

## “Writing Lessons According To the 6 Traits of Writing” July 2007

### Lesson Template

**Lesson Title:** Making a Story Make Sense  
**Trait:** Organization  
**Grade Level:** Primary  
**Content Area:** Composition/Story Organization

**MA Framework:** English Language Arts- Composition  
**Strand/Standard:** Organizing Ideas in Writing / 23.2

**Teacher:** Betty Ann Vitale

**Instructional Content/Strategy/Strategies:** *Describe the content/strategy learned and used.*  
Organizing a teacher created, pre-written story, in a sequence that helps the story make better sense.

**Instructional Objectives:** *Include content, process or skills, goals . . .*  
Children will be able to identify the sentence which best fits in the beginning of the story.  
The children will be able to sequence the story in a way that helps the story make sense.

**Description:** *Include how you proceeded with the lesson. What did you do?*  
The teacher thinks of a story about a snowy day or other experience that the children can relate to and pre-writes a story. The story could be about five or six sentences long. Each sentence of the story is written on a separate sentence strip. The teacher presents the children with the five or six sentences. The sentences are posted or held by students *in random order*, so that everyone can see them. Each sentence is read aloud. The class discusses whether or not the story makes sense in the way it is presented. Hopefully the children will realize that the story does not make sense. Teacher will lead the class in a discussion about why they story sounds strange and does not make sense. The class will then identify the one sentence that sounds like it could be the beginning of the story. Once that sentence is identified, the teacher will place that sentence at the top of a pocket chart. Next, the class will determine what part of the story should come next, etc. Finally, the children can determine which sentence would best fit as the ending to the story. The class will read the story in its new sequential order and determine whether or not it now makes sense and sounds better. The class will discuss the value of listing details in order so that the story makes sense.

**Resource Materials:** *Include book chapter pages, handouts, graphic organizers . . . .*

You will need five or six sentence large-size, blank sentence strips. You will need to think of a story before the start of the lesson and write it on the sentence strips. You will also need a large pocket chart or a place to post the sentences in sequence. A pointing stick might be helpful to point to the words as you read.

**Assessment/Follow-up:** *List the method(s) you'll use to assess student learning.*

Through observation and class discussion, the teacher will be able to determine whether or not the class can explain why the story “sounds funny” or “wrong” when it is not sequenced correctly. The teacher will be able to determine whether or not the class can identify the beginning and end of a story and whether or not they can sequence details in a way that makes sense. The teacher could ask questions to specific students to inquire about their individual understanding.

**Reflection:** *How was this content/strategy useful or successful? What changes would you make, if any? Why did you select this content/strategy for this lesson? Was this an effective content/learning strategy? How will this content/strategy lead to increased achievement in your classroom?*

I have done this lesson several times in the past. A story about a snowy day or the first “snow day” when school is cancelled works very well. The timing of approximately mid-year, or winter seems about right too. Once the children start adding more details to their story they sometimes forget that the order of the details is important so that the audience can understand what happened and gain meaning from the story. The lesson offers opportunities for everyone to participate in a non-threatening way. The teacher creates the story and uses her own writing as the sample so the children enjoy helping organize a piece of work that is not their own. Once the children practice this a couple of times, they will understand the importance of sequencing a story in order. The story strips can be left out at a free time for children to sequence on their own. What is interesting is that often a small group of children will sequence the same story in a slightly different way and yet the story still makes sense, sometimes keeping the original meaning and sometimes altering the meaning slightly. This makes for another great class discussion.

### *Sample Story*

Yesterday there was a huge snow storm.

There was so much snow that school got cancelled.

It was so pretty to see the snow blanketing the trees.

I couldn't wait to go outside and make a snowperson.

First, I had to put on my coat, boots, hat and mittens.

I made a really tall snowperson with a hat on her head.

Then, I had to shovel the walkway and clear the snow off the car.

When I got tired and cold I went into the house for a warm cup of cocoa.

Snow days are a wonderful!