

The “Write” Stuff: Third Grade Strategies and Conventions for Expository Writing

Grade Level: Third Grade

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Length of Unit: Ten lessons (See Appendix K-1)

I. ABSTRACT

The focus of this third grade unit is on expository writing while integrating content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence* in third grade geography, history and science. Students will develop an understanding of the writing process while learning strategies and conventions involved in expository writing. The expository writing lessons will address topic and detail sentences, paragraph organization and development, note taking, summarizing, various short reports, and friendly letters. Writing topics will provide a means by which teachers can review and reinforce Core Knowledge content areas.

II. OVERVIEW

- A. Concept Objectives (Jefferson County, CO. Language Arts Content Standard-JCLAS)
 - 1. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication. (JCLAS 3, 5)
 - 2. Understand how to locate, evaluate, and use relevant information sources for writing. (JCLAS 6)
 - 3. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing. (JCLAS 8)
- B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*-Third Grade (page 65)
 - 1. 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.
 - 2. Know how to gather information from basic print sources, and write a short report presenting the information in his or her own words. Know how to gather information from print sources.
 - 3. Produce a variety of types of writing—such as reports, 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.
 - 4. Know how to use established conventions when writing a friendly letter: heading, salutation (greeting), closing, signature.
 - 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.
- C. Skill Objectives
 - 1. Students will be able to identify a topic sentence in a paragraph.
 - 2. Students will be able to distinguish topic and detail sentences from one another.
 - 3. Students will be able to organize a paragraph with a topic sentence, three detail sentences, and a concluding sentence.
 - 4. Students will be able to independently organize and write a five-sentence paragraph.
 - 5. Students will be able to take notes in a two-column note taking format with main ideas listed on the left side and respective supporting details on the right.
 - 6. Students will be able to write a brief summary of the main idea in a paragraph.

7. Students will be able to write a summary/short report, in their own words, of an article.
8. Students will be able to write a summary, in their own words, of a non-fiction book.
9. Students will be able to write a summary, in their own words, of a fiction story.
10. Students will be able to write a friendly letter using the proper conventions.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers
 1. Auman, M. *Step Up to Writing*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West, 1999. ISBN 1-57035-208-9.
 2. Kemper, D., Nathan, R., & Sebranek, P. *Write on Track*. Wilmington, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1996. ISBN 0-669-40880-8.
 3. Moore, J. E. *Paragraph Writing*. Monterey, CA: Evan-Moor Corporation, 1997. ISBN 1-55799-608-3.
- B. For Students-from *Core Knowledge Sequence-Second Grade* (page 43)
 1. Students will have had exposure to a variety of types of writing including stories and poems.
 2. Students, with assistance, will have produced a story with beginning, middle, and end.
 3. Students, with assistance, will have begun the process of revising and editing to refine their writing by checking spelling and punctuation.

IV. RESOURCES

- A. *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*, by E. D. Hirsch
- B. *Mae Jemison, Astronaut*, by G. N. Jackson
- C. *Favorite Norse Myths*, by M. P. Osborne

V. LESSONS

Lesson One: Topic Sentences

- A. *Daily Objectives*
 1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication.
 - b. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing.
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. 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.
 3. Skill Objective
 - a. Students will be able to identify a topic sentence in a paragraph.
- B. *Materials*
 1. Transparency-Appendix A-1
 2. Overhead projector
 3. Green overhead pen (Vis-à-vis)
 4. Green crayon, marker, or colored pencil for every student
 5. Worksheet-Appendix A-2: copies for every student
 6. Chart paper for vocabulary words-this will be prominently displayed in the classroom

- C. *Key Vocabulary*
 - 1. Topic sentence-main idea of a paragraph to which all the other sentences relate
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
 - 1. Display transparency (Appendix A-1) of one of three paragraphs taken from the Core Knowledge book, *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*.
 - 2. Read paragraph aloud.
 - 3. Ask the students for the main idea of the paragraph. Using a green overhead pen on the transparency, underline the one sentence that is the main idea of the paragraph. Discuss what makes that sentence important and how all the other sentences relate back to it.
 - 4. Introduce vocabulary-“topic sentence.” Write this word and definition on the chart paper.
 - 5. Repeat steps 1-3 for the other two sample paragraphs. Discuss the topic sentences in each.
 - 6. Hand out worksheet (Appendix A-2). Students will complete this independently using green crayons, colored pencils, or markers to underline topic sentences.
 - 7. As a class, discuss the sentences students chose and have students state the reasons why they chose those sentences. Have them talk about how the topic sentence is different from all the other sentences.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
 - 1. Students’ responses to the questions in discussion of paragraphs
 - 2. Teacher observation during independent work time
 - 3. Students’ accurate location of topic sentences on worksheet

Lesson Two: Topic and Detail Sentences

- A. *Daily Objectives*
 - 1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication.
 - b. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing.
 - 2. Lesson Content
 - a. 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.
 - 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will be able to distinguish topic and detail sentences from one another.
- B. *Materials*
 - 1. Overhead projector
 - 2. Vis-a-vis pen-green
 - 3. Transparencies-Appendices B-1, B-2
 - 4. Envelopes containing strips properly labeled according to instructions in Appendix B-3 (one envelope per group)
 - 5. Worksheet-Appendix B-4: copies for each student
 - 6. Chart paper for vocabulary words
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
 - 1. Detail sentences-other sentences in the paragraph that relate to the topic sentence
 - 2. Extraneous words or phrases-those words or phrases that do not relate to the topic sentence

