Write On!

42 Lessons for Acquiring Writing Skills and Thinking Creatively

R. E. Myers

GOOD YEAR BOOKS

Dedication

Dedicated to Laurel Beckett, whose talents continue to amaze me.

GOOD YEAR BOOKS

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Common Core State Standards

Write On! contains lessons and activities that reinforce and develop writing skills as defined by the Common Core State Standards for students in grades 6 to 8. See www.goodyearbooks.com for information on how specific lessons correlate to specific standards.

Contents

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Introduction

An Overview of the Lessons

Despite our advanced society's many technological developments that seemingly make pencils and pens obsolete, it is nevertheless essential in this modern age that young people learn to write. From school reports to electronic communication with family and friends, students need to know how to put words together meaningfully and express themselves effectively in their writing.

As is true for the earlier volume in this series, *Time to Write,* the basic method of the lessons in *Write On!* is to show students the elements of good writing in various genres, then give them practice in using those elements in their own writing. Good writing involves putting words, sentences, and paragraphs together in clear and economical ways. It is also accurate and easy for the reader to follow. Great writing goes a step further by making both the writer and the reader think.

Teachers and parents often prefer students to write according to established standards. While mastering the basic methods and standards of writing is important, it is likewise vital for students to branch out mentally in responding to the ideas presented here. These lessons instruct students in the fundamentals of writing, then go a step beyond by challenging them to think creatively and critically. Many of the lessons also include a healthy dose of humor to keep young people engaged as they learn. This approach not only trains students to write academically, but also entertainingly prepares them for the more advanced writing and thinking skills that will be required of them in the years to come.

How to Use This Book

If you are familiar with and have used the lessons in *Time to Write* with your students, you will find that *Write On!* offers you additional activities to teach a particular skill, such as composing a cinquain or writing a complete sentence. Above all, the volumes in this series offer you variety in what to offer students in your writing instruction.

As in *Time to Write,* every lesson in *Write On!* includes a page that outlines suggestions for teaching the lesson. There are usually three parts, or levels, to an exercise:

1 The First Level

Many teachers have found that giving students the initiating or first-level activity orally is a good way to warm them up for a writing experience.

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The warm-up is a well-established part of the creative thinking process, and it is especially important in allowing young people to orient themselves and free themselves of inhibitions in their thinking.

2 The Second Level

The second level takes the student a bit deeper into the subject. There is a gentle push to get the student more involved in thinking about the topic at hand.

3 The Third Level

The third level of most lessons asks students to produce a piece of writing. There is an overwhelming amount of evidence that suggests that in creative thinking activities, it is probably wise not to demand a product. Encourage, but do not insist.

In addition, you'll find a list of targeted outcomes for the student, as well as suggestions for student responses to questions in the lesson. Many lessons include additional extension ideas called **Following Through** so you can take students even further with a particular type of writing.

Evaluating Student Writing

According to the National Center for the Study of Writing and Literacy at Berkeley, California, self-evaluation through editing and rewriting is all-important. When students complete a lesson, they can use the following six criteria of the "writing in process" approach to evaluate their writing:

1. **Ideas and content:** Is the message clear? Does the writing hold the reader's attention? Are the ideas fresh and original?

2. **Organization:** Does the writing have an inviting beginning? Are there supporting details placed in a logical order? Can a reader move through the text easily?

3. **Voice:** Does the writer speak directly to the reader? Is the writer aware of the needs of the audience?

4. **Word Choice:** Are the chosen words specific and accurate? Do lively verbs energize the writing? Is the writing free of jargon and clichés?

5. **Fluency:** Does the writing have a cadence and easy flow? Are the sentences structured so that they flow easily from one to the next? Do the sentences vary in length and structure?

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6. **Conventions:** Does the writer exhibit a good grasp of standard writing conventions, such as grammar, punctuation, and spelling?

In addition, when you read over students' work, observe these principles:

- Return papers without much delay. If they are returned long after they were written, it risks students losing that enthusiastic feeling about what they wrote.
- Don't demand too much revision from students. They may begin to feel negative about their compositions if they have to labor too long in revising them.
- Praise students who show effort and improvement. You can make "before" and "after" comparisons so that they can see their progress.

In some cases, you may decide to have students do some peer editing, which involves trading papers so that they can edit each other's writing. This is a nice way for students to see how their peers write and gives students a chance to make editorial comments instead of simply receiving them. If you decide to do this with your students, first go over the concept of offering compliments for what they like about a piece of writing before offering editing suggestions.

Let's Get Started!

The lessons in this book are designed to give students a strong foundation in the fundamentals of writing while challenging them to think creatively and critically. Above all, it is important that students have room and time to express themselves in meaningful ways.

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Lesson 1

Scrambled Syntax

Identifying Subjects and Predicates

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Recognize subjects and predicates.
- Recognize that sentences begin with capital letters.

About the Lesson

"Scrambled Syntax" involves elements of both punctuation and sentence structure. The nine scrambled sentences are broken up into subjects, predicates, prepositional phrases, and relative clauses. It isn't necessary for the student to recognize that fact, but he or she will intuitively realize the syntax of the sentences while splicing them together. A bigger clue is capitalization. Students know that sentences begin with capital letters, so they won't ignore those clues.

This first lesson is designed to put students in a playful mood so that they feel comfortable with humorous ideas when writing. Sometimes it takes time for those ideas to germinate and bear fruit. This lesson, and most of the others in this book, assumes that the student will have enough time to think about what he or she is invited to do.

Here are the nine sentences as originally written. It is quite all right if students come up with different ones—the more humorous the sentence, the better.

- Kittens are roly-poly and are usually playful.
- Children who constantly watch TV don't study much.
- Monkeys with special training act like people.
- Most ladies who can't talk are uncomfortable.
- Dogs that bite are dangerous.
- Heavy eaters with little willpower get indigestion.
- Babies, when being fed, make soft, gurgling noises.
- Little, old women in bathing suits are often uneasy.
- Middle-aged men, when skipping rope, look rather foolish.

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Subjects (without modifying phrases)

- Kittens
- Children
- Monkeys
- Most ladies
- Heavy eaters
- Little, old women
- Middle-aged men

Predicates

- Are roly-poly and are usually playful
- Don't study much
- Act like people
- Are uncomfortable
- Get indigestion
- Make soft gurgling noises
- Are often uneasy
- Look rather foolish

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Scrambled Syntax

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 The following phrases were originally nine sentences. These fairly sensible statements were each broken into three parts and then jumbled up as you see them below. See if you can put them back together into their original sentences.

Kittens	are often uneasy	that bite
who constantly watch TV	Middle-aged men	and are usually playful
with special training	look rather foolish	get indigestion
act like people	Heavy eaters	when skipping rope
Little, old women	Most ladies	in bathing suits
when being fed	don't study much	Dogs
are roly-poly	are dangerous	with little willpower
make soft, gurgling noises	Monkeys	Children
who can't talk	Babies	are uncomfortable

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____

F. _____

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Scrambled Syntax (continued)

ACTIVITY

2. Which of the phrases in the above list are subjects and which are predicates?

Subjects	Predicates

3. Did you come up with some rather unusual ideas when you were trying to piece together the nine sentences? In the space below, write the craziest sentences that you came up with, along with other sentences you can make from the phrases above. Circle your favorite sentence.

