

# Step Into Writing

**Grade Level:** Third Grade

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**Length of Unit:** Six Lessons

## I. ABSTRACT

This unit can be taught in sequence or as separate lessons throughout the year. Skills taught in the unit include writing stories, reports, poems, and letters. We will be using the *Six Traits of Writing* as well as *The Writing Process*. The lessons enable the teacher to provide many opportunities for the students to explore writing, to encourage creativity, and to develop a love for writing.

## II. OVERVIEW

### A. Concept Objectives

1. Students will understand that writing fulfills a variety of purposes and encourages creativity
2. Students will develop a love of writing.

### B. Content from the *Core Knowledge*

1. Produce a variety of types of writing-such as stories, reports, poems, letters, descriptions-and make reasonable judgments about what to include in his or her own written works based on the purpose and type of composition.
2. Know how to gather information from basic print sources (such as a children's encyclopedia), and write a short report presenting the information in his or her own words
3. Know how to use established conventions when writing a friendly letter: heading, salutation (greeting), closing, and signature.
4. Organize material in paragraphs and understand how to use a topic sentence, how to develop a paragraph with examples and details, and that each new paragraph is indented.
5. In some writings, proceed with guidance through a process of gathering information, organizing thoughts, composing a draft, revising to clarify and refine his or her meaning, and proofreading with attention to spelling, mechanics, and presentation of a final draft.
6. Spell most words correctly or with a highly probable spelling, and use a dictionary to check and correct spelling about which he/she is uncertain.
7. Use capital letters correctly.
8. Know the following parts of speech and how they are used: nouns, verbs, and adjectives.
9. Know how to use the following punctuation: end punctuation, comma, and apostrophe.
10. Understand the literary term: fiction.

### C. Skill Objectives

1. Students will expand on existing ideas.
2. Students will extract information from several sources.
3. Students will identify an audience and write for that audience.
4. Students will write a cinquain, concentrating on word choice.
5. Students will write a realistic fiction story containing sentence fluency.

6. Students will produce a letter using the correct conventions.
7. Students will use ideas in Fractured Fairy Tales.
8. Students will organize a report.
9. Students will concentrate on word choice in poetry.
10. Students will use sentence fluency and voice in fiction.
11. Students will use convention in letter writing.

### III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers
  1. *Six Trait Writing Steps* (see bibliography)
  2. *The Writing Process*
- B. For Students
  1. Writing Curriculum from *What Your Second Grader Needs to Know*

### IV. RESOURCES

- A. 6+1 Trait Writing: [www.nwrel.org](http://www.nwrel.org)
- B. Applying the Six Traits Writing Model: [www.bham.wednet.edu](http://www.bham.wednet.edu)
- C. 6 Traits Home Page: [www.6traits.cyberspaces.net](http://www.6traits.cyberspaces.net)
- D. *What Your Third Grader Needs to Know*

### V. LESSONS

#### Lesson One: Using Ideas in Fractured Fairy Tales

- A. *Daily Objectives*
  1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students will understand that writing fulfills a variety of purposes and encourages creativity.
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. Produce a variety of types of writing- such as stories, reports, poems, letters, descriptions- and make reasonable judgments about what to include in his or her own written works based on the purpose and type of composition.
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Produce a Fractured Fairy Tale
    - b. Brainstorm/Web ideas.
- B. *Materials*
  1. *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* by Jon Scieszka
  2. paper
  3. pencil
  4. wipe board markers
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
  1. Fractured Fairy Tale- a fairy tale which has had it's characters, plot, or setting altered or changed.
  2. Ideas-a thought, belief, or opinion formed in the mind.
  3. Brainstorm/web-Creating a network of ideas. (ex. Making lists, free writing, etc.)
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
  1. Call the students to the reading center.
  2. Tell the students that we will be learning about ideas and how they can be changed.

3. Read *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* to the students. Have the students point out how each fairy tale has been altered from its original form (point out that characters, settings, and/or plots are changed.) Tell the students that the stories in this book are fractured fairy tales.
  4. Explain to the students that it is possible to take an idea that already exists and add to it or change it to create a new idea.
  5. Dismiss the students back to their seats.
  6. Tell the students that we are going to brainstorm a list of fairy tales.
  7. Call on students and write their answers on the board.
  8. Have the students vote on one fairy tale.
  9. Tell the students that we are going to change the ideas in this fairy tale to create a fractured fairy tale.
  10. Brainstorm/Web ideas as a class and write them on the board. Remind the students that they want to change a character, the setting, or events in the story. (ex. Change Jack and the Beanstalk to Jacob and the Beanstalk.)
  11. Tell the students that it is their turn to write a fractured fairy tale. They may choose a fairy tale from the list the class created or choose a different fairy tale. Remind them that in order for their story to be a fractured fairy tale, they must change or expand on the already existing ideas. (Hint: change characters, settings, and/or plots)
  12. Have the students write their fractured fairy tales.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Collect the fractured fairy tales.
  2. Over the next week, conference with each child to edit his/her story.
  3. Have students type their final drafts on the computer.
  4. Create a class book with the students' final drafts.