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. On the overhead, display one of three examples of a paragraph that contains extraneous phrases or sentences. (Appendix B-1).
2. Read the paragraph aloud and ask students to identify the topic sentence. Highlight it in green.
3. Guide students in locating which sentence(s) does/do not belong in the paragraph. Cross out any unrelated sentences.
4. As a class, define “extraneous.” Teacher will add this word to the chart list of vocabulary words. Discuss what makes certain phrases or sentences extraneous in relation to the topic sentence.
5. For the remaining two sample paragraphs repeat steps 1-4.
6. Write a topic sentence on the board (Appendix B-2). Then list details, some relevant and some extraneous, under the topic sentence. Ask the students to take turns coming up to the board to separate the relevant details from the extraneous.
7. Divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 students each. Pass out one prepared envelope (Appendix B-3) to each group. (Write a topic sentence on the outside of the envelope. Inside each envelope will be cut-up strips, on each of which is written a relevant detail or an extraneous one.)
8. Students will open the envelopes and decide, one by one, which strips are relevant to the topic sentence and which are extraneous. Each group will sort their strips into two piles accordingly.
9. Have a representative from each group share and defend their group’s decisions.
10. Give each group a worksheet (Appendix B-4) with several topic sentences written on it. As a group, have them write detail sentences that pertain to the topic.
11. Exchange the results with another group. Have each group discuss and evaluate by asking the following questions: Which sentence is the topic sentence? Which sentences are the detail sentences? Do the detail sentences relate to the topic sentence?
12. Add the vocabulary words “detail sentences” and “extraneous words or phrases” to the chart paper vocabulary list.
13. As a class review, have the students define these words. Write the definitions on the chart paper.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Students’ responses at the board
2. Teacher observation of group interactions and responses during discussion

Lesson Three: Paragraph Development

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication.
 - b. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. 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.
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will be able to organize a paragraph with a topic sentence, three detail sentences, and a concluding sentence.

- B. *Materials*
1. Overhead projector
 2. Vis-à-vis pens-green, yellow, red
 3. Transparency and copies (one per student)-Appendix A-1
 4. Poster or transparency-Appendix C-2
 5. Sentence strips-1 green, 3 yellow, 1 red (pink)
 6. Precut colored paper strips-5 per student (1 green, 3 yellow, 1 pink)-1” by 6-8”
 7. Marking pens or colored pencils for each child-green, yellow, red
 8. Chart paper for vocabulary words, brainstorming
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Paragraph-group of sentences that all relate to the same topic
 2. Indent/indentation-two finger spaces at the beginning of a paragraph that indicates a new paragraph
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Using any common text, instruct students to turn to a particular page and browse the text. Ask them how to determine where one paragraph ends and another begins.
 2. Brainstorm together as a class, what the students notice about paragraphs. Record their responses on chart paper. Student responses should include the idea that all the sentences relate to one another and that paragraphs are one continuous block of writing. Point out that one sentence leads into the next, separated by periods. Also note that the paragraph contains a topic sentence. Note the spacing (indentation) at the beginning of the paragraph.
 3. On the chart paper list vocabulary words “indent/indentation” and “paragraph” along with definitions.
 4. Use a stoplight (Appendix C-1) to visually represent a paragraph. Either prepare a model on poster board or on another transparency. Show the model and explain that the green light represents “Go”-with your topic sentence. The yellow light means “Slow down”-and give examples, facts, or details about the topic. Finally, the red light stands for “Stop”-and write a concluding sentence (which restates the information given in the topic sentence).
 5. Using the paragraphs from Appendix A-1, instruct the students to follow your lead as you highlight or underline the sentences in each paragraph with the appropriate colors: green for topic sentence, yellow for supporting details, and red for concluding sentence. Students will use green, red, and yellow colored pencils or markers for this activity.
 6. Using one of the paragraphs from Appendix A-1 you have just highlighted, model how to write a 5-sentence paragraph (Appendix C-2) with the colored strips of paper. For this purpose use large sentence strips. (The strips for the students should be cut from colored paper to 1 inch by 6-8 inches.) Demonstrate to the students how you write the topic sentence on a green strip, the details on yellow strips, and the concluding sentence on a red strip. As you demonstrate, have the students follow your model and use their strips to practice copying what you’re doing.
 7. After the demonstration is completed, have the students arrange and glue their strips on a piece of paper. These will be handed in for evaluation.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Teacher observation of students’ highlighting on paragraphs
 2. Teacher evaluation of students’ glued strips

Lesson Four: Paragraph Writing

A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication.
 - b. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. 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.
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will be able to independently organize and write a five-sentence paragraph.

B. Materials

1. Precut (1" by 6 to 8") colored paper strips-5 per student (1 green, 5 yellow, 1 pink)
2. Chart paper/colored markers
3. Sentence strips-1 green, 3 yellow, 1 red
4. Notebook paper and glue for each student
5. Chart with proofreading/editing marks (Appendix D-1)
6. Vocabulary chart

C. Key Vocabulary

Review vocabulary from previous lessons

D. Procedures/Activities

1. Pass out five colored strips to each student-1green, 3 yellow, and 1 pink. Before they begin writing paragraphs, remind the students that they may write only one sentence per strip.
2. Review what the students remember from the previous lesson about organizing a paragraph. Discuss the different parts of the paragraph: the topic sentence, the detail sentences, and the concluding sentence. Review the format for a paragraph: indentation and a continuous group of sentences. Finally, address use of the colored strips for organizing the paragraph: green for topic sentence, yellow for detail sentences, and pink for concluding sentence.
3. Choose a topic. For our purposes we are using a Core Knowledge 3rd grade topic. The topic will be "Three things I learned about the Romans." Brainstorm, on chart paper, what the students have learned about the chosen topic.
4. Begin writing! On the green strip write the topic sentence. For the demonstration, all students will be given the same topic sentence. For example, a topic sentence could be: I learned three things about the Romans.
5. On each of the three yellow strips direct the students to write one thing they have learned about the topic (the Romans). They can take ideas from the list that was just recorded during their brainstorming session. For example, on each of the three yellow strips one of the following could be written: First, I learned that the Romans were amazing road builders. I also learned that they liked to recline while they ate. Finally, the Romans were great conquerors.
6. On the pink strip, each student will write a concluding sentence that refers back to the topic sentence. For example, a concluding sentence might be: These are some of the things I learned about the Romans.
7. Now instruct the students to glue their strips in order on a sheet of paper. The green strip will be first. Glue the three yellow strips under the green one. Last,

