



English Standards of Learning

MIDDLE SCHOOL
WRITING MODULES
IN SUPPORT OF
PROJECT GRADUATION

Commonwealth of Virginia
Department of Education
Richmond, Virginia
2008

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Prewriting Skill **Deciding the mode**

- SOL 6.6 The student will write narratives, descriptions, and explanations.
 7.8 The student will develop narrative, expository, and persuasive writing.
 8.7 The student will write in a variety of forms, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and informational.

Time 1 hour

Materials

None

Lesson

1. Remind students that they may respond to an SOL writing prompt in a descriptive, expository, narrative, or persuasive mode; the prompt is an invitation to write, and as long as a response is related to the prompt, it will be scored.
2. Put a practice writing prompt on the board, such as “Write about what friendship means to you.” Model planning to respond to the prompt, leading students through a discussion of how to decide the mode.
3. Put student responses to the above prompt on the board in a table such as the following:

Mode	Form of response	First sentence
Descriptive	A description of your best friend, Maria, whom you have known since second grade	When Maria came into Miss Smith’s room as the new girl, she looked petrified. I motioned to her to take the seat next to me, and she did with a smile. Maria has been a friend of mine ever since that moment.
Expository	An essay about the importance of having friends as you grow up	The formula for success lists several necessary ingredients: intelligence, courage, honesty, hard work, and flexibility. The word <i>friendship</i> is missing from this list.
Narrative	A story about two friends lost in a small boat in the Chesapeake Bay	“Kerry, stay awake!” Ashley’s eyes fluttered open. She only wanted to sleep. Didn’t Kerry realize she was so tired? If she were a real friend, she would let her sleep for just a minute—maybe five.
Persuasive	A feature article in the school newspaper	Ashton Miles is an athlete, and he is a boy who needs a friend. You could be that friend. Ashton is on the Special Olympics track team, which has a meet this Saturday in Roanoke.

4. Assign students to cooperative learning groups, and ask groups to brainstorm ways to respond to this released SOL test prompt: “You have been asked to plan an after-school program for your school. Thinking about activities that students might enjoy, write about this after-school program.”
5. Allow groups to share their ideas and suggestions with the entire class.
6. Assign students to respond to the prompt in one of the ways suggested during the discussion, either during class or outside of class as a homework assignment.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006. Note: Many lessons in this document cite this book as a resource showing how students can be taught to write effectively. In this book, Gallagher draws on his classroom experience as co-director of a regional writing project to offer teachers compelling reasons and practical ways to incorporate writing instruction into their classes. He shares a number of his classroom-tested strategies that enable teachers to

- understand the importance of teaching writing
- motivate young writers
- see the important role modeling plays in building young writers

- understand how providing choice elevates adolescent writing and how to allow for choice within a rigorous curriculum
- help students recognize the importance of purpose and audience
- assess essays in ways that drive better writing performance.

The chapters in *Teaching Adolescent Writers* are as follows:

- Chapter 1: Running with the Literacy Stampede
- Chapter 2: Overcoming “The Neglected ‘R’”: Establishing a Time and a Place to Write
- Chapter 3: Beyond the Grecian Urn: The Teacher as a Writing Model
- Chapter 4: Elevating Student Writing: Using Real-World Models
- Chapter 5: Beyond Fake Writing: The Power of Choice
- Chapter 6: The Importance of Purpose and Audience
- Chapter 7: Using Assessment to Drive Better Student Writing
- A Closing Thought: The Literacy Stampede Is upon Us

Excerpts from *Teaching Adolescent Writers* can be read on the Web at

<http://www.stenhouse.com/productcart/pc/viewPrd.asp?idcategory=0&idproduct=9032>.

Prewriting Skill **Identifying the audience and purpose**

- SOL 6.6 The student will write narratives, descriptions, and explanations.
7.8 The student will develop narrative, expository, and persuasive writing.
8.7 The student will write in a variety of forms, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and informational.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached "Writing Assignments" strips
Chart paper
Markers

Lesson

1. Tell the students to sit back in their seats, close their eyes, and listen carefully in order to visualize the following scenario as you read it aloud:

Imagine that you are in the middle of the school cafeteria and suddenly a food fight breaks out. You turn your head just in time to be hit with a soggy blob of lumpy mashed potatoes. Without thinking, you grab your red, runny jello and throw it. Just as it leaves your hand, you hear the cafeteria monitor yelling, and the principal's voice comes over the intercom. Suddenly there is silence, and everyone is ordered back to class. Fifteen minutes later, you are called out of class and ordered to go to the office to see the principal.
2. Divide the class into three groups. Distribute copies of the attached "Writing Assignment # 1" to the members of one group, the assignment # 2 to another group, and the assignment # 3 to the third group. Take care that each group sees only their own assignment.
3. Allow students to confer in their groups and write a group response to the writing prompt. When the members of each group are satisfied with their description, they should write it on chart paper.
4. Post the three descriptions on the board, and have the groups read their descriptions to the rest of the class. Have students compare and contrast the descriptions, especially identifying ways in which they are different. Differences will undoubtedly include language, voice, tone, and selected information. Ask students why they are so different, and lead them to consider the purpose and intended audience of each piece. Have each group clearly identify the purpose and intended audience for their piece and read their original writing assignment.
5. To conclude, have students consider what their purpose would be if they were asked to write a note to the cafeteria workers and the custodial staff who had to clean up the mess after the food fight. Ask them to describe the tone and voice they would use. If there is time, have students individually write such an apology note as an exit slip, or assign it for homework.

Writing Assignments

Writing Assignment # 1

When you arrive in the office, the principal hands you a blank sheet of paper and tells you to write a description of the cafeteria incident and your role in it. Write your response to this “real-life” writing prompt.

Writing Assignment # 2

Imagine that your best friend was absent from school the day of the food fight, and you are anxious to describe the scene in the cafeteria. Write a description of the cafeteria incident and your role in it as you want to tell your best friend.

Writing Assignment # 3

You have been waiting to talk to the principal, and the dismissal begins. The principal’s secretary comes out and tells you to go ahead and board your bus; the principal will deal with you first thing in the morning. You run to your bus, worrying about what will happen tomorrow. You decide that you better tell your parents something tonight. Write a description of the cafeteria incident and your role in it as you will tell your parents.

Prewriting Skill **Asking questions to gather information needed for writing**

- SOL 6.6a Use a variety of planning strategies to generate and organize ideas.
7.8a Apply knowledge of prewriting strategies.
8.7a Use prewriting strategies to generate and organize ideas.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Computers with Internet access
3 x 5 cards

Lesson

1. Ask students to name some state parks in Virginia, and list their responses on the board. Tell students that they will be writing an informational brochure about a Virginia state park of their choice and that they will formulate some questions about the information needed in such a brochure.
2. Ask students to brainstorm with a partner to construct questions about the information that should be included in the brochure, such as the following:
 - Where is the park located?
 - Are picnics allowed in the park?
 - Does it have an overnight camping area?
 - Are fires for cooking allowed?
 - What are the special features of the park?
3. When they are finished, ask each pair to share one question, and make a class list of questions on the board.
4. When the class list is sufficiently complete, ask students to write each question from the list on a 3 x 5 card and then to group the cards by categories, such as water sports, camping, location, and hours of operation.
5. Have students go to the Virginia state parks Web site at <http://www.virginia.org/site/features.asp?FeatureID=128> and pick a park in their geographical region to research. Have them gather the information that will answer their questions and write the answers to the questions on the cards.
6. Have students organize the information and draft the brochure by doing the lesson found on page 29: "Creating a brochure: informational writing."

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

RubiStar: Create Rubrics for your Project-Based Learning Activities.

<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>

Prewriting Skill **Using brainstorming, freewriting, 5WH, and graphic organizers**

- SOL 6.6a Use a variety of planning strategies to generate and organize ideas.
7.8a Apply knowledge of prewriting strategies.
8.7a Use prewriting strategies to generate and organize ideas.

Time 1 hour

Materials

- Copies of a prewriting graphic organizer (teacher-selected)
Copies of the attached “Prewriting Planning Sheet”

Lesson

1. Ask students to **brainstorm** times in their lives that they have been surprised. Remind them that surprises can be both good and bad. Give them sufficient time to create a list with a number of events. If students have difficulty brainstorming, model the process for them by starting your own list on the board.
2. After each student has a list, tell students to select one of the events about which to **“freewrite”** — i.e., write whatever comes to mind about the event without stopping even for one second from the time you say “go” until you say “stop.” They must not stop, erase, or correct; they should just write. Once they understand the process, say “go,” and keep students writing for at least 5 to 10 minutes, depending on the fluency of the group.
3. Have students select a second event from their brainstormed list. Tell them that they will now try the **5WH** method of prewriting. Have them write the questions *Who?*, *What?*, *When?*, *Where?*, *Why?*, and *How?* down the side of the paper, and have them answer each question about the second selected event.
4. Have students select a third event from their brainstormed list, and tell them to complete a teacher-selected **graphic organizer** capturing the main ideas of the event. They may use the attached “Prewriting Planning Sheet” as the basic frame or another of their choosing.
5. Tell students that they have now tried four different prewriting strategies: brainstorming, freewriting, 5WH, and graphic organizer. Ask the students which they liked best, but make it clear that they are all good methods.
6. Have students select the event that they want to use as the subject of their paper. Have them use the prewriting they have already done as a starting point and complete the attached “Prewriting Planning Sheet.” If necessary, have them complete it for homework and come prepared to tell their story the next day.
7. For closure, have students complete an exit slip on which they explain the kind of prewriting that works the best for them and why.

Prewriting Planning Sheet

1. Think of a time you were very surprised, and write one sentence that summarizes the experience. An example might be, "When I was 10 years old, my parents threw a surprise birthday party for me, and they really managed to surprise me."

2. List the events of that time in chronological order.

Event 1: _____

Event 2: _____

Event 3: _____

Event 4: _____

Event 5: _____

Event 6: _____

Event 7: _____

Event 8: _____

3. List the other people involved in the surprise.

4. Give the setting of the surprise. Be sure to include time, place, and duration.

5. Describe the day, using as many details as possible.

6. Describe the place, using as many details as possible.

7. Describe how you were feeling, what you were thinking, and what you said when you were surprised.

Prewriting Skill Asking questions to elicit missing information and to clarify

- SOL 6.6a Use a variety of planning strategies to generate and organize ideas.
7.8a Apply knowledge of prewriting strategies.
8.7a Use prewriting strategies to generate and organize ideas.

Time 1 hour

Materials

“Prewriting Planning Sheets” from the previous lesson

Lesson

This lesson will help students to write a sequential, fully developed personal narrative.

1. Ask the students to talk to a partner about the elements that are necessary for a story to be good.
2. Hold a class discussion about these elements. Elicit responses that a good story must include a clear sequence of events, good characters, and full elaboration with interesting details.
3. Seat the students in a circle, and review the topics on the Prewriting Planning Sheet, stressing that these elements are necessary in a good story. If students have not done the Prewriting Planning Sheet from the previous lesson, distribute blank copies of it for them to use.
4. Model the process that the students will use, as follows: sit in the circle with the students, tell them a personal story about a time you were surprised, but make sure you leave out some of the important elements. Tell students not to interrupt, but to look at the planning sheet and take notes on things they hear. When you have finished telling your story, allow them to ask you questions about the missing information, about further details they want to know, and for clarification of things they do not understand. Then, tell your story again, adding the details they requested.
5. Still in the class circle, ask for a student volunteer to tell his/her story to the group without any interruption. Then, allow everyone in the circle, including yourself, to question the storyteller to elicit further details, such as a complete setting. Questions should include an emphasis on clarification of sequence, cause and effect, setting, emotional reaction, and other such things. This is your opportunity to model good questioning.
6. Have the storyteller repeat his/her story, including the new information and an emphasis on correct sequence and elaboration. You may wish to make a recording of the storytelling, as some students will find it very beneficial.
7. Form groups of three or four students, and have the groups repeat the process for each student. This is a great group activity if each group’s members are carefully selected.
8. Have students write their personal narratives.

Prewriting Skill **Using the RAFTS strategy to unpack the prompt**

- SOL 6.6a Use a variety of planning strategies to generate and organize ideas.
7.8a Apply knowledge of prewriting strategies.
8.7a Use prewriting strategies to generate and organize ideas.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Released English Writing SOL Test Prompts”

Lesson

1. As students prepare for SOL tests involving direct writing prompts, remind them that the RAFTS prewriting strategy can be an excellent tool for planning writing. Explain that the RAFTS strategy helps the writer know his/her role (R) as a writer, the audience (A) for whom he/she is writing, the form (F) the writing will take, and the topic (T) of the writing. Use of strong verbs (S) should also be considered. For more about the RAFTS strategy, see <http://www.readingquest.org/strat/raft.html>.
2. Model several possibilities for using the RAFTS prewriting strategy to write a response to the following writing prompt from the released 2004 Grade 8 SOL English Writing test.

Prompt No. 951

Your principal is considering replacing all physical education classes with study skills classes. Write to explain why you agree or disagree with this idea.

Role	Audience	Form	Topic	Strong verb
Parent of a student at this school who disagrees with replacing physical education classes	The entire school district	Letter to the editor in the newspaper	Physical education is necessary for students.	<i>persuade</i>
Student trying to get in shape for wrestling tryouts	The school Principal	Personal letter	I need physical education class so I can increase my strength.	<i>beg</i> <i>plead</i>

3. Divide the class into three groups, and give each group one of the attached “Released English Writing SOL Prompts.” Ask each group to come up with three ideas for their prompt, using the RAFTS strategy.
4. Have the groups share their prompt and their ideas for writing with the whole class.
5. Have students individually pick one of the prompts and one of the prewriting ideas for it and draft a response to the prompt.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

R.A.F.T.S. Gallery. <http://www.geocities.com/writingprocess/gallery.htm>.

Released English Writing SOL Test Prompts

Prompt No. 980

You have been asked to plan an after-school program for your school. Think about activities that students might enjoy, and write about this after-school program.

Prompt No. 881

Imagine that your school will soon be adding something new. What do you think should be added? It may be a new club, or a new class that you would like to take. It might be before school, during school, or after school. Write to convince your principal that your idea is the one that should be added. Be sure to be specific and explain your reasons.

Prompt No. 906

Imagine you have a time machine and you are able to transport one person from the past to the present for one day. Whom would you choose? Write about why you chose this person and your visit with this person.

Prewriting Skill **Using graphic organizers and writing effective hooks**

- SOL 6.6c Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, tone, and voice.
7.8c Choose vocabulary and information that will create voice and tone.
8.7c Select specific vocabulary and information.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Internet access to online graphic organizers

Copies of a handout showing four to six types of prewriting graphic organizers (optional)

Lesson

Part 1

1. Distribute students' writing portfolios, and instruct students to label their next blank sheet "Types of Prewriting Graphic Organizers." Instruct pairs of students to brainstorm a list of the different kinds of graphic organizers they have used for the prewriting stage of the writing process and to write a brief description of each.
2. After students have been given sufficient time, have the students share their favorite graphic organizers. Encourage the class to continue their note-taking during this "share time."
3. Show students different types of graphic organizers, as found on Web sites such as
 - <http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/score/actbank/torganiz.htm>
 - <http://www.angelfire.com/wi/writingprocess/specificgos.html>
 - <http://www.graphic.org/goindex.html>This can be done using a projector or by making and distributing a handout that shows four to six sample organizers on one page. Be sure to explain each type of organizer and how different types can be used for different types of writing. Encourage students to continue their note-taking as you explain these organizers.
4. Once all organizers have been explained, review the writing process. Remind students that the next step in the process is drafting and that it should not be difficult if the prewriting process has been done thoroughly. Encourage students to brainstorm the difficulties with drafting that they have encountered in the past and the solutions they have found.

Part 2

5. Hook sentences or attention getters are an important writing element that is often forgotten. Have students title the next blank sheet in their writing portfolio "Writing Effective Hooks." Begin by having students create a class definition of *hook* as applied to sentences. Be sure they understand that a hook does not state the central idea of the writing, but rather captures the attention of the reader. This is an excellent fact to have students include in their "Writing Tips" chart in their portfolio.
6. Hold a brief class discussion about the types of hooks students have used in their writing. During the discussion, challenge students to classify the types of hooks. While emphasizing that creating a hook does not have to be difficult, present students with notes for inclusion in their portfolios about creating hooks. The Web site <http://www.frostburg.edu/clife/writingcenter/handouts/fishing.htm> is helpful in this regard, but you may prefer to include other methods.
7. Give students a list of broad topics similar to the ones on the Web site above and a list of specific types of hooks. Have students, either individually or in pairs, develop hooks for each topic, using the types of hooks listed. Remind them that the hook does not state the central idea of the writing.
8. Allow students a chance to share their hooks with classmates and receive feedback.

Conclusion

9. Conduct a quick (oral) quiz on the types of graphic organizers and their uses, as well as the various types of hooks and some examples.

Prewriting Skill **Organizing ideas into categories and writing an outline**

- SOL 6.6b Establish central idea, organization, elaboration, and unity.
7.8b Elaborate the central idea in an organized manner.
8.7b Organize details to elaborate the central idea.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Dogwood Facts Cards”
Chart paper (optional)

Lesson

1. Remind students that after they have made a web or list of ideas for writing, they need to sort the ideas into categories.
2. Give each pair of students a set of the 14 attached “Dogwood Facts Cards,” and ask them to put them into four categories of facts.
3. Ask students to name each of the four categories of facts according to the cards in each group and to write these category names on the four blank cards.
4. On chart paper or on the board, write Roman numerals for an outline, as shown below, leaving sufficient space between the Roman numerals for subheadings to fit.

I.

II.

III.

IV.

5. Ask students to attach the category-name facts cards beside the Roman numerals. Then, have them attach the other facts cards under the proper categories and add the letters A, B, C, etc. for completing the outline.
6. Instruct students to draft an informational article, using the four headings as topics for four paragraphs.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Dogwood Facts Cards KEY

I. Governmental Symbol Uses

- A. Dogwood is the state flower of Virginia.
- B. Dogwood is the official flower of the province British Columbia, Canada.
- C. Dogwood is the state flower of Missouri and North Carolina.

II. Description

- A. Tree is rarely more than 40 feet high.
- B. In the fall, leaves turn scarlet.
- C. Flowers are white or pink.
- D. Wood is very hard and strong.

III. Types

- A. There are forty different types of dogwood.
- B. Fifteen varieties of dogwood are native to North America.
- C. Other names are *false boxwood*, *spindle tree*, and *bird cherry*.
- D. A species of dogwood grows in Australia.

IV. Historical Uses

- A. Pioneers would peel off the bark, bite the twig, and use the wood as a toothbrush.
- B. Wood was used for making the shuttles of looms.
- C. Wood was used for making tool handles.

Dogwood Facts Cards

 <p>Tree is rarely more than 40 feet high.</p>	 <p>Wood is very hard and strong.</p>
 <p>Flowers are white or pink.</p>	 <p>Dogwood is the state flower of Virginia.</p>
 <p>Pioneers would peel off the bark, bite the twig, and use the wood as a toothbrush.</p>	 <p>Other names are <i>false boxwood, spindle tree, and bird cherry.</i></p>
 <p>A species of dogwood grows in Australia.</p>	 <p>Wood was used for making the shuttles of looms.</p>
 <p>Dogwood is the official flower of the province British Columbia, Canada.</p>	 <p>In the fall, leaves turn scarlet.</p>
 <p>Wood was used for making tool handles.</p>	 <p>There are forty different types of dogwood.</p>
 <p>Fifteen varieties of dogwood are native to North America.</p>	 <p>Dogwood is the state flower of Missouri and North Carolina.</p>
 <p>_____</p> <p>Write the category here.</p>	 <p>_____</p> <p>Write the category here.</p>
 <p>_____</p> <p>Write the category here.</p>	 <p>_____</p> <p>Write the category here.</p>

Prewriting Skill **Analyzing and planning persuasive writing**

- SOL 7.8 The student will develop narrative, expository, and persuasive writing.
8.7 The student will write in a variety of forms, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and informational.

Time 1 hour

Materials

- Copies of the attached “Wes’s Letter to the Editor” handout (from the released 2001 Grade 8 SOL English Reading/Literature and Research test located on the Web at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/2001sol/english_rlr_8.pdf)
- Copies of the attached “Wes’s Letter to the Editor Graphic Organizer”
- Highlighters in two colors
- Copies of a teacher-compiled list of persuasive writing topics about which students will write persuasive letters to the editor

Lesson

Note: This lesson can be expanded to emphasize reading and analysis of persuasive techniques, reinforcing SOL 7.3, 7.6, 8.3, 8.6.

1. Tell the students to imagine that the city council has decided to ban all fast food restaurants and discount stores from the area. Ask them what reasons they would give for the council to reconsider and reverse its decision. Have students work in pairs to list their ideas.
2. Have student pairs share their ideas with the class. Discuss the reasons presented, pointing out or eliciting from students which reasons are fact and which are opinion.
3. Pass out copies of the attached “Wes’s Letter to the Editor” handout. Read through the letter as a class. Discuss, and ask students to explain Wes’s main idea.
4. Pass out highlighters and copies of the attached “Wes’s Letter to the Editor Graphic Organizer.” Have students write in the organizer the main idea, position, or thesis identified by the class. Then, have them identify the arguments in each of the six paragraphs and summarize them in the organizer.
5. Have students highlight the arguments written in their organizer, using one color for fact and one for opinion. Discuss the effectiveness of these arguments and the reasons for including both facts and opinions in persuasive writing. (Note: This first part of the lesson will be revisited in the lesson on page 83, “Revising persuasive writing for voice and tone.”)
6. Put students in groups of four. Give each group a copy of a list of persuasive writing topics and a blank copy of the graphic organizer. Allow each group to select one of the topics from the list. Tell them to select the one they feel the most strongly about because they will be more successful in developing arguments for it than for the topics of lesser interest.
7. Have each group decide on their main idea and then brainstorm arguments to support it. Remind them to refer to Wes’s letter to the editor for ideas.
8. Have groups complete their graphic organizers, summarizing arguments for each paragraph. They may wish to adjust the number of paragraphs. Remind groups to include a balance of facts and opinions.
9. If there is time, have students begin writing a persuasive letter to the editor about the topic they selected, using their ideas written on the graphic organizer. In any case, have students complete the first draft of the letter by the next class period.

