

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 make use of forms of advanced punctuation (semicolon, parentheses, em dash), the higher performing students can be required to use all three forms of advanced punctuation.

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 Intermediate 2 level of Expository Writing. A pretest should be administered and scored before you introduce this unit.

Each student will need a copy of the Fact Sheet about Santa Monica Beach, California and Daytona Beach, Florida (page 12), lined paper, and a folder to use as a writing portfolio in which to keep writing assignments.

Write the following prompt on a transparency or make a Smart Board file: Write a passage of three hundred to five hundred words that compares and contrasts Santa Monica Beach, California and Daytona Beach, Florida. First, write an introductory paragraph. Next, write one paragraph describing Santa Monica Beach and one paragraph describing Daytona Beach. Then write one paragraph telling about their similarities and another paragraph telling about their differences. Finally, write a concluding paragraph.

Introducing Expository Writing

(Explain what the class will be doing during this Expository Writing unit.) **You're going to 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 informs the reader about something or explains something to the reader.

Expository writing is about facts. It is nonfiction. In this expository writing unit, we will focus on two kinds of expository writing: writing a summary and writing that compares and contrasts ideas or topics.

OBTAINING A BEGINNING WRITING SAMPLE—PRETEST

PREPARATION: Make an overhead transparency or Smart Board file of the writing prompt.

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.

Display the writing prompt. Call on a student to read aloud the prompt to the class as they follow along. Tell students to listen carefully to the instructions.) **Are there any words or instructions in this prompt you don't fully understand?** (Explain the meaning of any words or instructions the students ask about.

Give each student a copy of the Fact Sheet on page 12. Tell the students to pay close attention to details about Santa Monica Beach and Daytona Beach that are the same and details that are different. Call on two students to each read aloud a column of facts while the other students follow along on their copy.

Call on a student to reread the prompt. Tell the students they may include other details about the beaches from their own knowledge.

Allow students sufficient time to write. Ask them to edit, proofread, and write or word process a final copy of their compare and contrast passage. Use the rubric (page 13) and scoring guide found in the next column 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.)

Fact Sheet

Facts about Santa Monica Beach	Facts about Daytona Beach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • located on the coast of southern California on the Pacific Ocean • one of the top ten beach cities in the world • 3.5 miles long • over 281 days of sunshine annually • average high summer temperature of 71 degrees F; average high temp of 65 degrees F in winter • includes Santa Monica Pier (aquarium, dining, shopping) • has Pacific Park (a full-service amusement park) • has Pacific Wheel (9-story Ferris wheel—the world’s first and only solar-powered Ferris wheel) • farmers’ markets (four weekly; named best in the country) • Tongva Park (seven-acre park with walking paths, water elements, and platforms to view Pacific Ocean) • home of many creative businesses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an artistic center - more than half of residents work in a creative business—the largest concentration of any American city • South Bay Bicycle Trail (22 miles-world’s longest oceanfront bike path) • over 7.5 million visitors annually • very few concerns about weather 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • located on the coast of northern Florida on the Atlantic Ocean • known as the world’s most famous beach • 23 miles long • over 230 sunny days annually • average high summer temp of 90 degrees F; average high temp of 70 degrees F in winter • home of Daytona International Speedway • headquarters for NASCAR • cars allowed to drive on the beach • Florida’s tallest lighthouse 10 miles south of Daytona Beach • migrating whales visible from beach in winter • Biketoberfest every October for motorcyclists • manatees in nearby rivers and canals in summer • many historical locations of interest <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - once home to Timucuan Indians - school established for daughters of African-American workers - statue of Jackie Robinson (first African American major league baseball player) • over 8 million visitors annually • has a lower hurricane risk than many coastal regions on the east coast

Name _____ Date _____

Scoring Rubric for a Passage that Compares and Contrasts

Scoring the Sample

Pretest

Posttest

- 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 passage that compares and contrasts...	Points Earned
Organization	
Uses an opening paragraph that clearly states the intent of the passage with a thesis statement.	
Places details related to the topic in the middle paragraphs.	
Includes a final paragraph that summarizes the passage.	
Groups related ideas.	
Uses a logical sequence.	
Content	
Maintains consistent focus and objectivity by avoiding bias.	
States the similarities and the differences.	
Combines ideas to condense information.	
Maintains a balance between the information given about the two items.	
Presents a choice to the reader in the concluding paragraph.	
Style	
Maintains accuracy of facts.	
Uses a variety of sentence structures (simple, compound, complex).	
Uses correct and consistent verb tense throughout the passage.	
Uses parallel construction for similar parts of each sentence.	
Uses conjunctions to show differences (while, on the other hand, despite, but).	
Mechanics	
Indents paragraphs.	
Uses commas correctly with appositives and in combined sentences.	
Uses appropriate punctuation and makes use of parentheses, dashes, and/or semi-colons.	
Uses the conventions of capitalization correctly	
Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.	
Total Points	