- at the bottom, glue on the pink strip. Tell the students that this paper, with the glued strips, is equivalent to a rough copy.
8. Using the class editing and proofreading marks (Appendix D-1), instruct the students to revise and edit their paragraphs. Have each student read his/her paragraph aloud to himself/herself to see if it makes sense. If not, have them make the necessary changes and revisions so that it does make sense. Instruct them that once it makes sense, they are to check spelling and punctuation using the proper editing marks.
 9. Instruct each student to exchange papers with another student and check each other's work. Have students turn in their rough copies. Once you have checked them, return them and instruct the students to write a final copy on notebook paper. (It may be another lesson on another day when students are able to complete this step.)
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Teacher evaluation of students' final copies of their paragraphs

Lesson Five: Note taking

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication.
 - b. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing.
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Know how to gather information from basic print sources, and write a short report presenting the information in his or her own words.
 - b. 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.
 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will be able to take notes in a two-column note taking format with main ideas listed on the left side and respective supporting details on the right.
- B. *Materials*
1. Notebook paper (wide-ruled) and pencil for each student
 2. Overhead projector and vis-à-vis pens (green, yellow)
 3. Transparency, as well as enough copies for each student-Appendix E-2
 4. Highlighters for every student-green, yellow
 5. Chart-Appendix E-3
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Note-taking-writing down the main ideas in short phrases
 2. Two column note taking-a procedure of note-taking in which main ideas are listed separately from supporting details
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Teach your students to fold their paper for note taking. (Appendix E-1). Tell them: "Fold the side with holes (left side) over to the pink margin on the right side. Crease the paper. Then open it up." It is optional to draw a line down the fold. The left side will be narrower than the right side.

2. Model a note taking lesson, using a sample from whatever history or science text you are using. For example, from *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*, you might select “The Sun” on page 313. (Appendix E-2)
 3. Make a transparency copy as well as enough copies for each student. Pass these out. Have students get out three highlighters/markers: one green, one yellow, and one red.
 4. Read aloud the passage.
 5. Using the transparency, on the overhead projector, ask the students what the main idea is. Underline it with the green marker. Ask them for three supporting details. What are three important details/facts/examples that support the main idea? Highlight those with yellow.
 6. Then, on the folded note taking paper, show them how the green phrase goes on the left, and the three yellow phrases are written on the right side, one under the other. Point out to the students that the first yellow phrase will line up with the green phrase. There will be extra space below the green phrase.
 7. Model a second paragraph on the overhead, again passing out copies to each student. For example, from *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*, you might select “Venus” on page 315. (Appendix E-2). This time, after reading the paragraph aloud, take notes directly (on a new piece of paper set up for note taking) rather than highlighting first.
 8. Direct the students to try a third paragraph on their own. Pass out copies of a paragraph you have pre-selected for this purpose. You might use the example from *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*, titled “The Asteroids” on page 316 (Appendix E-2).
 9. Review note taking procedures with the students. Ask them what points they need to remember as they begin to take notes. List these on the board. Be sure to note the following: write the title, list main ideas on left and supporting details on right, use only words or phrases—NO complete sentences, use abbreviations, be neat. You could make a chart for this purpose, listing the reminders.
 10. Read the third paragraph aloud. Then instruct the students to take notes on their own. Circulate as the students are working. Be ready to answer questions. Take time for sharing main ideas and supporting details as a class. Allow the students to add to/correct their work as they listen to the discussion. At the end of the lesson collect the students’ work.
- E. *Assessment and Evaluation*
1. Teacher evaluation of students’ use of correct format in separately listing main ideas and respective supporting details in the note taking assignment

Lesson Six: Writing a Summary

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication.
 - b. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. 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.
 - b. Produce a variety of types of writing—such as reports, 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. Students will be able to write a brief summary of the main idea in a paragraph.

B. *Materials*

1. Overhead projector/clear transparency
2. Transparency of texts used in lesson
3. Copies of Appendix F-1 for each student

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Summary—a paragraph that contains only the most important ideas from your reading

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Show the students how to fold their paper in three equal parts like a burrito (see Appendix E-1). Crease the folds. Open up the paper. Optional: the students may draw lines over the folds.
2. Model how to write a summary for the students. Again, choose an appropriate passage from a history or science text. From *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*, you might select “Rome Begins with Two Boys and a Wolf,” page 92.
3. First read the selection aloud, or have a student read it aloud. Ask the students for the title. That’s what will be written in the first section on their burrito-fold paper. Model this on a transparency on the overhead: “Rome Begins with Two Boys and a Wolf.”
4. Then ask the students for a verb to describe what the title does in this selection. A list of verb choices (such as tells, explains, gives, lists, describes, compares, shows), can be written on poster board for the students. The chosen verb will be written on the middle section of their paper. For example: “tells.” Finally, ask the students for the main idea of the selection. This is written in the third part. For example, you might write: “the story of how Romulus began the city of Rome” (See Appendix F-1).
5. The preceding three parts will be the topic sentence for their summary paragraph. On the burrito-fold paper, beneath the three parts, have the students write out the complete topic sentence: “*Rome Begins with Two Boys and a Wolf* tells the story of how Romulus began the city of Rome.”
6. Then model to students how to write three detail sentences for their summary paragraphs. Go back to the first selection: “Rome Begins with Two Boys and a Wolf.” Ask the students to help you list details from this story of Rome. They might say things like: twins Romulus and Remus rescued from Tiber River; built city on Tiber; fought over who would be ruler; Romulus killed Remus; Romulus became ruler; etc. From the student-generated list, write three detail sentences that will support the topic sentence. For example: Romulus and his twin brother Remus were rescued from the Tiber River. They decided to build a city on the Tiber, but they fought over who would rule it. Romulus killed Remus, and so he became the ruler of Rome.
7. Write a concluding sentence, reminding the students that the concluding sentence must refer back to the topic sentence. Ask the children for examples. You might write: This summarizes what I read in “Two Boys and a Wolf.”
8. Model a second time, using a second selection such as “Roman Gods and Goddesses,” pages 92-93 from *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*. Take the students step by step through the same procedure as in steps 3-9 above.