Wes's Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

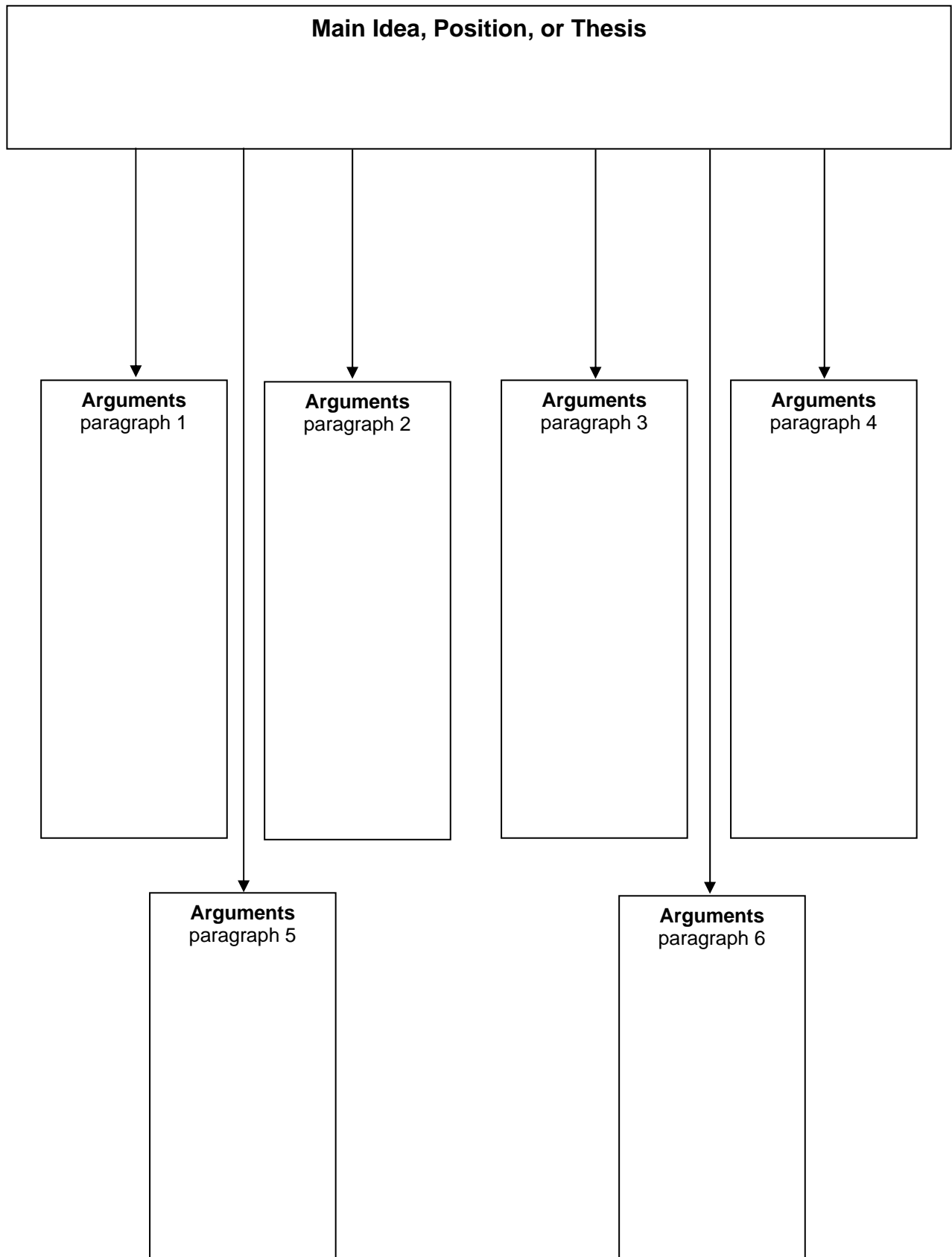
- 1 Brockingham is run by people who are more interested in tourists than its residents. The problem is that the people running the government, and nearly everything else in Brockingham, refuse to accept new ideas. By banning all fast-food restaurants and discount stores, they take away all the places kids can afford to shop.
- 2 These people forget that when they were young, they could go to the South Street Soda Fountain and get an ice-cream soda for 25 cents. Today you can't find an ice-cream soda anywhere in Brockingham for less than \$2! Why? Because the only places selling ice cream in Brockingham are Danker & Phillips, de Chambord, and The Emporium Restaurant. Have you tried buying a hamburger in one of those places? You can get an Emporium Deluxe with lettuce, tomato, cheese, and a pickle for a mere \$6.98! Where can kids go for a snack?
- 3 There is not a single restaurant in Brockingham where a family of four can eat dinner for less than \$100. Add a 15% tip and sales tax and you have spent nearly \$125 to eat a meal you could prepare at home for about \$12. Have you noticed that Brockingham families never dine in Brockingham? But take a look at Parkersburg on a Friday night. It seems as if you're walking down a Brockingham High corridor when you walk down South Main Street in Parkersburg.
- 4 Fast-food restaurants are also a good place for school kids to get an after-school job. Fast-food restaurants are busiest during the early supper hours when students are able to work, whereas the fancy food restaurants cater to late-night diners. Working in one of these establishments requires working shifts that are too late for most students.
- 5 The City Council claims that local merchants, rather than national chains, should benefit from the tourist business. I agree that it is important to support local businesses, but I think the fast-food restaurants would encourage more people to shop in Brockingham. As it is now, most tourists who come to Brockingham stop to eat at low-cost, convenient places in Southport or Regis Landing. How does that help Brockingham food establishments? Many people who stay overnight in Brockingham drive 25 miles to Parkersburg for breakfast at Jiffy Burger. That place is packed every weekend morning. Those profits could be kept in Brockingham.
- 6 Another thing that disturbs me is that we must travel 25 miles to the nearest discount store. If I need a tire for my bike, I have a choice of buying one at Surf and Peddle Sport Shop for \$15 or driving to Parkersburg Discount Center where I can buy the same kind of tire for \$9. When I am in Parkersburg, Dad always fills up the tank of the car, since the same brand of gas is at least 8 cents cheaper there than in Brockingham. Again, I think the ban on all food chains and discount houses is counterproductive for our city.

Wes Woodrow



9th-Grade Student at Brockingham High School

Wes's Letter to the Editor Graphic Organizer



Prewriting Skill **Developing and recognizing the features of written expression**

- SOL 6.6c Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, tone and voice.
7.8c Choose vocabulary and information that will create voice and tone.
8.7c Select specific vocabulary and information.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copy of the “Written Expression Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests” handout (see Appendix B, page 140)

Copies of the attached “Gross Food” prewriting sheet

Overhead or LCD projector

Chart paper

Markers

Lesson

1. Ask students to brainstorm for 5 minutes to list foods they hate. As they write their lists, write your own. Allow students to talk about the “gross and disgusting” food they put on their lists, and tell them about foods you particularly dislike.
2. Select one food item from your list, preferably one the students did not mention. List on the board the characteristics of that food: what it looks like, what it smells like, what it feels like, what it tastes like. Use vivid vocabulary and very specific information. Then, write what the offensive food does to you—what your physical reaction was when you ate it—and share with the students a time you were faced with this food.
3. Put a copy of the “Written Expression Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests” handout (see Appendix B, page 140) on the overhead or the LCD, and review use of specific details, vivid vocabulary, and figurative language. Tell students that combining those features effectively will let their own voice be heard in their writing.
4. Inform students that there will be a contest to see who can describe an experience with a hated food most effectively. Distribute copies of the attached “Gross Food” prewriting sheet, and give students time to complete the prewriting information in the chart.
5. Have students write their description of an experience with the hated food, using the information they wrote on the chart.
6. When students are finished, place them in groups of four. Have students in each group share their writings and select the one that is best. Have each group write their selected best writing on chart paper to be posted for all to read.
7. Have a student in each group read his/her group’s posted writing, and have the other students identify the specific details, vivid vocabulary, and figurative language in it.
8. Have students vote to select the best writing according to the grade 8 written expression rubric.

Note: If this activity works well and proves beneficial, you might wish to repeat it with *favorite* foods.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Gross Food

Name of the food: _____

How it looks	How it smells	How it feels	How it tastes	What I do in reaction to it!

In the space below, write about *one* of the following times:

- The time I realized I hated this food
- A time I was faced with this food

Prewriting Skill **Using prewriting strategies for narrative writing, and then drafting**

- SOL 6.6a Use a variety of planning strategies to generate and organize ideas.
6.6b Establish central idea, organization, elaboration, and unity.
7.8a Apply knowledge of prewriting strategies.
7.8b Elaborate the central idea in an organized manner.
8.7a Use prewriting strategies to generate and organize ideas.
8.7b Organize details to elaborate the central idea.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Samples of good personal narratives from the textbook, magazines, newspapers, or online sources

Copies of the attached "Narrative Writing Prompt" worksheet (from the released 2001 Grade 8 SOL English Writing test)

Lesson

Prewriting

1. Ask the students to jot down a definition of *personal narrative* and share it with a partner. Have partners share some of their definitions with the class, and discuss. Have students come to a consensus on the definition of this term.
2. Invite students to look at some samples of good personal narratives found in the textbook, magazines, newspapers, or online sources. As they are examining the samples, instruct them to look for some common elements that are found in the stories, such as first-person pronouns, dialogue, and a particular order of the writing. Discuss the reason these elements are used in personal narratives.
3. Distribute writing portfolios, and complete a quick review of the students' notes on the writing process. Inform students they will focus on the prewriting and drafting stages of the process in this lesson.
4. Distribute copies of the attached "Narrative Writing Prompt," and have students read the prompt and underline the words they think are the key words. Take a few minutes to discuss the students' chosen key words and their reasons for choosing them.
5. Remind students that although they are to write a personal narrative, it may actually be partly or wholly fictional even though it may be based on a true event. Stress that the students' goal as writers in this assignment is to keep the reader interested, not to impart truth.
6. At this point, students should be ready to begin the prewriting stage of the process. Remind them that they must first spend a few minutes brainstorming ideas for a topic and then narrow down their ideas before they actually start working on any type of graphic organizer. For example, if I experienced several times in my life when I did something I had thought I could not do, I would first need to list those times and choose one before I begin to organize my thoughts in a graphic organizer.
7. Have students spend the next 10 to 15 minutes narrowing their topic and organizing their thoughts in a graphic organizer of their choice. If they need help, have them refer to their notes on graphic organizers in their writing portfolios.
8. Explain that sometimes when one is writing a story, it is helpful in the prewriting stage to run story ideas past another person and get some feedback. Group students in pairs, and have the students read their ideas aloud to their partners. Stress that the listener must respond with ideas that will be helpful to the writer and that the writer may add any details he/she wishes to the prewriting (graphic organizer) during this conference. Allow about eight minutes for pairs to confer about their respective writings.

Drafting

9. Have students use the remainder of the time to write a first draft, using their ideas from the prewriting stage. Remind students to incorporate into their narratives the same elements found in the sample personal narrative examined earlier. Encourage students to refer to their notes on writing effective hooks and effective paragraphs, if needed.
10. Have students organize the completed parts of their narrative writing and file them on the left side of their writing portfolio. Collect the writing portfolios. Tell students that they will continue the writing process on another day (see narrative revising lesson on page 87).
11. Take a quick poll to see how many students added a bit of fiction to their personal narratives. For students who did not, this will serve as a reminder that it is permitted to add a bit of exaggeration or elaboration to keep the interest of the reader. As long as the story is not presented to the reader as complete truth, it is appropriate to include some fiction.
12. Ask students to think about their stories overnight. Tell them to think about how the story really happened and to write down everything they can remember about it—every detail—including the five Ws. Challenge students to think about ways they can make their stories more vivid and interesting for the reader.

Narrative Writing Prompt

Prompt No. 820

Former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt said, "...You must do the thing you think you cannot do." Based on your experience, do you think Eleanor Roosevelt was right? Write about a time when you did something you thought you could not do. Be sure to be specific.

CHECKLIST FOR WRITERS

_____ I planned my paper before writing it.

_____ I revised my paper to be sure that

_____ the introduction captures the reader's attention;

_____ the central idea is supported with specific information and examples that will be interesting to the reader;

_____ the content relates to my central idea;

_____ ideas are organized in a logical manner;

_____ my sentences are varied in length;

_____ my sentences are varied in the way that they begin; and

_____ the conclusion brings my ideas together.

_____ I edited my paper to be sure that

_____ correct grammar is used;

_____ words are capitalized when appropriate;

_____ sentences are punctuated correctly;

_____ words are spelled correctly; and

_____ paragraphs are clearly indicated.

_____ I checked my paper.

Prewriting Skill **Using prewriting strategies for expository writing, and then drafting**

- SOL 6.6a Use a variety of planning strategies to generate and organize ideas.
6.6b Establish central idea, organization, elaboration, and unity.
7.8a Apply knowledge of prewriting strategies.
7.8b Elaborate the central idea in an organized manner.
8.7a Use prewriting strategies to generate and organize ideas.
8.7b Organize details to elaborate the central idea.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Samples of good expository writing from the textbook, magazines, newspapers, or online sources

Copies of the attached “Expository Writing Prompt” worksheet

Lesson

Prewriting

1. Give a brief lesson on the meaning of the word *expository*. Write the word on the board and ask students to look for its root. When students recognize the word *expose*, build on that by explaining that “to expose” means “to show,” which is exactly what expository writing does—it shows or explains how to do something. Give some examples of expository writing to students, or ask them to share some examples that they have done in the past.
2. Distribute writing portfolios, and quickly review the students’ notes on the writing process. Tell students that by the end of this lesson, they should be finished with the prewriting and drafting stages of an expository writing.
3. Have students look at samples of good expository writing from the textbook, magazines, newspapers, or online sources. While they are looking over these writings, have students take particular notice of the items on which they have already taken notes in their writing portfolios, i.e., effective hooks, topic sentences, paragraph structure/organization, elaboration, sentence variety, specific vocabulary, transitions, and other such elements. Discuss these items as they are spotted in the sample writings.
4. Distribute copies of the attached “Expository Writing Prompt” worksheet, and have students read the prompt and underline the words they think are the key words. Take a few minutes to discuss the students’ chosen key words and their reasons for choosing them.
5. Have students brainstorm to narrow their topic. It is important that students understand that they must first choose or invent a place to visit and then develop solid reasons for their choice that can be easily explained in their paper. Remind students that once their thoughts have been narrowed and organized on their graphic organizer (prewriting), they should continue to the drafting stage of the writing process without delay.

Drafting

6. Have students complete the drafting stage of the writing process. Remind them to make use of the notes in their writing portfolio, looking back at their notes on, among other things, writing effective hooks and effective paragraphs.
7. Have students organize the completed parts of their expository writing and file them on the left side of their writing portfolio. Collect the writing portfolios. Tell students that they will continue the writing process on another day (see expository writing revising lesson on page 89).

Expository Writing Prompt

Prompt No. 951

You have the opportunity to visit anywhere you want. Explain where you would visit and the reasons you chose this place.

CHECKLIST FOR WRITERS

_____ I planned my paper before writing it.

_____ I revised my paper to be sure that

_____ the introduction captures the reader's attention;

_____ the central idea is supported with specific information and examples that will be interesting to the reader;

_____ the content relates to my central idea;

_____ ideas are organized in a logical manner;

_____ my sentences are varied in length;

_____ my sentences are varied in the way that they begin; and

_____ the conclusion brings my ideas together.

_____ I edited my paper to be sure that

_____ correct grammar is used;

_____ words are capitalized when appropriate;

_____ sentences are punctuated correctly;

_____ words are spelled correctly; and

_____ paragraphs are clearly indicated.

_____ I checked my paper.

Prewriting Skill **Using prewriting strategies for persuasive writing, and then drafting**

- SOL 7.8 The student will develop narrative, expository, and persuasive writing.
8.7 The student will write in a variety of forms, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and informational.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)
Samples of good persuasive writing from the textbook, magazines, newspapers, or online sources
Copies of the attached “Persuasive Writing Prompt” worksheet (from the released 2002 Grade 8 SOL English Writing test)

Lesson

Prewriting

1. Choose a current controversial subject that will interest students, and introduce the topic at the beginning of class. Have the students choose a side, either pro or con. You might want them to divide into pros and cons physically by sitting on different sides of the room.
2. Take a few minutes to allow each side to explain *the reasons* for their opinion. After a few minutes, when discussion has subsided, ask students why it was important to explain their reasons for their opinions. Explain to students the importance of not just having an opinion, but of having solid reasons to support that opinion: an opinion must have some “back up” in the form of details, examples, and/or explanations.
3. Explain to students that they will be writing a persuasive paper and in order to better understand what good persuasive writing looks like, they will first examine some samples. Point out the various parts of the sample persuasive papers: the hook, opinion statement, reasons and/or arguments, facts, examples, conclusion, and other such items.
4. Distribute writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation), ask students to turn to their “Writing Tips Chart,” and tell them that they will be adding tips regarding persuasive writing. First, have them add the tip discussed earlier: It is important that a persuasive writing contains more than just a bunch of opinions; those opinions need to be supported by reasons, facts, details, examples, and explanations. Next, explain the importance of the opinion statement, found in the opening and conclusion paragraph, and remind students that this is the focus of the writing. You may also want to cover emotional appeals, as outlined in the *English SOL Curriculum Framework*, SOL 7.3 and 8.3.
5. Distribute copies of the attached “Persuasive Writing Prompt” worksheet, and have students read the prompt and underline the words they think are the key words. Take a few minutes to discuss the students’ chosen key words and their reasons for choosing them.
6. Remind students that they must first spend a few minutes brainstorming ideas for a topic and then narrow down their ideas before they actually start working on any type of graphic organizer. Invite students to spend a few minutes brainstorming ideas about classes, clubs, teams, or other things that they would like to see added to the school. Allow students to share a few narrowed topic ideas with the class, and instruct them to choose the one they consider to be most important to them. Remind students that they are trying to persuade the principal to add this class, club, team, or whatever, so they must be able to provide convincing reasons for making this addition.
7. Once students have made their choice for the addition to school, have them write their opinion statement for the paper. Examine the statements, and make sure that all students have a good grasp of how to formulate an opinion statement.
8. Have students continue on to the graphic organizer stage of prewriting. Allow students time to complete their graphic organizer individually.

Drafting

9. Have students complete the drafting stage of the writing process. Remind them to make use of the notes in their writing portfolio, looking back at their notes on, among other things, writing effective hooks and effective paragraphs.
10. Have students organize the completed parts of their expository writing and file them on the left side of their writing portfolio. Collect the writing portfolios. Tell students that they will continue the writing process on another day (see persuasive writing revising lesson on page 91).

Resources

Persuasion Map. http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/persuasion_map/. Students can use this online graphic organizer (web) to list their arguments for a persuasive essay.

Persuasive Writing Prompt

Prompt No. 881

Imagine that your school will soon be adding something new. What do you think should be added? It may be a new club or a new class that you would like to take. It might be before school, during school, or after school. Write to convince your principal that your idea is the one that should be added. Be sure to be specific and explain your reasons.

CHECKLIST FOR WRITERS

_____ I planned my paper before writing it.

_____ I revised my paper to be sure that

_____ the introduction captures the reader's attention;

_____ the central idea is supported with specific information and examples that will be interesting to the reader;

_____ the content relates to my central idea;

_____ ideas are organized in a logical manner;

_____ my sentences are varied in length;

_____ my sentences are varied in the way that they begin; and

_____ the conclusion brings my ideas together.

_____ I edited my paper to be sure that

_____ correct grammar is used;

_____ words are capitalized when appropriate;

_____ sentences are punctuated correctly;

_____ words are spelled correctly; and

_____ paragraphs are clearly indicated.

_____ I checked my paper.

Drafting Skill **Writing effective paragraphs**

- SOL 6.6b Establish central idea, organization, elaboration, and unity.
 7.8b Elaborate the central idea in an organized manner.
 8.7b Organize details to elaborate the central idea.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Internet access for each student or printouts of the information found at
http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/paragrap/index.htm

Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Highlighters

Copies of a good piece of writing

Lesson

1. Ask students what goes into writing a good paper or essay. Listen for students to mention such things as topic sentences, central idea, supporting details, elaboration, organization, unity, hook, conclusion. List the students' ideas on the board, and explain that the focus of this lesson will be on writing effective paragraphs to achieve good writing.
2. Distribute writing portfolios, and instruct students to label the top of the next blank page "Writing Effective Paragraphs." Then, have them go to the Web site listed above and take notes on writing effective paragraphs from the information on the various pages in the three categories: "Parts of a Paragraph," "How to Write a Paragraph," and "Kinds of Paragraphs." Allow students approximately 20 minutes to complete taking notes and compare notes with a partner. Then, review the notes with the class, perhaps in outline form on the board or overhead.
3. Distribute highlighters and copies of a good piece of writing (see below for suggestions). Instruct students, individually or in pairs, to highlight and label parts of the writing, using their notes as a guide. When they are finished, review students' responses in a whole-class discussion, and allow students to revise their labeling as necessary. Have students staple the highlighted and labeled piece of writing to the back of the notes on "Writing Effective Paragraphs."
4. Have students write a paragraph about themselves, utilizing their notes on writing effective paragraphs. Have them complete a quick prewrite and then write their paragraph on the same page as the notes they just took.

Resources

Grade 8 Prompt. <http://jc-schools.net/tutorials/tools/writinganchors8.htm>. Contains actual examples of good student writing.

60 Essays: Contents of Essay Samplers. <http://grammar.about.com/od/60essays/a/essayscontents.htm>. Features examples of good writing.

About.com: Grammar & Composition.

<http://grammar.about.com/od/developingparagraphs/a/paraunity.htm>. Provides a review of notes on writing effective paragraphs, including paragraph unity and the factors that contribute to that unity—main idea, topic sentence, supporting sentences, etc.

Pearson Mentor™! <http://www.ncsmentor.com/>. The Pearson Mentor program is a computer-based professional development tool that provides an effective bridge between statewide performance assessment and instructional strategies in the classroom. To access "NCS Mentor for Virginia," click "customers" in the black bar at top; click "Click here for Virginia"; under "New User," type the key word *Virginia*; create your profile by creating your user name and password to be used each time you log in.

Drafting Skill **Creating a brochure: informational writing**

- SOL 6.6 The student will write narratives, descriptions, and explanations.
7.8 The student will develop narrative, expository, and persuasive writing.
8.7 The student will write in a variety of forms, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and informational.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Samples of good tri-fold brochures
Copies of the attached handouts

Background

This lesson is a continuation of the lesson on page 5, “Asking questions to gather information needed for writing,” which involves researching and organizing information for a brochure. In that lesson, students went to the Virginia state parks Web site (see below under Resources), picked a park in their geographical region, and completed the research needed to create a brochure about it.

The most common types of single-sheet brochures are the bi-fold (a single sheet printed on both sides and folded into halves) and the tri-fold (the same, but folded into thirds). A bi-fold brochure results in four panels (two panels on each side), while a tri-fold results in six panels (three panels on each side).

Lesson

1. Show students samples of good tri-fold brochures, pointing out the various kinds of information that are included and the layout of the information. Also point out design features, such as the use of various fonts, bold, italics, graphics, and pictures.
2. Distribute copies of the attached “Brochure Template,” and have students fill in the information they gathered about a state park.
3. Have students create a draft of their state park brochure, either on computers or by hand. (If students are working on computers, word processing software commonly provides a template for a tri-fold brochure.) Make sure students include the following components/features in their brochures:
 - Title
 - Graphics and/or picture
 - Caption for graphics and/or picture
 - Sidebar
 - Glossary
 - Map
 - Scale for map
 - Italics
 - Bold
 - Subheading
 - Web address
 - Numbered list
4. Distribute copies of the “Virginia State Park Brochure—Self-Evaluation” handout, and have students evaluate and score their own brochures. Collect these self-evaluations along with the drafts of the brochures.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

InZones: Free Microsoft Word Brochures. <http://www.inzones.com/free-templates.htm>. Offers an excellent Word template of a tri-fold brochure.

My Brochure Maker. <http://www.mybrochuremaker.com/>.

RubiStar: Create Rubrics for your Project-Based Learning Activities.
<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php>.

Virginia State Parks. <http://www.virginia.org/site/features.asp?FeatureID=128>.