## **Lesson Two: Organizing a Report**

- A. *Daily Objective(s)*
1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students will understand that writing fulfills a variety of purposes and encourages creativity
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. Recognize nonfiction material by text, photographs and captions, diagrams.
    - b. Extract information from several sources.
    - c. Organize information into a report.
    - d. Know how to gather information from basic print sources, and write a short report presenting the information in his or her own words.
      - a. Summarize main points from nonfiction reading.
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will decide what information is important to include in the report.
    - b. Students will extract information from several sources.
    - c. Students will organize information in an I-Chart.
    - d. Students will write a short report using his/her own words.
- B. *Materials*
1. *Great Whales: The Gentle Giants* by Patricia Lauber, Scholastic, 1991,
  2. *Orca Song* by Michael Armour, Scholastic 1994

3. *Whales* by Deborah Hodge, Scholastic 2000
  4. *Humpback Goes North* by Darice Bailer, Scholastic 1999
  5. *Whales & Dolphins* by Bobi Morgan Wood, Scholastic, 2000.
  6. chart paper
  7. markers
  8. 3 x 5 note cards
  9. Nonfiction trade books
  10. scotch tape or tack
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Non-fiction- a story that is true.
  2. Introduction-the beginning of a story.
  3. Conclusion- the end of a story.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Tell students they will be gathering information from several sources to create a report about an animal. (We have chosen the whale as an example.)
  2. Show nonfiction books
  3. Give one book to a group of 4 or 5 students.
  4. Display chart paper divided by vertical and horizontal lines.
  5. Select a student from each group to read the title, author, publisher, and date, and record books in the first column of chart under *sources*.
  6. Discuss what information would be important to include in a report about whales. (physical description, habitat, habits, food, growth and development, classification, interesting facts, etc.) If students have difficulty with headings for chart, they may preview their nonfiction books for ideas. Add this information to the top row of the chart.
  7. Working as a group, have students read their book, looking for facts that would fit under each heading.
  8. Record the information on a 3 x 5 card with markers. Remind students not to copy sentences from the book. They are looking for information that can be recorded in one or two words.
  9. After students have read and recorded information, each group will affix the 3 x 5 cards in the appropriate section of the chart next to their book title.
  10. Discuss information under each heading, noting that some information will be the same from other sources.
  11. Tell students that each heading will be a separate paragraph of their report.
  12. Discuss a sequence that will be logical and effective to report the information.
  13. Discuss thoughtful transitions that will link ideas.
  14. Brainstorm an introduction to the report that will set up the piece and invite the readers in.
  15. Brainstorm a satisfying conclusion that ties up loose ends.
  16. Students will then create a short report using the I-Chart as a graphic organizer.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Reports will be evaluated on a ten point scale.
    - 2 points- Inviting introduction
    - 1 point- Thoughtful transitions linking ideas
    - 1 point- Logical and effective sequence
    - 2 points- Satisfying conclusion
    - 2 points- In your own words
    - 2 points- Conventions
  2. As a homework assignment, students will create a report about an animal of their own choosing. See Appendix A for scoring reference.

### **Lesson Three: Recognizing and Using Voice in Fiction**

#### **A. *Daily Objectives***

1. Concept Objective(s) .
  - a. Students will understand that writing fulfills a variety of purposes and encourages creativity
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Produce a story and make reasonable judgments about what to include in his/her own written work.
  - b. Produce written work with a beginning, middle, and end.
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will identify, describe, and compare student writings, focusing on voice.
  - b. Students will identify an audience and write for that audience.

