

# Write On! Step by Step Paragraph and Report Writing

Grade Level or Special Area: 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

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Length of Unit: Five lessons and a Culminating Activity (5 days, one day = 60 minutes)

## I. ABSTRACT

- A. This unit combines writing instruction with review of third grade Core Knowledge concepts. Students learn to plan and write paragraphs while reviewing animal classification, the Vikings, explorers, and the solar system. A step-by-step approach is taken, and instruction transitions slowly from teacher-focused to student-focused. Instruction takes the students all the way to writing their own short report.

## II. OVERVIEW

- A. Concept Objectives (adapted from the *Colorado State Standards for Reading/Writing*)
1. Students will write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.
  2. Students will read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information for writing.
- B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*
1. Writing (p. 65)
    - a. Produce a variety of types of writing
    - b. Organize material in paragraphs and understand how to use a topic sentence and how to develop a paragraph with examples and details
    - 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 a presentation of a final draft
- C. Skill Objectives
1. Students will identify the four parts of a paragraph.
  2. Students will plan a paragraph using stars, dashes, and dots.
  3. Students will identify topic sentences.
  4. Students will write a paragraph.
  5. Students will write a short report.

## III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers
1. Auman, M. *Step Up to Writing*. Colorado: Sopris West, 1999. 1-57035-208-9.
  2. Hirsch, E.D., Jr. *What Your Third Grader Needs to Know*. New York: Bantam Dell Publishing, 2001. 0-385-33626-8.
- B. For Students
1. Animal Classification – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Core Knowledge concept (Lesson 2)
  2. Vikings – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Core Knowledge concept (Lesson 3)
  3. Early Explorers – 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Core Knowledge concept (Lesson 4)

## IV. RESOURCES

- A. Auman, M. *Step Up to Writing*. Colorado: Sopris West, 1999. 1-57035-208-9.
- B. Carlson, N. *How to Lose All Your Friends*. New York: Puffin Books, 1994. 0-14-055862-4. (Lesson 1)

## V. LESSONS

### Lesson One: Parts of a Paragraph (approximately 60 minutes)

#### A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Students will write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Organize material in paragraphs and understand how to use a topic sentence and how to develop a paragraph with examples and details
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will identify the four parts of a paragraph.

#### B. Materials

1. Chalkboard/chalk or whiteboard/markers
2. Overhead projector
3. Transparency of Appendix C
4. Book: *How to Lose All Your Friends*, by Nancy Carlson
5. Prepared sentence strips. (See Appendix B for instructions on how to prepare them for the lesson.)
6. Copies of Appendix D (1 per student)
7. Crayons or colored pencils (1 green, 1 red, 1 yellow per student)
8. Student portfolio (see Appendix A)
9. Copies of Appendix E (one per student) for grading

#### C. Key Vocabulary

1. Topic sentence: usually the first sentence of a paragraph, it tells the main idea
2. Transition: words used to let the reader know a new key idea is being introduced
3. Conclusion: the last sentence in a paragraph that reminds your reader of the main idea

#### D. Procedures/Activities

1. Ask: "What does the word 'paragraph' mean to you?" Write student responses on board.
2. Say: "In third grade we learn how to write good paragraphs, but before we can write a paragraph, we need to know the parts of a paragraph."
3. Display transparency of Appendix C.
4. Say: "The topic sentence of a paragraph tells the reader the main idea. On the stoplight, the topic sentence is green because green means go. When you write a topic sentence, you have to be sure to give the reader a clear idea of what you're going to write about. The topic sentence gets the reader interested to read further."
5. Say: "The next part of a paragraph is the information you want to give the reader. They are the yellow on the stoplight because you should 'slow down' and give a reason, detail, or fact. Yellows are easy to spot because they start with a transition word. Transition words are words like first, second, third, or first, next, last. When a sentence starts with one of these words, you know a new idea is coming."
6. Say: "Next are the sentences that make a paragraph interesting. The 'reds' are the explanations and examples you write to follow up a yellow. The reds give more information about the yellows. Reds are not necessary, but they make your paragraph more interesting."
7. Say: "The last part of a paragraph is the conclusion sentence. Why do you think conclusions are green?" (because they go back and restate the topic sentence)

8. Say: "The conclusion is where you go back and tell your reader the main idea of your paragraph again. It should restate your topic sentence, but it should not be exactly the same."
  9. Say: "Now I'm going to read a funny story that is written in this paragraph format."
  10. Read *How to Lose All Your Friends* straight through.
  11. Say: "Using this book, we're going to practice identifying which color each sentence represents. You will each get a sentence strip. We will go out into the hallway. I will re-read the book. When I get to your sentence, you will come forward and place your strip below the one before it. When we are done, the entire story will be on the floor, one sentence at a time."
  12. Pass out one sentence strip to each student. It's OK if someone needs to have more than one strip to get them all passed out.
  13. Have students line up along each wall outside the classroom.
  14. Re-read *How to Lose All Your Friends*. If necessary, remind students to place their sentence strip on the floor when you read their sentence.
  15. When you are finished, say: "Now let's look at the sentences. The first sentence is obviously a green because it is the topic of the story. It tells us that this book is going to be about the steps you'd take to lose all your friends."
  16. Say: "The next sentence is a yellow. Although it doesn't have a transition word, it does have a number one in front of it, which is the same thing as saying 'first.'"
  17. Say: "The next four sentences are reds. They are all red because they are still talking about the yellow 'never smile.'"
  18. Say: "The next sentence is a yellow. What clue tells us it should be a yellow?" (the number 2 before "never share")
  19. Say: "Next we have five reds. What do these sentences all have in common?" (they all talk about not sharing)
  20. Say: "Now we're up to yellow number three. 'Be a bully.' What are the details that follow this yellow?" (Pick on little kids. Push in front of the lunch line. Play mean tricks on kids.)
  21. Say: "Let's skip ahead to the last sentence strip. It's green. Why is it green?" (because it is the conclusion sentence)
  22. Say: "What do you notice about the topic and conclusion sentences here?" (they restate each other)
  23. Pick up sentence strips and lead class back into classroom.
  24. Pass out copies of Appendix D.
  25. Have students complete worksheet and collect for grading.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Use Appendix E to correct Appendix D.