4. How did you know when you had written a sentence that made sense?

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Lesson 2

Sentence Sense

Distinguishing between Complete and Incomplete Sentences

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Learn the meanings of the terms *subject* and *predicate*.
- Distinguish between complete and incomplete sentences.

About the Lesson

"Sentence Sense" is a traditional lesson about the two parts of a complete sentence—a subject and a predicate. The lesson features a quiz that asks students to differentiate between complete and incomplete sentences. In the first part of the lesson, students are asked to underline the subject of a sentence and to place two underlines under the predicate:

> In spite of inflation, the cost of living in Donora is not out of reach of the average worker.

Answers to the second activity:

A. C The sentence has both a subject and a predicate.

B. C The sentence has both a subject and a predicate.

C. I The sentence does not have a subject.

D. I The sentence does not have a subject.

E. I The sentence does not have a subject.

F. C The sentence has both a subject and a predicate.

G. C The sentence has both a subject and a predicate. It begins with a participial phrase.

H. I The sentence has neither a subject nor a main verb.

I. C The sentence has both a subject and a predicate. It begins with a conjunction.

J. I The sentence does not have a subject.

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Sentence Sense

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. Sentences are complete thoughts. The two main elements of a sentence are the subject and predicate. The subject is the noun, noun phrase, or pronoun that names the starting point of a statement. The predicate is the part of the sentence that includes the verb, along with its modifiers, objects, and complements, and says something about the subject of the sentence.

   Underline the subject of the following sentence, then read the sentence again, and underline the predicate twice.

   In spite of inflation, the cost of living in Donora is not out of reach of the average worker.

2. Label the following sentences that are complete with a *C* and label with an *I* those that are incomplete. Remember that complete sentences have both a subject and a predicate.

   A. _____ Of all the fellows I've met—and I've met quite a few—he's the nicest.

   B. _____ Inevitably, the mob grew restless and surged on to the field.

   C. _____ Nowadays, in spite of the ads and hoopla, but, really, maybe because of them.

   D. _____ Or something nearly as pleasant as going to the park.

   E. _____ Quarrelsome, petulant, and thoroughly disagreeable, just as he has always been.

   F. _____ Grady's mouth, which had been tightly shut, flew open.

   G. _____ Having none of Terry's suave ways, Duane made quite a fool of himself.

   H. _____ A champion of the downtrodden, an idealist whose feet are on the ground, but a sentimentalist who, sadly, can be deceived too easily.

   I. _____ But she's a silly, slightly conceited woman who imagines she has a heart.

   J. _____ Treats himself as if he is the resident genius around here.

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Lesson 3

Pure Vanity

Writing Complete Sentences

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Produce descriptions of hypothetical owners of vehicles with vanity license plates.
- Recognize the differences between nouns and adjectives.
- Write eight complete sentences.

About the Lesson

Associating names, faces, numbers, backgrounds, and occupations is an activity most of us do naturally. When we make associations purposefully, however, some mental effort is involved.

With a little thought, almost anyone can imagine who the owner of a vehicle with the license plate of UR A QT might be. A suitable response might be a "conceited jerk," and that would be an appropriate response for this lesson because it comprises an adjective and a noun. We ask your students to put their guesses into two words—an adjective and a noun.

The grammatical element in the lesson shouldn't be difficult. You can review the definitions of the two parts of speech if there is a question or two about them. If there is time, a class discussion after your students have finished the lesson will expose any doubts about nouns and adjectives.

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Pure Vanity

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 A former professional football coach enjoys taking a number, 14 for example, and telling what a player with that number might be like. Fourteen in the numbering system used in collegiate and professional football can be used only by a quarterback—the numbers 2 through 19 are reserved for quarterbacks. The coach, through many years of associating players and numbers, can rattle off something about the physical characteristics, home territory, general proclivities, weaknesses, and so on, of a 14.

Have you ever noticed a vanity plate and wondered what kind of person the owner of the car really is? Sometimes it is obvious from a glance at the driver, but the driver isn't necessarily the owner of the vehicle. Here are some license plates noted during the past several months. What do you think the owners of the vehicles are like? You might consider these options:

- gender
- age
- clothing style
- occupation
- physical characteristics
- personality

When you have thought about what the owners might be like, write two words—an adjective and a noun—to the right of their license plates. For example, the owner of the old blue Dynasty LE Dodge might be a "fat musician" (but you can think of another description that might be better).

License plates on these cars:

A. MY XS (*Mazda MX-5 Miata*) _____

B. RISKKIT (*white RS V8 Chevrolet Camaro*) _____

C. MUSIC M (*blue Dynasty LE Dodge*) _____

D. SEWMUP (*white Grand Cherokee*) _____

E. EAT ROAD (*yellow Porsche 911 turbo*) _____

F. ZOOM (*blue Honda Prelude*) _____

G. WE B BOYS (*green Chevrolet Venture minivan*) _____

H. HAUL (*red Chevrolet Tahoe*) _____

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Pure Vanity (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

2 Now put your brief description of the eight drivers in a complete sentence (one with both a subject and a predicate).

A. MY XS _____

B. RISKKIT _____

C. MUSIC M _____

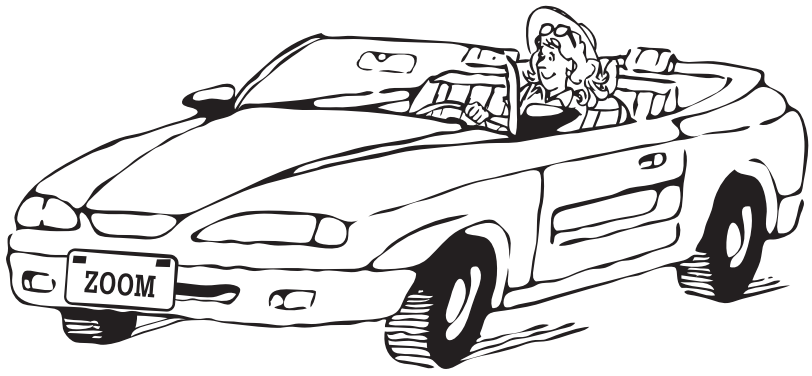
D. SEWMUP _____

E. EAT ROAD _____

F. ZOOM _____

G. WE B BOYS _____

H. HAUL _____



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Lesson 4

Getting a Fortune

Writing Complete Sentences Continued

Targeted Learner Outcome

The student will write complete sentences.

About the Lesson

"Getting a Fortune" begins with an introductory discussion of fortune cookies, which leads into an activity in which students are to compose their own fortune cookie words of wisdom.

As ancient institutions go, the fortune cookie is not all that ancient. The Chinese fortune cookie was actually invented in the United States sometime in the early part of the twentieth century, probably by either a Japanese American gardener in San Francisco or a Chinese American cook in Los Angeles.