9. Assigning a third selection, such as “The Roman Republic: Something New,” pages 94-95 from *What Your 3rd Grader Need to Know*, have the students try writing a summary paragraph on their own. Pass out copies of Appendix F-1 to each student to facilitate this assignment. Collect these.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Teacher evaluation of students’ summaries

Lesson Seven: Short Reports

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication.
 - b. Understand how to locate, evaluate, and use relevant information sources for writing.
 - c. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Know how to gather information from basic print sources and write a short report presenting the information in his or her own words.
 - b. Produce a variety of types of writing—such as reports, letters, descriptions—and make reasonable judgments about what to include in his or her own words.
 - c. 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.
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will be able to write a summary/short report, in their own words, of an article.

B. *Materials*

1. Overhead projector and vis-à-vis pens (green, yellow)
2. Transparency and copies for each student-Appendix G-1
3. Notebook paper and colored markers for each student (green, yellow)

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Report—a body of writing that contains facts and information about a particular subject
2. Plagiarism—to steal and use someone else’s work as your own, not giving proper credit

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. For writing a report, instruct the students to select a topic that is appealing to them. Emphasize to them that the report will be much easier to write if the subject is one that catches their interest or holds their fascination.
2. Ask the students to find a resource, such as an encyclopedia or a library book that contains information on their respective topics. Time could be scheduled at the school library for this part of the lesson.
3. Instruct the students that a short report will be very similar to a one-paragraph summary. They will read a body of information and be able to summarize the main ideas in one paragraph. Tell them you will model how to read the information, highlight the main ideas, and rewrite them in their own words.
4. Using passages from history or science texts, duplicated on a transparency on the overhead, model how to highlight. Pass out copies of the same text to each

student. Use green to underline the main idea. Use yellow to mark important details, facts, or examples that relate back to the main idea. For example, from *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*, you might use “The First Americans” on page 123.

5. Read the passage aloud. Ask the students to give you thumbs up when they hear the topic sentence. Highlight it in green. Have the students do the same thing on their copies. For example, in the above-mentioned passage, you might highlight the first sentence: “The story of our country begins with the first people who lived here.”
6. Next, ask the students to listen for at least three supporting details. This may require several readings of the passage. Again, ask them to give you thumbs up when they hear an important fact, detail, or example that supports the main idea. Highlight these in yellow. Instruct the students to do likewise on their copies. For example, these could be: from paragraph 1-American Indians, Native Americans; from paragraph 2-came from Asia, by a land bridge, twelve thousand years ago; from paragraph 3-followed animals they hunted, spread from Alaska to tip of South America.
7. Now pass out copies of Appendix G-1 to each student. Model to them how to use the highlighted information to write a summary or short report. In the first section, ask the students for the title of the article: “The First Americans.” In the middle section, ask them to give you a verb (direct them to the posted list of possibilities). You might write: “explains.” In the last section, ask for the main idea of the article. Remind the students that you highlighted this in green. For example, you could write directly from the article: “story of America begins with first people who lived here.” Finally, beneath these three parts, have the students combine these three parts as the topic sentence: “*The First Americans* explains the story of how America began with the first people who lived here.”
8. Under the topic sentence, show the students how to list their yellow highlighted information as the supporting details. As you do so, model the use of bullets, letters, or numbers to list the various details. Use the details from #6 above. Then change these into complete sentences, emphasizing the importance of using their own words. Define “plagiarism” at this time, and make a strong case against it. Model, step by step, how to take the highlighted words/phrases from the passage and rewrite them in your own words. For example, the notes from #6 above could be rewritten as follows: The Native Americans arrived here by a land bridge 12,000 years ago. They might have been following some animals that they were hunting. They arrived in Alaska and went as far as the tip of South America.
9. Model the writing of a concluding sentence, once again reminding the students to refer back to the topic sentence. For example, you could finish with: This is how America first began.
10. Finally, at the bottom, have the students write a final copy. Remind them to indent their paragraphs.
11. Model, for a second time, how to write a short report/summary. This time you might elect to use the passage from *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know*, “East of the Mississippi” on pages 124-126. Pass out copies to all the students. As you read aloud and highlight important information, have them follow along and do the same. Highlight the topic sentence in green and the supporting details in yellow.

12. After highlighting, instruct the students to take their information and fill in the short report form, ending with a complete summary paragraph, including a concluding sentence. Collect these.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Teacher evaluation of completed one-paragraph summary

Lesson Eight: Book Reports-Biography, Autobiography

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication.
 - b. Understand how to locate, evaluate, and use relevant information sources for writing.
 - c. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Know how to gather information from basic print sources and write a short report presenting the information in his or her own words.
 - b. Produce a variety of types of writing—such as reports, 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.
 - c. 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.
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will be able to write a summary, in their own words, of a non-fiction book.

B. *Materials*

1. Selection of sample biographies; in particular, *Mae Jemison, Astronaut*
2. Overhead projector
3. Appendix H-1-transparency and copies for each student

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Non-fiction-writing that is true
2. Biography-a true story about another person's life

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. For writing a non-fiction book report, instruct the students to choose a book in which they are interested. For our third grade purposes, we will be choosing a biography. A trip to the library might be a good idea at this time. Stress to the students that the assignment will be much more enjoyable if they are genuinely interested in the person of their choice.
2. Model the writing portion of the book report with your expectations. At this grade level, the book report will be more like a book review or even a simple summary. The summary can then be incorporated into a more extensive book report project that involves a poster, for example, or a 3-D project related to the information given in the book.
3. To model, choose an easy non-fiction chapter book or even a picture book. A biography related to the history or science curriculum is suggested. For example, one that comes from third grade Core Knowledge is *Mae Jemison, Astronaut*.

