

Lesson Skill: Narrative writing vs. explanatory writing

Strand Writing

SOL 3.9

4.7

5.7

Materials

- Writing Purpose Sorting Cards (attached)

Lesson

1. Discuss different purposes an author has for writing. Sometimes an author writes to explain or give information about a topic. Other times an author writes to tell a true story in the form of a narrative.
2. Provide each student with a copy of the attached Writing Purpose Sorting Cards. Have them cut the cards apart and divide them into two categories: those writing topics that should give information and those that should tell a narrative true story. Allow students time to work independently or with a partner to sort the cards. After several minutes, discuss the correct answers together.
3. Tell students that when an author writes a piece to inform or explain, it is organized differently from a piece written to tell a story. Select a topic students have been learning about in a content area, and locate a fiction book about this topic. Read the book aloud to the class. Next, read a nonfiction book or content area textbook article about the same topic.
4. As a group, analyze the two pieces to determine organizational characteristics for each writing genre. For example, informational/explanatory writing has a clear introduction, has information grouped into related paragraphs, includes facts, and has a conclusion. On the other hand, narrative writing follows a logical sequence to organize events, includes transition words, and has a conclusion to wrap up the story.
5. Select a content-area topic about which students have been learning. Have them use the writing process to develop an informational piece about this topic, using facts and details they have learned. As a follow-up, have them write a narrative story about the topic.

Strategies for Differentiation

- Have students complete the Writing Purpose Sorting activity with an interactive white board or document camera.
- Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast explanatory and narrative writing.
- Teach narrative and informative writing separately before comparing and contrasting.
- Display an example of a narrative writing, using available technology.
- Display an example of an informative writing, using available technology.

Writing Purpose Sorting Cards

<p>Tell the difference between frogs and toads.</p>	<p>Tell about the time you got your favorite birthday gift.</p>	<p>Write about what happened on your first day of school.</p>
<p>Pretend you can fly, and tell a story about what happens.</p>	<p>Describe the different parts of a plant.</p>	<p>Imagine you are a bug for a day, and tell about your adventures.</p>
<p>Explain the steps you must follow to multiply 98×36.</p>	<p>Tell about a funny time you had with a friend.</p>	<p>Explain how to care for your favorite animal.</p>
<p>Write about your favorite memory last school year.</p>	<p>Explain the rules you should follow to play football.</p>	<p>List reasons that electricity is important.</p>