PLACING STUDENTS INTO THE PROGRAM

Students should begin each unit by writing a passage 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 20-95 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 specific vocabulary appropriate to the topic, the higher performing students can be required to use more higher level vocabulary words.

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 Beginning Level 3 of Expository Writing. A pretest should be administered and scored before you introduce this unit.

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

Introducing Expository Writing

(Explain what the class will be doing during this Expository Writing unit:) **We're 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. Authors 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'll write our ideas and the piece of writing on chart paper or 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'll produce a piece of writing of your own.

For the next several lessons, you'll be learning about expository writing. Expository writing tells about something or explains something. Some expository writing explains how two things are the same or how they're different.

We will focus on two kinds of expository writing: writing a summary and writing that explains how things are the same and how things are different.

OBTAINING A BEGINNING WRITING SAMPLE—PRETEST

Make a transparency or a Smart Board file of the following writing prompt: Imagine you are helping with a group of children who will be starting kindergarten. They are learning about what to expect on the first day of school. They will ride on a bus. Many of them have never been on a bus. Write an explanation that tells how a bus is different from a car.

Administering the Pretest

(Explain to students that, before they start the Expository 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 expository passages.

Read aloud the prompt to the students. Ask them to write an explanatory passage on lined paper. Allow students sufficient time to write. Ask students to edit, proofread, and write or word process a final copy of the explanation. Use the rubric (page 12) and scoring guide found below 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 Expository Writing	
The author of this explanation…..	**Points Earned**
Organization	
Gives the passage a relevant title.	
Writes an opening sentence.	
Writes related sentences to develop a middle.	
Writes a closing sentence.	
Spaces words and sentences correctly on the page. Uses margins correctly to start each new line of writing.	
Content	
Writes the question to be answered in opening sentence.	
Writes details that tell facts related to the topic.	
Omits redundant information.	
Writes a concluding sentence that answers the question.	
Uses nouns to name categories.	
Style	
Uses a variety of sentence beginnings.	
Gives facts rather than opinions.	
Uses specific vocabulary appropriate to the topic.	
Writes in the present tense.	
Illustrates the explanation by drawing and labeling a realistic picture.	
Mechanics	
Indents paragraphs.	
Capitalizes I, first and last names, and the first words of sentences.	
Uses correct punctuation at the end of sentences.	
Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.	
Uses standard English usage (grammar).	
Total Points	