4. In preparation for reading a non-fiction selection, ask the students to be listening in order to answer three questions: What is the book about? What did you learn from this book? Why do you like it? (Does the book contain interesting information? Are the pictures colorful and helpful?)
 5. Read the book aloud in its entirety to the class.
 6. When you have finished reading the book, on a transparency of the book report form (Appendix H-1) on the overhead, model how to write the actual report. Be sure each student has a copy of the form as well, so they might practice as you are modeling. Ask the children to give you the title: *Mae Jemison, Astronaut*. Ask for the author's name: Garnet Nelson Jackson. Write these in the appropriate spaces.
 7. Inform the students that you will show them how to answer the first question: What is the book about? Review orally how to write a one-paragraph summary. Using a burrito-folded paper, in the respective three sections, write the title, chose a verb, and give the main idea. Then write these in a complete topic sentence. For example, you might end up with the following: *Mae Jemison, Astronaut* describes the life of the first African-American woman to travel in space.
 8. Then ask the students for at least three facts they learned about Mae Jemison. Ask for one from the beginning of the story, one from the middle, and one from the end. List these underneath the topic sentence. Help the students to incorporate these supporting details into their own words in three complete sentences. These might be: When Mae was eight years old, as she was watching a space flight on TV, she decided she wanted to go to space herself. After applying to be an astronaut, NASA chose her and gave her two years of training. On September 12, 1992, she was aboard the Endeavor Shuttle and left Earth for one week.
 9. Instruct the students to add a concluding sentence. It will tie into the topic sentence. One could be: Thus, Mae Jemison reached her childhood goal.
 10. Next, tell the students you will be answering the second question: What did you learn from this book? Inform the students they will be expected to write two complete sentences in the space provided. As a class you could brainstorm some things they learned. Then together, from the list, write two sentences. They might be factual (I learned that women have gone to space.), or a value/lesson (I learned that it is possible to set a high goal and reach it.)
 11. Finally, address the third question: Why do you like this book? Instruct the students to be specific: Was the information helpful? Was the information new to you? Were the pictures colorful or informative? Write two complete sentences for this question in the space provided. Collect these forms from the students.
 12. They may use class time to begin reading their biographies, or this can be given as a homework assignment.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Teacher evaluation of students' book report forms (filled out together as a class)

Lesson Nine: Book Reports-Fiction

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication.

- b. Understand how to locate, evaluate, and use relevant information sources for writing.
 - c. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing.
 - 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Know how to gather information from basic print sources and write a short report presenting the information in his or her own words.
 - b. Produce a variety of types of writing—such as reports, 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.
 - c. 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.
 - 3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will be able to write a summary, in their own words, of a fiction story.
- B. *Materials*
 - 1. Selection of fiction stories; in particular, *Favorite Norse Myths* by Mary Pope Osborne
 - 2. Overhead projector
 - 3. Appendix I-1-transparency and copies for each student
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
 - 1. Fiction-writing that is made up
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
 - 1. For writing a fiction book report, instruct the students to choose a book they are excited to read. Stress to the students that this will make the assignment much more enjoyable. You might schedule a trip to the library for this purpose, especially if there are students who are unsure what to read.
 - 2. Model the writing portion of the book report with the expectations. In third grade the book report will be similar to a one-paragraph summary. The summary can then be incorporated into a more extensive book report project such as a postcard written by the main character or a puppet show in which the main characters of the story play the parts of the puppets.
 - 3. To model, choose an easy reader chapter book or a picture book from your curriculum. For example, a story from the Core Knowledge curriculum is “How Thor Got his Hammer,” a Norse myth retold by Mary Pope Osborne in *Favorite Norse Myths*.
 - 4. In preparing to read a fiction story, ask the students to listen in order to answer three questions: What is the book about? (Who is the main character? What happens to him/her?) What are the problem and the solution? Why do you like this book? (Was there lots of action? Do you have a favorite part? Did you like the main character?)
 - 5. Read the book aloud in its entirety to the class.
 - 6. On a transparency of the book report form (Appendix I-1) on the overhead, model how to write the report. Pass out copies to each of the students so they may follow along and practice. Ask them for the title and the author. Write these in the appropriate spaces. For example: “How Thor Got his Hammer” and Mary Pope Osborne, could be written respectively.
 - 7. Inform the students that you will be showing them how to answer the question: What is the book about? Review with them how to write a one-paragraph

summary. Using a burrito-folded paper, in the respective three sections, write the title, choose a verb, and give the main idea. Then write these in a topic sentence. For example, you might write: “How Thor Got his Hammer” tells the story of what happened so Thor received a hammer.

8. Then ask the students for at least three of the main events in the story. Tell them to name one from each of the three parts of the story: the beginning, the middle, and the end. List these under the topic sentence. Ask the students to write these in order, in their own words, and in three complete sentences. These could be: When mischief-maker Loki cut off Thor’s wife’s hair, Thor was very angry. Loki agreed to restore the hair, and asked his friends the dwarves to help. They did and also made many other gifts for the gods, including a hammer for Thor.
9. Add a concluding sentence that ties into the topic sentence. A possibility is: Due to Loki’s trickery, Thor was able to get his hammer!
10. Next, model to the students how to answer the second question: What are the problem and the solution? Inform the students that they will be expected to write two complete sentences in the space provided. The first sentence should give the problem, and the second sentence should briefly state the solution. Elicit their suggestions. For example: Loki made Thor angry when he cut off the hair of Thor’s wife. He brought Thor new hair for Thor’s wife and a hammer for Thor.
11. Finally, address the third question: Why do you like this book? Instruct the students to be specific. Was there lots of action? Did you have a favorite part? Did you like the main character? Write two complete sentences for this question in the space provided. Collect these forms from the students.
12. Class time can be given to the students to begin reading their fiction stories, or this can be assigned for homework.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Teacher evaluation of students’ book report forms (filled out together as a class)

Lesson Ten: Friendly Letters

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
 - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication.
 - b. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Know how to use established conventions when writing a friendly letter: heading, salutation, (greeting), closing, signature.
3. Skill Objective(s)
 - a. Students will be able to write a friendly letter using the proper conventions.

