

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

### **Lesson Template**

**Lesson Title: Thinking Like a Writer**

**Trait: Word Choice**

**Grade Level: 1**

**Content Area: Writing**

**MA Framework: Composition General Standard 21: Revising**  
**Strand/Standard: 21.1 after writing or dictating a composition, identify words or phrases that could be added to make the thought clearer, more logical or more expressive.**

**Teacher: Cindy Holt**

**Instructional Content/Strategy/Strategies:** *Describe the content/strategy learned and used.*  
Students will learn how using vivid words can “paint a picture” in a readers mind.

**Instructional Objectives:** *Include content, process or skills, goals . . .*  
To provide students with oral experience/practice “thinking like writers”- to add language (adjectives, verbs) to apply to and strengthen their writing.

**Description:** *Include how you proceeded with the lesson. What did you do?*  
Students are called to the meeting area to play a “thinking like a writer” game. The teacher provides students with a simple sentence, such as “The girl ran”, writing the sentence on chart paper. The teacher then asks for a volunteer to provide another word that could be added to the sentence to help paint a more vivid picture (“The girl ran quickly.”) and writes the “improved” sentence under the first. The process is repeated with more volunteers adding detail until the class agrees a clear image can be derived (ex. “The frightened girl ran quickly through the dark, spooky forest.”) Throughout the process, the teacher should model both words/phrases that strengthen and those that don’t (ex. “The girl ran quickly.” vs. “The girl ran very, very, very fast.” – noting more words does not necessarily mean better!) Students are then divided into small groups and are provided with new simple sentences to work with, following the same process. Once groups have completed the process, they present their original sentence and final improved version for the whole group. Students will be encouraged to discuss improved sentences, noting how word choices provide visual imagery (ex. “Using the word frightened to describe the girl helped me to picture her face and body as she ran.”)

**Resource Materials:** *Include book chapter pages, handouts, graphic organizers . . . .*  
Chart paper, markers, pencils, ready made “boring” sentences for small groups

**Assessment/Follow-up:** *List the method(s) you’ll use to assess student learning.*  
Student understanding will be assessed through their participation in both the whole and small group process, including their oral reflections/feedback on other group’s products.

**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?*

- The whole group/ brainstorming strategy is useful to begin this lesson to “get the ball rolling”. I find that, once first graders get a good start on a topic, they build off of each other’s ideas. It is also useful in presenting what not-to-do in a non-threatening way because the “think-tank” environment is generally supportive in nature. I try to supply the weaker idea before a student does so that the group corrects the idea, not the student.
- I wouldn’t so much “change” anything as I would add a component. I think that this model/ lesson could be a good mini-lesson or writing warm-up to be presented again later on as an individual assignment. Each student would be provided with a simple sentence to improve that could be developed into a story in later writing lessons.
- I selected a word choice activity to help beginning writers come up with descriptive language to express their ideas. My students often have an easy time describing their thoughts orally but find it difficult to express those same ideas on paper.
- This lesson was a very successful one as it provided students with a method for expressing their thoughts more effectively.
- This strategy will lead to students being able to self and peer edit writing pieces in the future.