

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 at least five adjectives to modify and describe nouns, the higher performing students can be required to use six adjectives.

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 Intermediate Level 2 of Descriptive Writing. A pretest should be administered and scored before you start this unit.

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

Introducing Descriptive Writing

We're going to work 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'll 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 cooperatively, you'll produce a piece of writing of your own.

For the next several lessons, you'll be getting into more depth in learning about descriptive writing. Descriptive writing uses words and sentences to paint clear pictures in the reader's mind. At this level, you will be writing passages with multiple paragraphs. We will focus on two kinds of descriptive writing: a passage with spatial order and a biographic descriptive passage.

OBTAINING A BEGINNING WRITING SAMPLE—PRETEST

PREPARATION: Display the following writing prompt on the board or on a Smart Board:
Write a multi-paragraph passage that describes your favorite store.

Administering the Pretest

(Explain to the students that before they start this 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 passages.)

Read aloud the prompt to the students. Ask them to write a descriptive passage on lined paper. Allow them sufficient time to write. Ask students to edit, proofread, and write or word process a final copy of the passage. 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 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 Descriptive Writing	
The author of this descriptive passage with spatial order...	Points Earned
Organization	
Writes an opening paragraph that clearly introduces the topic using a hook and a thesis statement.	
Writes an opening sentence, detail sentences, and a closing sentence for each of four detail paragraphs.	
Uses the final sentence to bring closure by bringing all the ideas together in one final idea.	
Uses a logical spatial order starting with what the writer sees in front.	
Uses transition words to move the reader from one detail to the next.	
Content	
Writes an opening sentence, detail sentences, and a closing sentence for each of four paragraphs that includes an element of spatial order.	
Writes a paragraph using at least 3 of 5 senses to describe what is in front.	
Writes a paragraph using at least 3 of 5 senses to describe what is to the right.	
Writes a paragraph using at least 3 of 5 senses to describe what is behind.	
Writes a paragraph using at least 3 of 5 senses to describe what is to the left.	
Style	
Correctly uses at least five adjectives to modify and describe nouns.	
Correctly uses at least three adverbs to modify and describe verbs.	
Uses figurative language appropriately (simile, metaphor onomatopoeia, alliteration).	
Uses a variety of sentence structures (simple, compound, complex).	
Presents a clear picture to the reader.	
Mechanics	
Indents each new paragraph.	
Uses correct capitalization at the beginning of sentences and for proper nouns.	
Uses appropriate end punctuation.	
Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.	
Uses standard English usage (grammar).	
Total Points	