B. *Materials*

1. Chart paper for brainstorming, modeling a friendly letter
2. Overhead projector
3. Appendix J-1-transparency
4. Poster-sample friendly letter

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Salutation-the greeting of a letter, followed by a comma in a friendly letter

- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Brainstorm with the students the reasons for writing a friendly letter. Write these on chart paper that can be hung in the room. Be sure to tie in the purposes with the definition of a friendly letter.
 2. Decide with your students to whom you will be writing a friendly letter. If you write to someone living it would be fun to actually send the children's letters. How exciting it would be for them to receive answers from a real astronaut or an author! For purposes of modeling, you might select Lewis Carroll, the author of *Alice in Wonderland*, one of the stories from the third grade Core Knowledge curriculum. See Appendix J-1 for a sample friendly letter.
 3. On chart paper, model writing a friendly letter to the students. As you move step by step through the letter, be sure to define each of the five parts: the heading, the salutation, the body, the closing, and the signature.
 4. Instruct and model to the students as follows: Write the heading in the top right hand corner of the paper. This will include your address and the date.
 5. The salutation is the greeting. It is written flush with the left-hand margin. It usually begins with "Dear" followed by the name of the person you are writing to. A comma comes right after the name.
 6. The body is the actual letter containing whatever thoughts you want to communicate. It is written in paragraph form. For our purposes we will be using the paragraph model we have learned. Be sure to indent the first line. You might make a short list of the things you want to say. Be sure to write clearly, since you won't be there to explain what you meant. Check for any spelling or punctuation errors.
 7. The closing ends the letter. You can be creative with this, choosing a closing like "Love" or "Your friend," etc. The first word in the closing must be capitalized. The closing is followed by a comma. Line up the closing with the heading.
 8. Finally, write your signature directly below the closing.
 9. In order for the students to practice on their own, let them draw names of their classmates out of a hat. Have them practice writing a friendly letter to whomever they chose. Tell them to edit and revise these. Does the letter make sense? Check for spelling and punctuation errors. Make a final copy and "send" the letter.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Before "sending" the letters, teacher may collect and evaluate use of conventions in the letters.

VI. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- A. Appendix A-1: Paragraphs
- B. Appendix A-2: Student Worksheet
- C. Appendix B-1: Paragraphs
- D. Appendix B-2: Topic Sentences
- E. Appendix B-3: Topic Sentence Activity
- F. Appendix B-4: Student Worksheet
- G. Appendix C-1: Stoplight
- H. Appendix C-2: Model for Five-Sentence Paragraph
- I. Appendix D-1: Editing and Proofreading Marks
- J. Appendix E-1: Paper Folds
- K. Appendix E-2: Paragraphs
- L. Appendix F-1: Summary
- M. Appendix G-1: Short Report/Summary

- N. Appendix G-2: Short Report/Summary
- O. Appendix H-1: Non-Fiction Book Report/Summary-Biography
- P. Appendix I-1: Fiction Book Report/Summary
- Q. Appendix J-1: Sample Friendly Letter
- R. Appendix K-1: Writing “Stuff” Units

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Appendix A-1

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing

Paragraphs adapted from *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know* by E. D. Hirsch, Jr.
(Teachers may want to see the 2001 revision of this book for more in-depth information.)

Rivers are famous for many reasons. Some rivers are known for their beauty. Other rivers are very long. There are rivers that drain huge areas of land. Whatever the reason, rivers are very important. P.85

The Mississippi River is not just a single river, but a whole river system. Many other rivers flow into the Mississippi River. Some of these rivers are the Arkansas, the Missouri, and the Yellowstone. The Mississippi River drains almost half of the United States. The Mississippi River is a great river with a huge watershed. P. 86

Rivers influenced the way the colonists lived. Many of the colonists chose to settle near rivers. By using boats and ships on the rivers, the colonists could connect with one another. Colonists could ship goods back and forth to England on the rivers and oceans. Rivers were important in the colonists’ lives. P. 84

Appendix A-2

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing

Paragraphs adapted from *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know* by E.D. Hirsch, Jr.
(Teachers may want to see the 2001 revision of this book for more in-depth information.)

Directions: Underline the topic sentence (main idea) in each paragraph. Use a green marker. Be ready to give a reason why you chose each sentence.

Our world is mostly water. Look at a globe, and you will easily see the largest ocean. It is the Pacific Ocean. The next largest is the Atlantic Ocean. Third in size is the Indian Ocean.

P. 72

The seven largest pieces of land are called continents. Look at a globe to find them. In order of size, they are Asia, Africa, and our continent, North America. Next are South America, Antarctica, and Europe, which is attached to the western side of Asia. Finally, Australia is the smallest continent.

P. 73

Mountains shape the way people live. For almost 150 years, the mountains kept the English colonists from moving further west. The settlers stayed in one area. They started towns and governments. This helped them govern a new country, which would later become the United States.

P.84

Appendix B-1

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing

Paragraphs adapted from *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know* by E. D. Hirsch, Jr.
(Teachers may want to see the 2001 revision of this book for more in-depth information.)

The kids in Mr. Small’s homeroom class were known as the most well behaved kids in the school. One day, a new boy joined the class. He was noisy and rude and encouraged the other kids to become rowdy. “I guess the days of this being a well-behaved class are over,” Mr. Small said. He was a short man who loved to blow bubbles on Saturdays. “One rotten apple spoils the whole barrel!”

P.63-64

When we talk to each other, we have to use words in ways that the other person understands. That’s not hard when we talk inside our families. At home we know how to understand each other. Henry received a standing ovation for his trumpet solo. But when we write or talk to people outside our homes, we need to be sure that everyone is using the same rules for speaking and writing. We study grammar to learn these rules.

P.49

Whether we are speaking or writing, sentences are the building blocks of our language. Sentences are made of two main ingredients: subjects and predicates. The subject of a sentence is the person or place or thing that the sentence is about. The predicate of a sentence is the verb that tells us what the subject is doing. Like a battery in a flashlight, a predicate gives a sentence its life and energy. I have a blue flashlight.

P. 55

Appendix B-2

The "Write" Stuff

Topic sentences and lists of details adapted from

What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know by E. D. Hirsch, Jr.

(Teachers may want to see the 2001 revision of this book for more in-depth information.)

A biography is a true story of a person's life.

- *shows ways people achieve things
- *shows mistakes people make
- *helps us understand other people
- *picnics are great ways to be outdoors
- *ants love picnics

P. 59

An autobiography is a biography of your own life.

- *"auto" means self
- *exciting things that happened to you
- *your neighbor's grandma is from France
- *sad things that happened to you
- *thing you have done

P. 59

Nonfiction is all about true things.

- *biography-all true
- *autobiography-all true
- *history-all true
- *nothing is made up
- **Alice in Wonderland*

P. 60

Appendix B-3

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing

Topic sentences and lists of details adapted from

What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know by E. D. Hirsch, Jr. (pages 60, 57, 89)

(Teachers may want to see the 2001 revision of this book for more in-depth information.)

