

Teaching Essay Strategies

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Writing Level Worksheets Sequence of Instruction

1. (3)-(4)-(4) Word Paragraph
2. (3)-(4)-(4) Word Paragraph
3. (3)-(4)-(4) Phrase Paragraph
4. (3)-(4)-(4) Phrase Paragraph, Writing Prompts
5. (3)-(4)-(4) Sentence Paragraph
6. (3)-(4)-(4) Sentence Paragraph, Use Writing Prompt Words in (3), Writing Rules
7. (3)-(4)-(4) Sentence Paragraph, Third Person
8. (3)-(4)-(4) Sentence Paragraph, No “to be” Words
9. (3)-(4)-(4) Sentence Paragraph, Two Transitions
10. (3)-(4)-(5)-(4)-(5) Sentence Paragraph
11. (4)-(5)-(3)-(4)-(5) Paragraph, Fact Evidence, Writing Direction Word: Describe
12. (4)-(5)-(4)-(5)-(3) Paragraph, Statistic Evidence, Writing Direction Word: Explain
13. (4)-(5)-(4)-(5) Paragraph, Example Evidence, Writing Direction Word: Discuss
14. (3)-(4)-(5)-(4)-(5)-(4)-(5) Paragraph, Comparison Evidence, Writing Direction Words: Compare/Contrast
15. (3)-(4)-(4)-(4)-Concluding Statement Paragraph, Appeal to Authority Evidence, Writing Direction Word: Analyze
16. (3)-(4)-(4)-(5)-(4)-(5) Paragraph, Experience Evidence, Writing Direction Word: Persuade
17. (3)-(4)-(5)-(4)-(5)-(5) Paragraph, Logic Evidence, Writing Direction Word: Justify
18. (Transition Statement)-(4)-(5)-(3)-(4)-(5) Paragraph, Counterpoint Evidence, Writing Direction Word: Evaluate
- 19-26. Additional Body Paragraph and (2) Thesis Statement
27. Background (1) Introduction Strategy, Prepositional Phrase Sentence Openers
28. Controversial Statement (1) Introduction Strategy, Adverb Sentence Openers
29. Reference to Something Known in Common (1) Introduction Strategy, Adverbial Clause Sentence Openers
30. Definition (1) Introduction Strategy, Adjective Sentence Openers
31. Preview of Topic Sentences (1) Introduction Strategy, Adjective Phrase Sentence Openers
32. Question to be Answered (1) Introduction Strategy, Present Participial Phrase Sentence Openers
33. Quote from an Authority (1) Introduction Strategy, Past Participial Phrase Sentence Openers
34. Startling Statement (1) Introduction Strategy, Past Perfect Participial Phrase Sentence Openers
35. Synthesis of Main Points (1) Introduction Strategy, Infinitive Sentence Openers
36. Generalization (1) Introduction Strategy, Infinitive Phrase Sentence Openers
37. Question for Further Study (6) Conclusion Strategy, Verb before the Subject Sentence Openers
38. Application (6) Conclusion Strategy, Direct Object Sentence Openers
39. Argument Limitations (6) Conclusion Strategy, Gerund Sentence Openers
40. Emphasis of Key Point (6) Conclusion Strategy, Gerund Phrase Sentence Openers
41. Statement of Significance (6) Conclusion Strategy, Noun Clause Sentence Openers
42. Summary (6) Conclusion Strategy, Nominative Absolute Sentence Openers

Writing Level 8

Name _____

Writing Hint

Many students over-use the “to be verbs” in their writing.



To Be Verbs
is am are was were be being been

To replace “to-be verbs”—

1. *Substitute a more active verb*
2. *Begin the sentence with another word from the sentence*
3. *Change one of the words in the sentence into a verb form*

Notice how the writing model below uses active verbs to *show*, not just *tell* the reader.