The most common fortune cookie machine was created in 1980 by an engineer named Yong Lee. It has a spigot that squeezes dough onto round metal griddles. A turntable passes the dough through a gas oven. The cookies bake in about 30 seconds and remain pliable enough to be folded for another 15 seconds. When a cookie comes out of the oven, an arm drops a fortune into the middle of the warm wafer, then presses the cookie down through a slot that folds it in half. Two more arms then press the cookie over a metal rod set at right angles to the slot, folding it again in the other direction. By the time the cookie tumbles down a conveyor into a box, it has hardened with the message inside.

Surprisingly, a major problem for makers of fortune cookies isn't their manufacture or distribution, but the writing of the messages. Steven Yang, who produces most of the messages in the United States, works with his wife in a locked building to ensure that only he has access to a cache of the amusing/intriguing/annoying sayings.

Whether or not each student has a fortune cookie in hand, it would be a very good idea for you to introduce this activity by breaking one open and passing some out in class. Revealing the message will capture students' interest.

Begin this activity with discussion before students are asked to do any writing. Then students will write ten brief "fortunes." "Getting a Fortune" is designed to entice the reluctant writer to do a little writing. In this case, it isn't very much. The writing that the student does, however, is not necessarily without challenge or difficulty. Writing really catchy fortunes is not as easy as it seems.

One of the attractive features of this assignment is that students can do a variety of things with their fortunes: exchange them, make them into a bulletin board display, put them in a student publication, include them in cookies they actually bake, and so on.

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Following Through

These are some extensions of the lesson that might appeal to your students:

- **Verbal-Linguistic:** One of the obvious ways of administering this lesson is to have students volunteer to real aloud their brief messages.
- **Mathematical-Logical:** Challenge students to estimate the number of fortune cookies that are consumed weekly or monthly in the United States, and then do some research to see if their guesses are close to the actual number. (Use the Internet to find the answer.)
- **Interpersonal:** The original fortune cookies were mostly predictions written in a kind of Confucian style. They sometimes offended customers in Chinese restaurants, but they were not supposed to disturb anyone. Nowadays the fortunes are designed to be bland and inoffensive. How can people be offended by something they receive by chance and which is meant only to entertain them?
- **Intrapersonal:** If you do hand out fortune cookies to the members of your class, ask each individual to put down his or her reactions to the message. Students don't have to share the messages unless they wish to do so.
- **Visual:** Students who like to draw can sketch the predictions in their messages.

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Getting a Fortune

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

Slogans, mild insults, and obscure advice often accompany the time-honored and generally felicitous predictions found in fortune cookies. The writers of these brief fortunes are constrained, like the astrologists who predict future events, to phrase their predictions and advice in terms so general that anyone might feel that the message applies to him or her.

Most of the regular writers of these messages are simply employees of firms that manufacture the cookies. Imagine that you are given the job of writing a batch of new fortunes for a firm that makes these cookies. Considering what life will be like in the next few years for you and your friends, what ten messages can you invent? You might offer some advice or predict some happy or unhappy event. Use fewer than a dozen words for each message. (Please don't use "Help! I'm a prisoner in a Chinese fortune cookie factory!")

Here are a few attempts at writing fortunes that may guide you in coming up with ten of your own. You can probably do much better!

Those that know your secret salute your nobility.

You will always be skillful in games of love and chance.

Despite doubts, events will vindicate your position.

Following unlikely paths leads to discovery.

Through no fault of yours, the prize eludes you.

Be confident enough to dance badly.

Your fortunes should only be one sentence long. They should be legitimate sentences—not fragments—that have a subject and a predicate. Use the space below to compose your fortune cookie statements.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Lesson 5

For the Fun of It

Writing Simple, Compound, and Complex Sentences

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Make ten items humorous.
- Use those items to write a series of simple sentences.
- Write a paragraph using compound and complex sentences.

About the Lesson

1. Although humor is an important part of life, it seems impossible to analyze it successfully, and so the first part of this lesson only attempts to prompt students to think about what is funny to them. The second part allows them to review their written ideas with the notion that they might be more effective if expressed in varied forms.

   Allow students as much or as little time as they need to complete this activity. The questions that lead into the writing exercise are rather challenging, and your main role is to encourage students to do some genuine thinking. For example, the question "What would be funny if it were upside down?" does not immediately prompt a response. Depending on your sense of humor, you might say a hat, an abstract painting, or a VW bug—but not an American flag, a dog's water dish, or a chair. Humor is dependent on the subjective tastes of the creator and consumer.

2. In the second part of the lesson, have students choose one of their responses to the first activity and flesh out their idea in a series of simple sentences.

3. Last, ask students to revise those sentences into compound and complex sentences. Remind students that a compound sentence is two independent clauses joined by a coordinate conjunction. A complex sentence contains a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

Following Through

Group students in pairs and ask each individual to critique his or her partner's writing, making suggestions concerning organization, word usage, logic, and overall effect.

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For the Fun of It

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. Sometimes life gets boring, but then something happens to make it more enjoyable or exciting. When life becomes dreary, humor always helps to perk us up. Answer the following questions, telling how you would change an item or situation to make it funny. What would be funny if it were:

   A. Awkward? _____

   B. Heavy? _____

   C. Short? _____

   D. Decreased by half? _____

   E. Yellow? _____

   F. Upside down? _____

   G. Backward? _____

   H. Fast? _____

   I. Gooey? _____

   J. Very tall? _____

2. Look over the ten things you have changed. Which one tickles you most? What if it really were changed in the way you wrote? List some consequences in people's lives if the change you wrote about actually happened.

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Then, in a second draft, refine and clarify your ideas. For the sake of variety, don't put all of the consequences in the form of simple sentences. Make some compound sentences and some complex sentences. (Remember that a compound sentence consists of two independent clauses joined by a coordinate conjunction. A complex sentence contains a main clause and one or more subordinate clauses.)

   _____

   _____

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Lesson 6

Sound It Twice

Writing a Paragraph with Alliteration

Targeted Learner Outcome

The student will:

- Learn how to use the literary device of alliteration.
- Translate ten descriptions into alliterations.
- Write a paragraph with alliteration.

About the Lesson

1. There will probably be many times during the year when you or your students will encounter alliterative phrases or titles. The device is so commonplace in children's literature that examples abound in classrooms and libraries. It may be better, however, to anticipate the occurrence of alliteration in a coming lesson, or share an example from literature, and then follow it with this exercise.

   The initiating activity is really a vocabulary exercise. It is much like doing a crossword puzzle in which you find words for the definitions. Encourage students to use dictionaries and thesauruses. This lesson can be a welcome change of pace from the routine language lessons dealing with grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, etc.

2. The second activity is easy enough for students who don't ordinarily shine to catch on to and excel. Not all of the alliterative expressions will come immediately to mind, however, and therefore serve as a challenge. The two words don't have to start with the same letters, but they have to have the same initial sound. For example, "phony farmer" is alliterative.

   There can be any number of appropriate responses for each of the ten items in the activity. For example, a very lovely flower could be a "beautiful blossom" or a "pretty posy." A reticent hobo could be a "timid tramp" or a "bashful bum."

3. In the third activity, the invitation to write a paragraph with at least two alliterative expressions shouldn't be too difficult, provided students are fairly proficient at writing paragraphs. If necessary, review the characteristics of paragraphs with students. Remind them that a paragraph is a group of related sentences. A paragraph contains related statements that are organized so as to give the reader a better understanding of the topic. It usually begins with a topic sentence. In expository writing, the topic sentence is followed by statements supporting it, and there is often a summary statement at the end that ties together the material in the paragraph.