Brochure Template

Front Side

PANEL 4	BACK COVER	FRONT COVER
Description of picnicking and dining facilities in the park	Mailing address of park Phone number of park Web address of park Other essential information, such as opening hours, fees	Name of park Location of park Picture and caption

Back Side

PANEL 1	PANEL 2	PANEL 3
Introduction to the park Numbered list of the outdoor activities available	Description of the natural beauty in the park	Special highlights of the park

Virginia State Park Brochure—Self-Evaluation

Use the rubrics in the table below to score your own state park brochure:

Organization: _____

Pictures and graphics: _____

Internet use: _____

Quality of information: _____

TOTAL POINTS: _____

Category	Score Point 4	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
Organization	Information is very organized with well-constructed paragraphs and subheadings.	Information is organized with well-constructed paragraphs.	Information is organized, but paragraphs are not well-constructed.	The information appears to be disorganized.
Pictures and graphics	Pictures and graphics are neat and accurate and add to the reader's understanding of the topic.	Pictures and graphics are accurate and add to the reader's understanding of the topic.	Pictures and graphics are neat and accurate and sometimes add to the reader's understanding of the topic.	Pictures and graphics are not accurate OR do not add to the reader's understanding of the topic.
Internet use	Successfully uses suggested Internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance.	Usually able to use suggested Internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance.	Occasionally able to use suggested Internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance.	Needs assistance or supervision to use suggested Internet links and/or to navigate within these sites.
Quality of information	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes one or two supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. No details and/or examples are given.	Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic.

Drafting Skill **Developing fluency, using drop-in words in a story**

SOL	6.6	The student will write narratives, descriptions, and explanations.
	7.8	The student will develop narrative, expository, and persuasive writing.
	8.7	The student will write in a variety of forms, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and informational.

Time 1 hour

Materials

None

Lesson

This exercise works well with student writers who have difficulty with fluency.

1. Review the structure of a narrative—i.e., initiating event, rising action, climax, and resolution—and emphasize that for a short story to be a story, a conflict must be presented and must be resolved. Explain to students that they will write a short story by beginning with a given starting sentence or sentence fragment and develop a story, adding a conflict. As they write, you will interrupt them from time to time with an announced word, which they must “drop in” or include in their story in the *next* sentence. Of course, each time such a word is dropped in, it is likely to interrupt the story plan, sending it off on a tangent. Therefore, it will be a surprise where the story ends up.
2. Give students a starting sentence or sentence fragment, such as, “Yesterday afternoon I was walking to my friend’s house to listen to music, when suddenly...”. Have students use this story starter to develop a story as they add a conflict. Instruct them to include all the elements of a story—initiating event, rising action, climax, and resolution.
3. Every few minutes as students are drafting their stories, announce a drop-in word, such as *skunk*, *flood*, *candle*, *ice cream*, *secret*, or *map*. Remind students that they must include each word in the very next sentence they write.
4. Have students share their finished stories with the class. The stories may be nonsensical and comical because the drop-in words caused the plots to go in strange and completely unexpected directions. Tell the students that however ridiculous the stories may be, the drop-in words stimulated their imaginations and therefore helped them write more fluently.
5. Have students pick a favorite sentence to use as a basis for another story. You may want to give them a list of beginning sentences from which to choose or let them compose their own.
6. As students write, have them drop in words of their own choosing to assist them in writing fluently. Again, you may want to give students a fairly long list of such words from which to choose or let them make up their own.
7. After students write their first drafts, ask them to check to see whether they have included all of the elements of a story—initiating event, rising action, climax, and resolution.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Drafting Skill **Maintaining organization, clarity, central idea, and unity**

- SOL 6.6b The student will establish central idea, organization, elaboration, and unity.
7.8b Elaborate the central idea in an organized manner.
8.7b Organize details to elaborate the central idea.

Time 1 hour

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.

Drafting Skill **Developing composing skills, lesson 1**

- SOL 6.6b Establish central idea, organization, elaboration, and unity.
 7.8b Elaborate the central idea in an organized manner.
 8.7b Organize details to elaborate the central idea.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Knowledge Rating” worksheet

Copies of the “Composing Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests” handout (see Appendix A, page 139)

Highlighters

Copy of the “Soup Bowl” paper (Go to the NCS Mentor Web site listed under Resources below; click “Grade 8”; click “Anchor Papers” tab at top; click “Composing” at top left; click first button “1” under “Composing.”)

Overhead or LCD projector

Lesson

1. Write the question “What makes good writing?” on the board, and have students respond in writing.
2. Distribute copies of the attached “Knowledge Rating” worksheet on the features of composing, and have students complete it. As they work, monitor their responses to gain a better idea of their understanding. Discuss their responses, eliciting from students the correct explanation of elaboration, central idea, organization, unity, point of view, introduction, and conclusion.
3. Return to the students’ writing from step 1, and connect their comments to the terminology just explained.
4. Hand out copies of the “Composing Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests” handout (see Appendix A, page 139). Read the definitions of the score points aloud beginning with 1, and have students highlight the important concepts as they are read. Discuss the points as a class, making sure students understand the terms and realize that a 1 represents little or no control. When 3 is discussed, make sure students realize that “reasonable control” means “acceptable.” Also, make sure they understand that a 4 represents consistent, not perfect, control but that most of the time the writer is doing things well.
5. Display the “Soup Bowl” paper, using an overhead or LCD projector. Read the paper aloud, and ask students to look at the composing rubric and decide the appropriate score for the paper. You might have them hold up their fingers on the count of three to indicate the score they would give the paper. A quick look will indicate to you whether or not they have scored the paper correctly.
6. Have students complete an exit slip on which they list what they learned about good writing in this lesson.

Resources

Pearson Mentor™! <http://www.ncsmentor.com/>. The Pearson Mentor program is a computer-based professional development tool that provides an effective bridge between statewide performance assessment and instructional strategies in the classroom. To access “NCS Mentor for Virginia,” click “customers” in the black bar at top; click “Click here for Virginia”; under “New User,” type the key word *Virginia*; create your profile by creating your user name and password to be used each time you log in.

Knowledge Rating

Look at the terms below taken from the Composing Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests. Respond individually to each term in each category by placing a check mark (✓) in the appropriate boxes. Be ready to explain or give examples to support your responses.

Term	Have seen or heard	Can define	Can identify in writing	Can produce in writing
Elaboration				
Central Idea				
Organization				
Unity				
Point of view				
Introduction				
Conclusion				

Drafting Skill **Developing composing skills, lesson 2**

- SOL 6.6b Establish central idea, organization, elaboration, and unity.
 7.8b Elaborate the central idea in an organized manner.
 8.7b Organize details to elaborate the central idea.

Time 1 hour

Materials

- Copies of the attached “Composing Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests” handout (see Appendix A, page 139)
Copies of a 3- or 4-score-point NCS Mentor anchor papers for Composing (Go to the NCS Mentor Web site listed under Resources below; click “Grade 8”; click “Anchor Papers” tab at top; click “Composing” at top left; click various “3” and “4” buttons under “Composing” to access various papers.)
Overhead or LCD projector
Copies of the attached “Cooperative Learning Roles and Tasks” sheet
Envelopes

Lesson

1. Ask students to complete an entrance slip, listing the features of composing. Then, review the features with the class, asking students to explain each one.
2. Distribute copies of the attached “Composing Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests” handout, and review the meaning of the score points 1 through 4.
3. From the NCS Mentor Web site, select a 3- or 4-score-point composing anchor paper to display, using an overhead or LCD projector. As you read the paper aloud, have students look at the composing rubric and decide the appropriate score, holding up their fingers on the count of three to indicate the score they would give the paper. A quick look will indicate to you whether or not they have scored the paper correctly. Discuss the reasons for the correct score.
4. Place students in groups of four, and give each group an envelope containing copies of the attached “Cooperative Learning Roles and Tasks” cut into strips. Have each member of each group draw a role and task.
5. Give each group a set of the composing anchor papers without the state annotations. Have each group examine the papers, one at a time, and discuss their strengths and weaknesses.
6. Have a class discussion of each paper, and then reveal its state score.
7. Have students write an individual reflection that answers two questions: How did the cooperative group process work? How well do I understand the features of the composing domain? Collect the reflections.

Resources

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Cooperative Learning Roles and Tasks

DIRECTOR

Your task is to assign readers and make sure the members of the group are completing their assigned tasks.

TIME KEEPER

Your task is to make sure the group is using time effectively.

CONTRIBUTION MONITOR

Your task is to make sure everyone is contributing to the discussion.

CONTENT MANAGER

Your task is to make sure the group is completing the tasks in the correct sequence and that the papers are thoroughly discussed by the group before reading the annotation.

Drafting Skill **Developing composing skills, lesson 3**

- SOL 6.6b Establish central idea, organization, elaboration, and unity.
7.8b Elaborate the central idea in an organized manner.
8.7b Organize details to elaborate the central idea.

Time 1 hour

Materials

- Copies of the attached “Composing Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests” handout (see Appendix A, page 139)
Copy of the “Soup Bowl” paper (Go to the NCS Mentor Web site listed under Resources below; click “Grade 8”; click “Anchor Papers” tab at top; click “Composing” at top left; click first button “1” under “Composing.”)
Overhead or LCD projector
Chart paper
Four large blue “first-place winner” ribbons (either real or mock; see example at right)
Markers



Lesson

1. Ask students to list the features of composing. Then, review the features with the class, asking students to explain each one.
2. Display the “Soup Bowl” paper, using an overhead or LCD projector, and review why the paper earned only 1 score point in composing. Discuss what is needed for the paper to earn 4 score points.
3. Place students in groups of three or four. Give each group a copy of the “Soup Bowl” paper and a sheet of chart paper. Assign each group the task of revising the paper so it will earn 4 score points and of writing the revised version neatly on the chart paper once they are satisfied with their rewrite.
4. Post the revisions around the classroom, and have each group read theirs to the rest of the class. Then, review again the precept that a good paper has an interesting introduction, full elaboration, clear organization, and an effective conclusion.
5. Number each of the posted revisions. Then, allow students to vote by secret ballot for the papers in each composing-feature categories—that is, write on a sheet of paper the number of the paper with the best introduction, the paper with the best elaboration, the paper with the best organization, and the paper with the best conclusion.
6. Collect the students’ ballots and tabulate. Announce the winning paper in each category, and place a blue ribbon on each paper. Use a colored marker to write the winning category beside each ribbon.
7. As a class, consider the results of the vote. Did the winner in each category win by a landslide, receiving the vast majority of the votes? Why, or why not?
8. Have students complete an exit slip on which they write an evaluation of their own revised paper, describing what they did to improve the original and what they might have done to make it even better.

Resources

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Drafting Skill **Developing written expression skills, lesson 1**

- SOL 6.6c Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, tone and voice.
7.8c Choose vocabulary and information that will create voice and tone.
8.7c Select specific vocabulary and information.
8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Written Expression Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests” handout (see Appendix B, page 140)

Copies of the attached “Knowledge Rating” worksheet

Highlighters

Lesson

1. Write the following paragraph on the board:

I went to the mall. I went shopping with my friend. We ate dinner there. I bought some clothes. I stayed out late. I had a good time.

Ask the students whether they think this is good writing. Have them explain their answers.

2. Distribute copies of the attached “Knowledge Rating” worksheet on the features of written expression, and have students complete it. As they work, monitor their responses to gain a better idea of their understanding. Discuss their responses, eliciting from students the correct explanation of tone, voice, sentence variety, vocabulary, and selected, precise information.
3. Return to the students’ writing from step 1, and connect their comments to the terminology just explained. Should they also mention features of composing, make sure you help them separate the features of the two domains.
4. Hand out copies of the attached “Written Expression Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests” handout. Read the definitions of the score points aloud beginning with 1, and have students highlight the important concepts as they are read. Discuss the points as a class, making sure students understand the terms and realize that a 1 represents little or no control. When 3 is discussed, make sure students realize that “reasonable control” means “acceptable.” Also, make sure they understand that a 4 represents consistent, not perfect, control but that most of the time the writer is doing things well.
5. Return to the paragraph written on the board. Read it aloud, and ask students to look at the written expression rubric and decide the appropriate score for it. You might have them hold up their fingers on the count of three to indicate the score they would give it. A quick look will indicate to you whether or not they have scored the paragraph correctly.
6. Brainstorm with the students what could be done to improve the paragraph. If there is time, have students work with a partner to rewrite the paragraph.
7. Have students complete an exit slip on which they take one of the bland sentences from the sample paragraph and improve it, using things they learned about written expression in this lesson.

Knowledge Rating

Look at the terms below taken from the Written Expression Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests. Respond individually to each term in each category by placing a check mark (✓) in the appropriate boxes. Be ready to explain or give examples to support your responses.

Term	Have seen or heard	Can define	Can identify in writing	Can produce in writing
Tone				
Voice				
Sentence variety				
Vocabulary				
Selected, precise information				

Drafting Skill **Developing written expression skills, lesson 2**

- SOL 6.6c Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, tone and voice.
 7.8c Choose vocabulary and information that will create voice and tone.
 8.7c Select specific vocabulary and information.
 8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Written Expression Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests” handout (see Appendix B, page 140)

Copies of 3- or 4-score-point NCS Mentor anchor papers for Written Expression (Go to the NCS Mentor Web site listed under Resources below; click “Grade 8”; click “Anchor Papers” tab at top; click “Written Expression” at top left; click various “3” and “4” buttons under “Written Expression” to access various papers.)

Overhead or LCD projector

Copies of the attached “Cooperative Learning Roles and Tasks” sheet (see page 40)

Envelopes

Lesson

1. Ask students to complete an entrance slip, listing the features of written expression. Then, review the features with the class, asking students to explain each one.
2. Distribute copies of the attached “Written Expression Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests” handout, and review the meaning of the score points 1 through 4.
3. From the NCS Mentor Web site, select a 3- or 4-score-point written expression anchor paper to display, using an overhead or LCD projector. As you read the paper aloud, have students look at the written expression rubric and decide the appropriate score, holding up their fingers on the count of three to indicate the score they would give the paper. A quick look will indicate to you whether or not they have scored the paper correctly. Discuss the reasons for the correct score.
4. Place students in groups of four, and give each group an envelope containing copies of the attached “Cooperative Learning Roles and Tasks” cut into strips. Have each member of each group draw a role and task.
5. Give each group a set of the written expression anchor papers without the state annotations. Have each group examine the papers, one at a time, and discuss their strengths and weaknesses.
6. Have a class discussion of each paper, and then reveal its state score.
7. Have students write an individual reflection that answers two questions: How did the cooperative group process work? How well do I understand the features of the written expression domain? Collect the reflections.

Resources

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Drafting Skill **Writing effective dialogue**

- SOL 6.6c Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, tone and voice.
 7.8c Choose vocabulary and information that will create voice and tone.
 8.7c Select specific vocabulary and information.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Overhead or LCD projector

Copy of the attached “Sample Paragraph for Dialogue Revision” sheet

Copies of the attached “Paragraphs for Dialogue Revision” sheet, cut apart into strips

Chart paper

Markers

Lesson

1. Using an overhead or LCD projector, display the paragraph shown on the attached “Sample Paragraph for Dialogue Revision” sheet. After the students have read it, reveal the Dialogue Revision shown on the sheet. Ask the students to respond in writing to the question: “Which of the two selections did you enjoy reading more, and why?”
2. Ask volunteers to read their responses, and elicit from the students the things that dialogue can add to a piece of writing.
3. If necessary, give students a mini-lesson on the formatting of dialogue, or give them a copy of the dialogue to use as a model.
4. Have the class brainstorm words to use instead of the anemic words *said* and *tell*. Start by writing the following words on the board to stimulate thinking: *bellowed*, *chided*, *screamed*, and *instructed*. Discuss the effectiveness of the brainstormed words in comparison with the words *said* and *tell*.
5. Place students in groups of four. Put multiple copies of the attached paragraph strips in a container, and have each group select one. If more than one group draws the same paragraph, it is fine because it will be interesting to see how they handle it differently.
6. Have groups revise their paragraph by writing dialogue instead of only narrative. Remind them to use vivid vocabulary and to avoid the words *said* or *tell*.
7. When the groups are satisfied with their dialogues, have them write the dialogues on chart paper and post the papers around the room for all to see.
8. Allow the groups a short time to prepare to perform their dialogues by practicing aloud, using expression. Have one or more students read the text that is not part of the dialogue and the others take the parts of the persons speaking.
9. Have the groups present their dialogues, and then hold a follow-up class discussion on the effectiveness of each dialogue.
10. If there is time, have students revisit a narrative they have written during the year and revise all or part of it to include dialogue.
11. For closure, have students complete an exit slip on which they list what they have learned about dialogue in this lesson.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Sample Paragraph for Dialogue Revision

Paragraph

Shameka decided that she really deserved an allowance. She had never gotten one, and lots of her friends did. She talked to her dad. It started as an argument, but it ended up okay because she ended up getting an allowance, not as much as she wanted, but at least it was a start.

Dialogue Revision

“Dad, I need to talk to you,” announced Shameka.

“Honey, I’m really busy right now. Can it wait?”

“Actually, Dad, it’s already waited for 13 years. I think we are *way* overdue for this conversation.”

“Wait a minute,” responded Dad. “I really don’t like being talked to like that. What’s your problem?”

“My *problem* is that I’m not getting any support from you and Mom,” Shameka yelled as she walked across the room and prepared to slam the door.

“STOP RIGHT THERE, young lady. You will not talk to me that way and you will not walk away.” Dad paused and then calmly asked, “Please, will you tell me what’s bothering you? Obviously, there’s something rather important. What do you mean that we don’t support you?”

“OK, Dad, I’m sorry,” apologized Shameka. “It’s just that my friends all get allowances and I don’t. When we go to the mall, I have to ask you for money. I want to have some money of my own that I can count on whenever I need it.”

Dad sighed and then he explained, “Shameka, Mom and I would really like to be able to give you an allowance. We know that your friends have more money than you do, but it’s hard for us right now. I will talk to Mom about it, but until I do, how about if I give you 10 dollars this week? Mom and I *will* discuss it, and we’ll see what we can do.”

“Well, Dad, 10 dollars really doesn’t go very far these days, but I guess it’s a beginning. Please, tell Mom how much I want it, and tell her I’ll do more around the house and that I deserve it, OK?” pleaded Shameka.

Dad laughed, hugged Shameka, and promised, “I’ll do what I can.”

Paragraphs for Dialogue Revision

Paragraph 1

Sam and Billy had been planning the surprise party for Jared for at least two weeks. They were excited that the day had finally arrived and that everything went smoothly. They had tricked Jared by asking him to shoot a few baskets, and then when they got to the gym, they made an excuse to go inside and check on something. When they went inside, everyone jumped out and yelled, "Surprise!" Jared was happy, and they all had a good time. It had been a success.

Paragraph 2

Tanya had not done her math homework last night, and she had hoped that Mr. Jackson would not find out. Sometimes he just went over it quickly without checking if everyone had done it. When she got to class, however, they went over the homework, and he called on her. She was embarrassed, and she told him a lie in front of the class to explain why she didn't have it. She felt guilty after class, and she stayed after to tell him the truth.

Paragraph 3

Desiree received a phone call telling her that she had won a contest and had won a free trip to Disney World. At first she thought the call was from someone playing a joke on her, but finally they convinced her it was true. She was really excited and asked lots of question to get all the details.

Paragraph 4

Philip was having a difficult morning. He got into trouble on the school bus, and the bus driver yelled at him and all the kids laughed. Then when he got to school, his locker was jammed, and he had to get the assistant principal to unlock it for him. Just as he thought the day was going to be a disaster, the prettiest girl in the seventh grade stopped by to talk to him.

Paragraph 5

The neighborhood boys were playing baseball in the street. They were having a great time until Donte hit a fly ball that went right into the Robertsons's window. Glass shattered everywhere, and Mr. Robertson came out the door. All the boys ran, and Donte was left to explain and apologize to a very angry Mr. Robertson. After a long conversation, Donte agreed to pay for the window and to be sure it got fixed. Then Donte headed off to find his "friends."

Revising Skill **Revising writing**

SOL	6.6b	Establish central idea, organization, elaboration, and unity.
	6.6c	Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, tone and voice.
	7.8b	Elaborate the central idea in an organized manner.
	7.8c	Choose vocabulary and information that will create voice and tone.
	8.7b	Organize details to elaborate the central idea.
	8.7c	Select specific vocabulary and information.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Writing Prompt Response, REVISED!” handout

Copies of the “Revision Checklist” handout (see Appendix D, page 142)

Lesson

1. Begin the lesson by having students list the features of the composing and written expression domains. When they are finished, allow them to share their lists with partners and discuss and adjust their lists as needed.
2. Review the definitions and features of these two domains, reminding students that in order for writing to be good, these features must be evident.
3. Tell students that they will be analyzing a student’s sample first response to a writing prompt, as well as the student’s sample revision of the first response. Distribute copies of the attached “Writing Prompt Response, REVISED!” handout, and read the prompt and the sample first response aloud. Have students analyze the strengths and the weaknesses of the response, referring to the features of the composing and written expression domains.
4. Distribute the “Revision Checklist” handout (see Appendix D, page 142). In a class discussion, lead students to identify what this response needs. Make sure they mention features such as greater elaboration, voice, and sentence variety, using the checklist to guide the discussion.
5. Read the student’s sample revision aloud, and have students analyze the writing. Is it better? How did the student improve it? The paper is still not perfect, of course, and you may wish to continue discussing what it needs.
6. Have students select partners to work with on further revisions of the piece. Encourage partners to use the checklist to review the revision and make a list of further improvements needed.
7. Have students individually revise the piece again.

Writing Prompt Response, REVISED!

Prompt

When you turned 13, your parents threw a surprise birthday party for you, and they really managed to surprise you. Write about what happened that day and how they managed to pull it off. Title your story “My Biggest Surprise.”

Student’s sample first response

My Biggest Surprise

On March 17, 1996, it was my 13th birthday. My mom said I couldn’t have a party. I was upset all day long. My mom sent me and my father out to get pizza. I was wondering why we got so much pizza. When I got home, I walked into the kitchen. My friends jumped out at me and said, “Surprise!” It startled me. I was so happy, but at the same time I was embarrassed. That was my biggest surprise ever.

Student’s sample revision

My Biggest Surprise

“Please Mom,” I begged, “You know that my birthday is March 17, and I really want to have a party. I’ll do anything you want if you’ll just let me have my friends over!” “No! And that’s final,” she replied. I didn’t give up easily. I begged and pleaded with Mom every chance I got, but her reply was always the same. It seemed to me that my 13th birthday would be just another boring day. When my birthday finally arrived, I just moped around the house. I didn’t want to go anywhere or do anything. At first, with every chance I got, I’d slam a door or throw something around just to show my mom how upset I was. I finally decided that I was behaving like a little child and decided to improve my attitude. After all, I was turning 13. It was getting near dinner time when Mom called to me. “Hey, Greg, I need you to go with your dad to pick up the pizzas that I ordered from Papa John’s.” “Oh, alright,” I shrugged, thinking that pizza for my birthday was better than nothing at all. When we arrived at Papa John’s, my dad told me to help him get the boxes of pizza. I was wondering why we got so much pizza. “Gadzooks, Dad, we don’t need this much pizza,” I said. “Ah, there’s a special right now. Anyway, we can eat it for lunch this weekend,” he replied. When we got back in the car, I had to hold all of those hot boxes on my lap. Boy, were they ever steaming! I thought we’d never get home without them scorching my legs. When we finally arrived home, I walked into the kitchen carrying pizza boxes up to my nose. All of a sudden, a bunch of my friends jumped out at me and yelled, “Surprise!” I nearly dropped all those boxes! I could feel my face turning as red as the pizza sauce and my knees were getting weak. Then to embarrass me further, they all started singing, “Happy Birthday!” I thought I was going to die right there and fall flat into those pizzas. My parents really pulled one over on me that day.