Writing Model

(3) The Student Council President excited the crowd with two new ideas. (4) First, he promised a spirit day for each month. (4) Second, he announced that the cafeteria would now serve ice-cream daily.

Directions

Write a three-sentence (3)-(4)-(4) paragraph without using any “to be” verbs to respond to the **Writing Prompt: How do people relax?** After passing this writing level, use no more than one “to be” verb in each paragraph.

Writing Level 8 Practice

Directions: Review your Writing Level 11 and 19 worksheets and copy down the (2) Thesis Statement and any two (4) or (5) sentences from the body paragraphs that you would like to revise. Write a (1) **Background Introduction Strategy** sentence and then revise the two body paragraph sentences, beginning each with a **Prepositional Phrase Sentence Opener**. Refer to the writing models for help. When you have finished, proofread and then have your teacher correct.

Background Introduction Strategy

Background—Sentences that briefly explain the setting or help your reader better understand the thesis statement.

Writing Models for Background Introduction Strategy

- (1) In recent years, the government has spent millions of dollars in television commercials targeted at children.
- (1) After years of tobacco advertising on television, this media now advertises against this product.
- (1) Television networks at first did not want to air negative advertisements such as anti-smoking commercials.
- (2) Thesis Statement—Most anti-smoking television commercials are not effective in preventing children from beginning to smoke.

Prepositional Phrase Sentence Opener

Prepositional Phrase—A preposition frequently describes location (above the roof), tells time (after a while), or shows a relationship (with his friend). The prepositional phrase begins with a preposition and ends with the object (a noun or pronoun) that connects to the preposition. Place a comma after a prepositional phrase sentence opener when a noun or pronoun follows.

Common Prepositions

aboard, about, above, according to, across, after, against, along, among, around, as, as to, aside from, at, because of, before, behind, below, beneath, beside, between, beyond, by, despite, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, instead of, into, in addition to, in place of, in spite of, like, near, next to, of, off, on, on account of, onto, outside, out of, over, regardless of, since, through, throughout, to, toward, under, underneath, until, up, upon, with, within, without, but when it means "except," and *past* when it means "by."

Writing Models for Prepositional Phrase Sentence Opener

- *Describes location*
Behind the cabinet, he found the missing piece.
- *Tells time*
During the game, the umpire made few mistakes.
- *Shows a relationship*
Except for Steven, they left the party early.

Directions: Review your Writing Level 16 and 24 worksheets and copy down the (2) Thesis Statement and any two (4) or (5) sentences from the body paragraphs that you would like to revise. Write an (6) **Emphasis of Key Point Conclusion Strategy** sentence and then revise the two body paragraph sentences, beginning each with a **Gerund Phrase Sentence Opener**. Refer to the writing models for help. When you have finished, proofread and then have your teacher correct.

Emphasis of Key Point Conclusion Strategy

Emphasis of Key Point—Sentences that mention and add importance to one of the points of your essay.

Writing Models for Emphasis of Key Point Conclusion Strategy

- (2) Thesis Statement—Two key weather conditions have decreased the water supply this year.
(6) The fact that the Municipal Water District failed to plan for the possibility of less rainfall contributed most to the decreased water supply this year.
(6) Thirty-five days of 100-degree weather during the summer months was the main reason that water supplies ran short of demand.
(6) Letting out too much water from the reservoir last March caused the majority of the problems in water supply this year.

Gerund Phrase Sentence Opener

Gerund Phrase—A gerund phrase consists of the __ing form of the verb and a related group of words that serve as the subject of the sentence. Usually do not place a comma after the gerund phrase when used as a sentence opener.

Writing Models for Gerund Phrase Sentence Opener

- *With a prepositional phrase*
Riding in the car leaves some people bored and tired.
- *With an object*
Tasting the sauce makes many cooks hungry for dinner.
- *With an adverb*
Walking quickly is a favorite exercise.

TES Sentence Revisions #1

Revision—Delete unnecessary **modifiers**.