**Lesson Two: Organizing Your Writing & Animal Classification Review (approximately 60 minutes)**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students will write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. Organize material in paragraphs and understand how to use a topic sentence and how to develop a paragraph with examples and details
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will plan a paragraph using stars, dashes, and dots.
- B. *Materials*

1. Overhead projector
  2. Transparency of Appendix F
  3. Vis-à-vis overhead marker
  4. Copies of Appendix F (1 per student)
  5. Pencils (1 per student)
  6. Copies of Appendix G (1 per student)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Stars, dashes, and dots: a way to organize your writing
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Say: “When I want to go on a trip, I have to plan my course, first. I have to make a list of things to pack, I have to plot a course, and I have to call ahead to the hotel where I will be staying to make a reservation. What might happen if I don’t plan ahead?” (get lost, no place to stay, forget to pack something)
  2. Say: “Just like I need to plan ahead for a trip, we need to plan ahead when writing a paragraph. Writing is easier when we think ahead and make notes we can use to guide us.”
  3. Display transparency of Appendix F.
  4. Say: “This is the format we will use when we plan for a paragraph. It’s called ‘stars, dashes, and dots.’”
  5. Say: “When we plan, we use words and short phrases on the lines – not full sentences. We can think of it as ‘caveman writing.’”
  6. Say: “The star is the topic, or green, of my paragraph. We’re going to write a paragraph about one of the classes of animals, so I will write ‘mammals’ on the line next to the star as my topic.” Write “mammals” next to the star on the transparency.
  7. Say: “I’m going to describe three of the characteristics that prove an animal is a mammal. The dashes are for our yellows. Remember, yellows are facts. My first yellow is going to be that mammals are warm-blooded.” Write “warm-blooded” next to the first dash.
  8. Say: “The dots are for our reds. When I plan for a paragraph, I like to get my yellows down first, then I go back and do my reds. Let’s move on to the other yellows.”
  9. Say: “My next yellow is going to be about how mammals breathe. Does anyone remember what we learned about how mammals breathe?” (with lungs)
  10. Write “breathe with lungs” next to the second dash.
  11. Ask: “Who can think of a third characteristic of a mammal?” (hair on body, babies drink from mother) Write third suggestion next to third dash.
  12. Say: “Now I can go back and look at my reds. My first yellow is about the fact that mammals are warm-blooded. A good detail for this yellow might be to tell what warm-blooded means. Who can remind me what warm-blooded means?” (an animal whose body temperature stays the same, no matter the temperature) Write “temperature stays same” on the line next to the first dot.
  13. Say: “My next yellow is about how mammals breathe. Can anyone think of a detail I can add there?” (take a student suggestion, or you can remind students that you do not necessarily need a red for every yellow)
  14. Ask for a detail for your remaining yellow and add it as the last dot.
  15. Say: “The last line has a star again. What do you think it’s for?” (conclusion)
  16. Ask: “What do we need to remember about the conclusion?” (it should restate the topic)

17. Say: “When I get to this line I like to write the conclusion word or phrase I plan to use. Words like ‘clearly’ and ‘as you can see’ are good conclusions. You should pick one that works for you.”
  18. Say: “Now it’s your turn. I’m going to pass out a worksheet just like this one. You need to pick one of the other classes of animals and write notes like I have. You must have three yellows, or facts, about the class you choose, and at least 2 reds. Don’t forget to also fill in the greens!”
  19. Pass out copies of Appendix F.
  20. Give students time to complete the form. Circulate and help where needed.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Collect notes. Use rubric (Appendix G) to grade.
- Lesson Three: Topic Sentences and Viking Review (approximately 60 minutes)**
- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students will write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. Organize material in paragraphs and understand how to use a topic sentence and how to develop a paragraph with examples and details
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will identify topic sentences.
- B. *Materials*
1. Overhead projector
  2. Transparency of Appendix H
  3. Transparency of Appendix I
  4. Transparency of Appendix J
  5. Vis-à-vis overhead marker
  6. Copies of Appendix K (1 per student)
  7. Pencils (1 per student)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. none for this lesson
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Ask: “When we write a paragraph, what is the job of the first sentence?” (tell the main idea)
  2. Say: “The first sentence is our topic sentence and it tells the reader what we are going to be telling them about.”
  3. Display transparency of Appendix H. (Cover all but first sentence so as to keep everyone focused.)
  4. Ask: “Who can read this statement to the class?” Pick a student to read statement 1.
  5. Ask: “Do we know what this paragraph is going to be about?” (yes)
  6. Ask: “What is the writer going to tell us about?” (why chocolate chip cookies are their favorite)
  7. Uncover statement 2.
  8. Ask: “What is the writer going to tell us about here?” (their trip to the zoo)
  9. Say: “Notice how these statements tell us exactly what to expect. That is what makes them good topic sentences.”
  10. Uncover statement 3.
  11. Ask: “Is this a good topic statement?” (yes) “Why?” (because it tells exactly what the paragraph is going to be about)
  12. Uncover statement 4.