Revising Skill **Adding specific vocabulary**

- SOL 6.6c Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, tone, and voice.
7.8c Choose vocabulary and information that will create voice and tone.
8.7c Select specific vocabulary and information.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Arithmetic Revision: Adding Specific Vocabulary” handout
Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Lesson

1. Put the following paragraph onto the board:

We went on a vacation sometime this last summer. We went to a big beach. We swam a lot. I got a sunburn. We ate in restaurants. The food was delicious. It was great fun!
2. Ask students to make up some questions they might ask the writer of this paragraph to elicit more information. As students respond, put the questions on the board. The answers to these questions will make the writing more specific. For example, in response to the question, “Where was the beach?” the writer might specify the Outer Banks of North Carolina.
3. Discuss with students the changes they could make. Have students offer suggestions and watch you as you make the changes on the board.
4. Distribute copies of the attached “Arithmetic Revision: Adding Specific Vocabulary” handout, and review it with the students. Ask students to select a previously written paragraph or paragraphs from their writing portfolios that they think could use some improvement in the vocabulary used. Have students follow the concepts on the handout to make changes to the writing. Have them highlight and number the changes in the writing in order to facilitate discussion.
5. Have students describe some of the revisions they made. Summarize with a class discussion.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Arithmetic Revision: Adding Specific Vocabulary

Select a paragraph or paragraphs from your writing portfolio, and add specific vocabulary to give your writing more variety.

Add a metaphor or simile (e.g., “The violin sounded like a rusty gate swinging on its hinges.”).

Add proper nouns (e.g., *CVS Pharmacy* instead of *store*).

Subtract three non-specific words, such as *stuff*, *things*, *nice*, *pretty*, and *good*, and replace them with specific words.

Subtract any clichés, such as “dead as a doornail,” “right on target,” and “on the same page,” and replace them with something unique.

Subtract all unnecessary words and repetitious ideas.

Multiply the number of vibrant verbs, such as *screamed*, *ripped*, and *scoffed*.

Divide the writing into paragraphs.

Revising Skill **Elaborating with showing, not telling**

- SOL 6.6c Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, tone, and voice.
7.8c Choose vocabulary and information that will create voice and tone.
8.7c Select specific vocabulary and information.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Telling Sentences” cut into strips
Chart paper
Markers

Lesson

1. Before the students enter the room, write the sentence, “The teacher is angry.” on the board. When the students enter the room, act angry: storm across the room, slam the door, drop a book on the floor, glare at the class—whatever you can do to convince them that you really are angry without saying anything. Include small things like tapping a pencil against the desk, tapping your foot, etc.
2. Ask the students to write down how they know you are angry. Then, ask them to share their responses, and list the responses on the board. Make sure they have included everything.
3. Ask the students to describe the difference between showing and telling, as made clear in the warm-up activity. Ask them why showing is usually more effective than telling. Which will they remember this afternoon—the sentence on the board or the way you were behaving?
4. As a class, use their descriptions of your behaviors demonstrating anger to write a strong paragraph that “shows” that the you were angry. Point out that vivid vocabulary, selected information, and tone and voice are the things that make “showing” sentences effective.
5. If another example is needed, model the transformation of the following “telling” sentence into a “showing” paragraph: “The girl was happy when she won the contest.”
6. Place students in groups of three, and have each group draw one of the attached “Telling Sentences” strips. Have each group turn their sentence into a “showing paragraph” by using vivid vocabulary, rich details, and appropriate tone and voice. When each group is satisfied with their paragraph, have them write the original “telling” sentence and their “showing” paragraph on a piece of chart paper to post for all to see.
7. Have each group present their work to the class.
8. Have students complete an exit slip on which they turn the following “telling” sentence into a “showing” paragraph: “I am excited when the class is over.”

Telling Sentences

The basketball game was the most exciting one of the season.

The lost little girl looked very frightened.

The new student tried to get his locker open, but he was not successful.

The girl looked embarrassed when she fell in the gym.

The man was happy when he won the lottery.

The boy was nervous when he was called to the office.

The team members celebrated when they made a touchdown in the last 15 seconds of play.

The girls were surprised by the noise and activity at the concert.

The mother was angry at her daughter for arriving home two hours after curfew.

The bus driver punished everyone on the bus for the misbehavior.

Revising Skill **Using specific vocabulary and elaboration**

- SOL 6.6c Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, tone, and voice.
 6.6d Expand and embed ideas by using modifiers, standard coordination, and subordination in complete sentences.
 7.8c Choose vocabulary and information that will create voice and tone.
 7.8d Use clauses and phrases to vary sentences.
 8.7c Select specific vocabulary and information.
 8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Chart paper
Selection of “blah” sentences
Markers
Paperclips

Lesson

1. Prior to lesson, post “blah” sentences on chart paper around the classroom so that students will see them when they enter.
2. Begin by giving the class some vague directions. Do not say anything specific, but use pronouns like *it* instead of *pencil* or *paper* to make your point about nonspecific vocabulary. When they are thoroughly confused, explain that using *specific* vocabulary would have been helpful in communicating your message and sustaining their interest in what you were saying. Discuss how elaboration using specificity helps readers understand, connect with, and stay interested in a piece of writing.
3. Put students into pairs, and direct students’ attention to the “blah” sentences posted throughout the room. Tell students that each poster contains a “blah” sentence at the top, and it will be their job to add the necessary elaboration and to control word choice to make the sentences more interesting.
4. Complete a sample on the board so students know what is expected. For example, for the blah sentence, “The car stopped suddenly.” the revised sentence might be, “The gleaming Mercedes convertible came to a screeching halt when the dump truck unexpectedly turned in front of it.”
5. Have students complete a similar sample with their partners. The sample can be of your own choosing, or you might use the following blah sentences: “Did you hear what Mrs. James said? She’s mean!” (New sentence: “Fran, did you hear what that mean old snake, Mrs. James, said to Mrs. Johnson? She told Mrs. Johnson that her tomatoes tasted like gasoline! Fran, everybody knows Mrs. James wouldn’t know a tomato from a pickle! What does she know!”) Once partners have revised the blah sentence, ask a few of them to share their sentences with the class.
6. Distribute markers, and instruct each pair to stand before one of the posters to participate in a carousel activity. Have each pair take 2 to 3 minutes to revise and rewrite the sentence on their poster, writing the revised sentence *at the bottom of the chart paper*. When they have finished writing, have them fold their revised sentence up and over so the next group cannot see what they wrote. Provide students with paperclips to hold the folded paper in place.
7. When all pairs have finished writing, folding, and clipping, instruct them to rotate to the poster on their right and repeat the process with the new sentence, again folding the paper at the end.
8. The activity will continue in this way until the pairs rotate all the way back to the poster where they started.
9. Once students are back to their original sentence, tell them that now they are going to vote on the sentences that show the best elaboration and word choice. Instruct students to unfold the poster at which they are standing and read all the revised sentences on the poster. Now instruct them to draw a star beside the sentence that they feel shows the best elaboration and word choice.
10. Again, have students rotate from poster to poster to vote on the sentences that show the best elaboration and word choice.

11. Walk around from poster to poster looking for good examples to be read aloud. Ask selected pairs to tell the class the reasons they voted for certain sentences.
12. Make a class list of some common elements that are found in the favorite sentences. Ask students, “What makes those sentences stand out? What can you, as writers, learn from those sentences? Can you include those kinds of sentences in your writing? How?” Discuss these questions, or have students answer them individually in writing and turn in their responses on their way out.

Resources

<http://www.writingfix.com/6Traits/WordChoice.htm>. Offers notes on word choice and sentence elaboration.

http://www.gettoefl.com/toefl_essay/X_ex3.htm. Offers online practice with word choice and sentence structure.

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quiz_list.htm. Quiz numbers 111–121 offer online practice with word choice and sentence structure.

Revising Skill **Combining sentences and embedding ideas by using modifiers**

- SOL 6.6d Expand and embed ideas by using modifiers, standard coordination, and subordination in complete sentences.
- 7.8d Use clauses and phrases to vary sentences.
- 8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Gertrude Chandler and *The Boxcar Children*” handout

Lesson

1. Distribute copies of the attached “Gertrude Chandler and *The Boxcar Children*” handout, and read the passage aloud to the students.
2. Ask students to list the strengths and weaknesses of this piece of informational writing. Allow them to use the think-pair-share technique.
3. Inform students that this lesson involves revising writing to create a flowing style without the choppy rhythm of multiple short, simple sentences. One technique to achieve smoothness, called “embedding ideas,” involves combining two short sentences into a complex sentence by adding various modifiers, such as a prepositional phrase or an appositive. Here are two examples:
 - The two sentences, “Sarah is at the mall. Sarah is with her mother shopping.” can be combined by using the preposition *with*: “Sarah is at the mall shopping with her mother.”
 - The two sentences, “The spider was crawling up the wall. The spider was a tarantula.” can be combined by making *tarantula* an appositive: “The spider, a tarantula, was crawling up the wall.”
4. Assign pairs of students rewrite the passage about the boxcar children, using these two embedding techniques where it is appropriate to do so.
5. In the next revision work students do with their own writing, ask them to embed ideas by using these two techniques.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Gertrude Chandler and *The Boxcar Children*

Gertrude Chandler listened. Another train was rolling down the tracks outside her house in Putnam, Connecticut. She loved living across the street from the railroad station. With her brother, John, and her sister, Frances, she often went outside to wave at the people on passing trains.

Sometimes, Gertrude was ill and had to stay home from school. When she was not feeling well, books were her friends. She loved to read. She also enjoyed making her own books to give as gifts. One day in 1899, Gertrude glanced out the window at a train. She could see inside its last car, the caboose. She saw a small stove, cups, and a coffeepot. How cozy it looked! It was like a little home. Wouldn't it be wonderful to live in a caboose?

After high school, Gertrude decided to find a job. She had always loved to write. Soon she was writing for a newspaper in her town. Later, at age 26, she wrote her first real book. With her sister, Gertrude wrote more books. Most of these were for grown-up readers.

In 1924, Gertrude wondered again about living in a train car. She decided to write a story called *The Boxcar Children*. The characters in the book were called the Alden children. They were named Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny. The Alden children lived in an empty train car and had many adventures together. When Gertrude became a teacher, she read the boxcar book to her pupils.

During the next 30 years, Gertrude wrote 18 more books about the boxcar children. She died in 1979, but her well-loved books live on. The adventures of Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny still bring smiles to the faces of young readers.

Revising Skill **Adding sentence variety**

- SOL 6.6d Expand and embed ideas by using modifiers, standard coordination, and subordination in complete sentences.
- 7.8d Use clauses and phrases to vary sentences.
- 8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Adding Sentence Variety” handout

Copies of the selection “Anne Bailey, Brave Pioneer Scout” from the released 2005 Grade 5 English Reading SOL test (at

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Assessment/Release2005/RIB_g5R_WEB.pdf)

Copies of the selection “The Woman Behind *Little Women*” from the released 2004 Grade 5 English Reading SOL test (at

<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Assessment/Release2004/g5RdgCore1WEB.pdf>)

Overhead or LCD projector

Lesson

1. Select a paragraph or two from one of the released SOL tests cited above, and display it, using an overhead or LCD projector.
2. Discuss with students the fact that writing is generally more interesting when it has a variety of sentence lengths, and remind students that many short, simple sentences create a singsong rhythm that is not pleasing. Discuss possible changes in the displayed writing, and make the changes on the board as students give suggestions.
3. Distribute copies of the attached “Adding Sentence Variety” handout, and ask students to follow the directions on the handout to make changes to another passage from one of the selections cited above.
4. Summarize the lesson on sentence variety with a class discussion.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Adding Sentence Variety



Imagine that your school announced that the same lunch would be served in the cafeteria on all 180 days this school year. No variety! No changes or substitutions!

Students would not be happy with this decision because most people want some variety in the meals they eat.

The same is true for your writing. People generally like some variety in the sentences they read because sentences of the same length with the same subject-verb pattern are boring. To make your writing more interesting, vary it.

Take a piece of writing given to you by your teacher, and add some sentence variety to the writing by

1. adding a complex sentence (Because _____, _____.)
2. adding a compound sentence (Complete sentence, and complete sentence.)
3. adding a transition between paragraphs by using such words as *in conclusion*, *consequently*, *then*, *furthermore*, *additionally*, *moreover*
4. adding a short sentence that has no more than five words in it
5. adding elaboration to lengthen a short sentence.

Revising Skill **Combining ideas into an effective sentence**

- SOL 6.6d Expand and embed ideas by using modifiers, standard coordination, and subordination in complete sentences.
 7.8d Use clauses and phrases to vary sentences.
 8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Overhead or LCD projector

Copies of the attached “Combining Sentences: Green, Red, or Yellow Light?” worksheet

Lesson

- Display the following sentences, using an overhead or LCD projector. Ask students to give the sentences a green light for grammatically correct or a red light for grammatically incorrect.
 - The boys were healthy and happy during the school year. (green light)
 - Because the boys were healthy and happy during the school year. (red light)
- Remind students that changing an independent clause into a dependent clause changes a perfectly good sentence into a fragment.
- Introduce the idea of a “yellow-light sentence”—i.e., a sentence that is complete but is awkward, unclear, or wordy, such as the following:

The boys were healthy, and it was noted that they were happy during the school year.
 The health and happiness of the boys was maintained during the school year.

Write these sentences on the board, and lead students in rewriting them, using modifiers, standard coordination, and/or subordination.

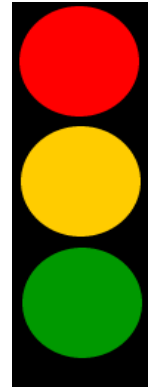
- Again using the overhead or LCD projector, model the following example from the released 2004 Grade 8 SOL English Writing test item “Colonial Fashions”:

Original sentences: In 1653, two women in Massachusetts were arrested. The cause of their arrest was wearing silk hoods and scarves.			
	Rewrite options	Color	Reason
A	In 1653, two women in Massachusetts were arrested, and the cause was wearing silk hoods and scarves.	yellow	Awkward—“the cause was”
B	In 1653, two women in Massachusetts were arrested, the cause being they wore silk hoods and scarves.	red	Run-on sentence
C	In 1653, two women in Massachusetts, arrested for wearing silk hoods and scarves, were detained by police.	yellow	Was Massachusetts arrested? Confusing.
D	In 1653, two women in Massachusetts were arrested for wearing silk hoods and scarves.	green	Clear and concise

- Distribute copies of the attached “Combining Sentences: Green, Red, or Yellow Light?” worksheet, and have students work in small cooperative learning groups to mark the sentences as either green-, red-, or yellow-light sentences. Have them give the reasons for their decisions.
- Have each group present their conclusions. Lead a discussion about the answers and the reasons why some sentences are yellow light or red light.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.



Combining Sentences: Green, Red, or Yellow Light?

In each example below, read the original sentences that are to be combined. Then, read the rewrite options for combining the sentences.

- Mark a combined sentence red if it is an incomplete or run-on sentence.
- Mark a combined sentence yellow if it is awkward, unclear, or wordy.
- Mark a combined sentence green if it is the best sentence combination.

Released 2006 Grade 8 SOL English Writing Test Item: "Signs of Friendship"

Original sentences: The popular local police band, The Blue Badges, was coming to play a concert at a school assembly. The concert was to promote Law Enforcement Week.			
	Rewrite options	Color	Reason
A	The popular local police band, The Blue Badges, coming to play a concert promoting Law Enforcement Week at a school assembly.		
B	The popular local police band, The Blue Badges, was coming to a school assembly to promoting Law Enforcement Week, and playing a concert.		
C	The popular local police band, The Blue Badges, was promoting Law Enforcement Week and was coming to play a concert and the concert was at a school assembly.		
D	The popular local police band, The Blue Badges, was coming to play a concert at a school assembly to promote Law Enforcement Week.		

Released 2006 Grade 8 SOL English Writing Test Item: "How Do Whales and Dolphins Sleep Without Drowning?"

Original sentences: Scientists have observed them at zoos and aquariums. Scientists have also observed them in the wild to see when and how they sleep.			
	Rewrite options	Color	Reason
A	In zoos and at aquariums they have been observed by scientists and also in the wild to see when and how they sleep.		
B	To see how and when they were observed by scientists, they sleep in zoos, at aquariums, and in the wild.		
C	Observing them in the wild, scientists observed them to see when and how they sleep in zoos and at aquariums.		
D	Scientists have observed them at zoos, at aquariums, and in the wild to see when and how they sleep.		

Combining Sentences: Green, Red, or Yellow Light? continued

Released 2001 Grade 8 SOL English Writing Test Item: "Mysterious Mail"

Original sentences: I finally got my chance. I learned that solving a mystery is a lot tougher than I thought.			
	Rewrite options	Color	Reason
A	I finally got my chance, I learned that solving a mystery is a lot tougher than I thought.		
B	When I finally got my chance, I learned that solving a mystery is a lot tougher than I thought.		
C	Got my chance finally, and learned that solving a mystery is a lot tougher than I thought.		
D	I learned that solving a mystery is a lot tougher than I thought and I finally got my chance.		

Released 2005 Grade 8 SOL English Writing Test Item: "Stage Fright"

Original sentences: She told Julia how proud she would be of her. She would be proud to see her standing up on the stage reading her poem.			
	Rewrite options	Color	Reason
A	She told Julia how proud to see her she was standing up on the stage, reading her poem.		
B	She told Julia how proud she would be she would be proud to see her standing up on the stage reading her poem.		
C	She told Julia how proud she would be standing up on the stage and seeing her reading her poem.		
D	She told Julia how proud she would be to see her standing up on the stage, reading her poem.		

Revising Skill **Forming complex sentences by using subordination**

- SOL 6.6d Expand and embed ideas by using modifiers, standard coordination, and subordination in complete sentences.
- 7.8d Use clauses and phrases to vary sentences.
- 8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the “Gertrude Chandler and *The Boxcar Children*” handout on page 57

Lesson

1. Have students review the “Gertrude Chandler and *The Boxcar Children*” handout distributed earlier, and reread the passage aloud to the students.
2. Ask students to list again the strengths and weaknesses of this piece of informational writing. Allow them to use the think-pair-share technique.
3. Inform students that this lesson again involves revising writing to create a smoother piece of writing without the choppy rhythm of multiple short, simple sentences. Another technique to achieve smoothness is called “subordination.” It involves combining two short sentences into a complex sentence by using a subordinate conjunction. Write the following example on the board: “I got up early. It was a Monday.” Ask students to explain the relationship between these two sentences. (Cause and effect: Why did I get up early? Because it was Monday.) Therefore, show students that they can subordinate the idea of it being Monday to the idea of getting up early by using the subordinate conjunction *because*: “Because it was a Monday, I got up early.” or “I got up early because it was a Monday.”
4. Have students make a list of subordinate conjunctions. Make sure they include *after, although, as, as if, as long as, as though, because, before, if, in order that, provided that, since, so, so that, though, unless, until, when, where, whereas, and while*.
5. Give students another example: “Gertrude wrote books for adults for several years. Then she started writing for children.” Ask students to explain the relationship between these two sentences. (Sequence: one event follows the other.) Have them subordinate one idea to another. (“After several years of writing books for adults, Gertrude started writing for children.” or “Gertrude started writing for children after writing books for adults for several years.” or “Before starting to write for children, Gertrude wrote books for several years.”)
6. Assign pairs of students to rewrite the passage about the boxcar children by using subordination to changing simple sentences into complex sentences where it is appropriate to do so.
7. In the next revision work students do with their own writing, ask them use subordination to combine short sentences into complex sentences.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Revising Skill **Forming compound sentences by using coordination**

- SOL 6.6d Expand and embed ideas by using modifiers, standard coordination, and subordination in complete sentences.
- 7.8d Use clauses and phrases to vary sentences.
- 8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the “Gertrude Chandler and *The Boxcar Children*” handout on page 57

Lesson

1. Have students revisit the “Gertrude Chandler and *The Boxcar Children*” handout distributed earlier, and reread the passage aloud to the students.
2. Ask students to list again the strengths and weaknesses of this piece of informational writing. Allow them to use the think-pair-share technique.
3. Inform students that this lesson again involves revising writing to create a smoother piece of writing without the choppy rhythm of multiple short, simple sentences. Another technique to achieve smoothness is called “coordination.” It involves combining two short sentences into a compound sentence by using a coordinate conjunction. Write the following example on the board: “I want a ham and cheese sandwich. My mother packed my lunch with a pimiento cheese sandwich.” Ask students to explain the relationship between these two sentences. (Contradictory—one contradicts or negates the other. What did I want? A ham and cheese sandwich. What did I get? A pimiento cheese sandwich.) Therefore, show students that they can coordinate the two ideas by using the coordinating conjunction *but*: “I want a ham and cheese sandwich, but my mother packed my lunch with a pimiento cheese sandwich.”
4. Have students make a list of coordinating conjunctions. Make sure they include *for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so*. You may wish to point out the mnemonic, FANBOYS, as an aide to remembering the coordinating conjunctions.
5. Give students another example: “Gertrude wrote more books. Most of them were for grown-up readers.” Ask students to explain the relationship between these two sentences. (Additive—one adds to the other: What did Gertrude write? More books. For whom did she write most of them? For grown-up readers.) Have them coordinate the two ideas. (“Gertrude wrote more books, and most of them were for grown-up readers.”)
6. Assign pairs of students to rewrite the passage about Gertrude Chandler by using coordination to changing simple sentences into compound sentences where it is appropriate to do so.
7. In the next revision work students do with their own writing, ask them to use coordination to combine short sentences into compound sentences.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Revising Skill **Combining and varying sentences**

- SOL 6.6d Expand and embed ideas by using modifiers, standard coordination, and subordination in complete sentences.
- 7.8d Use clauses and phrases to vary sentences.
- 8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Teacher-prepared sentence strips

Highlighters

Copies of an age-appropriate, interesting magazine or newspaper article or essay

Lesson

Prepare sentence strips with short, abrupt sentences, making sure that for each sentence, there is a related sentence with which it can be combined. For example, one strip might read, "I went to camp this summer." while its matching sentence might read, "The name of the camp was Camp Kale."

1. Begin the lesson with a brief session on sentence combining, including a few examples.
2. Give each student a sentence strip, and tell students that there is someone in the room who has a related sentence so that the two sentences can be logically combined. Each student must find the related sentence, which can be combined without changing the meaning. Provide an example or two, such as the one above.
3. Have students move about the room and compare sentences. When all of the sentences are paired, ask the students to sit together. Then, ask the student pairs to write their original sentences side-by-side on the board and write the two sentences as one combined sentence below the originals.
4. Take a few minutes to discuss each of the newly combined sentences, allowing students the opportunity to explain why they chose a particular way to combine their sentences.
5. Distribute copies of an interesting, age-appropriate magazine article, newspaper article, or essay (see below) that is full of sentence variety. Have students write their definition of "sentence variety" at the top of the article. Ask for volunteers to share their definitions. Take a minute to build on students' definitions and explain "sentence variety" in terms consistent with the state scoring rubric. Explain that students should focus on sentence variety as they read the article, looking for such things as embedded clauses/phrases, standard coordination, and subordination.
6. Instruct students to read the article and highlight sentences that exemplify sentence variety. You may wish to begin the process by modeling, reading the article aloud and highlighting sentences that exhibit appropriate characteristics, before students work on their own.
7. Once students are finished, have them compare and discuss their answers with a partner. Emphasize that they should not change their answers just because their partner has something different because it is possible that different readers spotted different examples of sentence variety.
8. Review with the class the sentences that could have been highlighted, and explain that the reasons for highlighting may vary to some degree.
9. Have the student pairs (from step 3 above) choose one of the combined sentences written on the board (but not their own) and rewrite it. Discuss the revisions as a class. What changes were made? Were embedded phrases/clauses added? How can we take this lesson and apply it to our writing?

