Lesson Skill: Maintaining organization, clarity, central idea, and unity

Strand Writing

SOL 6.7
 7.7
 8.7

Materials
- Copies of the attached Adding Something New to School: Sentence Strips pages
- Envelopes
- Construction paper
- Glue
- Highlighters
- Copies of the attached Adding Something New to School essay

Lesson

1. Write the word *organization* on the board, and have volunteers come to the board and surround the word with other words or phrases they associate with it. Discuss the words and phrases the students wrote and why they thought of them.

2. Explain that good writing follows an organizational plan. Discuss the basic organizational components of a paper, including the attention grabber or hook, topic sentence, central idea, elaboration, transitions, etc. This might be a good time to include a quick review of students' Writing Effective Paragraph notes in their writing portfolios.

3. Group students into pairs, and give each pair a sheet of construction paper, glue, and an envelope with a complete, pre-cut set of the attached sentence strips in it. Explain that the envelopes contain sentences that compose an essay when put in the right order, and it is the students' job to reconstruct the essay by putting the sentences in order.

4. Discuss ways students can tell how the sentences fit together: talk about transitions, central ideas, details, etc. Also, tell them that the sentences were not in order when they were cut apart; therefore, matching up the cuts will not result in the correct order. Caution students not to glue the strips to the construction paper, but simply to lay the strips on the construction paper until they have completed reconstructing the essay and you have checked it.

5. Have students work to reconstruct the essay. When each pair is finished, check their work, and give them the go-ahead to glue the strips down when you are satisfied with their results.

6.   When all pairs have finished gluing the strips, have pairs compare their essays to see if there are any differences in the way they organized the essay. Have the pairs highlight any differences in their organizational patterns.

7.   Distribute copies of the attached "Adding Something New to School" essay, and have the pairs compare their glued essays to the original. Again, have them highlight any differences between their version of the essay and the original. Because students are looking for organizational components, have them label those items (attention grabber, topic sentence, central idea, elaboration, transitions, etc.) on the original essay.

8.   Have students share the organizational items they found in the original essay, and discuss them as a whole class.

9.   Have students complete an exit slip on which they explain the importance of a good organizational plan for writing.

Adding Something New to School: Sentence Strips

We need a break during the day.

It would also allow us to do make-up work and, perhaps, improve our grades.

Another reason I think we should have a 30-minute free time every day is that it would give us time to catch up on our school work.

If you could add something fresh to your school, what would it be?

Would it be a sports team?

For 30 minutes, we wouldn't have to think about doing work or worry about any of our classes.

It has been proven that students learn better when they are rested, so why not give us a few minutes to rest?

The first reason I think we should have a 30-minute free time every day is that it would give students time to relax and clear our much-stressed minds.

This free time would give students time to relax and empty our minds.

What about a new club?

I know you're thinking, "Well, what about lunch?"

There would probably even be fewer people who wanted to skip class if we had a 30-minute free time every day.

For example, students who were absent could take advantage of this free time by using it to make up missed quizzes and tests.

If I could add something new to this school, it would be for students to have a 30-minute free time every day to do whatever they want.

Have you ever been in the cafeteria during lunchtime?

Sounds like a great idea, right?

Having a 30-minute free time would give students time to relax so that we would be more focused and willing to work hard in class.

We would finally have a chance to rest during the school day!

We could return to class refreshed and prepared to learn.

If so, you wouldn't have to ask that question, because, believe me, it's far from restful!

We could also use the free time to talk to our friends and just do whatever we wanted.

Imagine that—a class full of students who actually wanted to be there!

In fact, I'll bet if we had 30 minutes of free time, we wouldn't dread going back to class.

Remediation could also take place during this time for students who need additional assistance.

Obviously, this will result in better grades for the students in our school.

These are reasons why I would add this 30-minute free time to our school.

In addition, if we didn't get a chance to do our homework the night before, we could do it during this free time.

It's just gotten to be too stressful.

Please take this idea under serious consideration.

We could also use this time to complete any unfinished class work.

How would you like to be a student doing schoolwork six hours a day, five days a week without ever getting a break?

All that work on top of having a life outside of school.

Even students need a little relaxation in their day.

Adding Something New to School

If you could add something fresh to your school, what would it be? Would it be a sports team? What about a new club? If I could add something new to this school, it would be for students to have a 30-minute free time every day to do whatever they want. This free time would give students time to relax and empty our minds. It would also allow us to do make-up work and, perhaps, improve our grades. Sounds like a great idea, right?

The first reason I think we should have a 30-minute free time every day is that it would give students time to relax and clear our much-stressed minds. For 30 minutes, we wouldn't have to think about doing work or worry about any of our classes. We would finally have a chance to rest during the school day! I know you're thinking, "Well, what about lunch?" Have you ever been in the cafeteria during lunchtime? If so, you wouldn't have to ask that question, because, believe me, it's far from restful! We could also use the free time to talk to our friends and just do whatever we wanted. Even students need a little relaxation in their day. It has been proven that students learn better when they are rested, so why not give us a few minutes to rest? We could return to class refreshed and prepared to learn. In fact, I'll bet if we had 30 minutes of free time, we wouldn't dread going back to class. There would probably even be fewer people who wanted to skip class if we had a 30-minute free time every day. Imagine that—a class full of students who actually wanted to be there!

Another reason I think we should have a 30-minute free time every day is that it would give us time to catch up on our school work. For example, students who were absent could take advantage of this free time by using it to make up missed quizzes and tests. In addition, if we didn't get a chance to do our homework the night before, we could do it during this free time. We could also use this time to complete any unfinished class work. Remediation could also take place during this time for students who need additional assistance. Obviously, this will result in better grades for the students in our school.

How would you like to be a student doing schoolwork six hours a day, five days a week without ever getting a break? All that work on top of having a life outside of school. It's just gotten to be too stressful. We need a break during the day. Having a 30-minute free time would give students time to relax so that we would be more focused and willing to work hard in class. These are reasons why I would add this 30-minute free time to our school. Please take this idea under serious consideration.