Lesson Skill: Writing process — expository writing

Strand   Writing

SOL   1.13

            2.12

Materials
- Content books such as those on the woodland forest habitat
- Large paper for each pair of students
- Chart paper, markers, highlighters
- Index cards with a specific subject written on it. Subjects may include those related to nature, such as deer, trees, ponds, bears, squirrels, woodpeckers, insects, berries, caves
- Masking tape

Lesson

1. Review with students what the expository mode of writing is. Read aloud a nonfiction book on the woodland forest habitat. The book should introduce the animals, food, water sources, and shelters that are found in that specific habitat. (This lesson can also be done in conjunction with teaching habitats in science or adapted to other content area lessons.)

2. Write key vocabulary words on a piece of chart paper: energy, nutrients, oxygen, shelter, survive, adapt. Discuss each word, and use in the context of a sentence. Students will be able to use this list as a word bank when writing their expository pieces. The teacher may add additional words to the list as they appear during the lesson.

3. Explain to students that they will be writing an expository text that communicates new facts. The text will be a description of the woodland forest habitat based on the information in the book or covered during science explorations.

4. Review with students that good writers use descriptions to help the reader "see" the woodland forest. Specific details and clear adjectives need to be included.

5. Tape one piece of paper on the board, and model the process of developing a sentence about raccoons. Write the first version: "Raccoons eat fruit." Ask students if that description of raccoons allows them to "see" the animal in the forest. Remind students that specific details and clear adjectives help the readers visualize. Write the second version: "Black and grey raccoons hunt for juicy berries during the night." Illustrate the sentence.

6. Pair students, and give each pair a large piece of paper and an index card with a subject written on it. Ask them to write one sentence using specific details and clear adjectives describing their subject. Encourage students to revise and improve their sentence. After they have completed their sentence, have them illustrate it on the paper. Have students tape their papers on the wall. Draw attention to the specific details and clear adjectives that were used. Check for beginning capital letter and ending punctuation.

7. Explain to students that they should group sentences together in the text according to categories: animals, shelter, food, and water.

8. On the taped piece of paper used for modeling, add a piece of paper above it and a piece of paper below it. Work with students to write a captivating beginning sentence that introduces the topic of the woodland forest habitat and a strong concluding sentence. Read the entire woodland forest text. Tell students that they just wrote an expository text that communicated facts. Ask students if they think they had a captivating beginning sentence, organized/descriptive facts, and a strong concluding sentence. Display the finished product in the room as a model when students work on individual expository writing.

9. As a wrap-up to the lesson, ask students what good writers include when writing expository or informational text.

Strategies for Differentiation

- Pre-teach content vocabulary—e.g., *energy, nutrients, oxygen, shelter, survive, adapt.*
- Introductory Lesson: Using an interactive whiteboard, pre-teach students adjectives using pictures. Post pictures of different vocabulary words. Ask students to describe the pictures one at a time. Write a phrase for students to see. Explain the role of the adjective as a describing word, for example, the *furry* chipmunks. Have students point to the fur. Continue using the vocabulary of the lesson. (This lesson can also be adapted using magazines and other pictures.)
- Have sentences written out for students with a blank for the missing adjectives. Distribute pictures that correlate to the sentences.
- Show model of a paragraph with details. Have students identify the details by highlighting them.