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Following Through

If the alliteration exercise goes well, you may want students to read aloud their compositions, giving them practice in oral reading. This exercise can also serve as an opportunity to reinforce the skills required in paragraphing. In fact, it could be a sneaky way to slip in such a lesson (not overly loved by young people), making the alliteration game serve as a fun jumpstart for more extensive writing. Have students insert their alliterative phrase into a paragraph of their own making.

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Sound It Twice

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. If you say, "He has a heavy heart," you are using a common literary device called *alliteration*. When a phrase or sentence contains words with the same beginning sound near one another, that is alliteration. "The Sounds of Silence" is the alliterative title of a song, and *Captains Courageous* is the alliterative title of a movie. What other alliterative titles can you think of?

   Is "copper cent" an example of alliteration? _____

   What about "Donald Duck"? _____

   "Comfortable chair"? _____

   "Phony farmer"? _____

2. Let's find out how good you are at coming up with phrases made up of words that have the same beginning sound. Make each of these into an alliterative expression:

   A. a terribly attractive young lady _____

   B. an embraceable young bear _____

   C. a very warm abode _____

   D. a courageous young man _____

   E. an awful midday meal _____

   F. a noisy timepiece _____

   G. a very lovely flower _____

   H. a small conifer _____

   I. a diving aircraft _____

   J. a reticent hobo _____

   Look in the dictionary or thesaurus if you need help in coming up with appropriate words for your alliterative expression. There are a number of possible expressions for each of the ten definitions above.

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Sound It Twice (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

3 In the space below, write at least one paragraph that contains two or more examples of alliteration.

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Lesson 7

"Quick Milk"

Solving Riddles

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Recognize the use of pun in riddles.
- Write three or more riddles with puns.

About the Lesson

1. Riddles are very popular with children, but older kids also enjoy them. Although there can be more than one answer to a riddle, here are some good answers to the four riddles:
    - Milk is quick because it's pasteurized (past your eyes) before you see it! This is a good example of the use of a pun in a riddle. A high percentage of riddles are puns.
    - A door isn't a door when it's ajar (a jar).
    - At the North Pole, any direction you head in is south.
    - A shadow becomes darker when it (the daylight) becomes lighter. Also, some eyeglasses get darker in brighter light.

2. The invitation to produce a few good riddles may trigger a riddling session, and, if you have the time and the patience, it could be a welcome break from the routine.

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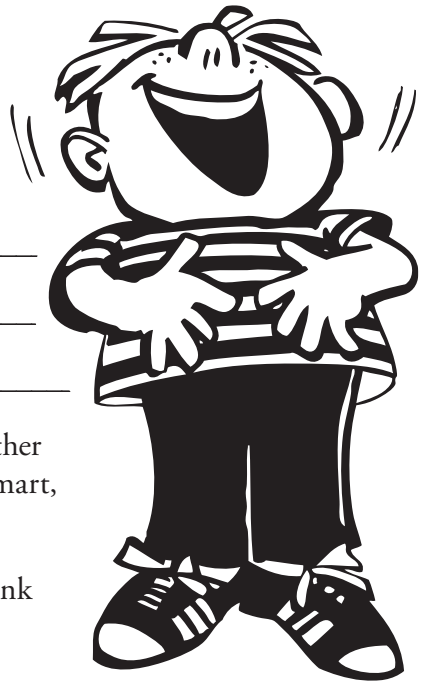
"Quick Milk"

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 Abe looked puzzled. Mario laughed and laughed. Mario had just asked Abe, "Why is milk so quick?" When Abe couldn't answer, Mario almost fell over because he was laughing so hard. Although it was an old riddle, Abe hadn't heard it before and couldn't understand why milk was "quick."



Maybe it means I'm very thirsty and drink it in a hurry, he thought, but he didn't tell Mario.

What is the answer to the riddle? _____

_____

_____

Abe got even when he thought of a riddle that his mother had told him a few weeks before. "Okay, if you're so smart, Mario, when is a door not a door?"

Mario stopped laughing and frowned. He couldn't think of how a door couldn't be a door. Finally he replied, "When it's a window."

"Why do you say that?" asked Abe, a little taken aback.

"I guess because I've read about people using French windows as doors," offered Mario.

Maybe he was right. What is the answer to the riddle? _____

_____

_____

Mr. Harding, their teacher, overheard the conversation and interrupted. "I've got a couple of riddles for you two," he said. "See if you can answer these. Where will you always travel south, no matter which way you are headed?"

"Oh, I think I know that one," said Abe, and he did. What is the answer to the riddle? _____

_____

_____

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"Quick Milk" (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

"Okay," Mr. Harding said. "Now what, during the day, is darker when it's lighter?"

Both boys were stumped. They came up with answers about food, computers, clothing, and clouds, but they didn't have a good answer. What is the answer to the riddle? _____

_____

_____

1 What are a few of your favorite riddles? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

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Lesson 8

Sporting Riddles

Composing Riddles

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Attempt to answer ten riddles.
- Compose at least three riddles.

About the Lesson

1. The first activity in this lesson asks students to solve ten sports-related riddles. Acceptable answers to these riddles:

   A. A punching bag

   B. A *bucket* is a term that is interchangeable with *basket* in basketball or *field goal* in soccer.

   C. They have zebras. A *zebra* in a football game is an official in a striped shirt.

   D. The winning race car goes around and around the track until it passes the checkered flag at the finish.

   E. In golf, an *eagle* is a score on a hole of two under par and a *birdie* is a score of one under par.

   F. A shuttlecock in badminton

   G. "Pop" fly

   H. He gets beaten "at *love*," a term in tennis meaning no games were won in a set.

   I. They have good laps.

   J. The butterfliers

2. Students will now make up their own riddles, three apiece.

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Sporting Riddles

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 The following riddles are all related to sports and games. See if you can solve them.

A. What always comes back no matter how hard it is hit?

_____

B. When is a basket a bucket?

_____

C. What do a zoo and a gridiron have in common?

_____

D. What goes around and around in circles until it is finally checked out?

_____

E. When is an eagle not a birdie?

_____

F. What has feathers and flies back and forth over a net?

_____

G. If insect fathers played baseball, which insect would always be out when it hit the ball? _____

H. Why is a rejected suitor like a terrible tennis player?

_____

I. What do a champion miler and a grandmother have in common?

_____

J. If a frog were to watch a swim meet, which swimmers would appeal most to it?

_____

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Sporting Riddles (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

2 See if you can make up at least three riddles. They don't have to be about sports; they can be about anything. Try asking them to your classmates.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Lesson **9**

Jumbled

Writing a Paragraph with Uncluttered Sentences

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Grasp the concept of uncluttering.
- Edit a paragraph containing highly cluttered sentences.
- Write a paragraph with uncluttered sentences.

About the Lesson

1. This is a good lesson to do with students who are having difficulty expressing themselves in clearly written sentences. It is best to administer this lesson over two class periods, one for the first activity and one for the second activity.

