

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 20-84 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 three forms of figurative language, the higher performing students can be required to use four forms of figurative language.

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

Introducing Descriptive Writing

(Explain what the class will be doing during this Descriptive 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. The people who work together enjoy sharing their ideas. Sometimes we will work as a cooperative group to write a class piece of writing. When we do a cooperative 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 days, you'll be learning about descriptive writing. Descriptive writing uses words and sentences to paint clear pictures in the reader's mind.

OBTAINING A BEGINNING WRITING SAMPLE—PRETEST

PREPARATION: Display the following writing prompt on the board or on a Smart Board:
You have been asked to write an article for the school newspaper that tells about this school. Write an article that describes this school.

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 passages.)

Read aloud the starter 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 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 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 the proficient level based on the state curriculum or Common Core State Standards.
Give the student 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 an opening sentence that clearly introduces the topic.	
Writes detail sentences to produce a middle.	
Writes a final sentence to bring closure.	
Writes using a logical sequence and order.	
Uses transition words to move the reader from one detail to the next.	
Content	
Writes descriptive detail sentences that use the sense of sight .	
Writes descriptive detail sentences that use the sense of hearing .	
Writes descriptive detail sentences that use the sense of smell .	
Writes descriptive detail sentences that use the sense of taste .	
Writes descriptive detail sentences that use the sense of touch or feeling .	
Style	
Correctly uses at least five adjectives to describe nouns.	
Correctly uses at least three adverbs to modify and describe verbs.	
Uses figurative language appropriately (simile, onomatopoeia, alliteration).	
Uses a variety of sentence structures (simple, compound, complex).	
Paints a clear picture for the reader.	
Mechanics	
Indents the 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	