13. Say: "This is a great topic statement as long as the writer talks about the game Clue. If they talk about other games like Monopoly or Connect Four, then the statement would not fit the paragraph."
  14. Uncover the "My Favorite Restaurant" paragraph.
  15. Say: "Listen carefully as I read this paragraph aloud." Read paragraph.
  16. Ask: "What is the title of this paragraph?" (My Favorite Food)
  17. Say: "So if the title is 'My Favorite Food,' I would expect to read about the writer's favorite food."
  18. Ask: "Who can read the topic sentence of this paragraph for me?" Select a student to read the first sentence.
  19. Ask: "What is the writer telling us they are going to write about in their topic sentence?" (their favorite restaurant, Pizza Hut)
  20. Ask: "What is the rest of the paragraph about?" (why pizza is their favorite food)
  21. Ask: "So is this a good topic sentence?" (no)
  22. Ask: "Can someone give me a better topic sentence for this paragraph?" Take several student suggestions. Example might be: "Pizza is my favorite food for several reasons."
  23. Display transparency of Appendix I.
  24. Ask: "Who can read this paragraph for us?" Select a student to read the paragraph.
  25. Ask: "What is the topic of this paragraph?" (the three levels of the Viking universe)
  26. Ask: "Does this topic sentence fit the paragraph?" (yes)
  27. Display transparency of Appendix J.
  28. Read paragraph aloud.
  29. Say: "This paragraph is missing its topic sentence. Who can give me a good topic sentence for this paragraph?" Select several students and write the best sentence on the lines provided. An example might be: "The Vikings, a fierce group of fighters, can be placed into three main groups."
  30. Pass out copies of Appendix K.
  31. Read directions to students. Ask for questions.
  32. Circulate class to help as needed.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Collect topic sentence worksheet. Answers are as follows: 1. B; 2. A; 3. C

**Lesson Four: Paragraph Writing and Explorer Review (approximately 60 minutes)**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students will write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. Produce a variety of types of writing
    - b. Organize material in paragraphs and understand how to use a topic sentence and how to develop a paragraph with examples and details
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will write a paragraph.
- B. *Materials*
1. Chalkboard/chalk or whiteboard/markers
  2. Transparency of Appendix L
  3. Overhead projector
  4. Vis-à-vis overhead marker

5. Crayons or colored pencils (1 green, 1 red, 1 yellow per student)
  6. Lined paper (2 pieces per student)
  7. Pencils (1 per student)
  8. Chart paper with paragraph written on it (see Appendix M)
  9. Copies of Appendix N (1 per student)
  10. Several books about the explorers you have studied, or access to the Internet
  11. Copies of Appendix O (1 per student) for grading
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Synonym: a word that has the same meaning as another word
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Say: “Up until this point we have been practicing with the various parts of writing a paragraph. We have worked on planning and topic sentences. Today we’re going to put the pieces together to actually write a paragraph.”
  2. Write the following prompt on the board: “We have studied several explorers. Choose the two that you find most interesting. Tell at least two facts about them to help explain why you think they are interesting.”
  3. Ask: “What is the first thing we need to do?” (plan)
  4. Have students take out a piece of paper and their crayons or colored pencils.
  5. Display transparency of Appendix L.
  6. Instruct students to use their crayons or colored pencils to make their paper look like the transparency.
  7. Ask: “What do you think the big ‘T’ on top means?” (topic)
  8. Ask: “What is the topic of our paragraph?” (2 explorers you find interesting)
  9. Write on the transparency next to the T: “2 explorers I find interesting.”
  10. Instruct students to copy the above next to the T on their papers.
  11. Say: “The dashes are my yellows, or my facts. What are the yellows of my paragraph going to be? Remember, we’re writing about explorers.” (the names of the two explorers you are going to write about)
  12. Say: “Please put your pencils down. I’m going to show you by example how I want you to plan your paragraph, but I don’t want you to copy what I write from this point on.”
  13. Say: “I’m going to choose two explorers that you won’t be able to use: Christopher Columbus and Leif Ericson.” Write Christopher Columbus next to the first dash and Leif Ericson next to the second dash.
  14. Say: “When you do your planning, you will write the names of the explorers you’re going to write about next to the dashes.”
  15. Ask: “What are the dots below the dashes for?” (the details about each explorer)
  16. Say: “Under Columbus I need to write two details that I think make him interesting. First, I think it was interesting that he was looking for a passage to India. Next to the first dot I will write ‘looking for passage to the Indies.’”  
Write: “looking for passage to Indies” next to the first dot under Columbus.
  17. Say: “When you do your planning, you will write a detail about each explorer next to each dot.”
  18. Say: “The second detail I want to talk about is that Columbus died thinking he had reached the Indies, when in fact he had landed in the Caribbean.”
  19. Write: “died thinking he had reached the Indies although landed in Caribbean.”
  20. Say: “Now I need to write two details about Leif Ericson. My first detail is that he came from a family of explorers.”
  21. Write: “from a family of explorers” next to the first dash underneath Leif Ericson.