#### **B. *Materials***

1. Transparencies or copies of Appendixes B, C, D, and E.
2. Transparencies

#### **C. *Key Vocabulary***

1. Voice – sounds human, not like techno speak, has the mark of a particular writer, brings the topic to life, is appropriate for the audience, topic, and purpose, shows conscious concern for reader’s interests

#### **D. *Procedures/Activities***

1. Discuss the meaning of voice in writing.
2. Using texts from Appendixes B through E, read each one together or silently.
3. After each text, determine if the piece has a weak or strong voice by answering questions from original discussion of voice. Students should give specific examples from the text to support their decisions. Examples should include the author’s ability to get your attention and keep it throughout the piece, and how the author used the beginning, middle, and end to show their voice.
4. Students will brainstorm ideas for a fictional story using themselves as the main character.
5. Students will develop a graphic organizer such as a story web ( Ex. List topic in the center of your paper. Draw lines leading to other ideas that will be used in your story.)for their story.
6. Students will write a fictional story focusing on their own strong voice.

#### **E. *Assessment/Evaluation***

1. Self evaluation—answer the following questions about your own writing: Do I really like this paper? Does this writing sound like me? How do I want my readers to feel? Did I bring the story to life? Did I reveal my personality in my writing? Would other people like to read my story? My favorite part is \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Lesson Four: Poetry with Word Choice**

#### **A *Daily Objectives***

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will understand that writing fulfills a variety of purposes and encourages creativity
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Produce a variety of types of writing- such as stories, reports, poems, letters, and descriptions- and make reasonable judgments about what to

- include in his/her own written works based on the purpose and type of composition
- b. Know the parts of speech and how they are used: noun, verb, and adjective.
- 3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Identify poetry patterns
  - b. Understand the 6 trait writing assessment-word choice.
  - c. Select well-written words and phrases
  - d. Expand vocabulary
  - e. Students will review nouns, adjectives, verbs, and synonyms.
  - f. Students will recognize the form of poetry (cinquain).
  - g. Students will write a cinquain.
  - h. Students will use the 6 trait- word choice.
  - i. Students will understand that word choice effects the meaning of poetry.
- B. *Materials*
  - 1. basketball or soccer ball
  - 2. chart paper
  - 3. thesaurus
  - 4. transparency (Appendix F and G)
  - 5. overhead projector
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
  - 1. Noun- a word that names a person, place, or thing.
  - 2. Verb- word expressing action or being.
  - 3. Adjective- word that describes a noun.
  - 4. Synonym- word meaning the same as another.
  - 5. Cinquain- a simple five line poem which follows a specific pattern.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
  - 1. Hold a ball and pose the question, “What can I do with this ball?”
  - 2. Model a response: “I can bounce the ball.” Demonstrate the action by bouncing the ball on the floor.
  - 3. Give the students the opportunity to voice their ideas and demonstrate for the class.
  - 4. Record students’ ideas on chart paper under the heading “verb”.
  - 5. On the chart paper, next to each verb, ask students to help make a list of synonyms for each verb. Example: bounce (spring, leap). Use thesauruses if needed.
  - 6. Next ask students to add adjectives for each verb. Example: bounce (forceful, spirited).
  - 7. Record these answers under the heading “adjective”.
  - 8. Give students the opportunity to create a larger list of different verbs and adjectives. Example: walking (marching, stomping) (hurriedly, leisurely).
  - 9. Talk about when writing, specific words give you a clearer picture of what is happening. Verbs should make pictures in the readers’ mind. Use transparency F.
  - 10. Review the concept of a cinquain (or introduce and model if no prior exposure). Use transparency Appendix G.
  - 11. Group Practice: Brainstorm a cinquain about a current topic.
  - 12. Independent Practice: Write a cinquain about a familiar object or subject.
- E. *Evaluation/Assessment*
  - 1. Evaluate the poem on a 10-point scale – see appendix AA
  - 2. Share poems with the class.

## **Lesson Five: Realistic Fiction with Sentence Fluency**

### A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will understand that writing fulfills a variety of purposes and encourages creativity
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Produce variety of types of writing-such as stories, reports, poems, letters, and descriptions- and make reasonable judgments about what to include in his/her own written works based on the purpose and type of composition.
  - b. Exposure to literary term- fiction
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will recognize realistic fiction.
  - b. Students will write a realistic fiction story.
  - c. Students will understand the 6 trait writing assessment- sentence fluency.
  - d. Students will select well written words and phrases
  - e. Students will write using the 6 trait-sentence fluency.

### B. *Materials*

1. chart paper
2. picture book, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*
3. overhead projector
4. transparency-Appendix H.

### C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Realistic Fiction- literary work(s) with events that can actually happen.
2. Fiction- literary work(s) with imaginary characters and events.
3. Fluency- speaking or writing easily.