Instructions to teacher: For this activity you will divide your class into groups of four to five students. Each group will receive one envelope at a time. You will need enough large envelopes so that each group can try this activity several times. Copy this page as many times as you need so that you can have a topic sentence to cut apart and glue on the outside of each envelope. Then, inside each envelope place the respective cut-apart detail strips. In the groups, direct the students to open the envelopes and sort the strips according to whether they are relevant to the topic sentence or not. Students should discuss and be prepared to share their decisions.

Fiction is the name we use for stories that are make-believe.

- *fairy tales
 - *can be close to truth
 - *seems real-like *Pollyanna*
 - *can be fantastic-like *Alice in Wonderland*
 - *article about turtles
 - *uses imagination
-

Almost everything you say is in sentences.

- *three kinds: interrogative, declarative, imperative
- *end with punctuation marks
- *have subjects and predicates

*What happened to Rome?

Appendix B-3 (continued)

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing

The first cities began because people were able to grow extra food along the fertile banks of the Nile River in Egypt.

- *more food meant more people could settle
- *land near rivers was fertile
- *auntie sewed down the edges of the earth
- *farmers could harvest big crops
- *people could live together in one place

Appendix B-4

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing

Directions: Choose three topic sentences from the following list. Brainstorm together as a group and write three supporting detail sentences for **each** of the three topic sentences. Be prepared to tell how these detail sentences relate back to the topic sentences.

I learned a lot of things in second grade last year.

Ice cream is good to eat.

The mountains are a fun place to visit.

I would like to have a pet.

I enjoyed going places this past summer.

Baseball is fun to play.

There are many things I like about my best friend.

Belonging to a family is very special.

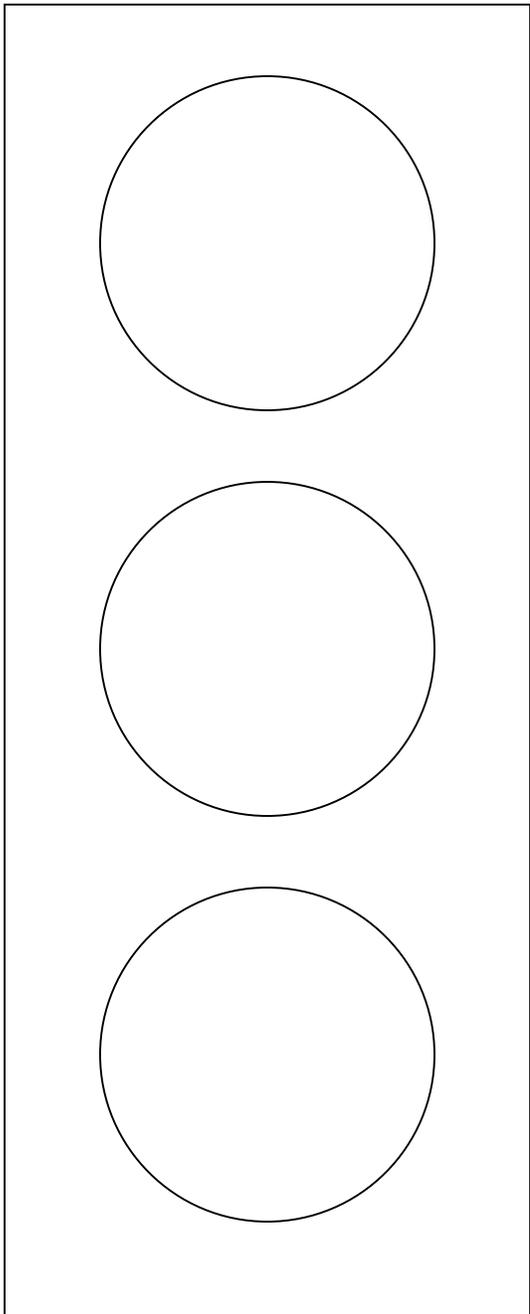
I am looking forward to learning new things in third grade.

I love school!

Appendix C-1

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing
Adapted from *Step Up to Writing* by Maureen E. Auman

Stoplight



GO-with your topic sentence

SLOW DOWN-and give examples, facts, or details about the topic

STOP-and write a concluding sentence

Appendix C-2

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing
Adapted from *Step Up to Writing* by Maureen E. Auman

Model for Five-Sentence Paragraph

Green-Topic sentence

Yellow-Fact, detail, or example sentence

Yellow-Fact, detail, or example sentence

Yellow-Fact, detail, or example sentence

Red (Pink)-Concluding sentence

Appendix D-1

The "Write" Stuff: Expository Writing

Adapted from *Write on Track*

By Dave Kemper, Ruth Nathan, Patrick Sebranek

Editing and Proofreading Marks

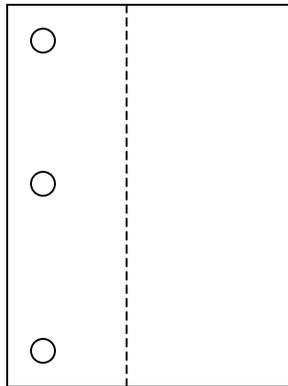
	make a capital letter
	add a comma
	add a period
	add an apostrophe
	add quotation marks
	sentence fragment
	make a lowercase letter
	indent paragraph
	run-on sentence
	incorrect spelling

Appendix E-1

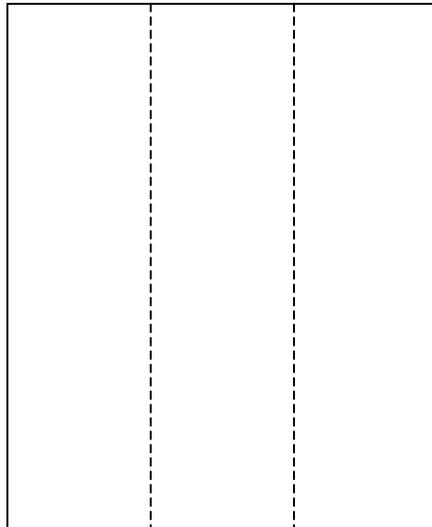
The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing
Adapted from *Step Up to Writing* by Maureen E. Auman

Paper Folds

Two-column note taking fold:



Burrito fold:



Appendix E-2

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing

Paragraphs adapted from the original *What Your 3rd Grader Needs to Know* by E.D. Hirsch, Jr. (Teachers may want to see the 2001 revision of this book for more in-depth information.)