   What is clutter? An obvious response would be: "There are too many things, and they aren't organized." After introducing the concept of clutter, ask students to think about the clutter in their lives, whether in their lockers or their rooms, then to take it a step further. When it comes to the human mind, clutter can also have to do with thoughts that are of little use to the topic at hand.

2. The second task is to rewrite a paragraph with very long sentences. Before students start their revision, review sentence structure and perhaps punctuation. The rambling paragraph should be shortened into four to six sentences.

   Here is one way of uncluttering the paragraph about Melva:

   > Melva, although fully aware of her charms, always attempts to look unassuming. Take for instance the time she came to the game in that frilly dress. She walked right up and down the aisle like a model on a runway, seemingly oblivious to the attention she was getting, especially from guys. Ugh!

3. For the final activity of the lesson, students will write their own uncluttered sentences. By applying the notion of "uncluttering," students will more readily grasp what makes a "clean" sentence.

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Jumbled

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. Think about the kinds of clutter in the world. Describe the clutter you would see in each place listed below.

   A. A street: _____

   _____

   B. Outer space: _____

   _____

   C. A dance floor: _____

   _____

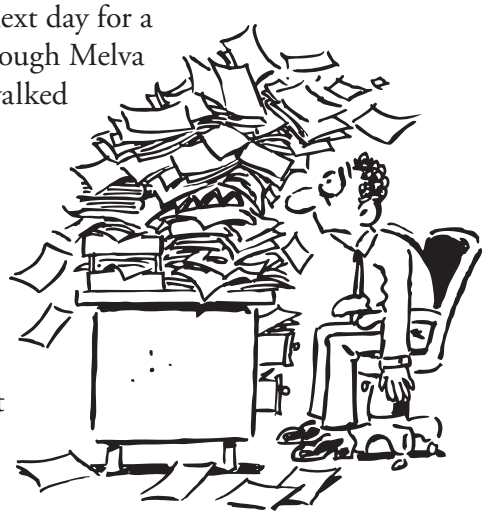
   D. A meal: _____

   _____

   E. Your mind: _____

2. There are neatniks and there are clutter-bugs, and some people can be either at times. The neatniks have clean desks and spotless rooms. You won't find anything out of place in their closets. Of course, clutter-bugs have a bit more lying around. Which type are you? If you are a clutter-bug writer, your first draft may be jumbled and/or disorganized. A jumbled paragraph is hard to read and hard to understand. Take this one, for instance:

   Melva, although fully aware of her charms, always attempts to look unassuming and naive, even when she is showing off, which is most of the time. Take for instance the time she came to the game in that frilly dress with the lace at the hem, which unfortunately went on sale the next day for a drastically reduced price at Herron's (even though Melva was told that it was an exclusive style), and walked up and down the aisle throughout the game, seemingly oblivious to the attention she was getting, especially from those guys who are easily distracted by showy girls. She is the kind of girl that is always "surprised" by the reactions she gets—even when she moves like a model on a runway at a fashion show—and gives you that big-eyed, innocent look. Ugh!



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ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

Reread the paragraph and then rewrite it so it is clearer to read and understand, removing the cluttered phrases and sentences while maintaining the author's intended meaning.

The writer put too many pieces of irrelevant and redundant information into those sentences. In revising the paragraph, you probably eliminated some parenthetical phrases. (Those are the additional comments or asides that are set off by parentheses, dashes, or commas.) Are you satisfied that you have changed it so that most people can read it without any trouble? Read it one more time and make any necessary changes.

3. Now, write a paragraph containing at least three uncluttered sentences. Choose any topic that interests you. Use the space below to write your first draft. Then go back over your draft one or two times, continuing to unclutter it.

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Lesson 10

Shoo, Fly!

Composing Limericks

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Learn the form of a limerick.
- Write a limerick.

About the Lesson

A limerick is a humorous verse with five lines. The first, second, and fifth lines rhyme and have three metric feet. In poetry, a foot is a group of syllables with a particular pattern of stresses. The third and fourth lines of a limerick rhyme and have two metric feet. There is a pronounced rhythm, or beat, to the verse. This is a limerick that is in the proper meter and may tickle students' funny bones:

> There was a Young Lady of Norway
> Who casually sat in a doorway;
> When the door squeezed her flat,
> She exclaimed, "What of that?"
> This courageous Young Lady of Norway.

In the lesson, the two limericks about flies will hopefully get students' attention so that they will be in the mood to try out their own limericks. The form is imperfectly demonstrated by the boys' verses, so you may also want to use one of Edward Lear's famous limericks as an example of a good limerick. Then set students to the task of writing some limericks of their own. Afterward, give students the chance to read their limericks to the class.

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Shoo, Fly!

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

On the back of his assignment notebook, Robert scribbled these lines:

There once was a man from Tibet
Who had a remarkable pet.
It was small and hairy
With two wings like a fairy,
The cutest fly you've never met.

Robert looked at the five lines and chuckled. He wasn't quite satisfied with the middle part, but what the heck. Maybe it wasn't a very good limerick, Robert thought, but it had something.

Robert looked around for someone to show his limerick to, and he saw Mervin with a glazed look in his eyes. Mervin often had a glazed look in his eyes on Monday morning. Robert slipped his notebook, back side up, over to Mervin, slightly rousing him. Mervin glanced at the notebook, looked at Robert, and read the limerick. He chucked softly and was still for a couple of minutes, thinking. Then he grabbed his pencil and wrote underneath Robert's five lines:

While flicking the wings of a fly
In the merry old town of Blye,
A ten-year-old lad
Said, "I might be mad,
But I don't care much for this fly."

On the back of this paper, see if you can do better than Robert and Mervin by writing your own limerick. Remember, limericks are meant to be humorous.

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Lesson 11

Music for Life

Writing Descriptions of Sounds

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Classify seven sounds as "agreeable" and "disagreeable."
- Describe music that might be appropriate for ten living things.

About the Lesson

This activity combines everyday experiences with a certain amount of musical knowledge.

1. First, students are invited to classify seven everyday sounds as "agreeable" or "disagreeable." This part of the activity shouldn't take long.

2. Camille Saint-Saëns did an excellent job of composing music that described the characteristics of a variety of animals. Play his *Carnival of the Animals* to give your class an idea of how music can suggest an animal's movements or character. A familiarity with musical instruments will help students come up with responses, but they are only asked to describe the music in words.

3. The final part of the activity is voluntary. If a student becomes interested and has the talent, he or she could compose a theme (a la Saint-Saëns) for one or more of the animals.

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Music for Life

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

There are a great many sounds in the world that can cause us discomfort. In general, certain sounds are strident or disagreeable by the nature of the tone that strikes our ears. Other sounds are distasteful because of the connotations that are associated with them. For instance, the sound of a tree's branch cracking in a windstorm is disturbing. Other sounds are unpleasant because, as is the case with music, we expect to hear them in certain relationships; when we don't, we call the combinations of sounds *dissonance*.