Resources

60 Essays: Contents of Essay Samplers. <http://grammar.about.com/od/60essays/a/essayscontents.htm>.

Revising Skill **Eliminating redundancy**

- SOL 6.6e Revise writing for clarity.
 7.8e Revise writing for clarity and effect.
 8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Eliminating Redundancy” worksheet
Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Lesson

1. Instruct students that unnecessary and/or needlessly repetitious words and information weaken writing by distracting the reader and causing confusion. Have students define the term *redundant*, and write a class definition on the board for students to copy into their writing portfolios.
2. Ask students to examine and comment on this sentence: “I asked my mom and dad for permission, and my parents said that I had permission to go to the fair.” Ask whether parts of the sentence are redundant, and if so, what words can be replaced or eliminated.
3. Distribute copies of the attached “Eliminating Redundancy” worksheet. Ask students to replace or eliminate redundant words and phrases from the sentences.
4. Review items from released Grade 5, Grade 8, or End of Course SOL English Writing tests for further practice in eliminating redundancy.

Resources

Released SOL English Writing tests. <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Assessment/releasedtests.html>.
Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Eliminating Redundancy

In the following sentences, cross out or replace unnecessary words.

1. It is absolutely essential for students to throw away their trash in order for us to have a tidy school.
2. At this time, it is true that the litterbugs at our school are few in number.
3. The janitor needs to make a determination about the placement of the trash can due to the fact that it is often empty because it is not used.
4. As long as littering is a problem, the school officials must provide more trash cans for the purpose of decreasing the amount of trash that is located on our campus in the form of littering.
5. More often than not, students don't think about littering and its effect or impact on the appearance of our current school campus.
6. The poisonous plant, which is red in color, is called toxic because it is harmful to babies, infants, toddlers, and children under 12.

The following example comes from the released 2001 Grade 8 SOL English Writing test:

Which of these underlined phrases repeats an idea already expressed in that sentence?

- A I always thought it would be cool to be a detective.
- B It all started when I checked the mail one day after school.
- C Buried among the bills and magazines addressed to my parents, there was a small white card included with the other mail.
- D When I showed the strange card to my friend Bob, he said, "Maybe someone's sending you a present."

Revising Skill **Maintaining consistent point of view**

- SOL 6.6e Revise writing for clarity.
 7.8e Revise writing for clarity and effect.
 8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of several news articles of interest to students (see Resources below)

Lesson

1. Discuss a recent selection read in class, such as a poem, short story, article, or excerpt from a novel. Ask students how the selection would be different if it were retold from the point of view of a different character.
2. Select a current news article of interest to students, and change several details so the point of view is inconsistent. (Online newspaper articles are easy to manipulate.) Share the revised article with the class, and ask students to note any difficulty they might have understanding it. Lead a discussion about the difficulties encountered and the reasons for them. This should lead into a discussion of the importance of maintaining consistent point of view.
3. Distribute another news article with inconsistent point of view, and have students practice correcting the errors.
4. Remove the middle section of another news article, and have students practice using consistent point of view when drafting a middle section for it. Give them freedom to supply whatever details they wish for the missing section, as long as the point of view remains consistent.

Resources

Science News for Kids. <http://www.sciencenewsforkids.org/>.

Revising Skill **Using subject-verb agreement with intervening phrases and clauses**

- SOL 6.7b Use subject-verb agreement with intervening phrases and clauses.
7.9d Choose pronouns to agree with antecedents.
8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Subject and Verb Sort Cards,” cut apart into sets
Copies of the “Subject-Verb Agreement Repair Template” worksheet
Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Lesson

1. Display the following example, and have students select the correct verbs.

Mexican food (is, are) my favorite food. The appetizer, chips, and salsa (set, sets) the stage for a fantastic meal. Sizzling fajitas, straight from the kitchen, (arrive, arrives) at the table in the blink of an eye. Everyone (wish, wishes) he or she had ordered fajitas when the sound of sizzling occurs. No one (save, saves) room for dessert.
2. Use the example to review the rules of subject-verb agreement.
3. Put students into small groups, and distribute a set of the attached “Subject-Verb Sort Cards” to each group. Have the groups sort their cards into four categories: singular subject, plural subject, singular verb, plural verb. Monitor groups for accuracy as they work.
4. Have groups match the singular subjects with singular verbs and the plural subjects with plural verbs. Then, have groups use the matches to write sentences with correct subject-verb agreement.
5. Have groups select five of their sentences to rewrite to include an intervening phrase or clause between the subject and the verb.
6. Distribute copies of the “Subject-Verb Agreement Repair Template” worksheet. Have students select one of their own writings and correct their errors in subject-verb agreement, using the template.

Subject and Verb Sort Cards

Singular subjects	Singular verbs	Plural subjects	Plural verbs
the class	walks	they	cook
Micah	believes	players	jump
Mrs. Lucas	bakes	Brian and Kelly	watch
Danny	dances	women	sing
everyone	likes	children	paint
the singer	practices	bears	growl
a woman	arrives	reporters	interview
a coach	takes	many	buy
Mr. Jones	was	several	help
the dog	saves	firefighters	bring

Subject-Verb Agreement Repair Template

Subject (singular or plural)	Verb (singular or plural)	Sentence rewritten to demonstrate agreement

Revising Skill **Using pronoun-antecedent agreement, including indefinite pronouns**

- SOL 6.7c Use pronoun-antecedent agreement to include indefinite pronouns.
7.9c Choose pronouns to agree with antecedents.
8.8c Choose the correct case and number for pronouns in prepositional phrases with compound objects.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Excerpts from a recently read short story or novel

Copies of the attached “Definite and Indefinite Pronoun Sort Cards,” cut apart into sets

Copies of the attached “Pronoun-Antecedent Practice” worksheet

Lesson

1. Ask students to identify all pronouns in the first few paragraphs of a recently read short story or novel. Have students underline the pronouns and circle their antecedents.
2. Remind students that pronouns and antecedents need to agree in person and number. This may be tricky when the pronoun and antecedent are separated from each other or when the pronoun or antecedent is an indefinite pronoun.
3. Give students examples of sentences in which the pronouns and antecedents do not agree, and have students correct the mistakes. Discuss.
4. Give each pair of students a set of the “Definite and Indefinite Pronoun Sort Cards.” Have students shuffle the cards and sort them into two piles. Monitor the sorting for accuracy.
5. Have partners write sentences that include pronouns and their antecedents. Have them underline the pronouns and circle their antecedents.
6. Distribute copies of the “Pronoun-Antecedent Practice” worksheet, and have students complete it.

Definite and Indefinite Pronoun Sort Cards

Definite pronouns	Indefinite pronouns
he	anybody
we	nobody
us	either
them	each
mine	few
hers	others
she	none
it	several
they	both
my	something

Pronoun-Antecedent Practice

Correct the errors in pronoun-antecedent agreement in the following sentences:

1. When Michelle arrived at the beach, her realized she had forgotten her towel.
2. Place each of the CDs in their case.
3. Neither of the twins wanted to spend the night at their cousin's house.
4. Kevin wants to know where you can buy an aquarium.
5. People often eat too much when we go to a buffet.

Complete the sentences using correct pronoun-antecedent agreement.

6. The trees and the bushes are dry, and _____ should be watered.
7. Aunt Rita and Uncle Jim decided that _____ will go to Mexico.
8. Julia and Richard brought _____ field trip money to school.
9. Each dog at the animal shelter had _____ pen cleaned by the volunteers.
10. Neither driver admitted that the accident was _____ fault.

Revising Skill **Using adverbs to describe verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs**

- SOL 6.7e Choose adverbs to describe verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs.
7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
8.8e Use comparative and superlative degrees in adverbs and adjectives.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Adjective and Adverb Practice” worksheet
Copies of the attached “Comparative and Superlative Review Sheet”

Lesson





1. Ask students to read these sentences and identify all the describing words:
 - The rickety, old house appeared to be haunted.
 - No family had lived in the house for six long years.
 - Late in the evening was the scariest time to walk by the house.Discuss the roles of the adjectives and adverbs identified in the sentences.
2. Review the types of questions that are answered by adjectives and adverbs, as shown on the attached “Adjective and Adverb Practice” worksheet.
3. Distribute copies of the “Adjective and Adverb Practice” worksheet, and review the given adjectives and adverbs. Then, have students complete the charts.
4. Have students write a paragraph using a teacher-specified number of adjectives and adverbs. After completing the paragraphs, have students exchange papers to identify the adjectives, adverbs, and words they modify.
5. Have students share with the class a sample sentence containing at least one adjective and one adverb. Correct the sentences as necessary for usage errors, for example, using an adjective instead of an adverb or using incorrect comparative or superlative forms.
6. Distribute copies of the attached “Comparative and Superlative Review Sheet.” Review the examples given, and tell students to complete the sheet. You may wish to give students a list of certain modifiers that frequently cause trouble.
7. Have students review samples of their own writings to make corrections in the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs.

Adjective and Adverb Practice

Adjectives answer the questions shown below. Fill in the chart with additional adjectives.

Which one? 	What kind? 	How many? 	How much? 
each	free	several	extra
that	serious	two	no
youngest	elegant	many	plenty
this	blue	countless	some
	playful	various	enough

Adverbs answer the questions shown below. Fill in the chart with additional adverbs.

When? 	Where? 	How? 	To what extent? 
daily	outside	loudly	almost
often	there	cautiously	totally
never	nearby	gently	drastically
suddenly	away	neatly	very
early	everywhere	willingly	fully

Comparative and Superlative Review Sheet

1. Complete the center column by adding additional adjectives and adverbs.
2. Complete the comparative and superlative columns.
3. Cut on the dotted lines, and fold on the heavy solid lines to create a hands-on review sheet.

Comparative	Adjective or Adverb	Superlative
more fun	fun	most fun
less gracefully	gracefully	least gracefully

Revising Skill **Using comparative and superlative forms of adjectives**

SOL 8.8e Use comparative and superlative degrees in adverbs and adjectives.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Several items for students to describe
Internet access for each student

Lesson

1. Get students thinking about adjectives by placing several objects (e.g., a shoe, garbage can, hat, marker, pencil) on a table in the front of the room. Tell students they have several minutes to write down as many adjectives as they can to describe each object.
2. Write the following chart on the board:

ADJECTIVES		
Positive form: describes an item	Comparative form: compares an item to one other item	Superlative form: compares an item to two or more items
The shoe is <i>dirty</i> .	The shoe is <i>dirtier</i> than the hat.	The shoe is the <i>dirtiest</i> item on the table.

Discuss how the adjective *dirty* has been used to (1) describe the shoe, (2) compare the shoe to the hat, and (3) compare the shoe to all the other items.

3. Have a student share an adjective he/she used to describe one of the items on display and then use the adjective in a sentence describing the item. Write this sentence in the Positive column.
4. Have another student use the same adjective in a sentence comparing that same item with another item on display. Write the sentence in the Comparative column.
5. Have a third student use the same adjective in a sentence comparing that same item to two or more items on display. Write the sentence in the Superlative column.
6. Review with students the three forms of adjectives:
 - The *positive form* describes a noun or pronoun without comparing it to anyone or anything else.
 - The *comparative form* (-er) compares two persons, places, things, or ideas.
 - The *superlative form* (-est) compares three or more persons, places, things, or ideas.
7. Repeat steps 3, 4, and 5 with other students and different adjectives.
8. Have students copy the chart, choose five of their adjectives, and write sentences using those adjectives to related to the objects in the front of the room and using these adjectives in the positive, comparative, and superlative forms. The adjectives should be used in the positive, comparative, and superlative forms.
9. Have students exchange their charts with a partner and look for errors.
10. Instruct students to go to the Web site listed below and complete the questions on comparative and superlative forms of adjectives.

Resources

Regular Comparatives and Superlatives.

<http://web2.uvcs.uvic.ca/elc/studyzone/330/grammar/regcom1.htm>.

Revising Skill **Including sensory details in descriptive writing**

- SOL 6.6c Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, organization, elaboration and unity.
7.8c Choose vocabulary and information that will create voice and tone.
8.7c Select specific vocabulary and information

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached "Sensory Details Chart"
Copies of the attached "Description Template"
Colored markers or chalk

Lesson

1. Ask students to describe the cafeteria at lunchtime, and list the responses on the board.
2. Give five students colored markers or chalk to find and circle the five senses found in the class list, according to the following color code:
 - Touch: red
 - Taste: orange
 - Sight: green
 - Sound: purple
 - Smell: blue
3. Distribute copies of the attached "Sensory Details Chart," and ask students to fill in as many details in the appropriate columns as they can, using details from the board as well as making them up from their own imagination.
4. Distribute copies of the attached "Description Template," and ask students to use it to draft a paragraph describing the cafeteria at lunchtime. The paragraph must logically follow the first paragraph provided and lead into the third paragraph, and it must include at least two sensory details from each section of their chart.
5. Allow students time to complete their descriptive paragraph of the cafeteria at lunchtime.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Sensory Details Chart

Touch	Taste	Smell
bumped while in line	salty potato chip	vinegar
Sound	Sight	Other Details
"Hey, Keisha! Over here."	ketchup escaping from dispenser and dripping onto the floor	27-minute lunch period

Revising Skill **Revising informational writing**

- SOL 6.6e Revise writing for clarity.
 7.8e Revise writing for clarity and effect.
 8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 2 hours of a 3 hour lesson

Materials

Student drafts of informational writing done in the prewriting skill lesson on page 12

Scissors

Tape or glue

Computer access for all students

Sample newspaper informational article

Lesson

1. Ask students to cut their informational writing draft into four paragraphs and rearrange the order of the paragraphs to organize it in a different way. Have students tape or glue the new arrangement on another sheet of paper, leaving space between the paragraphs to add subheadings and transitions.
2. Have students decide on a creative title for their article and write it at the top. Then, have them create subheadings for each section.
3. Ask students to compose a hook for their first sentence, if they have not already done so. Explain that one technique is to begin with an interesting or odd fact or question, for example: "Virginia is not the only state to claim the dogwood as its state flower."
4. Ask students to add a transition word or phrase to connect the ideas in one paragraph to those in the preceding paragraph. Examples are *in addition*, *finally*, *then*, *also*, *in the past*, and *it's also interesting to note*.
5. Arrange computer time for students. Have students open a new word-processing document, name it, and save it in a designated folder. Then, have students type their final informational article about the dogwood, spell check it, and grammar check it.
6. Instruct students on a proper format for informational writing, using a newspaper article as an example. The article should include the following features:
 - A centered title in a larger, bold font than is used for the text of the article
 - A byline
 - Text of the article arranged in two equal columns
 - A centered subheading before each paragraph
 - An eye-catching sidebar
 - A graphic that matches the article
7. Display the final printed articles on a bulletin board in the classroom, and point out examples of the best features.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Revising Skill **Revising persuasive writing for voice and tone**

- SOL 6.6c Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, tone, and voice.
7.8c Choose vocabulary and information that will create voice and tone.
8.7c Select specific vocabulary and information.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Wes’s Letter to the Editor” handout (found on page 16) (from the released 2001 Grade 8 SOL English Reading/Literature and Research test located on the Web at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/2001sol/english_rlr_8.pdf)

Copy of the attached “Wes’s Revised Letter to the Editor—A Beginning”

Copies of the attached Written Expression Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests (see Appendix B)

Lesson

1. Have students access and review the previously used handout “Wes’s Letter to the Editor.”
2. Display the attached “Wes’s Revised Letter to the Editor—A Beginning,” and have a student volunteer to read it. Hold a class discussion about this revision, asking questions such as: “Who is the audience for this letter? What is the purpose of this letter? If the whole letter were revised with this very different kind of tone and voice, would the letter be likely to influence a member of city council? Why or why not?” Guide students into a discussion of voice and tone in writing, pointing out the wide range of possibilities and how the tone chosen must match the purpose of the writing. Ask what the result might be if the wrong tone is chosen for a writing.
3. Have students refer again to the original letter and identify places where the voice and tone could use some improvement. Have them explain their reasons for thinking these places need to be improved. Have them also explain how they would revise these sentences or passages.
4. Distribute copies of the attached Written Expression Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests. Review with students the information on the handout. Then, have students revise the original letter to make the voice and tone even more effective.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Wes's Revised Letter to the Editor—A Beginning

Hey Guys,

Wuz Up? I just gotta tell you that this here town is run by some fools who care more about the tourists than the locals.

Revising Skill **Applying knowledge of revision techniques to a persuasive draft**

- SOL 7.8b Elaborate the central idea in an organized manner.
 7.8e Revise writing for clarity and effect.
 8.7b Organize details to elaborate the central idea.
 8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Sticky notes

Copies of the attached “Shortening the School Week” worksheet

Highlighters in orange, purple, pink, yellow, green, and blue

Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Lesson

1. Put students into writing groups of three or four. Give each group a sticky note and one minute to jot down on the note specific components of writing they think a good persuasive essay should contain.
2. Allow each group to share their results aloud, and make a list on the board of the components mentioned. The list should include items such as
 - attention grabber
 - opinion statement
 - solid, convincing reasons
 - supporting details
 - elaboration
 - examples
 - transitions.Collect the sticky notes for use at the end of class.
3. Distribute a copy of the attached “Shortening the School Week” worksheet to each student, along with a set of six colored highlighters. Read the directions on the worksheet aloud, and address questions and concerns.
4. Allow groups 10 to 15 minutes to complete the activity. Be sure all students are participating in the group discussions as they decide which things to highlight.
5. Distribute student writing portfolios, and ask students to take out the completed draft of their persuasive writing (from prewriting lesson on page 25). Explain that these persuasive essays should contain the same parts that were just found and highlighted in the “Shortening the School Week” essay. Have students use the same colors to highlight their own persuasive essays. If they cannot locate one or more of the items listed in the directions, then they should add the item(s) at this time. Remind students to identify and add any overused or boring words in their essays to their “Tired Terms” chart in their writing portfolio.
6. Explain to students that revision is a very important step in the writing process and that it must not be rushed. Remind students that during revision, they are correcting errors in *two* of the three writing domains—written expression and usage/mechanics.
7. Return the sticky notes completed at the beginning of class to the groups. Have students compare the components written on their group’s sticky notes to their own persuasive essays in order to assess how many components they actually had included in their essays. Have each student give himself/herself a letter grade on his/her essay and write an explanation for that grade.
8. Have students file their partially revised persuasive essays in their writing portfolios.

Shortening the School Week

Read the persuasive essay below, and use highlighters to do the following:

- Highlight the attention grabber in orange.
- Highlight the opinion statement in purple.
- Highlight the three reasons in pink (each time they appear).
- Highlight all transitions in yellow.
- Highlight all supporting details in green.
- Highlight all elaboration, examples, explanations, personal appeals in blue.

Picture this! You're walking down the hallway and you notice that all of the students are dressed alike. I would find that very boring, not to mention a misrepresentation of students' personalities. This is the reason why, when I heard that uniforms were being considered, I knew I had to write to express my opinion. I do not believe students should be forced to wear uniforms at this school. Forcing students to wear school uniforms will reduce freedom of choice, take away individuality, and cost way too much money.

First of all, the implementation of uniforms greatly reduces freedom of choice because, as of now, students have no choice in the style of uniforms. This decision falls to the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). Since we, the student body, are the ones who are going to be wearing the uniforms, I believe we should have some input as to how they look. Since we do not, I believe uniforms should not be made mandatory. Furthermore, the PTA doesn't completely know the varying tastes of the student body. Consequently, they can't accurately choose uniforms that everyone will like.

In addition, implementing uniforms will stifle our individuality since all of our clothes will look the same. Since clothes are a major form of expression for most students, including myself, taking away our sense of clothing style will be the equivalent of taking a part of us away. We wear clothes to tell who we are, and with the implementation of uniforms, this will be impossible.

Lastly, implementing uniforms will be costly for both the school and parents. Paying for uniforms on top of casual clothes will get quite expensive, which will not help underprivileged families who already struggle with the cost of clothes. Plus the uniforms will probably only get worn during school hours, unlike regular or casual clothes which can be worn all day, every day so that parents get their money's worth. Requiring uniforms means people will be buying clothes for a sole purpose; clothes their children probably don't even want. This is a waste in my opinion.

In conclusion, I do not believe students at our school will benefit by being forced to wear school uniforms. Implementing mandatory school uniforms will have an ill effect on our students for many reasons including the absence of freedom of choice, high costs, and loss of individuality. Please consider these reasons before making any final decisions in this matter.

Revising Skill **Revising, editing, and publishing narrative writing**

- SOL 6.6c Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, organization, elaboration, and unity.
- 6.6d Expand embedded ideas by using modifiers, standard coordination, and subordination in complete sentences.
- 6.6e Revise writing for clarity.
- 7.8c Choose vocabulary and information that will create voice and tone.
- 7.8d Use clauses and phrases to vary sentences.
- 7.8e Revise writing for clarity and effect.
- 8.7c Select specific vocabulary and information.
- 8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Dictionaries

Thesauruses

Sticky notes

Lesson

1. Distribute student writing portfolios, and instruct students to take out the completed prewriting and draft versions of their personal narrative writing (from prewriting lesson on page 20). Ask students to write at the top of their rough draft at least one specific example to make their writing more vivid and interesting to the reader. Have students share their specific examples.
2. Since students are writing narratives, inform them that using dialogue is one good way to keep readers interested. This conversation between or among characters in the story, if used correctly, helps readers feel like they are a part of what is happening. Challenge your students to use effective dialogue several times throughout their narratives.
3. Review the writing prompt with students, recalling key words. Focus especially on the phrase “Be sure to be specific.” Explain to students that they should look for specificity in their writing during the revision process.
4. Refer students to the rubrics in their portfolios. Make sure they understand that their papers will be assessed according to the criteria in these rubrics. Spend some time reviewing each domain. Review the revision and editor’s checklists in their portfolios, reminding students that these are the guidelines they will use to check their papers.
5. Before students actually start to revise, remind them that they will need to find places in their papers to add dialogue, if they did not include it earlier. Show them an example of a place it could occur naturally versus a place where it would sound awkward. Again, refer students to the sample personal narratives that were used at the beginning of the prewriting lesson.
6. Allow students time to revise and edit their papers individually, but also encourage peer editing; another set of eyes can often find mistakes that the writer would not see in his/her own writing. Allow students the remainder of class time to write the final, clean draft.
7. Have students organize all parts of their personal narrative writing for collection. Distribute sticky notes, and instruct students to rank on a scale of 1 to 10 their feelings about writing the personal narrative writing: 1 = very easy, 10 = extremely difficult. Also, have them write on the note a brief explanation for the ranking. Have students affix the note to their final draft for collection.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Revision Checklists

Nordquist, Richard. *Revision Checklist*, About.com.