22. Say: “The other detail I want to use is that he was nicknamed ‘Leif the Lucky’ because he had rescued a crew of men from a wrecked trading ship. I need to make that shorter, so I will just write ‘Leif the Lucky’ to give me a clue as to what to write.”
  23. Write “Leif the Lucky” next to the second dash below Leif Ericson.
  24. Say: “Now that I have my notes done, I can begin writing my paragraph.”
  25. Display prepared paragraph on chart paper.
  26. Point to the title. Say: “I have to title my paragraph. Some people like to do this first, while others like to do it last. Feel free to do it whichever way makes you feel most comfortable. Remember, your title needs to relate directly to your topic.
  27. Point to the topic sentence.
  28. Say: “I take my cue from the ‘T=’ to write my topic sentence. We know the topic is the two explorers I find most interesting, so I used those words and added to them to make a full sentence.”
  29. Say: “My first dash, which is my first yellow, is Christopher Columbus, so I wrote my next sentence about him. I followed it up with two sentences that are my reds. Again, I used the words from my notes in the actual sentences.”
  30. Say: “My next sentence is another yellow, this time about Leif Ericson. Again, I followed up with two reds, both using the language from my notes. Please note that it is not necessary to always have the same number of reds. You may have three or four for one explorer and only two for the other – that’s okay.”
  31. Say: “My last sentence is my conclusion. What is the job of the conclusion sentence?” (to remind the reader of your topic)
  32. Say: “Notice that when I wrote my conclusion, I restated my topic sentence and used a word that means the same thing as ‘interesting’ – captivating. It’s always a good idea to use a word that means the same thing, but is not the same exact word. We call words that mean the same thing ‘synonyms.’”
  33. Pass out copies of Appendix N.
  34. Say: “I have listed the names of the other explorers we have studied, along with a few details about them. Your job is to pick two of these explorers to write about, do the notes, and write the paragraph, just as I have demonstrated.”  
Students should have access to the Internet, library, or books in the classroom they can use to find more information about the explorers you have studied.
  35. Circulate the class to help as needed.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Collect and grade using rubric (Appendix O).

**Lesson Five: Short Report and Solar System Review (approximately 60 minutes)**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Students will write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.
    - b. Students will read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information for writing.
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. 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 a presentation of a final draft
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will write a short report.

- B. *Materials*
1. Copies of Appendices P-R (1 set per student, stapled)
  2. Overhead projector
  3. Transparencies of Appendices P-R
  4. Chalkboard/chalk or whiteboard/markers
  5. Pencils (1 per student)
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Report: a written account or explanation based on fact
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
1. Say: “Now that you know how to write good paragraphs, I am going to show you how to write a report. You will have to write reports each year you are in school, and some of you may even have to write reports when you get a job.”
  2. Say: “The report you will write will be very similar to the explorer paragraph we wrote. This time, however, I will not be giving you all the information – you will need to look up the information on your own.”
  3. Display transparency of Appendix P.
  4. Pass out copies of Appendices P-R
  5. Say: “This letter and the papers that are attached to it need to go home tonight. You should show them to your mom or dad and talk to them about this report.”
  6. Read letter to students and point out the importance of doing a good job.
  7. Display rubric and ask students to turn the page in their packet.
  8. Go through the rubric step-by-step to discuss expectations.
  9. Ask for student questions regarding rubric before moving on.
  10. Display planning page and ask students to turn the page in their packet.
  11. Ask: “We’ve seen something like this before, what do we do with it?” (we use it to plan a paragraph)
  12. Ask: “What is the big ‘T’ at the top for?” (our topic) “What will the topic be?” (the name of the planet we are going to write about)
  13. Ask: “What are the dashes for?” (our yellows/main facts)
  14. Ask: “How many facts do you need to have in your report?” (3)
  15. Ask: “What are the dots for?” (our reds/details)
  16. Ask: “How many details do you need to have?” (1 for each fact)
  17. Say: “But remember, details will make your report more interesting!”
  18. Ask: “How are you going to get all the information for your report? Where can I go to get information?” List student responses on board.
  19. Say: “When I need to write a report or find information on something, I go to the library or use the Internet.”
  20. At this point, explain the plan for getting the students access to books. If you have scheduled time in your school library, tell them when. If you are going to bring books to the classroom for a few days, tell them when. It is important to give students access to books in school, as some parents cannot take their child to the library.
  21. Remind students to use the planning sheet to plan their report before they start writing.
  22. Remind students they will be expected to bring in their rough draft on the day you have designated.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Use rubric (Appendix Q) to grade reports.

## VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

- A. At the end of your Rome unit, assign a report discussing the three classes in the Roman government: Plebeians, Patricians, and Senate. Use Appendix X to grade.