### D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Read *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*.
2. Discuss type of book- realistic fiction.
3. Discuss how the author made the book interesting to her readers (sentences begin in different ways, writing flows easily from sentence to sentence, sentences are powerful). Use transparency Appendix H.
4. On chart paper, make a list of the different sentence beginnings in the book.
5. Ask students to add more sentence beginnings to the list.
6. Guided Practice: Using a beginning from the list, create a sentence. With the students' help, add more sentences with different beginnings to create a story. Discuss the variety of sentences created.
7. Independent Practice: Students write a realistic fiction story about a bad day using the 6 trait- sentence fluency.

### E. *Evaluation/Assessment*

4. Assess the stories to check for type of story and sentence fluency.
5. Share stories with the class.

## **Lesson Six: Using Conventions in Letter Writing**

### A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will understand that writing fulfills a variety of purposes and encourages creativity
2. Lesson Content

- a. Know how to use established conventions when writing a friendly letter: heading, salutation (greeting), closing, and signature.
  - b. Produce a variety of types of writing- such as stories, reports, poems, , and descriptions- and make reasonable judgments about what to include in his/her own written works based on the purpose and type of composition.
3. Skill Objective(s)
- a. Identify the parts of a letter.
  - b. Produce a letter using the correct conventions of : heading, greeting, body, closing, and signature.
  - c. Edit for mistakes.
- B. *Materials*
1. paper
  2. pencil
  3. overhead projector
  4. dictionary
  5. Appendix I and J
  6. wipe board markers
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Mechanics-spelling and grammar elements in a story.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Tell the students that today they will be learning how to write a letter.
  2. Show Appendix L on the overhead projector.
  3. Explain and discuss the five parts of a letter (heading, greeting/salutation, body, closing, signature.)
  4. Divide the class into pairs.
  5. Tell the students that they will be working with their partner to find and correct the mistakes in a letter.
  6. Pass out copies of Appendix I to the couples.
  7. Have the students work on correcting the letters for about five minutes.
  8. After five minutes, go over Appendix I. Be sure to have the students tell what the mistake was and how to correct it. Make the corrections to Appendix I on the overhead.
  9. Ask the students: “Why is it important to have good mechanics?” (So that the message and purpose is clear to the reader.)
  10. Collect Appendix I from the pairs.
  11. Tell the students that you have received a letter from a storybook character but unfortunately the letter got torn. You need their help to figure out whom the letter is from.
  12. Read the letter to the class. (Appendix J)
  13. Call on students to guess who wrote the letter. (Make sure they give examples from the letter to support their decision.)
  14. Tell the students that it is their turn to write a letter. Explain that they will be writing a letter to one of their classmates. In the letter they must describe themselves but they **must not sign** the letter. Remind the students that they must include all five parts of a letter (minus the signature) and have the correct mechanics.
  15. Have the students write their letters.
  16. After a student has written his/her letter, have the student edit for mistakes. (allow 20-30 minutes for students to write and edit their letters.)
  17. Collect the letters.

- E. *Evaluation/Assessment*
1. Read each of the students' letters to the class. Have students guess who wrote each letter.
  2. Check each letter for the correct conventions (mechanics.)
  3. Check each letter to see if it contains a heading, greeting/salutation, body, and closing.

**VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY**  
None

**VII. HANDOUTS/STUDENT WORKSHEETS**  
Appendices AA – J

**VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

*Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*  
ISBN: 0-689-71173-5

*What Your Third Grader Needs to Know.* New York: Dell Publishing, 1991

*The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales.* Jon Scieszka. New York: Scholastic, 1992, ISBN: 0-590-47676-9

*Great Whales: The Gentle Giants* by Patricia Lauber, Scholastic, 1991, ISBN: 0-590-10859-x

*Orca Song* by Michael Armour, Scholastic 1994, ISBN:0-590-35719-0

*Whales* by Deborah Hodge, Scholastic 2000, ISBN: 0-439-18831-8

*Humpback Goes North* by Darice Bailer, Scholastic 1999, ISBN: 0-590-99278-3

*Whales & Dolphins* by Bobi Morgan Wood, Scholastic, 2000, ISBN: 0-439-25952-5

Appendix AA

Scoring Sheet

Used two adjectives in the first line (2 points): \_\_\_\_\_

Used three verbs in the second line (3 points):

Used four different adjectives in the third line (4 points):

Used a synonym for the subject in the last line (1 point):

Total Score:

**Step Into Writing  
Appendix A**

**Animal Report**

**Information:** 20 possible points \_\_\_\_\_

Sources  
Food  
Habitat  
Habits  
Defenses  
Physical description  
Location  
Other