1. Which of these sounds would you classify as agreeable or disagreeable?

   A. The purring of a cat _____

   B. A piece of bread popping up from a toaster _____

   C. The rustle of the pages of a newspaper being turned _____

   D. Rain falling on a roof _____

   E. A jet airplane taking off from a landing strip _____

   F. Someone coughing in a theater _____

   G. A young crow calling for food from a parent _____

2. There is a rhythm to almost everything that has life. By adding sounds (notes) to the rhythm, music can be created for every living thing. Describe the music that might be right for a(n):

   A. alligator _____

   _____

   B. ant _____

   _____

   C. tiger _____

   _____

   D. cockroach _____

   _____

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Music for Life (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

E. barracuda _____

_____

F. heron _____

_____

G. gorilla _____

_____

H. kangaroo _____

_____

I. redwood tree _____

_____

J. paramecium _____

_____

3 If you can read and write music, jot down a short theme for three of the living things above.

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Lesson 12

A Letter from Harry

Writing a Friendly Letter

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Learn the parts of a friendly letter.
- Write a letter to a friend and send it.

About the Lesson

In recent years, letter writing appears to have become a lost art. Instead of writing long, well-thought-out, newsy letters, people send skimpy e-mail messages or talk on the phone. Although its value has diminished, letters still have a place in the affairs of most people. A text message simply cannot replace the excitement and mystery of receiving a letter in the mail. In this lesson, students send the letters they compose to their friends.

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A Letter from Harry

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

This is a letter Harry wrote to his friend Vince a month after Vince moved to a new town:

920 Booker St.
Riverdale, CA 91234
May 15, _____

Hi Vince,

How are you doing in Middletown? Did you get that horse your dad promised you? I'll never get my parents to let me have a horse. They say it's too expensive to keep a horse and we don't have a big enough place.

What about your school? I hope you like it better than old R.M.S. You're bound to! What are the kids like over there? Have you made any good friends? Nothing much has changed here since you left. Maybe Gordon is a little taller, but he's all right. At least he loaned me a new video game last week. You'd love it!

Our Little League team still hasn't won a game, but I don't really blame Mr. Morris. We just don't have anyone who can hit—or field. Gordon actually split his pants when he slid into second in the game last week against Antelope Valley. He really did!

Mom roped me into agreeing to help her at the booth for the county fair. It's not so bad. I see most of our friends during the fair. And there are always the girls. Remember the ones we met from Geyserville? Wow!

Well, I hope I can talk Dad into driving over your way before too long. It's a drag not having a license. Say hi to your parents for me.

Your buddy,
Harry

There are several points about Harry's letter that you should note. If the letter is handwritten, the address and date should appear on the upper right side of the first page. It is important that both be included so that the person receiving the letter will be able to refer to it when responding. (People misplace friends' addresses, and the envelope with the return address may be discarded.) The date should go below the address in the heading. It lets the recipient know when the letter was written, and sometimes that is of interest at the time it is received, as well as later on when the recipient refers to it.

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A Letter from Harry (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

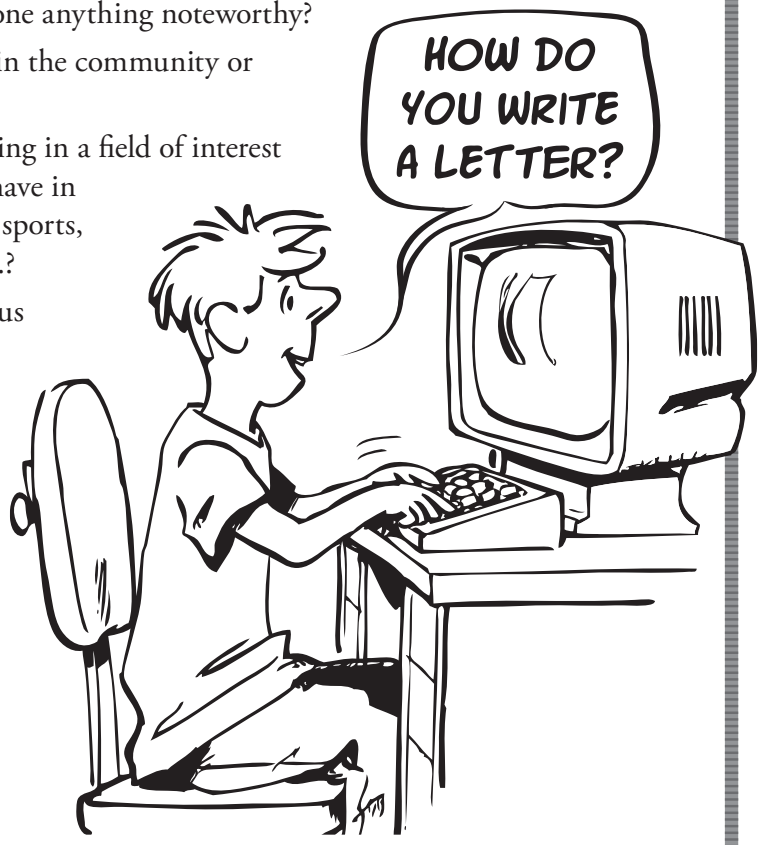
Notice that the salutation is "Hi Vince" instead of "Dear Vince." It is more common now among friends and acquaintances to use the more informal "Hi" instead of the traditional "Dear." The salutation, or greeting, is followed by a comma in a friendly letter and not by a colon.

The body of Harry's letter consists of paragraphs that each deal with separate topics.

The closing, "Your buddy," is followed by a comma and the signature. The convention is to capitalize the first word, such as "Sincerely," and not capitalize the next word, as in "Yours truly." The position of the closing is in line with the heading (the address and date) on the right side of the page.

1. Now, write a letter to a friend or relative. The tone of your letter should be informal—you can use slang. Remember that what you write can be preserved and shown to others. As a general rule, just as with e-mail, you don't want to put anything in a letter that might embarrass you later on. These are some of the ideas for what to put in your letter to a friend:

   - Refer to past experiences that you and the recipient have in common.
   - Did anything happen to you recently that was important or amusing?
   - Have you or some friend done anything noteworthy?
   - What has been happening in the community or neighborhood lately?
   - Has anything been happening in a field of interest that you and the recipient have in common, such as clothing, sports, entertainment, hobbies, etc.?
   - Is there something humorous or fascinating that you have recently heard or read about?



You can jot down your ideas for your letter in the space below. Then write your letter and mail it.

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Lesson 13

"Dear Editor"

Writing Opinionated Pieces

Targeted Learner Outcome

The student will compose a letter to the editor and mail it to a newspaper.

About the Lesson

In a democratic society, freedom of speech is cherished, and newspapers take this freedom very seriously indeed. Even though the editor of a newspaper might disagree personally with a "Mr. Small" (the writer in this activity), that editor would nevertheless print his letters, along with others stating contrary views.

As students begin the lesson, it might be helpful to give them time in small groups to talk about issues in your community. Bouncing ideas off others will help students focus on an issue and a proposal for a solution. Before they begin to write their letters, review proper letter-writing form with them (go over Lesson 12, "A Letter from Harry," if you have not already).

After students have written and revised their letters, share the ten tips for getting their letters published. Allow time for additional revision, if necessary.

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"Dear Editor"

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

An old man wrote regularly to the editor of his local newspaper. He wrote so often, in fact, that the editor was surprised when a week went by without a letter from the vociferous man on his cluttered desk. He often wished it would get lost there, as many of his papers did, but unfortunately none of the letters ever did.