## **VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS**

- A. Appendix A: Teacher Resource Guide
- B. Appendix B: Instructions for Sentence Strips
- C. Appendix C: Parts of a Paragraph Stoplight
- D. Appendix D: Color Coding Paragraph
- E. Appendix E: Answer Key for Color Coding Paragraph
- F. Appendix F: Stars, Dashes, and Dots
- G. Appendix G: Stars, Dashes, and Dots Grading Rubric
- H. Appendix H: Topic Sentence Examples
- I. Appendix I: Topic Sentence Practice – Viking Universe
- J. Appendix J: Topic Sentence Practice – Vikings
- K. Appendix K: Topic Sentence Worksheet
- L. Appendix L: Planning a Paragraph
- M. Appendix M: Prepared Paragraph
- N. Appendix N: Explorer Notes
- O. Appendix O: Explorer Paragraph Rubric
- P. Appendix P: Planet Report Letter
- Q. Appendix Q: Planet Report Grading Rubric
- R. Appendix R: Planet Report Planning Sheet
- S. Appendix S: Roman Government Report Rubric
- T. Appendix T: Power Statement Poster
- U. Appendix U: Occasion/Position Topic Sentence Poster
- V. Appendix V: Transitions Poster
- W. Appendix W: E’s (Details) Poster
- X. Appendix X: Conclusions Poster

## **VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- A. Auman, M. *Step Up to Writing*. Colorado: Sopris West, 1999. 1-57035-208-9.
- B. Carlson, N. *How to Lose All Your Friends*. New York: Puffin Books, 1994. 0-14-055862-4.
- C. Hirsch, E.D., Jr. *What Your Third Grader Needs to Know*. New York: Bantam Dell Publishing, 2001. 0-385-33626-8.

## **Appendix A: Teacher Resource Guide**

### **A Note About Posters or Folders**

This unit is written with the understanding that your students will have access to either posters or copies of Appendices T-X. Posters can be made at Kinko's for about \$3 each. I like to have copies of the sheets in their writing folders, too, so they always have access to them, even at home.

### **Notes About the Lessons**

Lesson 2: Use this lesson to review animal classification and teach writing organization. Make sure students are well-versed in the characteristics of each of the 5 classes before attempting this lesson.

Lesson 3: Use this lesson to review The Vikings and teach topic sentences. For the topic sentence worksheet, I assign 10 points for each answer, but it can be worth as little or as much as you see fit.

Lesson 4: When assigning a paragraph that will be graded using a rubric, I spend time showing the students the rubric on the overhead and taking them through each part. I think it is important that students see how they are going to be graded. It is also a good idea to send home a copy of the rubric to parents so they have the opportunity to help their student.

Lesson 5: I assign this report about two weeks prior to the conclusion of the space unit. This gives the students plenty of time to research and write the report. I do not have the ability to schedule time in our library for researching, so I bring in books from the school and public libraries for the students to use. I schedule a couple hours over the course of a few days for this purpose. However, I do make it clear to the students that part of doing a report is researching at the library and encourage them to go to the public library themselves.

## Appendix B: Instructions for Sentence Strips (Lesson 1)

### Materials:

Sentence strips (2 green, 6 yellow, 21 pink)  
Black permanent marker  
Book: *How to Lose All Your Friends*

The idea is to write a sentence on each strip. The color should correlate to what kind of sentence it is. Follow the guide below:

### Green:

“If you don’t want to have any friends, follow these simple instructions.” (Topic Sentence)  
“If you follow these instructions you’ll be able to eat all the cookies you want. And you will have no friends to bother you.” (Conclusion Sentence)

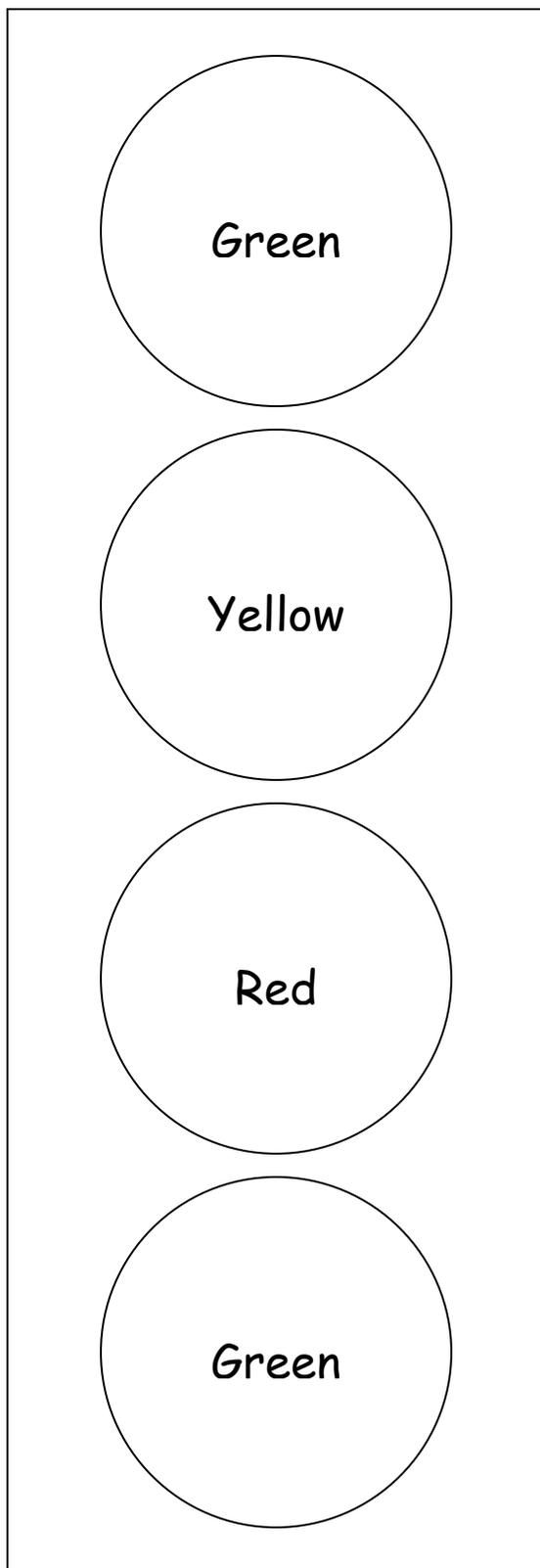
### Yellow:

“Never smile.”  
“Never share.”  
“Be a bully.”  
“Be a poor sport.”  
“Tattle.”  
“Now if you still have friends after all of that, I have one more lesson. Whine.”

### Red:

“Be gloomy.”  
“Be cranky.”  
“Frown a lot.”  
“Being gloomy and cranky, and frowning a lot will scare off any friends!”  
“If you are eating cookies, hide them when your friends come over.”  
“You could also stuff them all in your mouth, or you could just run away.”  
“When you’re playing with toys, grab all the good ones for yourself.”  
“Then throw a tantrum if somebody else plays with them.”  
“You can also just lock everyone out of your bedroom.”  
“Pick on little kids.”  
“Push in front of the lunch line.”  
“Play mean tricks on kids.”  
“When you tag and someone tags you, lie, and say they missed.”  
“Cheat at cards.”  
“If you’re losing a board game, knock off all the pieces.”  
“Tell on kids when they run in the hall.”  
“When your brother makes a face at you, tell your mom.”  
“If your brother is in Time Out, make sure he stays there.”  
“Whine when it’s too hot outside.”  
“Whine when it’s too cold outside.”  
“Whine for treats. That will irritate everyone.”

## Appendix C: Parts of a Paragraph Stoplight



### **Green = Go!**

Write a topic sentence.  
Tell the reader what you  
are going to write about.

### **Yellow = Slow Down!**

Give a reason, detail, or  
fact. Use a transition.

### **Red = Stop!**

Explain. Give an  
example. The reds add  
interest!

### **Green = Go back!**

Write a conclusion that  
restates your topic  
sentence.

Adapted from *Step Up to Writing*. (see bibliography)

## Appendix D: Color Coding Paragraph

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Read the paragraph. Using a green, yellow, and red crayon (or colored pencil), underline each sentence with the appropriate color.

### Writing a Paragraph

When we write paragraphs, there are a few things we must remember to do. First, always begin with an indent. Use the width of your thumb as a guide for how big it should be. Next, skip lines to allow for revision later. You'll need the space for fixing mistakes. Also, don't forget to use capital letters to begin each sentence and a period at the end. Paragraphs are easy to write if you just follow the rules.

## Appendix E: Answer Key for Color Coding Paragraph

### Writing a Paragraph

When we write paragraphs, there are a few things we must remember to do. First, always begin with an indent. Use the width of your thumb as a guide for how big it should be. Next, skip lines to allow for revision later. You'll need the space for fixing mistakes. Also, don't forget to use capital letters to begin each sentence and a period at the end. Paragraphs are easy to write if you just follow the rules.

## Appendix F: Stars, Dashes, and Dots



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Adapted from Step Up to Writing (see bibliography).

## Appendix G: Stars, Dashes, and Dots Grading Rubric

	<b>Yes</b> 25 pts.*	<b>No</b> 0 pts.
<b>Lists class next to first star</b>		
<b>Has 3 facts</b>		
<b>Has 3 reds (details)</b>		
<b>Conclusion word listed</b>		
<b>Total Points</b>	_____/100	
<b>Grade</b>		

**\*NOTE:** In the “Yes” column, give fewer points if not 100% acceptable.

## Appendix H: Topic Sentence Examples

1. Although all cookies are good, my favorite is chocolate chip for many reasons.
2. Out of all the field trips we took this year, my favorite was our trip to the zoo.
3. I love snacks, but there are three snacks I love most.
4. My family plays several really cool board games, but my favorite is Clue.

### My Favorite Food

My family and I go to a lot of restaurants, but Pizza Hut is my favorite for a couple of reasons. First, pizza is easy to eat. You don't need any forks or anything – just pick it up and eat it! Next, I like the gooey cheese. I always order extra cheese on my pizza. Last, I love pepperoni. It's a little spicy, but not too much. Clearly you can see why pizza is my favorite food.

## Appendix I: Topic Sentence Practice

### The Viking Universe

The Vikings had very unique religious beliefs, one of which is that the world had three levels. The most important world is Asgard, which is where the gods live. Asgard has the most magnificent halls. One of the most important halls is Valhalla. Valhalla is the hall where all the brave Vikings go when they die. The middle level is called Midgard. Midgard means "middle earth," and is the land where humans and other creatures, like trolls, live. The lowest level has two sections. One half contains the land of the dead and is called Niflhelm. A dragon named Nidhogg lives there. It is a place of icy, eternal darkness. The other section is called Muspell. It is a land of eternal fire. The Vikings clearly had a very unique view of the world of religion.