**Getting It Together:** 20 possible points \_\_\_\_\_

Organize information according to topic  
In your own words

**Creating The Report- Rough Draft:** 20 possible points \_\_\_\_\_

Including the information  
Organization of topics

**Final Report:** 20 possible points \_\_\_\_\_

Readability  
Neatness

**Cover:** 20 possible points

Front and back  
Picture  
Name

**Final Grade** \_\_\_\_\_

**Step Into Writing**  
**Appendix B**

**Verbs**

What I want most is strong verbs. Teachers all say I got weak verbs. I got no strong verbs. I always have a tough time in school cause of that. I been pushed around and hounded too much about them verbs. Always then verbs! If I get strong verbs maybe teachers will leave me alone. Other than that I would like probably a hamburger and a malt. Porter says me eat at 1215. So I eat at 1215 are 1230? I still don't know when I eat?

**Step Into Writing**  
**Appendix C**

**My best frind**

He did mov to north Dakta and his name was Jake  
We all was youts to play to  
Gether and oneday he move  
And I navr get  
We all was youst to play together  
And I nevr get to see him a gin  
I might mov to north Dakta  
I dow not whant to mov

**Step Into Writing**  
**Appendix D**

The memiros my stuffed dog gives me.

My suffed dog gives me memiros of when  
My dad went to Chicago. I felt sad when  
He got on the plain. At night I would hut  
My dog tight. I would weep for my dad to  
Come home! I wished I were in Chicago  
With him! I was quit at the dinner table. I  
Was worried that he would be gon more  
Then 3 days! In the day I would not miss  
Him so much. Because I would be at  
School. The first day when the plain was out  
Of the sight and we were back at home I  
Was worried that my dads plain would crash  
And he would be killed! When I called him  
At his hotel I would usuallyn be crying over  
The phone. I wondered if he was loney to?  
I felt sad when my dad would not come in  
At night and give me a kiss and hug good  
Night. On the day that he was going to  
Come home he called and said "The plain

Flight was re-skegaled and that he would not  
Be home to night." Since my dad had to go  
To work the next morning that meant that I  
Would not be able to see him till 6:00 p.m.  
That made me fell sad. Because I missed  
Him so much. But at least I knew that he  
Was not on a plain and his plain did not  
Crash!

**Step Into Writing  
Appendix E**

**My Bear**

A long time ago when I was a baby my  
Grandma gave me a bear. It is a nice  
Little brown bear. It has brown and blak  
Eye's. I'v had it for about 9 year's. it is  
So old that just a little bit of haer has  
fallen off. It's nose is a little pust in.  
But I stell love it. I call it grandma  
Connell bear. Because my dad's mom's  
Last name was Connell and was my  
Grandma so I call it that.

I like to sleep with it sometime's not  
Always's, I like to play with it a lot, and  
One more thing it is nice and catley.

**Step Into Writing**  
**Appendix F**

Word Choice

This is the best way to say this.

My words make pictures in the reader's mind.

I used words that are new ways to say everyday things.

My verbs are powerful; my nouns and adjectives are specific and precise.

Some of the words linger in your mind after you read them.

**Step Into Writing  
Appendix G**

Cinquain

- Line 1     Noun
- Line 2     Two adjectives
- Line 3     Three verbs
- Line 4     Short statement about the noun
- Line 5     Noun or synonym

**Step Into Writing**  
**Appendix H**

Sentence Fluency

My sentences begin in different ways.

Some sentences are long; some are short.

It sounds good as you read it.

My sentences have power and punch.

My writing flows easily from sentence to sentence

**Step Into Writing  
Appendix I**

March 5, 2001  
julie simmons  
2563 oak Street  
Glendale, az 85308

Dear sally,

I am so glad you came to visit We hadd soo much fun! My favrite part was when we goed to the zoo. I liked seeing all the animal. What was your favorite part. I cant wate to see you again. I planed atrip to see you in the winter. It will be fun to see the snow Gotta go know.

Your friend,  
Julie

**Step Into Writing**  
**Appendix J**

July 23, 2001

Dear Mrs. Ruckh's Class,

I am writing to you because I need your help! Yesterday I followed a rabbit and ever since I have been in a heap of trouble. The trouble started with me shrinking and growing! I just couldn't seem to end up at the right size. Do not fret though, after a great many turns of growing and shrinking I did finally arrive at the right size. Now, however, I've seemed to have gotten myself into a little trouble with the queen of this land. It seems, that after attending a mad tea party, I offended this strange queen who has now ordered her subjects to cut off my head. You can obviously see the trouble I am in. If you could just write a letter to the queen telling her what an honorable person I am, I am sure she will dismiss these silly orders. I thank you for your help and look forward to receiving your letters.

Your friend,