This man's name was Small, and in some respects, Mr. Small lived up to his name. He quibbled about every little thing the city council did, every change in the schools, every large gathering in the city's parks, and every activity young people conducted that he happened to witness. In sum, Mr. Small was a petty old man.

Mr. Romer was one of the many people who was annoyed by Mr. Small's continual complaining. Finally, after seven years of responding to Mr. Small's sour letters with his own letters to the editor, Mr. Romer decided to put an end to Mr. Small's letters. He wrote a petition and found 1,021 people to sign it. In effect, it said that Mr. Small should cease and desist from writing to the newspaper, or else 1,021 persons would purchase his house and evict him. (Mr. Small rented—he didn't believe in paying taxes that would be spent foolishly by the city and county.) The owner of the house was willing to sell it at a handsome price. Mr. Romer personally delivered the petition to Mr. Small, and then he purchased space in the newspaper to reproduce the petition with all of its signatures.

1. Do you read the op-ed page of your local newspaper? If you do, you realize that some people get quite excited about local, statewide, and national issues. Mr. Small was not unusual in being very fond of expressing his feelings about what he felt was wrong in his community. Every community has people that express strong opinions in the "To the Editor" portion of the newspaper. Was there another way for Mr. Romer to deal with his disagreements with Mr. Small? If so, what could he have done?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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"Dear Editor" (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

2. Think of a way your community could be improved, perhaps in the areas of recreation, transportation, crime, sanitation, housing, public health, or care for the needy. After defining an issue, think of what should be done and compose a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about your idea. Remember to use proper letter-writing form. Ask someone whose judgment you value to read and comment on your letter. After considering the person's comments, revise your letter, making any changes you feel will improve your argument, and then send your letter to the editor. Here are some tips for getting a letter published in the newspaper:

A. Send it by e-mail. It will reach the newspaper faster.

B. Keep your letter short and sweet—fewer than 200 words. The number one reason a letter is rejected is its length. Also, studies show that the shorter the letter is, the more likely it is to be read.

C. Stay tightly focused on your issue. Drop clichés like a hot potato, as well as any redundancies. Above all, leave out exclamation marks. In almost all cases, the editor will take them out anyway.

D. Respond to—but don't repeat—what another writer has written.

E. Don't call people names or use profane language.

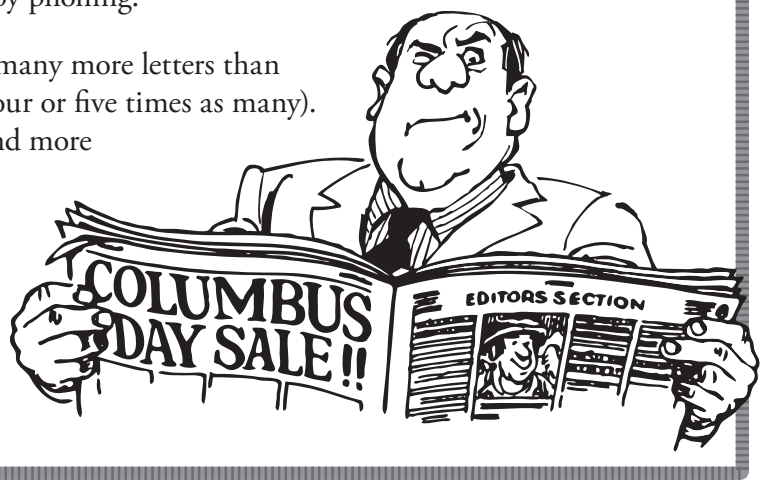
F. Keep it timely.

G. Don't plagiarize. The newspaper's intent is to reserve the letters page for those who want to express their ideas and thoughts in their own words.

H. Don't send an attachment.

I. Check to make sure you have included all of your necessary information, such as your full name, address, and phone number. Editors will sometimes check to see if a writer is legitimate by phoning.

J. Be patient. Editors receive many more letters than can be published (at least four or five times as many). Keep trying, but do not send more than one letter in a 90-day period, due to space limitations on the op-ed page.



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Lesson 14

Traitors and Patriots

Composing a Definition

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Explore the idea of patriotism.
- Learn the procedure for producing a definition.
- Write a definition of an important concept.

About the Lesson

Although this lesson is about writing definitions, it could engender a debate about patriotism. If so, the discussion might indeed be worthy of the time devoted to it. Nevertheless, the intent is to emphasize the importance of defining terms, especially in expository writing.

The lesson page outlines the procedure for composing a definition and then provides an example of one. The procedure that leads to a good working definition may seem excessive to students but if they follow it, they will likely produce a definition that is sound and useful.

The culminating phase of the lesson has students select a concept and make it "workable." The easiest way to find an authoritative definition of a concept is to look it up in a standard dictionary. Go a step further by asking students for a definition that will serve them well when writing or debating.

Following Through

A follow-up activity to "Traitors and Patriots" is to have students use their definitions as a springboard for their ideas about patriotism. Their essays should contain arguments that are supported by facts, quotations, and anecdotes. Although their opinions are important, they should keep expression of their own opinions to a minimum, striving for an unbiased, authoritative tone.

Another extension of the lesson would be to select an important concept that has been under discussion in their study of literature—such as protagonist, novel, plot, setting, climax, short story, foreshadowing, or style—and have students define it by including the elements given in the lesson.

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Traitors and Patriots

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

In recent times, the concept of loyalty to one's country has become a heated issue. How do you define loyalty as it relates to your country? Does loyalty mean that you must follow your country's leader, no matter what? What if you disagree with your country's governing body and laws that it passes? Does disagreement with your government necessarily mean you do not love your country?

In the discussion of an issue, writers define terms that are crucial to a reader's understanding. In our example, before writing about the issue at hand, it is necessary to define the term *loyalty*.

Follow these steps to write a definition:

- After choosing a topic, define its central concept. In defining it, you set the limits and give the essential characteristics of the concept.
- Read your definition and ask yourself if you have captured the basic idea of the concept. Do you get a sense of what it is when you use the term?

These are the elements of a definition:

- **Meaning:** The commonly understood significance of the concept
- **Description:** The basic characteristics of the term
- **Synonyms:** The words that are closest in meaning to the concept
- **Antonyms:** Words meaning the opposite of the concept—they can be used for purposes of contrast or to sharpen distinctions
- **Examples:** Sentences and phrases in which the concept occurs

In example, this is a definition of loyalty that includes these elements:

- meaning, synonym
- description
- examples
- antonym

Loyalty: The idea of being loyal to someone, to an institution, to a country, or to a cause is an important one in our culture. A faithful friend is one who doesn't desert you. You can depend on him or her to come to your aid or to defend you, if necessary. Some people believe that loyalty is the most important virtue in human relationships. To these people, disloyalty or unfaithfulness is a disgraceful crime.

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Traitors and Patriots (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

To compose a good definition, select one of the concepts below and write its definition. Employ the procedure outlined above in composing your definition. You should consult as many references and authorities as are necessary to write a workable definition, but don't just copy from the dictionary.