<http://grammar.about.com/od/developingessays/a/revisecheck.htm>

Revision Checklist for Essays. The RSCC Online Writing Lab.
<http://www.rsc.c.c.tn.us/owl&writingcenter/OWL/EssayRev.html>

Editing Checklists

Editing Checklist. Jefferson County Schools. <http://jc-schools.net/write/checklist.pdf>.

Grammar and Composition. About.com.
<http://grammar.about.com/od/correctingerrors/a/editchecklist.htm>. Features editing checklist.

Proofreaders Marks

Proofreaders' Marks. Merriam Webster. <http://www.m-w.com/mw/table/proofrea.htm>

Revising Skill **Revising, editing, and publishing expository writing**

- SOL 6.6c Select vocabulary and information to enhance the central idea, organization, elaboration, and unity.
- 6.6d Expand embedded ideas by using modifiers, standard coordination, and subordination in complete sentences.
- 6.6e Revise writing for clarity.
- 7.8c Choose vocabulary and information that will create voice and tone.
- 7.8d Use clauses and phrases to vary sentences.
- 7.8e Revise writing for clarity and effect.
- 8.7c Select specific vocabulary and information.
- 8.7d Revise writing for word choice, sentence variety, and transitions among paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Dictionaries

Thesauruses

Lesson

1. Review the purpose of expository writing, and remind students of the importance of keeping that purpose in mind throughout the writing process. Tie purpose and audience for this writing back to the prompt.
2. Distribute student writing portfolios, and instruct students to take out the completed prewriting and draft versions of their expository writing (from prewriting lesson on page 23). Tell students that their writings should be revised, edited, and published by the end of today's class. Have students refer to writing process notes in the portfolios, if necessary.
3. Review the writing domain rubrics in the portfolios so that students will understand how their papers will be assessed. Review the revision and editor's checklists in the portfolios, reminding students that these are the guidelines they will use to check their papers.
4. Allow students time to revise and edit their papers, using their revision and editor's checklists.
5. Put students into pairs for peer editing, which is helpful not only because another pair of eyes will be examining the paper, but also because the author will understand whether or not the writing is clear to someone else. Instruct the students to read their partners' papers aloud—but just loud enough so the author can hear it—and to make any corrections he/she deems necessary, including circling any words that need to be listed on the author's "Tired Terms" chart.
6. Instruct students to add any circled words to their "Tired Terms" chart and to use a dictionary and/or thesaurus to find alternate words. Upon completion of this task, students should be ready to write their final draft.
7. Allow students the remainder of time to write the final, clean draft.
8. Have students organize all parts of their expository writing for collection.
9. Have students complete an exit slip on which they list the tired terms that they removed from their paper.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Revision Checklists

Nordquist, Richard. *Revision Checklist*, About.com.

<http://grammar.about.com/od/developingessays/a/revischeck.htm>

Revision Checklist for Essays. The RSCC Online Writing Lab.

<http://www.rsc.c.c.tn.us/owl&writingcenter/OWL/EssayRev.html>

Editing Checklists

Editing Checklist. Jefferson County Schools. <http://jc-schools.net/write/checklist.pdf>.

Grammar and Composition. About.com.

<http://grammar.about.com/od/correctingerrors/a/editchecklist.htm>. Features editing checklist.

Proofreaders Marks

Proofreaders' Marks. Merriam Webster. <http://www.m-w.com/mw/table/proofrea.htm>

Revising Skill **Revising, editing, and publishing persuasive writing**

- SOL 7.8 The student will develop narrative, expository, and persuasive writing.
8.7 The student will write in a variety of forms, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and informational.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)
Dictionaries
Thesauruses
Sticky notes

Lesson

1. Distribute student writing portfolios, and instruct students to take out the partially revised, highlighted version of their persuasive writing (from revising lesson on page 87). Remind students of the purpose of the highlighting exercise, and explain that they will now finish the revising and editing process and write the final version. Quickly review the writing process plan in the students' portfolios, and have students check off the steps they have finished for this persuasive essay.
2. Review the revision and editor's checklists in the portfolios, reminding students that these are the guidelines they will use to check their papers. You may also wish to have them scan the composing, written expression, and usage/mechanics rubrics in their portfolios so that they will remember how their papers will be assessed in these three domains. Emphasize that these are the things they should be focusing on during the revising and editing processes.
3. Have students complete the revising and editing processes, using the checklists and rubrics in their writing portfolios. Remind them that as they do this, they should be looking for items to add to the "Tired Terms" and "Writing Tips" charts in their portfolios.
4. Allow students to peer edit in pairs.
5. Once the revising and editing processes are complete, have students write the final, clean draft.
6. Have students write a critique of their persuasive writing on a sticky note, assigning their writing a letter grade based on the rubrics for the three domains and explaining exactly why they assigned that grade. Have the students affix the note on their paper for collection.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Revision Checklists

Nordquist, Richard. *Revision Checklist*, About.com.

<http://grammar.about.com/od/developingessays/a/revischeck.htm>

Revision Checklist for Essays. The RSCC Online Writing Lab.

<http://www.rsccl.org/owl&writingcenter/OWL/EssayRev.html>

Editing Checklists

Editing Checklist. Jefferson County Schools. <http://jc-schools.net/write/checklist.pdf>.

Grammar and Composition. About.com.

<http://grammar.about.com/od/correctingerrors/a/editchecklist.htm>. Features editing checklist.

Proofreaders Marks

Proofreaders' Marks. Merriam Webster. <http://www.m-w.com/mw/table/proofrea.htm>

Revising Skill **Analyzing and revising one’s own writing**

- SOL 6.6 The student will write narratives, descriptions, and explanations.
7.8 The student will develop narrative, expository, and persuasive writing.
8.7 The student will write in a variety of forms, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and informational.

Time 1 hour

Materials


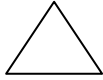
- Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)
Copies of the attached “Plus-Delta Chart” handout (optional)
Staplers

Lesson

1. This lesson is germane to the end of the school year. Tell students that they are going to examine their own development as writers over the year by using a “Plus-Delta Chart” to analyze their own assessed writings.
2. Distribute students’ writing portfolios, and either distribute copies of the “Plus-Delta Chart” handout, or instruct students to make one themselves. Have students go through their portfolios and analyze their writings, listing in the Plus column areas in which they consider they have grown and listing in the Delta column areas in which they feel they need further improvement. Instruct students to make the notes on their charts as specific as possible, as vague notes will not be especially helpful next year. Students may wish to take some notes also on their “Writing Tips” chart during this time.
3. Spend a few minutes as a whole group discussing some common strengths and weaknesses in the students’ writings.
4. Instruct students to look back through their assessed papers to find one they believe is their weakest paper. Emphasize that this may or may not be the one with the lowest score. Explain that even though the paper has been assessed, improvements can still be made, and they should now go back through the selected paper and edit or revise it. Tell them to think about sentence variety, word choice, voice, elaboration, and clarity. Some students may even need or wish to make structural or organizational changes. Be sure to explain that their revised final draft should not look anything like their first final draft; the purpose of this activity is to make major improvements to the assessed paper.
5. Have students staple the new final drafts on top of the previously assessed papers and file them and the Plus-Delta charts in the left pockets of their writing portfolios.

Plus-Delta Chart

Writing Portfolio page ____

<p>PLUS</p> 	<p>DELTA</p> 

Editing Skill **Using apostrophes in singular and plural possessive nouns**

- SOL 6.7 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.
- 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- 8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Overhead projector

Transparency of the attached “Forming Possessives of Nouns” practice tables

Computers with Internet access

Lesson

This lesson will help students distinguish singular nouns, singular possessive nouns, plural nouns, and plural possessive nouns.

1. Post the following groups of words:
 - singer, singer’s, singers, singers’
 - computer, computer’s, computers, computers’Ask students to think about the differences in meaning among the words in each group and to share the differences in meaning. Then, have the students label the words either “singular noun,” “singular possessive noun,” “plural noun,” or “plural possessive noun.”
2. Review the rules for forming the possessive of singular and plural nouns.
3. Display the attached “Forming Possessives of Nouns” practice tables on an overhead, and guide the class in completing the first table, using the Think Aloud strategy to reinforce the rules for forming possessives.
4. Have students complete the second table independently, using the rules for forming possessives.
5. Have students go to the Web site listed below and perform the activity, which provides feedback for each choice made.
6. As a class, brainstorm a list of nouns that are related, e.g., *whale, shark, fin, diver, submarine, sand, shipwreck, boat, captain, and coral*. Have students use this list to write a paragraph that includes at least one singular noun, one singular possessive noun, one plural noun, and one plural possessive noun. Students should leave a blank where the noun belongs so papers can be exchanged and completed.
7. Have students review samples of their own writings to make corrections.

Resources

Exploring for Possessives. Harcourt School Publishers.

http://www.harcourtschool.com/activity/exploring_possessives/index.html. Interactive exercise in choosing the correct forms of nouns.

Forming Possessives of Nouns

Class Practice

Singular Noun	Singular Possessive	Plural Noun	Plural Possessive
car			
man			
friend			
puppy			
CD player			

Select a pair of words from the table to use correctly in a sentence.

Independent Practice

Singular Noun	Singular Possessive	Plural Noun	Plural Possessive
watch			
athlete			
mother			
shelf			
television			
	child's		
		speakers	
			ladies'

Select a pair of words from the table to use correctly in a sentence.

Editing Skill **Avoiding run-on sentences**

- SOL 6.7 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.
- 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- 8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Sentence Solutions” worksheet
Scissors
Copies of the attached “Sentence Formation Repair Chart”
Student writing portfolios

Lesson

1. Display the following paragraph. Ask students to examine the sentence structure to identify errors.

The ride home on the school bus seemed to take forever because there were too many kids on the bus since the new neighborhood was built. Not enough space. I think they are going to make new bus routes and that will help because now there will be two buses instead of one.
2. Discuss the impact poor sentence structure has on the reader.
3. Ask students to correct the sentence structure. Model a few different ways to correct the errors.
4. Tell students that it is often easier to perceive the issues with sentence structure when reading a piece aloud as opposed to reading it silently. Suggest to students that when reading must be silent, it may help to place one finger where the sentence begins and another finger where it ends, which will allow them to focus on each sentence individually.
5. Distribute scissors and copies of the attached “Sentence Solutions” worksheet, and have students cut out the three signal cards on the dotted lines. Review each group of words, and have all students signal their answer by holding up a card. Then, call on a student signaling the correct answer to explain it.
6. Have students rewrite the incorrect sentences on the “Sentence Solutions” worksheet. Use other sentences for additional practice.
7. Have students review samples of their own writings to make corrections. They may find it helpful to use the attached “Sentence Formation Repair Chart” (from the *English SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence for Grades 6–8*, page 198) to focus on and track specific corrections.

Resources

English SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence for Grades 6–8.
<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/EnhancedSandS/english6-8.doc>

Sentence Solutions

Writers should avoid run-on sentences and sentence fragments.

Label each group of words below as a sentence (S), run-on (R), or sentence fragment (SF).

_____ 1. The new mall will be open in two months, it is located near the old high school.

_____ 2. James an unusually tall man.

_____ 3. My brother and cousin play football on Saturdays, I watch television.

_____ 4. I studied.

_____ 5. Because Jaime forgot her homework.

Sentence



Run-on



**Sentence
Fragment**



Sentence Formation Repair Chart

Writing Portfolio page ____

Group of Words	Problem	Solution

Editing Skill **Avoiding the use of double negatives**

- SOL 6.7 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.
- 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- 8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Double Trouble” worksheet
Scissors

Lesson

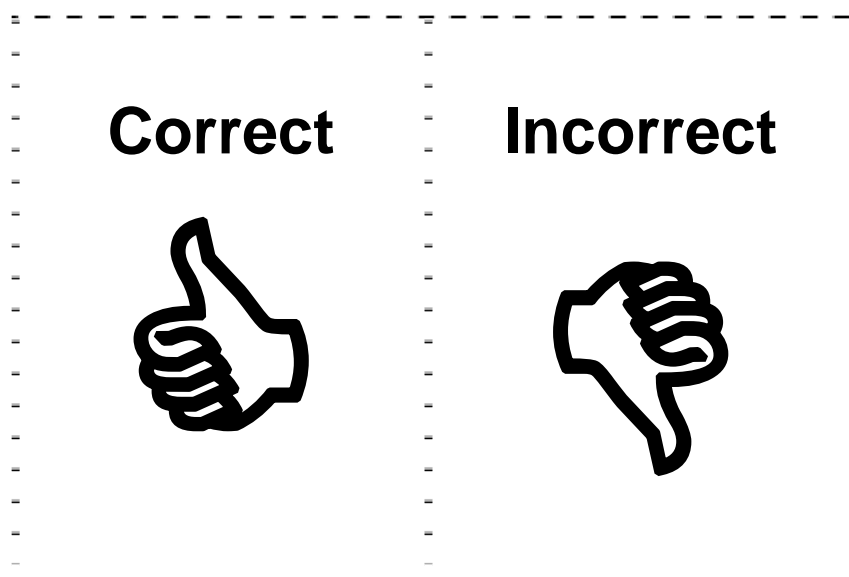
1. Display the following sentences, and ask students to figure out what each sentence *really* means:
 - My sister didn't ask for nothing.
 - Brad could not find nowhere to park.
2. Show students how two negative words create a positive meaning. Remind students that people may understand what you mean to say when you use a double negative in casual conversation but that actually, double negatives mean the opposite of what you are trying to say. Therefore, double negatives must be avoided whenever language, spoken or written, should be correct.
3. Brainstorm and post a list of negative words, e.g., *no, not, nothing, neither, hardly, barely, and scarcely*.
4. Distribute scissors and copies of the attached “Double Trouble” worksheet, and have students cut out the two signal cards on the dotted lines. Review each sentence, and have all students signal their answer by holding up a card. Then, call on a student signaling the correct answer to explain it.
5. Have students work with a partner to correct all incorrect sentences on the worksheet. Have them rewrite each sentence two different ways, removing or replacing first one and then the other of the two negatives.
6. Hold a class discussion about the often underused words *any* and *anything*. Have students give examples of sentences involving a negative and one of these words. Point out that it is often one of these words that is needed when a double negative is mistakenly used. Have students review the worksheet and circle all instances of these two words.
7. Review the reason that a double negative is wrong. (It creates a *positive* meaning—exactly the opposite of what you are trying to say.) Have students review samples of their own writings to make corrections.

Double Trouble

Double negatives must be avoided in speaking and writing because they create a *positive* meaning that is actually the opposite of what you are trying to say.

Label each sentence either "Correct" or "Incorrect."

- _____ 1. I hardly have nothing left in my savings account.
- _____ 2. Nobody wanted to see none of the movies listed.
- _____ 3. She barely has any gas in the truck.
- _____ 4. Tara couldn't see nothing when she wore her mask.
- _____ 5. The hole in his shirt wasn't hardly noticeable.
- _____ 6. The neighbors reported they didn't hear anything unusual.
- _____ 7. Didn't you see none of the football game?
- _____ 8. We had scarcely any snow last winter.
- _____ 9. Even at the buffet, my picky brother couldn't find nothing to eat.
- _____ 10. She didn't accept neither apology.



Editing Skill **Editing for correct use of commas**

- SOL 6.7 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.
- 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- 8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Sentences with Commas” pages on overhead transparencies

Scissors

10 envelopes

Overhead projector

Transparencies

Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Lesson

Before undertaking this lesson, copy the attached “Sentences with Commas” pages onto overhead transparencies, and cut out the pieces of the 10 sentences. Make sure to keep the pieces of each sentence associated with each other and separate from the other pieces by, for example, placing each set into a separate envelope labeled “Sentence 1,” “Sentence 2,” etc.

1. Review with students the rules for placing commas in sentences.
2. Place the pieces of the first sentence on the overhead so that they seem scattered around randomly. Avoid any order that resembles the original sentence. Ask students to examine the pieces, make up a sentence composed of *all* the pieces, and write it down.
3. Call on a student to give his/her version of the sentence, and demonstrate it on the overhead. Ask the student to give the rule(s) behind the placement of the comma(s). Discuss the correct or incorrect use of the comma(s) with the class.
4. If the student gives an incorrect arrangement of the pieces, call on another student to give his/her version of the sentence and the rule(s) behind the placement of the comma(s).
5. Once the correct version of the sentence is established, have students copy it into their writing portfolios on a page called “Examples of Sentences with Commas.”
6. Repeat steps 2–5 for the remaining nine sentences.

Sentences with Commas

Sentence 1

because he found a cockroach baked under the cheese of his pizza ,
John won't eat in the cafeteria .

Sentence 2

when a thunderstorm is crashing overhead , Jane sits on the sofa
and hopes that the roof doesn't blow off .

Sentence 3

unfortunately , my dog Rags loves chewing on table legs
and shredding newspapers .

Sentence 4

get those straws out of your nose , Bob !

Sentence 5

my friend Maggie , who microwaves all her meals ,
has decided to sell her stove to buy textbooks .

Sentence 6

Samantha went to The Olive Garden **with her boyfriend Michael**
and his little sister Allison .

Sentence 7

Alan drove to his girlfriend Julia's house **to beg forgiveness** ,
but he found Donald's car already parked in the driveway .

Sentence 8

sipping hot tea , **Janet enjoyed an hour of television**
as her cat purred on her lap .

Sentence 9

Mrs. Johnston , **the head chef at the local restaurant** ,
makes the best chicken pot pie .

Sentence 10

as Karen searched the abandoned house **for empty bottles** ,
spider webs snatched at her hair , **and insects scurried from her path** .

Editing Skill **Editing for usage and mechanics, lesson 1**

- SOL 6.7 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.
- 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- 8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour

Materials

- Copies of the attached “Usage/Mechanics Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests” handout (see Appendix C, page 141)
- Copies of 3- or 4-score-point NCS Mentor anchor papers for Usage/Mechanics (Go to the NCS Mentor Web site listed under Resources below; click “Grade 8”; click “Anchor Papers” tab at top; click “Usage/Mechanics” at top left; click various “3” and “4” buttons under “Usage/Mechanics” to access various papers.)
- Copies of the attached “Independent Correction Sheet” handout
- Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Lesson

1. Distribute copies of the attached “Usage/Mechanics Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests” handout, and have students read the rubric individually.
2. Have students discuss the language for each score with a partner. Ask them to look for similarities and differences.
3. Have partners share their findings. Guide the discussion to place emphasis on the key words *consistent*, *reasonable*, *inconsistent*, and *little*. Point out that the highest score of a 4 does not necessarily indicate a perfect paper.
4. Review with the class a few of the NCS Mentor anchor papers to provide practice in scoring for this domain.
5. Provide each pair of students a set of four selected NCS Mentor anchor papers—one representing each score. Have partners work together to determine the scores for the sample writings. Then, have partners share their scores and rationale for the scores with the class.
6. Display the annotations and overlays with students, and discuss.
7. Repeat this process with additional writings until students become comfortable with the process.
8. Distribute previously assessed writing assignments to students. Ask students to score their own papers, using the usage/mechanics rubric.
9. Provide students with a copy of the attached “Independent Correction Sheet” to use to keep track of areas in which they can improve their writing.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Pearson Mentor™! <http://www.ncsmentor.com/>. The Pearson Mentor program is a computer-based professional development tool that provides an effective bridge between statewide performance assessment and instructional strategies in the classroom. To access “NCS Mentor for Virginia,” click “customers” in the black bar at top; click “Click here for Virginia”; under “New User,” type the key word *Virginia*; create your profile by creating your user name and password to be used each time you log in.

Independent Correction Sheet

Writing Portfolio page ____

Use this sheet to keep track of areas in which you can improve your writing.

Sentence with the problem	Particular problem area(s)	Corrected version of the sentence
	grammar word choice run-on comma(s) clarity spelling punctuation sentence structure verb tense documentation passive voice dead words	
	grammar word choice run-on comma(s) clarity spelling punctuation sentence structure verb tense documentation passive voice dead words	
	grammar word choice run-on comma(s) clarity spelling punctuation sentence structure verb tense documentation passive voice dead words	
	grammar word choice run-on comma(s) clarity spelling punctuation sentence structure verb tense documentation passive voice dead words	
	grammar word choice run-on comma(s) clarity spelling punctuation sentence structure verb tense documentation passive voice dead words	

From Kelly Gallagher, *Teaching Adolescent Writers* , 150–151.

Editing Skill **Editing for usage and mechanics, lesson 2**

- SOL 6.7 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.
- 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- 8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour








Materials

Sample advertisements that use informal language
Samples of students' writings
Copies of the attached "Editing Role Cards"
Sticky notes (or scratch paper and paper clips)

Lesson

1. Display advertisements that use incorrect or informal language, e.g., i'm lovin' it. Ask students to identify the purpose of the advertisement and explain why the language is not correct. Remind students that there are various purposes for writing and that while formal writing requires correct language, sometimes informal writing does not.
2. Review with students the skills included in the usage/mechanics domain.
3. Tell students that this lesson involves peer editing, with each student taking a particular editing role. Display the Editing Role Cards, and review them with students. Model the editing roles with some sample writings, noting the strengths and areas for improvement found in the writings. Include the asking of clarifying questions that would be helpful to the authors.
4. Put students into groups of at most seven students each. Assign an editing role to each group member, based on his/her personal strengths as a writer. It is not essential to assign all roles to each group.
5. Have student groups work to provide collective feedback to each writer in their group. Writers will circulate their writings within the group, and each editor will take four to five minutes with each paper to record feedback on sticky notes or scratch paper and attach it to the paper.
6. Have students review samples of their own writings to make corrections.

Editing Role Cards

	<p>Provides the author feedback in the area of sentence formation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each sentence is complete. ▪ Run-on sentences are avoided. ▪ Coordinating conjunctions (e.g., <i>and</i>, <i>but</i>, <i>so</i>) are not used to begin sentences.
	<p>Provides the author feedback in the area of agreement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Subject and verbs agree (e.g., single subjects have single verbs). ▪ Pronouns and antecedents match in number and gender.
	<p>Provides the author feedback in the area of punctuation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Punctuation is used correctly at the ends of all sentences. ▪ Commas are used correctly in dates and series. ▪ Dialogue is punctuated correctly. ▪ Apostrophes are used correctly in contractions and possessives.
	<p>Provides the author feedback in the area of spelling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frequently used words are spelled correctly. ▪ Homophones (e.g., <i>there</i>, <i>their</i>, <i>they're</i>) are used correctly.
	<p>Provides the author feedback in the area of capitalization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First words of sentences are capitalized. ▪ Proper nouns are capitalized. ▪ The pronoun <i>I</i> is capitalized. ▪ School subjects are capitalized, as appropriate.
	<p>Provides the author feedback in the area of usage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>A/an</i> are used correctly. ▪ <i>I</i> is used in compound subjects (e.g., <i>Mark and I</i>). ▪ Double negatives are avoided. ▪ Plural endings are used correctly.
	<p>Provides the author feedback in the area of formatting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paragraphs are indented. ▪ Words at the ends of lines are hyphenated between syllables. ▪ Dialogue lines are indented when the speaker changes.