## Appendix J: Topic Sentence Practice

### Who Were the Vikings?

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The first group was called raiders. This term describes the Vikings who stole from other people's ships or towns to get items they could not normally get where they lived. They took wine, jewelry, silks - anything that had any value. Another Viking group was the traders. Traders were those Vikings who would travel to other lands to trade for items they needed. Sometimes they traded stolen items, other times they traded the items they hand-crafted. The last group of Vikings were the explorers. These Vikings traveled to find new places to live and farm. All three groups of Vikings worked together to make a great nation.

## Appendix K: Topic Sentence Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Read each short paragraph about the Vikings. Then underline the topic sentence that best fits the paragraph.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ . They were long, low ships that were pointed on each end. Longships also had had large sails. This Viking ship could hold up to 32 people, with 16 men on each side to row. For these reasons, the longship was the most famous of the Viking ships.

- a. The Vikings were great shipbuilders.
- b. The most famous Viking ship was the longship, or the Drakkar.
- c. The Vikings built many different kinds of ships.

2. \_\_\_\_\_ . One piece of equipment they used was a shield. The shield was used to protect while in battle. Also, they used swords. Some Vikings even had double-edged swords! They were often very heavy and difficult to use. The most famous piece of equipment Vikings had, though, was their helmet. They were made of leather or metal, but they didn't have horns on them. Obviously, the Vikings took protecting themselves very seriously.

- a. The Viking raiders had many pieces of equipment they carried for protection.
- b. The Vikings were fierce warriors.
- c. Viking equipment is cool.

3. \_\_\_\_\_ . The Vikings stole treasure and burned buildings. Another reason for their fear was because the Vikings often took captives during their raids. A captive would be held for ransom. If the ransom was not paid, they kept the captive as a slave. The Vikings were also known to kill anyone who got in their way, so people were very scared. Certainly, people had good reasons for fearing a Viking raid.

- a. The Vikings were mean and scary.
- b. The Vikings were raiders, traders, and explorers.
- c. For many reasons, people feared the Viking raids.



## Appendix M: Prepared Paragraph

Note: Copy this onto chart paper to be shared with the class. It cannot be put on a transparency because you need to have your notes up at the same time as the paragraph for the lesson. It may help to underline each sentence with the appropriate color to help visual learners make the connection from notes to paragraph.

### Interesting Explorers

Although all of the explorers we have studied are interesting, there are two that I think are the most remarkable. Christopher Columbus lead a fascinating life. He started exploring to try to find a shorter route to the Indies. Although he had actually reached the Caribbean Islands, he died thinking he had reached the Indies, and had even named the people he had met there "Indians." The other explorer I find interesting is Leif Ericson. Ericson came from a family of explorers - his father, Erik the Red, took the family exploring when Leif was a young boy. Ericson was nicknamed "Leif the Lucky" because he once saved the entire crew from a wrecked ship. Clearly these great explorers lead captivating lives.

## Appendix N: Explorer Notes

### **Juan Ponce de Leon**

1. Fountain of Youth
2. Settled St. Augustine, Florida

### **Hernando de Soto**

1. Looking for gold
2. First Europeans to see Mississippi River

### **Francisco Vasquez de Coronado**

1. Searched for Seven Cities of Cibola
2. Found the Grand Canyon

### **John Cabot**

1. Looking for Northwest Passage
2. Found Newfoundland

### **Henry Hudson**

1. Looking for Northwest Passage
2. Sailed the river that was later named for him
3. Was left behind by his crew after they rebelled against him

### **Samuel de Champlain**

1. Looking for Northwest Passage
2. Built a trading post along the St. Lawrence River
3. Called “the Father of New France”

## Appendix O: Explorer Paragraph Rubric

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Select one column for each row. Multiply points as shown to arrive at a total grade.

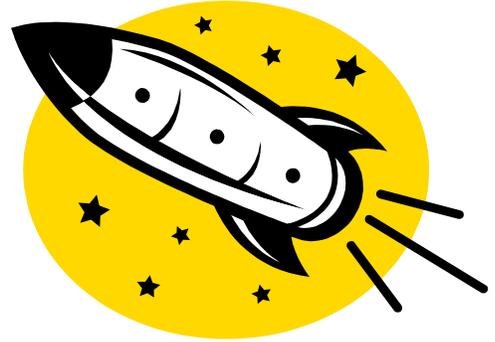
	<b>Not Proficient 0 points</b>	<b>Developing 1 point</b>	<b>Emergent 2 points</b>	<b>Proficient 3 points</b>
Topic Statement _____ x 5 = _____ pts.	Not copied correctly			Copied correctly
Facts _____ x 5 = _____ pts.	No explorers named		Names 1 explorer	Names 2 explorers
Details _____ x 5 = _____ pts.	No details	1-2 details	3 details	4 details
Conclusion _____ x 5 = _____ pts.	No conclusion	Conclusion unclear	Has conclusion that does not restate topic sentence	Has conclusion that clearly restates topic sentence
Mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar) _____ x 5 = _____ pts.	Errors make the paragraph difficult to understand	Frequent errors, but still readable. May take away from meaning	Few errors, appropriate for grade level. Does not take away from meaning	No errors
Total Grade Points _____/75  Grade: _____	Comments:			

## Appendix P: Planet Report Letter

Dear Parents:

The third grade is currently studying the solar system. A major portion of the unit grade will be based on a report that is due on \_\_\_\_\_.

