

PLACING STUDENTS INTO THE PROGRAM

Students should begin each unit by writing a paragraph 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 each form of writing) that considers the following elements: organization, content, style, and mechanics.

A perfect score is 100 points. If your students score 20-84 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 at least three adverbs to modify and describe verbs, the higher performing students can be required to use more than three adverbs.

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

GETTING READY TO START

Note: The pretest should be used to determine if your students are working at the Beginning Level 3 of Descriptive Writing. A pretest should be administered and scored before you introduce this unit.

Introducing Descriptive Writing

We are going to have fun together as you learn to be authors in many different forms of writing. Sometimes authors work with others to produce a piece of writing. This kind of writing is called a collaborative writing project. The people who work together enjoy sharing their ideas. Sometimes we will work as a collaborative group to write a class piece of writing. When we do a collaborative piece of writing, I will write our ideas and the piece of writing on chart paper or type it on the Smart Board. Everyone will contribute ideas to the class piece of writing.

(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 piece of writing of your own.

For the next several lessons, you will be learning about descriptive writing. Descriptive writing uses words and sentences to paint clear pictures in the reader's mind.

We will focus on two kinds of descriptive writing: using the five senses and using spatial order.

OBTAINING A BEGINNING WRITING SAMPLE—PRETEST

PREPARATION: Write the following prompt on the board or make a Smart Board file from which students will generate their descriptive paragraph. Write a paragraph to describe your favorite season. Be sure to include your five senses in your writing.

Administering the Pretest

Explain to the students that before they start the Descriptive Writing unit, you would like to collect a sample of their writing. Mention that you will save this sample so you and they can see how their writing develops as they learn more about writing descriptive paragraphs.

Read the prompt aloud to the students. Ask them to write a descriptive paragraph on lined paper. Allow them sufficient time to write. Ask students to edit, proofread, and write or word process a final copy of the paragraph. Use the rubric and scoring guide found on the following page 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 10.)

Name _____

Date _____

RUBRIC

Pretest

Posttest

Scoring the Sample

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

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

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

Give the student a score of 4 for each element at proficient level.

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

| Evaluating the Elements of a Piece of Descriptive Writing | |
|--|----------------------|
| The author of this five-sense descriptive paragraph..... | Points Earned |
| Organization | |
| Writes a hook that captures the reader's attention. | |
| Writes a beginning sentence that tells the topic. | |
| Writes a middle with five related sentences that give details about the topic. | |
| Writes a final sentence to bring closure. | |
| Writes using a logical sequence and order. | |
| Content | |
| Includes a descriptive detail sentence that uses the sense of sight . | |
| Includes a descriptive detail sentence that uses the sense of hearing . | |
| Includes a descriptive detail sentence that uses the sense of smell . | |
| Includes a descriptive detail sentence that uses the sense of taste . | |
| Includes a descriptive detail sentence that uses the sense of touch or feeling . | |
| Style | |
| Uses specific vocabulary to identify simple objects. | |
| Uses at least four adjectives to describe nouns. | |
| Uses at least three adverbs that tell how, when, or where. | |
| Uses figurative language appropriately (simile, onomatopoeia, alliteration). | |
| Uses specific vocabulary. | |
| Mechanics | |
| Indents the paragraph. | |
| Uses appropriate end punctuation. | |
| Uses correct capitalization at the beginning of sentences and for proper nouns. | |
| Uses standard English usage (grammar). | |
| Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level. | |
| Total Points | |