The sun is a star, like those we see sprinkled across the night sky. The sun looks much bigger than those stars only because it is the one closest to us. Though it is huge compared with the Earth, the sun is really rather small, as stars go. The sun is made of two gases called hydrogen and helium. A process called thermonuclear fusion changes the hydrogen into helium, producing the energy that provides heat and light to the solar system. The sun is *hot*---its temperature can reach 27 million degrees Fahrenheit. It was born about 4.5 billion years ago, and will live about 5 billion more.

P. 313

Venus is the planet between Mercury and Earth. Like the other planets, it reflects the sun’s light but has none of its own. Except for the moon, it is the brightest body in the night sky. Though Venus appears beautiful to viewers on Earth, its environment is hostile to life. It is the hottest planet, and pools of liquid metal may dot its surface. Clouds on Venus are made of acid, not water, and are heavy enough to crush a person. Lightning storms are common on Venus, and it may have erupting volcanoes. In ages past, Venus probably had oceans.

P. 315

Asteroids are thousands of chunks of rock and metal that orbit the sun, mostly between Mars and Jupiter. They are smaller than any of the planets—some are as small as a basketball. Maybe, one day, space miners will remove minerals from the asteroids for use on Earth or for building space colonies. Where did the asteroids come from?

Astronomers disagree, but some think they may be the remains of a planet that was smashed to bits in a space collision. P. 316

Appendix F-1

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing
Adapted from *Step Up to Writing* by Maureen E. Auman

Summary

To write a summary paragraph, first write the topic sentence. Fill in each section of the burrito-fold diagram to help you with this:

Title

Verb

Main idea

Now write a complete topic sentence here: _____

Next list three facts, details, or examples that support the topic sentence:

a.

b.

c.

Finally, write a summary paragraph, beginning with your topic sentence. Add the three detail sentences. Finish with a concluding sentence.

Appendix G-1

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing
Adapted from *Step Up to Writing* by Maureen E. Auman

Short Report/Summary

To write a summary paragraph, first write the topic sentence. Fill in each section of the burrito-fold diagram to help you with this:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Verb</u>	<u>Main idea</u>

Now write a complete topic sentence here: _____

Next list three facts, details, or examples that support the topic sentence:

- a.
- b.
- c.

Finally, write a summary paragraph, beginning with your topic sentence. Add the three detail sentences. Finish with a concluding sentence.

Appendix G-2

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing
Adapted from *Step Up to Writing* by Maureen E. Auman

Short Report/Summary

To write a summary paragraph, first write the topic sentence. Fill in each section of the burrito-fold diagram to help you with this:

Title

Verb

Main idea

Now write a complete topic sentence here: _____

Next list three facts, details, or examples that support the topic sentence:

a.

b.

c.

Finally, write a summary paragraph, beginning with your topic sentence. Add the three detail sentences. Finish with a concluding sentence.

Appendix H-1

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing

Summary portion adapted from *Step Up to Writing* by Maureen E. Auman

Non-fiction Book Report/Summary-Biography

Title: _____

Author: _____

What is the book about? Write a summary paragraph about the book. On another sheet of paper, use the burrito-fold method to write a topic sentence. List three supporting details, one from the beginning of the book, the middle, and the end. Be sure to end with a concluding sentence. Write the complete paragraph on the space below.

What did you learn from this book? Did you learn a new fact? Did you learn a lesson? Write two complete sentences.

Why do you like/dislike this book? Be specific. Was the information helpful or new to you? Were the pictures colorful or informative? Write two complete sentences.

Appendix I-1

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing

Summary portion adapted from *Step Up to Writing* by Maureen E. Auman

Fiction Book Report/Summary

Title: _____

Author: _____

What is the book about? Write a summary paragraph about the book. On another sheet of paper, use the burrito-fold method to write a topic sentence. Then list, in order, three of the main events of the story. Write a concluding sentence. Finally, write the complete paragraph on the space below.

What are the problem and the solution? Write two complete sentences. In the first, state the problem. In the second, briefly describe the solution.

Why do you like/dislike this book? Was there lots of action? Did you have a favorite part? Did you like the main character? Write two complete sentences.

Appendix J-1

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing

Sample Friendly Letter

Jefferson Academy
9955 Yarrow
Broomfield, Colorado 80021
Date (Month, day, year)

Dear Mr. Carroll,

Our class has been reading *Alice in Wonderland* together for several weeks now. We love your imagination!

You have created any colorful characters! Alice’s curiosity seems to get her in all kinds of predicaments. The way she shrinks and grows again is fascinating! The caterpillar is oh-so-cool, or so he acts! The Hatter and the March Hare can be exasperating with their banter back and forth!

Thanks for writing a classic—whether you knew it at the time or not!

Your friends,

The third graders at JA

Appendix K-1

The “Write” Stuff: Expository Writing

This writing unit is taught along with two other third grade writing units, The “Write” Stuff-Imaginative Writing and The “Write” Stuff-Research Paper, in a writing workshop format. This workshop is a yearlong program. These units are independent, in and of themselves, and could be taught separately, if so desired. However, we have broken them down into a workshop format which we coordinate with our Core curriculum calendar. Through mixing and intertwining these units we feel we are able to more effectively teach the writing process to our third graders.

At our school, Jefferson Academy, this format is organized using the following guidelines:

- Students are placed in small groups (7-8 students were group)
- Groups are led by parent volunteers who have made a commitment for a year
- Workshops are conducted for a one hour session every two weeks
- Volunteers are given written, detailed instructions on what is to be covered in workshop
- Mini lessons are included in each workshop that review and build on previous classroom instruction
- Volunteers work with each student in developing their writing piece, giving immediate feedback and reinforcement
- A standard system of proofreading, editing, and revising is used
- Every workshop session concludes with students orally sharing their writings with the group who then give constructive feedback
- Teachers travel from group to group and interact, but do no direct instruction