
7. My room is an (*oven*) .
8. His mind is a (*camera*) .
9. This chair has become a (*board*) after sitting in it so long.
10. Bev is a (*rose*) .

## **Personification**

Personification is a type of figure of speech which takes inanimate things and give them human qualities. The main purpose of personification is to explain, expand, and give vivid images. To introduce the students to the use of this type of writing is to have them to pretend that they are non-living things. The following questions will help them organize their thoughts.

1. What are you?
2. What do you look like?
3. Where do you live?
4. Does someone own you?
5. Do you have sisters and brothers?
6. What good traits do you have?
7. What bad traits do you have?
8. What do you see, hear, smell, touch, and taste?
9. How do you feel about the people around you?

Below are some examples of how an ordinary sentence can be changed and given vivid meaning with the use of personification.

1. The door was squeaky. The *moaned* with its rusty, dry hinges.
2. The refrigerator was noisy. The refrigerator *hummed*.
3. The television was loud. The television *screamed* as the children twisted its knobs.

Below is a list of things that the students can pretend they are. Have them to choose one and tell a story.

A shoe      A chair  
A paperclip   A car  
A rollerskate   A cash register  
A television   A credit card  
A telephone   A mirror  
A lightbulb   A door

A pencil      A Christmas tree  
An elevator    Interstate 95  
A bathtub      A rubber band  
A floor        A sheet of paper

Figurative language is not hard to master because the students use it constantly while teasing their peers daily. To live in a fantasy world is a pleasant way to allow the students to put some of their inner feelings on paper. Encouraging the students to use figurative speech while developing their paragraphs will enhance their writing skills as well as build their vocabulary.

## Summary

Writing is that phase of language which allows humans to express themselves through what they see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. Because children are so vulnerable, creativeness is at their fingertips. We as educators have to find ways to let this creativeness surface without creating negative attitudes toward writing. This process is called proper guidance. The first step to creative writing is to allow the students to put what they know on paper without criticism. Once they have experienced success in that aspect, the teacher should guide them to put their thoughts in a sequential order. From that point you, the teacher, should provide guidance in correct grammar, punctuation, and increased vocabulary. The whole idea is to make writing as much fun as opening presents on Christmas morning. In a span of 4 months, the students should begin to produce a masterpiece at his level of achievement. It is my hope that the techniques listed in this unit will be used properly without putting strict demands on the students which will turn them against expressing themselves. The sample lessons and related activities found at the end of this unit provide much practice to enable the students to become better writers. You will note that these activities need not be confined to language arts but can easily be adapted to other disciplines of the curriculum, especially science and social studies. Practice makes perfect, therefore, allow the students to experience creative writing daily. Use the techniques wisely and the best will be produced.

## Notes

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1. Kenneth A. Bruffee, *A Short Course in Writing* (Mass.: Winthrop Publishers, 1972), p. 51.
- 2 Theo Liddell, *Basic Languages: Messages and Meaning* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), p. 178.
3. *Famous Writer's Course: Principles of Good Writing* (Westport, Conn., Famous Writers School, 1960), p. 328.
4. Ibid., p. 358.
5. Ibid., p. 359.
6. Ibid., p. 413.



## Sample Lesson

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### Write to Communicate

#### **Objectives:**

The students will be able to:

1. recognize that writing is worth learning.
2. identify that writing is different from talking.
3. identify that writing is more than finding words to fit ideas.

#### **Vocabulary:**

communicate, verbal, mute

Brainstorming questions:

1. How do people communicate?
2. Why do we communicate with one another?
3. Can animals communicate with people and vice versa? If yes, how?
4. Suppose we lived in a world without sound. How would you cope?

#### **Procedures:**

Explain and discuss how the terms above relate to the English language. Divide the class into small groups of three to four students each. Have the students to think of an idea that he wants to share with his classmates and write it on a 3 x 5 index card.

After about 3 minutes, tell them that they have exactly 10 minutes to share their ideas in the group but they can't have any verbal communications. They can write or use sign language to get their messages across. At the end of the session, allow a few of the students to give the most difficult part of the task and the most helpful part of the task.

#### **Related Activities:**

1. Have the students to choose a specific foreign country and tell how he would explain that he is from the United States.
2. Have the students to write about helping a foreign student learn the rules of the class or school. Later have them to role play the same situation.
3. Have the students to select a word or phrase and play charade. The class could be divided into

teams and compete.

