

Lesson Skill: Determining purpose and audience

Strand Writing

SOL 6.7

7.7

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Materials

- T chart
- Computers
- Did You Catch That Tone? handout

Lesson

1. Create a T chart on the board with the key words "formal" and "informal." Students brainstorm events or situations that are formal and informal. For example: graduation is a formal event; a picnic is an informal event. Connect the terms to the type of clothing students might choose to wear to an event: the homecoming dance requires formal dress; one wears informal clothing to weed the garden.
2. Make the connection that language can be formal or informal. Students continue brainstorming where they may see formal and informal language adding their ideas to the T chart. For example, texting and slang are examples of informal language, and contracts and letters from the principal contain formal language. Include a discussion about dialectal speech, pointing out that dialect is a type of informal language.
3. From the T chart, develop working definitions of formal and informal language. Students write the definitions on the top of the T charts.
4. Explain that just as one makes a decision about what to wear based on where one is going and what one will be doing, writers choose their words based on the purpose and the intended audience. For example, if the writer's purpose is to text a friend to say she's running late, "B there in 5," would be appropriate for the purpose and the audience. If the writer were writing a thank you note to Grandma for birthday gifts, then the language should be more formal with more elaboration of details.
5. Tell students that the purpose of writing can be classified into broad categories. Students create a web with the following topic: purposes of writing. Direct the students to branch off from the topic with the following categories: persuade, inform, describe, entertain, and explain. Have students develop a definition of each category and provide examples of the type of writing in each category. Record the definitions and examples onto the web.

6. Students do a series of five minutes writings. Emphasize that the writings will not be collected and graded; rather, students should record their ideas without stopping for the entire five minutes. Give students an opportunity to share the writing with classmates.
7. Give students the following prompts. Reveal each prompt one at a time. As a prompt is revealed, give students exactly five minutes to write. Then have the students stop and turn and talk to a neighbor. Students read their written responses to each other. After students share their responses, reveal the second prompt giving another five minutes to respond. Repeat the writing/sharing process for each prompt. Encourage the students to visualize the person they are writing to, and write directly to that person.
 - Writing Prompts
 - You received a bad grade on a test, and you have to inform your parent that now you are required to stay for after school tutoring.
 - You discovered a new game, band, or movie, and you are explaining to your friend why you like it so much.
 - You are trying to get someone to do or buy something for you. Maybe you want your parent to buy you a new game system. Perhaps you are trying to convince your principal to allow you to have cell phones in school.
8. Introduce the following terms to the students: tone and voice. Explain that voice shows an author's personality, awareness of audience, and feelings toward the subject. Voice adds liveliness and energy to writing. Explain tone is used to express an author's attitude toward the subject. Some examples of tone are serious, humorous, enthusiastic, hostile, and sarcastic. Ask students if they have ever heard the phrase, "Don't take that tone with me!" Ask what "tone" the speaker was probably referring to.
9. Arrange students into groups of four. Give each group of students a copy of the attached "Did You Catch That Tone?" sheet. Students share their first writing with the group by reading it out loud. After each person has shared, the group chooses key words and phrases from each piece that are important to the piece. Record the words and phrases. Then, students read the words and phrases and indicate the tone of the piece. Repeat this process for each prompt.

Strategies for Differentiation

- To assist students as they create the author's purpose web, provide a variety of types of texts. Texts should be geared towards students' independent reading levels. Allow students to work in small groups to sort the texts based on author's purpose, using the class written definition as a guide.
 - There should be an image of each type of texts students sorted available for the class web (examples may include an image of a textbook, comic strip, letter to an editor, want ad, advertisement for a product, flier for an event, and instruction manual). As students share responses aloud, these examples may be added to the web. (This is a visual scaffold that may be left on the class wall that students may access as they encounter future texts.)

- Provide index cards for students to create personal flashcards. On the front, students list the author's purpose. On the back students list the examples and create a visual representation for the author's purpose.
- As opposed to requiring students to write an original response, students may be given the following options:
 - Act out a scenario that matches the prompt
 - Sort out pre-written responses. Students will select the one that best matches the prompt for tone and audience.
- When tone vocabulary is presented, they may be accompanied with the following:
 - A flashcard with the word
 - A facial image that conveys the tone
 - A sentence that matches the tone
 - As a class, have the students generate a kid friendly definition for the tone word. Record the best definition on a sentence strip to be posted by the word and image.
- When completing Did You Catch that Tone? students may refer to the scenarios or pre-written responses to identify specific word choice/phrases and tone.

Did You Catch that Tone?

Writing 1

Purpose: [to inform]

Audience: [parent]

Key words/phrases:

Tone:

Writing 2

Purpose:

Audience:

Key words/phrases:

Tone:

Writing 3

Purpose:

Audience:

Key words/phrases:

Tone: