

PLACING STUDENTS INTO THE PROGRAM

Students should begin this unit by writing a story in response to a prompt. This writing sample can be used as the placement test as well as the pretest. You score the samples with a rubric (provided for the narrative form of writing) that considers the following elements: organization, content, style, and mechanics.

A perfect score is 100 points. If your students score 20-95 points, they have the necessary preskills to participate in the unit.

Guidelines for placement:

- 0-19 points: The student may not function well at the level tested. If, because of class organization, the student must be placed in this level, they will require accommodation and assistance.
- 20-95 points: The student is properly placed and will benefit from instruction at the level tested.
- 96-100 points: The student may have skills exceeding those taught at the level tested. If, because of class organization, the student must be placed in this level, they can still benefit from participation in this level of the program. Additional challenges can be added by making adjustments on the rubric for what is required of this student. For example, if the rubric requires students to use more than one attempt to solve the mystery, the higher performing students can be required to provide more than two.

After students have completed the placement test and you know they are appropriately placed, you are ready to begin the lessons.

GETTING READY TO START

The pretest should be used to determine if your students are working at the advanced level of Narrative Writing. A pretest should be administered and scored before you introduce this unit.

Each student will need lined paper and a folder with two pockets to use as a writing portfolio in which to keep writing assignments.

Introducing Narrative Writing

For the next several weeks the class will be working to learn how to write a narrative. **A narrative is a story. What is a word that means story?** *Narrative.*

We are going to have fun together as you learn how to write different forms of stories.

Sometimes authors work with others to produce a piece of writing. This kind of writing is called a collaborative writing project. What is it called when authors work together to produce a piece of writing? *A collaborative writing project.*

Authors who work together enjoy sharing their ideas. Sometimes we will work as a collaborative group to write a class narrative. When we do a collaborative piece of writing, I will write our ideas and the piece of writing on chart paper or on the Smart Board. Everyone will contribute ideas to the class story. (Note: Writing can be word processed using a computer and a Smart Board.)

Sometimes authors work alone. After we work collaboratively, you will produce a narrative of your own.

For the next several lessons, you will learn about two different kinds of stories: ecological mystery narratives and historical fiction narratives. What are two different kinds of stories? Ideas: *Ecological mystery narratives and historical fiction narratives.*

When you write an ecological mystery you tell a story about a problem in an ecosystem. The characters who solve the mystery will find clues that help them figure out what has happened to alter or change the ecosystem.

An ecosystem is everything that exists in a specific environment. It includes living things such as plants and animals, and things that are not living, such as rocks, soil, sunlight, and water. For example, tell me what can be found in the ecosystem in which we live. (Accept appropriate responses.)

Let's review what we know about an ecological mystery. In an ecological mystery, there will be a problem in an... *ecosystem*.

The story will be about how the characters find... *clues that help them figure out what has happened to alter or change the ecosystem*.

When you write a historical fiction narrative, you write a story about people or events from history. You imagine a realistic story based on historical facts. Explain what you do when you write a historical fiction narrative. Ideas: *You write a story about people or events from history; you imagine a realistic story based on historical facts.*

OBTAINING A BEGINNING WRITING SAMPLE—PRETEST

Administering the Pretest

PREPARATION: Write or display the following prompt on the board: Imagine that an artifact is stolen from a museum. However, the security cameras did not manage to capture any footage of the thief. Write a story to solve the mystery of the stolen artifact.

(Explain to students that before they learn about writing narratives, you'd like to have a sample of their writing. Tell them you will save these samples so you and they can see how their writing improves as they learn more about narrative writing.

Read aloud the prompt on the board.

Ask students to write a mystery on lined paper, telling the events of the story. Remind them to give their story a title.

Allow students sufficient time to write their story. Ask them to edit, proofread, and write a final copy of the story. Use the rubric and scoring guide found on page 13 to evaluate each student's writing. Staple the rubric to each student's piece of writing. Keep the writing sample and the scoring rubric for comparison at the end of the unit.)

Scoring the Pretest

For each element:

Give a score of 0 if there is no evidence of the element.

Give a score of 1 for each element at the emerging level.

Give a score of 2-3 for each element at the basic level.

Give a score of 4 for each element at the proficient level based on the state curriculum or Common Core State Standards.

Give a score of 5 for each element at the advanced level.

Total the scores for each individual element. Place students according to the guidelines for placement found on page 11.

Name _____ Date _____

RUBRIC

Pretest

Posttest

Scoring the Sample

- Give a score of 0 if there is no evidence of the element.
- Give a score of 1 for each element at the emerging level.
- Give a score of 2-3 for each element at the basic level.
- Give a score of 4 for each element at proficient level.
- Give a score of 5 for each element at the advanced level.

Evaluating the Elements of a Piece of Narrative Writing	
The author of this mystery...	Points Earned
Organization	
Writes an attention-grabbing title related to the story.	
Writes an introductory paragraph that draws the reader into the story (beginning).	
Writes several related paragraphs to develop the plot (middle).	
Writes a concluding paragraph that provides a denouement (solution).	
Follows a logical sequence of events.	
Content	
Includes details about the setting (where and when the story takes place).	
Develops the character of the mystery solver and a minor character by describing both physical appearance and personality attributes.	
Develops a plot with a beginning that includes characters, setting, and a mysterious event.	
Develops a plot through attempts at solution (must include a red herring).	
Presents a believable denouement (motive and solution).	
Style	
Maintains an appropriate balance between narrative and dialogue.	
Maintains a consistent point of view.	
Uses a variety of sentence structures (simple, compound, complex).	
Uses descriptive and figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification, onomatopoeia, and alliteration) to bring characters and setting to life.	
Develops theme, either stated or implied.	
Mechanics	
Indents narrative paragraphs. Indents each time there is a new speaker.	
Capitalizes and punctuates dialogue correctly.	
Capitalizes and punctuates narrative correctly.	
Uses standard English usage (grammar).	
Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.	
Total Points	