Please see the information below for specifics, as well as the attached grading rubric and planning sheet.



To ensure your child is on the right track, your student needs to bring in a draft of his/her report on \_\_\_\_\_. On this day, I will be meeting with each child individually to edit and discuss his/her report. Please note, computer printouts from the Internet, or copies from a book will not be accepted. Please use the attached planning sheet to help your child organize his/her thoughts and plan for their report.

Respectfully,

### Solar System Report Requirements

1. The report can be about any planet, except Earth.
2. The report should be typed or neatly printed.
3. The report should include at least three facts about the planet and may include such information as name origin, distance from sun, period of revolution/rotation, number/name of moons, or any other fact that interests your student.
4. The report must also include at least one detail about each fact. (i.e. fact -- The Earth the only planet with oceans that we know of. detail -- There are 5 oceans on Earth.)
5. Please look at the grading rubric for other requirements for this report.

## Appendix Q: Planet Report Grading Rubric

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: Select one column for each row. Multiply points as shown to arrive at a total grade.

	<b>Deficient 0 points</b>	<b>Basic 1 point</b>	<b>Competent 2 points</b>	<b>Exemplary 3 points</b>
Content _____ x 5 = _____ pts.	No evidence of research	Shows some evidence of research	Shows acceptable evidence of research	Well-researched
3 facts stated _____ x 5 = _____ pts.	0 facts	1-2 facts	3 acceptable facts	3 clearly stated facts
1 detail for each fact _____ x 5 = _____ pts.	0 details	1-2 details	3 acceptable details	3 clearly stated details
Topic Sentence _____ x 3 = _____ pts.	No topic sentence	Topic sentence unclear	Has topic sentence that somewhat states main idea	Has topic sentence that clearly states main idea
Conclusion _____ x 3 = _____ pts.	No conclusion	Conclusion unclear	Has conclusion that does not restate topic sentence	Has conclusion that clearly restates topic sentence
Mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar) _____ x 2 = _____ pts.	Errors make report difficult to understand	Frequent errors, but still readable. May take away from meaning	Few errors, appropriate for grade level. Does not take away from meaning	No errors
Typed or printed neatly _____ x 2 = _____ pts.	Sloppy	Shows some effort toward neatness	Acceptable	Very neat
Total Grade Points _____/75  Grade: _____	Comments:			

## Appendix R: Planet Report Planning Sheet

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	●
	●
	<b>—</b>
○	●
	●
	<b>—</b>
	●
	●
○	

## Appendix S: Roman Government Report Rubric

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Select one column for each row. Multiply points as shown to arrive at a total grade.

	<b>Not Proficient 0 points</b>	<b>Developing 1 point</b>	<b>Emergent 2 points</b>	<b>Proficient 3 points</b>
Topic Statement _____ x 5 = _____ pts.	No topic sentence	Topic sentence unclear	Has topic sentence that somewhat states main idea	Has topic sentence that clearly states main idea
3 facts _____ x 5 = _____ pts.	0 facts	1-2 facts	3 acceptable facts	3 clearly stated facts
1 detail for each fact _____ x 5 = _____ pts.	0 details	1-2 details	3 acceptable details	3 clearly stated details
Conclusion _____ x 5 = _____ pts.	No conclusion	Conclusion unclear	Has conclusion that does not restate topic sentence	Has conclusion that clearly restates topic sentence
Mechanics (spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar) _____ x 5 = _____ pts.	Errors make the paragraph difficult to understand	Frequent errors, but still readable. May take away from meaning	Few errors, appropriate for grade level. Does not take away from meaning	No errors
Total Grade Points _____/75  Grade: _____	Comments:			

# Power (Number)

## Topic Sentences

two

some

three

many

four

a few

several

a couple

a number of

Examples:

The third grade learned about several Native American tribes last week.

My favorite ice cream is vanilla for three reasons.

I enjoyed our trip to the zoo for many reasons.

# Occasion/Position Topic Sentences

After

Since

Although

Unless

As

Until

Before

When

Even though

Whenever

If

While

Examples:

Although I like many kinds of cookies, chocolate chip are my favorite.

Until I tried it, I didn't know liver was so delicious!

# Transitions

First, second, third...

A good, a better, the best...

First of all, next, another...

One, another, last...

The first, the second...

One way, another way...

First, next, finally...

First, second, last...

# The Reds

Includes:

Examples

Explanations

Evidence

Events

Experience

Remember: Your paragraph makes sense without the reds.

It's just not very interesting!

# Conclusions

Remember to remind your reader about your topic!

In fact,	Definitely,
Surely,	Obviously,
To sum up,	Clearly,
Certainly,	Truly,

Examples:

Truly you can see why I love vanilla ice cream.

Clearly I really enjoyed our trip to the zoo.

You should definitely try liver -- it's great!

Surely there are other cookies that are good, but chocolate chip is the best.