## ***Sample Lesson***

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### **Expository Writing**

#### ***Objectives:***

The students will be able to:

1. identify what constitutes expository writing.
2. distinguish between comparison, contrast, and analogy.
3. write expository paragraphs.

#### ***Vocabulary:***

exposition, comparison, contrast, analogy

#### ***Brainstorming Questions:***

1. Why do people who are running for public office always make speeches?
2. If you wanted someone to vote for you, would you make a speech?
3. What's the first thing you do when you go to the library to check out a book?
4. Why do you think all textbooks have a preface or an introductory page?

#### ***Procedures:***

Introduce and explain the terms above. Complete the brainstorming exercises. Discuss the techniques presented in this unit to develop expository writings. Once the students have mastered those skills, they should be guided to choose one of the comparisons, contrasts, or analogies, using the techniques, to develop an expository paragraph. The less able students may be encouraged to use the restatement technique to write their paragraphs. Some suggested questions are listed below.

1. Why is it hotter during the summer months?
2. How do you bake cookies?
3. Why is a dog a good pet to have?

***Related Activities:***

1. Have the students to scan magazines and the newspaper to find expository articles. Share with the class.
2. Have the students to chart the time of sunrise and sunset for one week. After noting and discussing what has happened, have them to write an expository paragraph telling what they observed.
3. At random, choose students to give directions to get to certain points in the school or city.

## ***Sample Lesson***

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### **Descriptive Writing**

***Objectives:***

The students will be able to:

1. identify and use adjectives.
2. identify and use adverbs.
3. identify the concept of clustering.
4. write a descriptive paragraph.

***Vocabulary:***

describe, description, adjective, adverb, noun, verb, cluster

***Brainstorming Questions:***

1. How would you describe the way you felt when you woke up this morning? Make a list of at least five words you would use in this description.
2. Why do you choose special words to describe a certain person, place, or thing?

### 3. What makes some stories more interesting than others?

#### **Procedures:**

Introduce the vocabulary above. Have the students to choose their favorite person, place, or thing and write a few words to describe it. Refer to the clustering concept to complete this task. Once the students have finished their lists, have them to use each word in a sentence to describe this person, place, or thing. Guide the students to choose descriptive words that would arouse the five senses. Remind the students to organize their sentences in paragraph form. Share the finished assignment with the class.

#### **Related Activities:**

1. Have the students to choose an item with their eyes covered. Ask them to describe what the item is using their senses of smell, touch, and sight. Ask them to identify the item by name.
2. Take off the blindfold and describe the same item. Discuss the two descriptions.
3. Have the students to scan the newspaper and magazines to find descriptive articles. Share their findings with the class.
4. Have the students to choose and discuss the television program they think is most descriptive and why?

## **Sample Lesson**

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### **Narrative Writing**

#### **Objectives:**

The students will be able to:

1. identify a narrative paragraph.
2. recognize the parts in developing a narrative paragraph.
3. to write a narrative paragraph.

#### **Vocabulary:**

narrator, sequence

#### **Brainstorming Questions:**

1. In the story “The Three Little Pigs” what did the wolf do to get to the pigs?
2. Why did he do these things in a particular order?
3. If you were to change the order of the action in that story, what would happen?

**Procedures:**

Explain the terms above. Introduce the five parts in developing a narrative paragraph and explain each part. (Time, Place, People, What happened, and How the writer felt)

Have the students to choose one of the following topics and write a paragraph about it.

1. My most embarrassing moment
2. How I earned my summer vacation
3. How I feel about my new bike
4. My first night at a slumber party
5. Allow the students to choose their own topic.

**Related Activities:**

1. Have the students to identify narrative type programs seen on television and discuss them.
2. Have the students to discuss why documentaries are almost always narrative programs.
3. Have the students to choose a place anywhere in the United States and give a narrative of how they would travel to that point from their hometown. Suggest that they include at least three historical sites they could visit while traveling to their destination.

## ***Sample Lesson***

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### **Persuasive Writing**

**Objectives:**

The students will be able to:

1. identify the two kinds of persuasive writings.
2. identify propaganda techniques.

3. understand how debating affects persuasive writing.
4. write a persuasive paragraph.