Definition—An unnecessary **modifier** is an adjective or adverb that does not add meaning to the sentence.

Example:

You can express any particular point of view.

This sentence can be better revised as...

You can express any point of view.

Revise the following sentence by deleting unnecessary modifiers:

Paul is definitely the best candidate for the actual position.

Teaching Hints:

An adjective describes a noun or a pronoun—asking How Many? Which One? Or What Kind? An adverb describes an adjective, adverb, or verb—asking How? When? Where? Or What Degree? The following words frequently serve as unnecessary modifiers: *actual(ly)*, *basic(ally)*, *definite(ly)*, *general(ly)*, *kind of*, *particular(ly)*, *real(ly)*, *sort of*, *specific(ally)*, and *type of*.

Possible Answer:

Paul is the best candidate for the position.

TES Sentence Revisions #2

Revision—Start a sentence with a **prepositional phrase**.

Definition—A **prepositional phrase** describes location, tells time, or shows a relationship. It begins with a preposition and ends with a connecting object (a noun or pronoun).

Examples:

- *Describes location*

Behind the cabinet, he found the missing piece.

- *Tells time*

During the game, the umpire made mistakes.

- *Shows a relationship*

Except for Steven, they all left the party early.

Revise the following sentence with a prepositional phrase sentence opener:

The rabbit escaped the farmer by going under the fence then through the cornfield.

Teaching Hints:

Place a comma after a prepositional phrase sentence opener when a noun or pronoun follows.

Possible Answer:

Under the fence then through the cornfield, the rabbit escaped the farmer.

TES Rhetorical Stance Quick Writes #1

Voice: Idealistic and inspirational

Audience: A class of third-graders

Purpose: Describe the kind of world in which you hope these students will live as adults.

Form: A short speech

Student Model

I have a dream
that one day you will all live in a world in which wars are found
only in the history books
that you will see a world in which there are no more children who
go to bed hungry
that you will enjoy a world in which there is more laughter than
tears.

I have a dream.

Someday soon. You will know what it's like to have children of
your own.

Someday soon. You will understand what it's like to worry about
their futures.

Someday soon. You will hope for a better world for your children,
just as I hope for you.

I have a dream. Dreams can become real.

Identifying Conclusion Strategies

Name _____

Directions: Identify the number of the conclusion strategy in the space provided before the sentences in the conclusion paragraph that follows. Also, label TR for the thesis re-statement in the space provided.

1. *Synthesis of Main Points*—Sentences that pull together the points proven in the essay to say something new.
2. *Generalization*—Sentences that make one of your specific points more general in focus.
3. *Question for Further Study*—Sentences that mention a related subject or question that is beyond the focus of the essay.
4. *Application*—Sentences that apply the proven thesis statement to another idea or issue.
5. *Argument Limitations*—Sentences that explain how or why your conclusions are limited.
6. *Emphasis of Key Point*—Sentences that mention and add importance to one of the points of your essay.
7. *Statement of Significance*—Sentences that discuss the importance and relevance of the proven thesis statement.
8. *Summary Statement*—Sentences that list the main ideas and major details discussed in the essay.

____ We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World to help us do what is right, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these Colonies, ____ solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are, and have the right to be, free and independent states; that they are removed from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and Great Britain, is and ought to be totally ended; ____ and that as free and independent states, they have full power to declare war, make peace, form alliances, establish trade, and to do all other acts and things which independent states have the right to do. And for the support of this declaration, relying firmly on the protection of God, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

Adapted from the Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson

Writing Domains and Forms

Name _____

Informative/Practical

Definition: The practical/informative writing domain explains and interprets factual information.

Directions: Change the form of the following excerpt to a present-day police report in the spaces provided below the text.

The Trojan Horse

For ten long years the Greeks had tried to conquer the city of Troy without success. The

city walls were so thick and high that the Greeks could not enter the Trojan fortress through

force. Then one day the Greeks thought of a clever plan. They built a giant, wooden horse with a

hollow belly. A small group of Greek soldiers climbed into the hollow opening, and sealed it up.