Editing Skill **Editing for correct use of quotation marks**

- SOL 6.7 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.
- 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- 8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Overhead projector

Samples of students' writings containing dialogue

Highlighters

Lesson

1. Display on the overhead a paragraph containing incorrectly punctuated dialogue, and have the students correct it as a class.
2. Review with students the rules for the use of quotation marks.
3. Give each student a sample of his/her own writing containing dialogue, and have students highlight all quotation marks and ending punctuation found in the dialogue. Then, have students examine the highlighted punctuation to see if the rules were followed. Ask students to revise their paper as needed by moving, adding, or removing punctuation.
4. Instruct students to share their writings with a partner and discuss the rules behind each quotation mark and ending punctuation used. Circulate through the room, helping students as needed.
5. Collect the students' writings and check for accuracy.

Resources

"Quotation Marks." *Online Writing Lab (OWL)*. Purdue University,
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_quote.html.

Editing Skill **Maintaining consistent verb tense across paragraphs**

- SOL 6.7d Maintain consistent tense inflections across paragraphs.
 7.9e Edit for verb tense consistency
 8.8d Maintain consistent verb tense across paragraphs.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of several news articles of interest to students

Lesson

1. Select a current news article of interest to students, and change several of the verbs within the article so that the verb tenses are inconsistent. (Online newspaper articles are easy to manipulate.) Share the revised article with the class, and ask students to note any difficulty they might have understanding it. Lead a discussion about the difficulties encountered and the reasons for them. This should lead into a discussion of the importance of maintaining consistent verb tenses.
2. Distribute another news article with inconsistent verb tenses, and have students practice correcting the errors.
3. Remove the middle section of another news article, and have students practice using consistent verb tenses when drafting a middle section for it. Give them freedom to supply whatever details they wish for the missing section, as long as the verb tenses remain consistent.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Editing Skill **Punctuating dialogue**

- SOL 6.7 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.
- 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- 8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Dialogue Activity” worksheet
Copies of the attached “Conversation Cube” handout
Scissors
Glue or tape
Chart paper

Lesson

1. Display the following conversation for students to read silently. Ask students to try to figure out who is talking and what each person is saying.

Hello? Hi? What's going on? I left my money at home. Can you bring it to me? I'm running late. I'm not sure I'll have time to bring it. PLEASE! Well, if I'm late to work I won't be able to leave early on Friday. Remember, we were going to the afternoon movie. I really need it. You don't want me to be the only one who doesn't eat lunch. Of course not. I'll leave it in the front office.
2. Read the conversation aloud so that there is very little pause between sentences, thus making it difficult to follow. Again, ask students who is talking and what each person is saying.
3. Have the class guide you in rewriting this conversation on the board as correctly punctuated dialogue. When finished, ask two students to read the two parts, thus making the conversation perfectly easy to understand when heard.
4. Distribute copies of the attached “Dialogue Activity” worksheet. Use part 1 as guided practice. Then, have students complete parts 2 and 3 independently.
5. Put students into small groups, and distribute a sheet of chart paper and a copy of the attached “Conversation Cube” handout to each group. Have each group assemble their cube according to the directions. Then, have one group member select a topic of conversation and roll the cube. He or she must then write a sentence on the chart paper, following the direction rolled and punctuating it correctly. The next group member then rolls the cube and continues the conversation by writing and punctuating the next sentence on the chart paper. Play continues until all group members have participated in the conversation
6. Have students review samples of their own writings to make corrections.

Dialogue Activity

Part One

Add correct punctuation to the following conversation:

Thanks dad I exclaimed
He said You have to do a better job packing at night
That movie I admitted kept me up too late
Try to do better my dad remarked
Aren't you going to be late for work I joked

Part Two

Add correct punctuation to the following conversation:

You are lucky the secretary said that your dad brought your money
You are right I admitted I really wasn't looking forward to going on the field trip without it
Who wants to be the only one without spending money I pondered
She warned Hurry up and return to homeroom before the buses start loading
Have a great day I declared

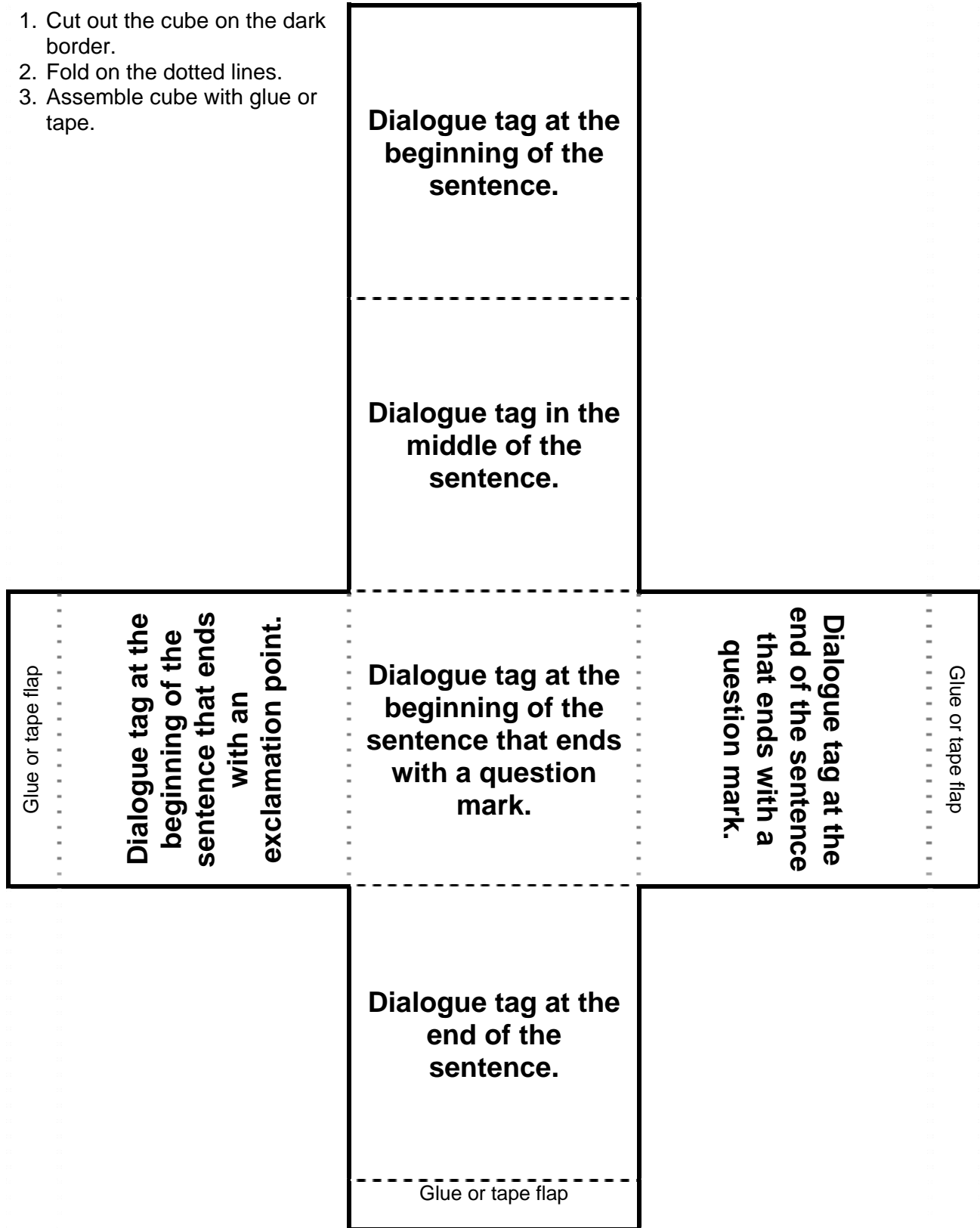
Part Three

Imagine what happens next.

Continue the conversation above, using the various types of dialogue. Include the dialogue tag in various locations—at the beginning of a sentence, in the middle of a sentence, and at the end of a sentence.

Conversation Cube

1. Cut out the cube on the dark border.
2. Fold on the dotted lines.
3. Assemble cube with glue or tape.



Editing Skill **Editing for errors in usage and mechanics**

- SOL 6.7 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.
- 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- 8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Rough draft of a previously written writing

Copies of attached "Error Chart"

Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Lesson

1. Tell students that they can learn to become better proofreaders of their own writing by proofreading the writing of others. Have pairs of students exchange papers and proofread one another's work.
2. Have students return the proofread papers to the original authors. Distribute copies of attached "Error Chart," and have the authors correct all errors and determine what *kinds* of mistakes they made most frequently by categorizing and quantifying them, using the chart. By filling out this chart and looking at the number of errors in each category, students will get a clear idea of the areas in which they are most likely to make errors.
3. Have students place the completed chart in their writing portfolio for future reference.

Error Chart

Writing Portfolio page ____

Error Type	Example	Number
Spelling	Misplaced internal vowel: <i>wierd</i> for <i>weird</i>	
Spelling	Prefix/suffix: <i>scarfs</i> for <i>scarves</i>	
Spelling	Pronunciation/structural: <i>waring</i> for <i>wearing</i>	
Wrong word	<i>Are</i> for <i>our</i> or <i>where</i> for <i>were</i> or <i>it's</i> for <i>its</i>	
Punctuation	Comma	
Punctuation	Colon or semicolon or hyphen	
Capitalization	Proper name or sentence beginning	
Usage	Subject-verb agreement: <i>he don't</i> for <i>he doesn't</i>	
Unintentional sentence fragment	<i>Running down the street.</i> for <i>The thief was running down the street.</i>	
Incorrect modifier	<i>The horse ran quick.</i> for <i>The horse ran quickly.</i> or <i>He took the joke literal.</i> for <i>He took the joke literally.</i>	
Run-on Sentence	<i>Mary was noisy at first, now she's settled down.</i> for <i>Mary was noisy at first, but now she's settled down.</i>	
Unclear pronoun reference	<i>Joe called Frank when he got home.</i> for <i>When he got home, Joe called Frank.</i>	
Misused preposition	<i>We divided the reward between the four of us.</i> for <i>We divided the reward among the four of us.</i>	
Other:		

Editing Skill **Using correct capitalization**

- SOL 6.7 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.
- 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- 8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Self-Portrait” worksheet

Lesson

1. Ask students why capital letters are necessary. Give them a couple of minutes to think about the answer, and then allow them a few more minutes to discuss their answer with a partner. Call on pairs to share their responses and record. Fill in any reasons that the students may not have shared. The reasons for using capital letters will be of help in a review of the rules of capitalization.

2. Display the following paragraph:

Last Summer i traveled to New York city. My Aunt met me at the Amtrack Train Station. Her cadillac broke down just before we crossed the Brooklyn Bridge. we were stranded for an hour until Uncle Chris could get there. I'm so glad I had my favorite magazine, Teen people, to read while we waited.

Ask pairs to find the correct and incorrect capitalizations in this paragraph and prepare to explain why each example is correct or incorrect. Call on pairs to share, and make corrections as they provide; note the rules being applied.

3. Distribute copies of the attached “Self-Portrait” worksheet, and model correct capitalization by completing it for yourself. Then, have students independently complete the worksheet, using correct punctuation.
4. Call on volunteers to share answers for each category and record on a large copy of the Self-Portrait or on a transparency. Students will explain why or why not their answer is capitalized.
5. Have students exchange papers with their partner. Using the information provided, assign students to write a paragraph about their partner.

Self-Portrait

A place I would love to visit: _____

A car I hope to own: _____

A book I enjoyed: _____

My favorite time of year: _____

The way I like to sign letters to my friends:

My favorite subject: _____

The brand name of jeans I prefer: _____

The job I hope to have: _____

My favorite relative: _____

Type of pet I'll have when I'm an adult: _____

A super place to eat: _____

A song that I can't get out of my head:

Editing Skill **Using homophones correctly**

- SOL 6.7 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.
- 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- 8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Homophones, Illustrated” handout (optional)
List of homophones (see step 3 below)
Copies of the attached “Homophones-Card Template”
Scissors

Lesson

1. Tell students that you will read a short sentence aloud and that they should make a quick sketch showing what the sentence means. Read aloud: “The extra wait was just too much.” Give students a minute or two to draw what they think it means; then have students compare their drawings. Ask a few students to share their drawings with the class until drawings showing two very different meanings have been shared. Repeat the exercise with the sentence: “I will knead two loaves of bread.” Make use of the attached “Homophones, Illustrated” handout, if desired.
2. Ask students to explain why there can be such different illustrations of the “same” sentence. Are the sentences really the same? Establish a class definition of *homophone*: one of two or more words pronounced alike but different in meaning and, often, spelling.
3. Ask students to identify at least three pairs of homophones they personally confuse, referring to a list of commonly misused homophones from students’ writings or to a given list, such as the one found at the Education Oasis Web site listed below.
4. Distribute three copies of the attached “Homophones-Card Template” to each student for use in creating three homophone cards. This activity will be more beneficial if students use words that they personally have confused.
5. Have students use the completed cards to quiz their classmates.
6. Divide the class into small groups. Read aloud various pairs of homophones, and have each group write a sentence using each homophone correctly. Allow students two to three minutes to draft their sentences. Award each group a point for each correct sentence.

Resources

Homophones. Education Oasis.
http://educationoasis.com/curriculum/Lang_Arts/resources/homophones.htm.

Homophones, Illustrated



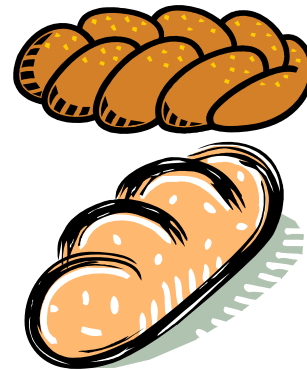
The extra *weight* was just too much.



The extra *wait* was just too much.



I will *knead* two loaves of bread.



I will *need* two loaves of bread.


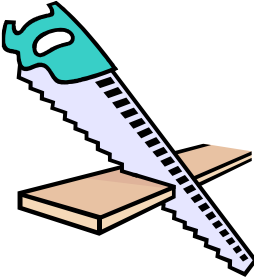
Homophones-Card Template

1. Complete the template below for a pair of homophones that you have confused.
2. Cut out the template on the outer border, and then fold it on the dotted lines.
3. Use the card to quiz a classmate.

Write the two homophones in a way that helps you remember them.	Write a definition of each homophone, including synonyms for it.
Write a sentence for each homophone, using it correctly.	Draw a picture for each homophone, representing its meaning.

Homophones-Card Template Sample

1. Complete the template below for a pair of homophones that you have confused.
2. Cut out the template on the outer border, and then fold it on the dotted lines.
3. Use the card to quiz a classmate.

<p>Write the two homophones in a way that helps you remember them.</p> <p>bored_{zzzzzz}</p> <p>board</p>	<p>Write a definition of each homophone, including synonyms for it.</p> <p>bored. Not entertained, uninterested</p> <p>board. A piece of wood, a plank, timber</p>
<p>Write a sentence for each homophone, using it correctly.</p> <p>I was so <i>bored</i> after my cousin went home that I decided to take a nap.</p> <p>I got a splinter in my toe by walking on the rough <i>board</i>.</p>	<p>Draw a picture for each homophone, representing its meaning.</p> <p>bored </p> <p>board </p>

Editing Skill **Editing for differentiation of homophones**

- SOL 6.7f Use correct spelling for frequently used words.
- 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- 8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the attached “Homophones” worksheet

Lesson

1. Review with the students the definition of *homophone*: one of two or more words pronounced alike but different in meaning and, often, spelling.
2. Write the following homophones on the board, and lead a class discussion to determine the meanings: *ant/aunt; red/read; scene/seen; close/clothes; our/hour*.
3. Distribute copies of the attached “Homophone” worksheet, and have students complete it. When students are finished, review the answers with the class, and discuss the words that gave students difficulty.
4. Place students in small groups, and instruct each group to write a narrative paragraph using five pairs of homophones. Have each group swap their completed paragraph with another group and check the accuracy of the use of the homophones.

Resources

Stacey Geluck. *Homophones*, <http://www.quia.com/pop/7442.html>. Interactive activity with 25 sentences to complete by selecting the correct homophone.

Homophones

Circle the correct underlined word to complete each sentence below.

1. The teacher asked her aid / aide to assist the student with washing his hands.
AAA comes to the aid / aide of motorists in distress.
2. I enjoy hearing my father read allowed / aloud when he uses those special voices.
Being allowed / aloud to leave school early is a privilege only seniors are afforded.
3. The bride and groom stand at the altar / alter to say their vows.
Due to the traffic accident, we had to altar / alter our normal route to the beach.
4. The governor's office is in the capital / capitol building in Richmond.
The nation's capital / capitol is in Washington, D.C.
5. The bride and groom complement / compliment each other well.
Suzanne's boss gave her a nice complement / compliment when she landed the account.
6. After hearing of the death of her grandmother, Cheryl walked around in a days / daze.
An advent calendar counts down the days / daze until Christmas.
7. Milan's dear / deer friend sent her a birthday card.
A dear / deer ran out in front of my husband's motorcycle and caused him to crash into the embankment.
8. Walking on the grass early in the morning always gets my shoes wet because of the dew / due.
The planes were grounded dew / due to the ice on their wings.
9. The lawyer presented the facts / fax of the case in court.
We received a facts / fax at work from the Department of Labor requesting information on our policies and procedures for hiring new employees.
10. The fair / fare for riding the train is sometimes more expensive than flying on a plane.
Jeremy doesn't think it fair / fare that his older sister gets to stay up later on a school night.
11. Cheryl's cousin tried to flea / flee from the police and wound up in jail.
The veterinarian told us always to put a flea / flee collar on our dog.
12. Kelly's dog loves to play with its / it's rubber toys.
When there is a tornado, its / it's better to stay away from windows.
13. Sara doesn't knead / need more shoes, but she bought a pair anyway.
My grandma would knead / need the dough for biscuits on a wooden cutting board.
14. My parents said know / no when I asked them for the keys to the car.
The professor wanted to know / no whether I had done the work on my own.

15. That was a hard way to learn a lessen / lesson .
Tim replaced the shocks on his motorcycle to lessen / lesson the jarring felt when riding over bumps.
16. The widow was in morning / mourning after the death of her husband.
Some people must have their cup of coffee in the morning / mourning before they start the day.
17. Before going to Germany, our son packed / pact his clothes in one large suitcase.
The soldiers made a packed / pact that they would not leave anyone on the battlefield.
18. The motorcycle passed / past us on the right-hand side of the road.
Our marital problems are in our passed / past, but we just don't seem to be able to forget them.
19. The doctor's secretary booked too many patience / patients for him to see in one day.
Rudy does not have the patience / patients to stand in line for long periods of time.
20. The role / roll of the cheerleader is to encourage the crowd to support the team.
I wish I could role / roll the shell for a chicken wrap the way the restaurant does.
21. The enticing scent / sent of the roast cooking in the oven made my stomach growl.
The insurance company scent / sent the hospital its money for my surgical procedure.
22. Grandpa taught me how to sew / sow the seeds in his garden.
The only thing I can sew / sow is a button on a garment.
23. I have a stationary / stationery bicycle in my house for exercising.
Mom gave me personalized stationary / stationery to write letters home from college.
24. Baby birds leave their / they're nest when they are ready to fly.
The coach tells the players what position their / they're playing.
25. There is a process one goes threw / through to become an astronaut.
Brett Farve threw / through the game-winning touchdown.
26. That was a hard way too / to learn a lesson.
This jar lid is too / to tight to remove.
27. Mom wants to know whose / who's shoes are in the middle of the floor.
The teacher needs to know whose / who's going on the field trip next week.
28. Was you're / your mother supposed to pick you up after school?
Come along with us if you're / your able.

Editing Skill **Spelling frequently used words correctly**

- SOL 6.7f Use correct spelling for frequently used words.
- 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- 8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Published list of commonly misspelled words from a grammar book
Copies of the attached “My Spelling Demons” chart
Copies of the attached “Spelling Cards Template”
Colored pencils or markers
Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Lesson

1. For a few minutes, have students brainstorm words they frequently have difficulty spelling. Have them share their words, and create a class list.
2. Distribute students’ previously assessed writings, and have students look through them to find commonly misspelled words to add to the chart.
3. Compare the class list with a published list of commonly misspelled words, such as one contained in a grammar book. Add to the chart additional words that students think are often misspelled.
4. Share with students a word that you often misspell and a tip on how to remember the correct spelling. (For example, you might choose the word *committee*. How do you remember how many *m*’s, *t*’s, and *e*’s it has? Tip: A committee needs lots of people, so there are two *m*’s, two *t*’s, and two *e*’s.)
5. Distribute copies of the attached “My Spelling Demons” chart, and have students use their previously assessed writings to begin creating a personalized list of words that they have misspelled. They will refer to this list often when editing their writings. Be sure they list the correct spelling of words they often misspell.
6. Distribute copies of the attached “Spelling Cards Template” for use in creating spelling cards. This activity will be more beneficial if students use words that they personally have misspelled.
7. Have students use the completed cards to quiz their classmates.

My Spelling Demons

Writing Portfolio page ____

Spelling Cards Template

1. Complete the template below for five words that you often misspell. Using different colors to emphasize the part of each word that is difficult may help.
2. Cut out the five cards on the heavy borders, and then fold each card on the dotted line.
3. Use the cards to quiz a classmate.

Write the word in a way that helps you remember the correct spelling.	Write a sentence using the word correctly spelled.
Write the word in a way that helps you remember the correct spelling.	Write a sentence using the word correctly spelled.
Write the word in a way that helps you remember the correct spelling.	Write a sentence using the word correctly spelled.
Write the word in a way that helps you remember the correct spelling.	Write a sentence using the word correctly spelled.
Write the word in a way that helps you remember the correct spelling.	Write a sentence using the word correctly spelled.

Spelling Cards Template Sample

<p>Write the word in a way that helps you remember the correct spelling.</p>	<p>Write a sentence using the word correctly spelled.</p>
<p>co<u>mm</u>it<u>tee</u></p>	<p>We need a large table since there are twelve committee members.</p>

Editing Skill **Punctuating varied sentence structures**

- SOL 6.7 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and sentence structure.
- 7.9 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.
- 8.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, sentence structure, and paragraphing.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Copies of the two attached “Punctuation Review Tic-Tac-Toe Game” handouts

Lesson

1. Ask students why something as small as a comma matters, and have them share answers in a class discussion about the placement of punctuation marks.
2. Display the sentence, “I need to buy corn bread rice pudding garlic potatoes chocolate milk and butter.” Ask students how different placements of commas in this sentence could make a big difference in what you say you need to buy. Which of the following do you need to buy?
 - corn bread, rice pudding, garlic potatoes, chocolate milk, and butter
 - corn, bread, rice, pudding, garlic, potatoes, chocolate, milk, and butter
 - corn bread, rice, pudding, garlic, potatoes, chocolate milk and butterIs it possible to know what you need to buy without using commas? Which items in the long list are nouns and which are adjectives? Only the correct usage of commas can clarify your list.
3. Remind students that using correct punctuation helps the reader understand the author’s meaning or message. Review rules for correct use of commas, periods, question marks, and exclamation points.
4. Distribute the two attached “Punctuation Tic-Tac-Toe Game” handouts, and have students play the game with a partner. Game cards are self-checking.
5. After students play two rounds, have them create 10 sentences to use as additional game cards and exchange the cards with another pair. Have partners repeat the game with the new cards.