**Vocabulary:**

debate, argument, persuade, personal, personalize, narrative, proposition, propaganda

**Brainstorming Questions:**

1. Why do you and your parents buy certain name brand products?
2. Why are there so many commercials on television?
3. Are commercials good or bad? Why?

**Procedures:**

Introduce the vocabulary above. After the brainstorming session, divide the class into three groups. Choose two popular name brand products the students are familiar with for discussion such as Reebok sneakers and Puma sneakers. Allow one group to support Reeboks while another group supports Pumas. The third group will be neutral. The purpose of the first two groups is to persuade the third group to come on their side. After a small debate, take a vote from the third group to see which group was more influential. During the debate encourage the students to make use of any skills which were used in developing narrative, descriptive, and expository paragraphs. Remind the students that the use of figurative language would be beneficial in presenting a good argument also.

**Related Activities:**

1. Conduct a mock election to see who would become the leader of a group for a week. Allow candidates to campaign before the voting takes place.
2. Choose a current local, state, or national issue and allow the students to voice their opinion of the situation.
3. Have the students to write a paragraph on the topic "Writing is Worth Learning". Share paragraphs with the class.

## Student's Bibliography

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Berry, Marilyn. *Written Reports* . Chicago: Children's Press. 1984.

This book explains the steps used in writing a report, including topics, outlining, and paragraph development. There are many exercises to compliment those steps.

Blot, David and David M. Davidson. *Put It In Writing* . Mass.: Newbury House Publishers. 1969.

This book suggests topics and exercises and discusses techniques to help students learn English through writing.

Brandt, Sue R. *How To Improve Your Written English* . New York: Franklin Watts, Inc. 1972.

This book discusses the differences between spoken and written English and suggests ways to improving written English from the middle grades through high school.

Cassedy, Sylvia. *In Your Own Words: A Beginner's Guide to Writing* . Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday. 1978.

This is a guide to writing prose, both fiction and non-fiction, and poetry.

Goffstein, M. B. *A Writer*. New York: Harper & Row. 1984.

This book is a brief text comparing the works of a writer to that of a gardner whose seeds are ideas that grow into books.

James, Elizabeth and Carol Barkin. *How to Write a Great School Report* .

New York: Lothrop, Lee, & Shepard Books. 1983.

This book explains how to choose a topic for a report, how to find and organize information, and how to write and revise the final version.

Tchudi, Susan J. and Stephen Tchudi. *The Young Writer's Handbook* . New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1984.

This book suggests helpful procedures and approaches for the beginning writers in areas of interest such as journal, ietter writing, creative writing, school reports, topics, and experiments.

Traiger, Arthur and Leon Gersten. *Solutions To Your Writing Problems* . Woodbury, N. Y.: Barron's Educational Series, Inc. 1980.

This book presents the various kinds of writing, the stages of writing, special skills for developing style, structure, and clarity.

## Teacher's Bibliography

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Bruffee, Kenneth A. *A Short Course in Writing* . Mass.: Winthrop Publishers. 1972.

This book tells how an individual can develop his skills in writing other than in a classroom setting.

Elbow, Peter. *Writing With Power* . New York: Oxford University Press. 1981.

This book emphasizes how powerful and beneficial writing can be as a means of communicating.

Kane, Thomas S. *The Oxford Guide to Writing* . New York: Oxford University Press. 1983.

This is a rhetoric and handbook for college students which tells how to improve writing skills by identifying specific mistakes and difficulties.

Liddell, Theo C. *Basic Languages: Messages and Meaning* . New York: Harper & Row. 1975.

This is a basic text used to develop skills in all facets of language.

Strafford, William. *A Way of Writing* . Michigan. University of Michigan. 1977.

This book deals with various techniques used to develop writing skills.

Rico, Gabriele L. *Writing the Natural Way* . Los Angeles: J. P. Tarcher, Inc. 1983.

This book is designed to encourage a potential writer to use his inner ability to produce a natural flow of creative writing.

Warriner, John E. *English Grammar and Composition* . New York: Harcourt Brace Jonavovich, Publishers. 1982.

This is a basic text used to develop skills in language.

Wiener, Harvey S. *Any Child Can Write* . New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company. 1978.

This book covers techniques which can be used to improve a child's writing skills from preschool to high school.

*Famous Writing Course: Principles of Good Writing* . Vol. II. Westport, Conn.: Famous Writers School. 1969.

This book concerns itself with the basic techniques needed to become a more influential writer.

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