The wooden horse was then wheeled to the front of the city gates. Meanwhile, the rest of the

Greeks went back to their ships and appeared to sail away.

Thinking that the horse was a gift left to honor the brave people of Troy, the Trojans

brought the horse into their city and began to celebrate. In the early hours of the morning, while

everyone was asleep, the Greeks unsealed the belly of the horse, and climbed down from it.

Silently, they killed the Trojan guards at all the city gates. The gates were then opened and the

Greeks, who had only pretended to sail for home, captured the city and won the Trojan War.

Parallelism

Name _____

Definition: Parallelism in writing refers to the repeated usage of words and grammatical structures in a well-designed pattern. Parallel structures assist the comprehension of the reader and provide a memorable rhythm to the writing.

Writing Hints

Repeat key words throughout an essay to help the reader maintain focus. Use the same grammatical structures for phrases within lists. Repeated **Transitions** can produce interesting parallelism.

Directions: Identify the words and phrases that are part of parallel structures in Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address in the spaces provided. Hints are provided in **bold** for each structure to get you started.

Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation: conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war. . .testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated. . . can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate. . .we cannot consecrate. . . we cannot hallow this ground.

a new **nation** _____, _____, _____

conceived **in** liberty _____

we are engaged _____

so conceived _____

that nation _____, _____, _____

we can not dedicate _____,

Writing Fluency Assessment 1

Writing Direction Words: *describe*

The Peace Corps

Margin Notes

In 1961, President John Kennedy founded the Peace Corps. The purpose of the program is to promote world peace and friendship among nations by sending American volunteers to serve the poor in the United States and in other countries. Peace Corps volunteers work in a wide variety of assistance programs that promote better education, health, agriculture, and housing.

Recently, the Peace Corps has helped refugees (people forced to leave their country) from Africa. The Peace Corps worked with these refugees to find them new homes and jobs.

Writing Prompt

The Peace Corps has played an important role in relationships between the United States and other countries since its beginnings in 1961. It is one of the few government programs from this time period that has stayed true to its original purpose. Describe the key goals of this service program.

(2) Thesis Statement

Pre-Write

List the key features of both body paragraphs in the appropriate boxes.

“Features Chart”

(3) Topic Sentences	(4) Major Details		(5) Support Details	
(3)	(4)	(4)	(5)	(5)
(3)	(4)	(4)	(5)	(5)

Analytical Rubric

Essay Scoring Guide

5=Advanced

4=Proficient

3=Basic

2=Below Basic

1=Far Below Basic

Essay #1

Writing Standard

Essay #2

Writing Structure

___	(2) Thesis statement states the subject and responds to all of the writing prompt.	___
___	(1) Introduction paragraph uses a variety of Introduction Strategies.	___
___	(3) Topic sentences state the main ideas of each body paragraph.	___
___	(4) Major details & (5) minor details use a variety of Types of Evidence.	___
___	(6) Conclusion paragraph uses a variety of Conclusion Strategies.	___

Essay Content

___	(2) Thesis Statement establishes a clear purpose or point of view.	___
___	Essay maintains a consistent focus on the central idea of the (2) Thesis Statement.	___
___	(1) Introduction Strategies effectively engage the reader.	___
___	The essay evidence offers convincing support or proof.	___
___	(6) Conclusion strategies effectively respond to the main points of the essay.	___
___	Essay maintains a sense of the audience i.e., the reader.	___

Writing Style

___	Essay uses a variety of sentence patterns.	___
___	Essay uses a variety of transitions.	___
___	Word choice and vocabulary is appropriate for the essay.	___

Writing Conventions

___	Spelling is correct.	___
___	Grammar is correct and sentences are complete.	___
___	Punctuation and capitalization are correct.	___

Totals