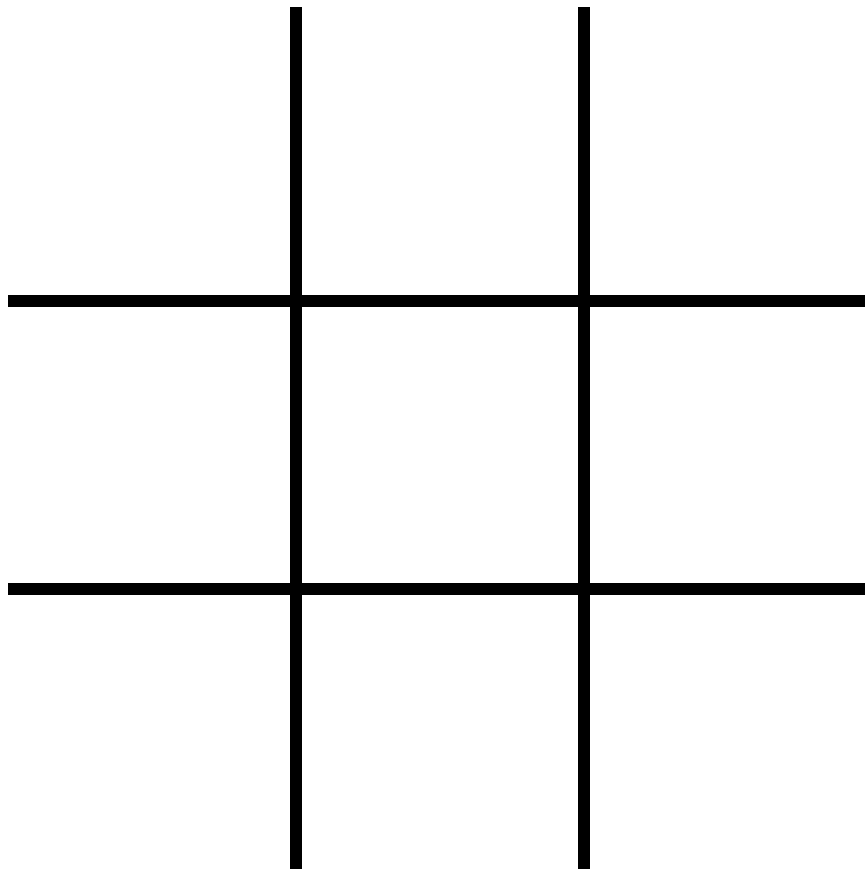
Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Punctuation Review Tic-Tac-Toe Game Board

Rules of the game

1. Decide who will be X's and who will be O's.
2. Shuffle the game cards (sentences in bold type), and place them face down.
3. Player O selects a card and shows it to Player X. If Player X supplies the missing punctuation correctly, he/she gets to place an X on the game board below. Answers can be checked against the list of answers provided.
4. The game card is placed in the discard pile whether or not the question was answered correctly.
5. Player X selects a card and shows it to Player O. If Player O supplies the missing punctuation correctly, he/she gets to place an O on the game board below.
6. Play continues until one player has tic-tac-toe. If you run out of cards, shuffle the cards again, and reuse them.



Punctuation Review Tic-Tac-Toe Game Cards

1. Cut out the table below on the dotted lines to make the game cards.
2. After each play, check the answer against the list of answers below.

1. A starfish can regenerate an arm.
2. Spiders also known as arachnids live on most continents.
3. Snakes mice and rats are commonly feared creatures.
4. Sharks have been spotted off the coast of Virginia Beach Virginia and Hatteras North Carolina.
5. A whale beached itself on July 18 2006.
6. The lead marine biologist Dr Thorne studied the beached whale.
7. After a tanker spilled millions of gallons of oil volunteers worked to save wildlife.
8. Scientists build artificial oyster beds hoping to restore the oyster population.
9. Why do people pollute rivers streams and oceans
10. My sister Christina always looks for unusual shells

Answers

1. A starfish can regenerate an arm.
2. Spiders, also known as arachnids, live on most continents.
3. Snakes, mice, and rats are commonly feared creatures.
4. Sharks have been spotted off the coast of Virginia Beach, Virginia and Hatteras, North Carolina.
5. A whale beached itself on July 18, 2006.
6. The lead marine biologist, Dr. Thorne, studied the beached whale.
7. After a tanker spilled millions of gallons of oil, volunteers worked to save wildlife.
8. Scientists build artificial oyster beds, hoping to restore the oyster population.
9. Why do people pollute rivers, streams, and oceans?
10. My sister, Christina, always looks for unusual shells.

Skill **Creating, organizing, and using a writing portfolio**

- SOL 6.6 The student will write narratives, descriptions, and explanations.
7.8 The student will develop narrative, expository, and persuasive writing.
8.7 The student will write in a variety of forms, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and informational.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Student writing portfolios (student-provided three-ring notebooks with inside pockets and with an ample supply of notebook paper)

Three-hole punched copies of the following handouts:

- The attached “Writing Portfolio: Table of Contents” handout
- The attached “My Tired Terms Chart”
- The attached “The Writing Process: The Basic Steps”
- The “Revision Checklist” (see Appendix D, page 142) or an alternative editor’s checklist (see list under Resources on next page)
- An editor’s checklist (see list under Resources on next page)
- A chart of proofreader’s marks with explanation of the marks you use to correct paper (see list under Resources on next page)

Copies of the Grade 8 SOL English Writing Test Scoring Rubrics for Composing, Written Expression, and Usage/Mechanics (found in the *English SOL Enhanced Scope and Sequence for Grades 6–8*, pp. 167–168, located at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Assessment/releasedtests.html>)

Lesson

1. Take a thumbs up / thumbs down poll of students regarding how they feel about the writing process—whether they find writing usually comes easily and is enjoyable or whether they have the opposite experience. Ask several students of both opinions to share their thoughts.
2. Whichever side they chose, students will see that they are not alone. Remind students that many adults also find writing difficult, even acclaimed authors, such as Stephen King. (Students might be interested in hearing about his difficulties as a writer: see *Teaching Adolescent Writers*, p. 49.) Explain to students this lesson will help them take a huge step, either to become better, stronger writers if they already enjoy writing, or to overcome some of their writing weaknesses and difficulties by providing them with some stepping stones to get through the rough waters.
3. Have students title their writing portfolio and identify it with their name. Tell them that they will use it throughout the year to write their ideas, reactions, and insights into the world around them. Then, distribute copies of the attached “Writing Portfolio: Table of Contents” for insertion into the portfolios as page 1. Instruct them that each time they write something, they should insert it into their portfolio, number the page, and enter the date and title at the correct page number in this Table of Contents. They can use the “Note/Reflection” column to make reminder notes about the status of the piece, (e.g., “Draft only,” “To be revised,” “IMPORTANT!”) and/or write a summary or reflection on it.
4. Then, have them set up page 2 entitled “Writing Tips” on which to record throughout the year helpful hints to use in writing a paper. Tell them that sometimes you will give tips for the whole class to record, such as the first one today, and sometimes tips may come from a comment that a peer or teacher writes on one of their papers. Teach them the importance of writing down useful information or anything that makes them stop and say, “Hey, that’s a good idea!” or “I like the way she did/said/wrote that.” Emphasize the value of these tips and that they will not be just taking up space in the portfolio.
5. Give students the first tip to write: “How to Attack a Prompt.” A useful reference for how to do this is found in Kelly Gallagher’s *Teaching Adolescent Writers*, pp. 41–43. Released SOL writing prompts, found at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Assessment/releasedtests.html>, are also useful.
6. Distribute copies of the attached “My Tired Terms Chart” for insertion into the portfolios. Explain that this chart is designed specifically for keeping track of terms that they overuse in their papers—terms

that are, therefore, “tired.” Provide a few examples, such as *good*, *bad*, or *nice*, or allow students to go through their papers to find some.

7. Distribute copies of the attached “The Writing Process: The Basic Steps” handout for insertion, and briefly discuss each step.
8. Distribute copies of the “Revision Checklist” (see Appendix D, page 142) or one of your own choosing (see Resources below) for insertion in portfolios. Explain to students briefly that revision, which follows drafting, is when a writer reads through his/her paper and looks for errors in the organization, unity, clarity, word choice and sentence construction. A checklist is a helpful, methodical, inclusive tool for checking the paper, rather than just reading the paper over and over while hoping to catch another error.
9. Distribute copies of an editor’s checklist (see Resources below) for insertion. Explain to students that this is used when checking for errors in usage and mechanics.
10. Distribute copies of a chart of proofreader’s marks for insertion. Explain each mark.
11. Distribute copies of the Grade 8 SOL English Writing Test Scoring Rubrics for Composing, Written Expression, and Usage/Mechanics for insertion in portfolios. There will probably not be enough time to go into much detail about the rubrics, but at least explain each domain and each score point. Tell students that the rubrics will be used with future lessons.
12. Remind students of the importance of maintaining their “Writing Tips” pages and the importance of growing as a writer, no matter how they feel about their writing abilities at this point. The purpose of maintaining a portfolio is to *show growth*.
13. Explain that once writing begins, all papers will be stored in the pockets of the folders: “Writings in Progress” will be stored in the left pocket (to be seen as soon as the portfolio is opened), and “Finished/Assessed Writings” will be placed in the right pocket. Have students label the pockets to avoid confusion later.
14. Collect portfolios, and explain that they will not leave the classroom as a matter of policy.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Revision Checklists

Nordquist, Richard. *Revision Checklist*, About.com.

<http://grammar.about.com/od/developingessays/a/revischeck.htm>

Revision Checklist for Essays. The RSCC Online Writing Lab.

<http://www.rsccl.org/onlinewritingcenter/OWL/essayrev.html>

Editing Checklists

Editing Checklist. Jefferson County Schools. <http://jc-schools.net/write/checklist.pdf>.

Grammar and Composition. About.com.

<http://grammar.about.com/od/correctingerrors/a/editchecklist.htm>. Features editing checklist.

Proofreaders Marks

Proofreaders’ Marks. Merriam Webster. <http://www.m-w.com/mw/table/proofrea.htm>

Writing Portfolio: Table of Contents

Page	Date	Title	Note / Reflection
1		Writing Tips	IMPORTANT! Add to it and consult it frequently.
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My Tired Terms Chart

Writing Portfolio page ____

Overused Word	Part of Speech	Alternative Word(s)

The Writing Process: The Basic Steps

Writing Portfolio page ____

1. Pick or narrow a topic.

If you get to choose your own topic, write down every idea that comes to mind. Then look over your notes and circle the one you like best! If the topic is given to you, simply remember to follow the directions that are given in the prompt. Look for keywords to be sure that you understand what the prompt is asking you to do, for example, find words like *explain* or *tell about* or *convince*. Focus the topic on what the prompt is asking you to do.

2. Think about your topic.

Write down what you already know about the topic. Research if you need more facts and details. Then, read over what you wrote and choose the part of your topic that interests you the most. Make sure you are still responding to the prompt. *This is not a rough draft—it is simply a strategy to help get your ideas going!*

3. Organize your ideas / prewrite.

Use a graphic organizer, such as a flow chart, Venn Diagram, bubble graph, or four-square, to help organize your ideas.

4. Write a draft.

Start writing. At this point, just get your ideas down on paper. Remember, a draft is not a finished piece of writing. You can correct and polish later.

5. Revise your draft.

Read over your draft. Look for ways you can improve your paper's organization. Do sentences need to be rearranged or rewritten? Does your paper need more details or better transitions? Have you elaborated and included specific vocabulary? Use your revision checklist to revise your paper.

6. Edit and proofread your revised draft.

Check your grammar, spelling, and punctuation, using your editor's checklist.

7. Write your final draft.

Once your paper has been sufficiently revised and edited, writing the final draft should not be a difficult task, however, you still may want to make a few changes as you write. The final draft is the draft that will be assessed, so make it your best.

8. Share your paper, and reflect about your writing.

Read your final paper aloud to one or more of your classmates. Discuss your strengths and weaknesses.

Skill **Developing writing fluency**

- SOL 6.6 The student will write narratives, descriptions, and explanations.
7.8 The student will develop narrative, expository, and persuasive writing.
8.7 The student will write in a variety of forms, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and informational.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Student writing portfolios (see lesson on page 131 for portfolio creation)

Copies of the attached “Writing Topics” handout, three-hole punched (You might want to add to this list)

Copies of the attached “Areas to Watch” handout, three-hole punched

Lesson

1. Tell students that they will be writing three to five pages a week, or set an exact number based on knowledge of your students; in any case, three pages should be the minimum. Reassure them that all writings will not necessarily be edited or revised but may be only rough drafts. For the first few weeks of classes, give students regular times to write in the portfolios. Once writing has become an established habit, you may wish to require more of it to be done independently.
2. Give students a specific topic, and allow them 10 minutes to write. Tell them they must write the entire time and that their pencils must not come off the paper. This is more successful if you first model the process of associative writing—thinking out loud while writing your thoughts on the board.
3. Distribute student writing portfolios and copies of the attached “Writing Topics” handout for insertion. Remind students to number the page and list it in the Table of Contents. Tell students they should refer to this list whenever they cannot think of a topic for writing.
4. Distribute copies of the attached “Areas to Watch” handout, and tell students that during the writing process and whenever writing pieces are returned, they should enter problems on this sheet. Then, as they are writing a new piece, remind them to refer to this sheet to check for their own areas of weakness.

Resources

Gallagher, Kelly. *Teaching Adolescent Writers*. Portland, Maine: Stenhouse, 2006.

Writing Topics

Writing Portfolio page ____

Foods I hate
The best fast-food burger
My favorite season
A great TV show
An interesting person I know
A person from history I would like to have met
My favorite indoor place
Water parks
My favorite thing to do in my free time
A musician I like
Music I hate
Dreams I have
A vacation I would like to take
An interesting person I saw
I wish I could...
A great memory that I have
A teacher I will never forget
My favorite team
I think writing in this portfolio is...
If I could live anywhere.
I never expected...
For my birthday, I'd like...
I daydream most about...
Something few people realize about me
One of my best points
I dream that one day...
What makes me feel proud
Some little things I often forget to enjoy

Foods I love
The worst fast-food burger
The first time I remember seeing snow
A TV show I really didn't like
A person I admire
My favorite outdoor place
Amusement parks
A pet that I have or had
A really good book I read
My favorite song
My favorite color...and why
A vacation I took
If I could go anywhere, I would go to...
A problem I face
A time I really helped someone
The best year I spent in school
My favorite sport
Something that puzzles me
When I need time for my self...
I really miss...
An unusual day in my life
The worst gift I ever got
I really wish...
I wish I weren't so...
One of my most important goals
My hardest class
I'm glad I'm alive when...
I can protect the environment by...

Skill **Reviewing the steps of the writing process**

- SOL 6.6 The student will write narratives, descriptions, and explanations.
7.8 The student will develop narrative, expository, and persuasive writing.
8.7 The student will write in a variety of forms, including narrative, expository, persuasive, and informational.

Time 1 hour

Materials

Student writing portfolios

Simple prompt to which all students can easily relate

Stapler

Lesson

1. Put students into groups of three, and instruct the groups to work together to list the writing process steps in order and a description of each step. Remind groups of the page “The Writing Process: The Basic Steps” in their portfolios, and challenge them to remember the steps and descriptions listed there. Give groups five or six minutes to complete this activity.
2. Allow students to access their writing portfolios to check the steps and make sure they have listed all the steps correctly and in order.
3. Lead a class discussion to share the work of the groups and determine which steps and descriptions were most familiar and which were most forgotten, and why.
4. Explain to students that they need to understand how to complete *all* steps of the writing process; therefore, each group will be completing a short essay that will demonstrate all steps.
5. Assign groups a prompt of your choosing, for example, “An embarrassing moment” or “A time I got in trouble.” Be sure to explain that all students in the group must take part in the writing process. They should be writing, or working with other writers, or helping by telling the writer how to revise the paper. Remind the students that all steps of the process will be turned in at the end of class.
6. Instruct students to begin by labeling the first page “Prewrite” at the top. Then, have each group choose a graphic organizer and proceed to use it as they brainstorm and organize their thoughts.
7. Have students label the next page “First Draft” and continue the writing process by writing the rough draft on that page.
8. Next, have students revise and edit the draft. You may want them to do this in different colors.
9. Finally, have students write the final draft on a page labeled “Final Draft.”
10. Approximately 10 minutes before the end of class, have groups staple the various pages of their essays together in the order of creation. Ask a member from each group to show and describe to the class all the parts of the group’s paper to reiterate the focus of this lesson on the writing process.
11. End the lesson with a quick quiz on the steps of the writing process.

Resources

The Write Site: A student’s guide to implementing the writing process.

<http://www.brigantine.atlnet.org/writesite/writingprocess.htm>. Provides useful links to all steps of the writing process.

Appendix A **Composing Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests**

Writing Portfolio page ____

The **composing domain** includes the focusing, structuring, and elaborating that a writer does to construct an effective message for a reader. It is the creation of a product, the building of writing intended to be read. The writer crafts his/her message for the reader by focusing on a central idea, providing elaboration of the central idea, and delivering the central idea and its elaboration in an organized text. Features of the composing domain are

- central idea
- elaboration
- organization
- unity.

Score Point 1

The writer demonstrates *little or no* control of most of the composing domain's features. Typically, the writing jumps from point to point without a unifying central idea. No organizational plan is apparent. No purposeful elaboration of any kind is present.

Score Point 2

The writer demonstrates *inconsistent* control of several of the composing domain's features, indicating significant weakness in this domain. At this score point, major digressions may be present, or ideas compete and no one idea emerges as central. Even if a single idea dominates, the writing may be a list of general, underdeveloped statements or a skeletal plot. Often, little elaboration or organization is apparent, although some attempt at a lead or closure may be present. The lack of a logically elaborated central idea prevents unity from emerging.

Score Point 3

The writer demonstrates *reasonable*, but not consistent, control of the composing domain's features; the writer may control some features more than others. Purposeful elaboration focuses the central idea both at the sentence level and throughout the entire piece of writing. However, some thinness or unevenness in elaboration may occur. Narrative organization is generally intact; in other modes, organizational lapses may occur, but an overall plan is apparent. Unity is evidenced by the fact that few, if any, minor digressions or shifts in point of view occur; further, an opening and closing, though not sophisticated, are present.

Score Point 4

The writer demonstrates *consistent*, though not necessarily perfect, control of the composing domain's features. Full elaboration focuses the central idea both at the sentence level and throughout the entire piece by providing purposeful examples, anecdotes, illustrations, or details. Narrative organization is intact; in other modes, minor organizational lapses may occur. However, any organizational lapses that occur do not significantly detract from the presentation. Several elements in the writing provide evidence of unity: a consistent point of view (e.g., not switching from "I" to "you"), a lack of digressions, and the presence of a lead and closure.

Appendix B **Written Expression Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests**

Writing Portfolio page ____

The **written expression domain** comprises those features that show the writer purposefully shaping and controlling language to affect readers. This domain focuses on the vividness, specificity, and rhythm of the piece and the writer's attitude and presence. Features of the written expression domain are

- specific vocabulary
- selected, precise information
- sentence variety
- tone
- voice.

Score Point 1

The writer demonstrates *little or no* control of most of the written expression domain's features. Both word choice and information are general, vague, and/or repetitive. A lack of sentence variety makes the presentation monotonous. The existence of several extremely awkward constructions may further reduce the paper's stylistic effect. The writer's lack of control of vocabulary and information prevents both tone and voice from emerging.

Score Point 2

The writer demonstrates *inconsistent* control of several features, indicating significant weakness in the written expression domain. While some specificity of word choice might exist, mostly the message consists of general information written in imprecise, bland language. As a result, the writer's voice emerges only on occasion, if at all. A relative lack of sentence variety may make the reading monotonous, and awkward constructions may be distracting enough to make the writer's meaning unclear on occasion. While a few brief rhythmic clusters of sentences may occur, an overall sense of rhythmic flow is not present.

Score Point 3

The writer demonstrates *reasonable*, but not consistent, control of the written expression domain's features; the writer may control some features more than others. On the whole, some specific word choice and information cause the message to be clear, although there may be some inclusion of unnecessary but related information. Along with instances of successful control, general statements or vague words might be present; when they are, the tone and voice of the piece will flatten somewhat. Typically, sentences are varied in length and structure. However, at times the rhythm of the paper may be diminished by a lack of sentence variety or by awkward constructions.

Score Point 4

The writer demonstrates *consistent*, though not necessarily perfect, control of the written expression domain's features. The result is a purposefully crafted message that the reader remembers, primarily because its precise information and vocabulary resonate as images in the reader's mind. Specific word choice and information also create tone in the writing and enhance the writer's voice. Sentences are often varied in length and beginnings, resulting in a rhythmic flow throughout the piece.

Appendix C Usage/Mechanics Rubric for Grade 8 SOL English Writing Tests

Writing Portfolio page ____

The **usage/mechanics domain** comprises the writer's ability to form competent, appropriately mature sentences and the use of word-level features that cause written language to be acceptable and effective for standard discourse. This domain includes the system of symbols and cueing devices a writer uses to help readers make meaning. Features of the usage/mechanics domain are

- Sentence formation (complete sentences, quality of construction)
- Usage (inflections, agreement, comparison of adjectives/adverbs, word meaning, grammar conventions)
- Mechanics (capitalization, spelling, punctuation, formatting)

Score Point 1

The writer demonstrates *little or no* control of most of the domain's features of usage/mechanics. Frequent and severe errors distract the reader and make the writing very hard to understand. Even when meaning is not significantly affected, the density and variety of errors overwhelm the performance and keep it from meeting minimum standards of competence.

Score Point 2

The writer demonstrates *inconsistent* control of several features, indicating significant weakness in the domain of usage/mechanics. Evidence of the author's knowledge of features of this domain appears alongside frequent errors. In terms of both usage and mechanics, the writer inconsistently applies the rules of capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, and sentence formation as specified in the Virginia K-8 SOL. The density of errors across features outweighs the feature control present in the paper.

Score Point 3

The writer demonstrates *reasonable*, but not consistent, control of most of the domain's features of usage/mechanics. The writing demonstrates a basic understanding of usage and mechanics as specified in the Virginia K-8 SOL. For the most part, the author appropriately applies both the rules of capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation and the structural principles of spelling expected of eighth graders.

Score Point 4

The writer demonstrates *consistent*, though not necessarily perfect, control of the domain's features of usage/mechanics. The writing demonstrates a thorough understanding of usage and mechanics as specified in the Virginia K-8 SOL. The author uses capitalization, punctuation, usage, and sentence formation and applies the structural principles of spelling. A few careless errors in usage and mechanics may be present. However, the writer's control of the domain's many features is too strong for these mistakes to detract from the performance.

Appendix D **Revision Checklist**

Writing Portfolio page ____

Composing

- Is your introduction compelling, and does it provide a good hook?
- Is it clear what the surprise was and why it was a surprise?
- Have you elaborated with lots of details and illustrations?
- Is your story told in sequential order?
- Does the paper talk about the surprise the whole time, or do you get off topic?
- Does your point of view stay the same throughout the paper?
- Does the paper flow smoothly with good transitions?
- Does the conclusion leave the audience thinking or chuckling?

Written Expression

- Does your writing make the audience know you as a person?
- Is your writing lively and in the active voice?
- Do you create pictures for the reader?
- Is your information precise and your vocabulary specific?
- Are your sentences varied?
- Do you use figurative language, or could you find a good place to add it?
- Would dialogue help your paper?
- How does your paper sound when read aloud to your partner?