Concepts

- delinquency
- courage
- justice
- charity
- adolescence
- faith
- truth
- patriotism

The concept you will define: _____

Your definition: _____

_____

_____

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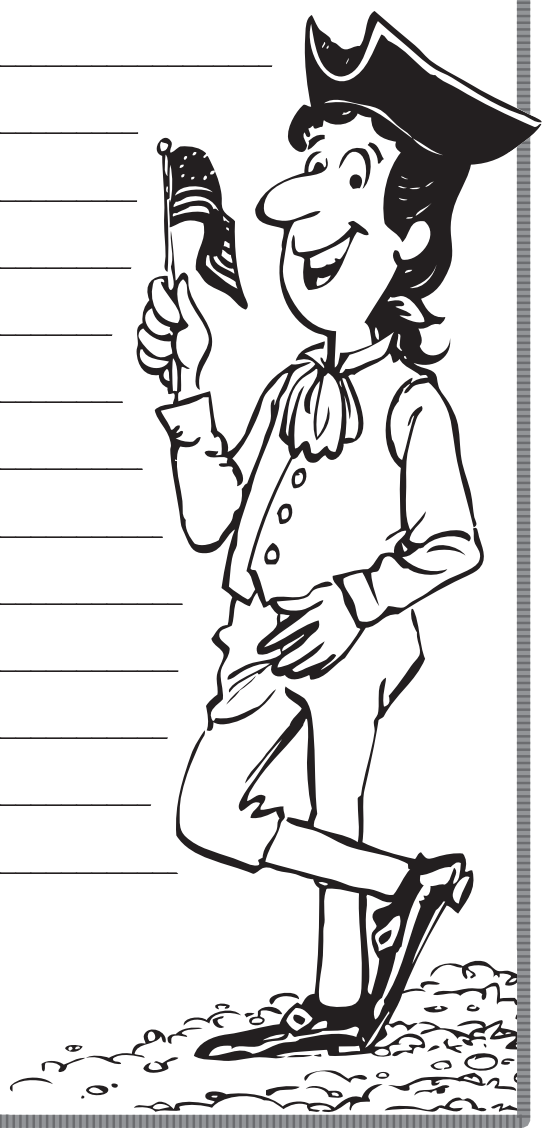

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Lesson 15

Oxymorons

Writing Oxymorons

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Interpret twelve oxymorons.
- Compose ten oxymorons.
- Write a vignette based on an oxymoron.

About the Lesson

An oxymoron is a figure of speech made up of contradictory terms. The word "oxymoron" consists of the Greek words for "sharp" and "dull." To warm up students for the lesson, provide an example of an oxymoron. (For example, you might refer to someone as an "unknown celebrity," a person who isn't familiar to the public but who has achieved fame.) The dictionary definition of a vignette is "a short, graceful sketch." Any of the oxymorons in the lesson should provide an idea that can produce a brief story. If, however, students struggle with expanding an oxymoron into a sketch, you might suggest that they write their vignettes after reading an example of the genre in a book or periodical. James Thurber and other *New Yorker* writers of years past were masters of the form, and their words have been lovingly preserved in anthologies. Thurber's "The Night the Bed Fell" is an excellent example of the humorous vignette. It isn't easy to produce a graceful or delicate sketch, of course, and you won't expect students to do more than take an incident based on an oxymoron and expand it.

Below are some possible explanations for the oxymorons from the first activity:

A. Some people put on an act and are impolite or difficult in a way that could be called charming.

B. A peaceful warrior can be found in any army—he's really a pacifist at heart.

C. A great many people enjoy being downcast and melancholy for psychological reasons that confuse others.

D. On a bicycle going down a steep hill, when you come to the bottom and head up the hill that follows, you can actually coast for a bit.

E. Illiterates can't read, of course, but they can be read *to* and thus seem to be well-read.

F. There is a way of being very aggressive in a gentle manner. The manner is mild, but the belligerence is there.

G. A bleak scene, as of an expanse of desert, can be spectacularly dull if there is nothing moving and the terrain is monotonous.

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H. To be "boisterously pensive" is a trick only an expert actor can achieve.

I. A lucky loser might be one who didn't win the prize or contest, yet the win would later prove to be unfortunate or disastrous for the actual winner.

J. Robin Hood was to some a virtuous villain.

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Writing Oxymorons

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 An *oxymoron* is a figure of speech made up of contradictory terms. The word oxymoron consists of the Greek words for "sharp" and "dull." Because they catch our eye and ear, oxymorons serve to draw attention to whatever the writer wants us to notice. Oxymorons stimulate the imagination. For example, if you read that someone was charmingly churlish, you might wonder what kind of a person could be pleasant and unpleasant at the same time.

Below are some oxymoronic expressions that contain apparent contradictions. Your task is to explain why these expressions might be reasonable or make sense in the right context.

A. charmingly churlish _____

_____

B. peaceful warrior _____

_____

C. happily forlorn _____

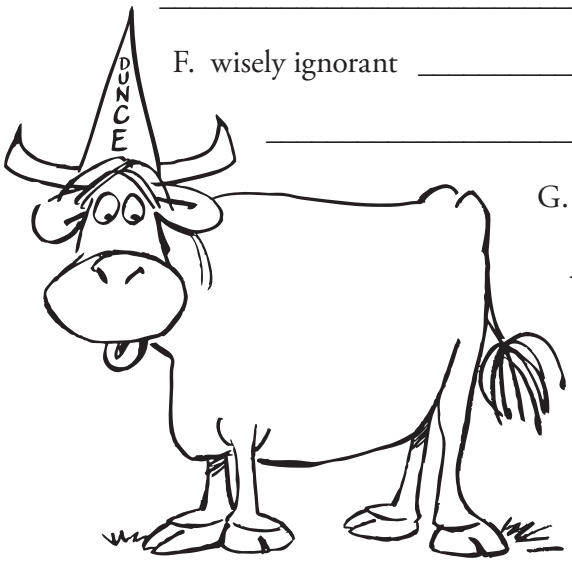
_____

D. coasting uphill _____

_____

E. well-read illiterate _____

_____



F. wisely ignorant _____

_____

G. harmonious discord _____

_____

_____

H. gently belligerent _____

_____

_____

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Writing Oxymorons (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

I. spectacularly dull _____

_____

J. boisterously pensive _____

_____

K. lucky loser _____

_____

L. virtuous villain _____

_____

2. Make a list of ten of your own oxymoronic expressions. Tell them to someone else to make sure that they make sense.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

3. Choose an oxymoron above that especially interests you. Write a brief sketch of someone or a situation based on this phrase. This kind of sketch is called a *vignette*. Jot down ideas for the vignette in the space below. An outline or sequence of events will help you to organize your story.

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Lesson 16

Are You Aware?

Writing a Report

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Think about the everyday happenings in his/her life to gain insight.
- Write a report about a phenomenon that is of particular interest.

About the Lesson

This kind of activity is sometimes called a "sensitivity exercise." Its prime purpose is to encourage students to become more aware of what is taking place around them. In the past twenty years or so, many activities have been devised to heighten an individual's powers of perception in a school setting. E. Paul Torrance and H.T. Safter (1999), for example, have been particularly successful in sharpening students' sense by allowing them to carefully examine pieces of wood. It is amazing how much information can be gained by a careful examination of small objects taken from nature. The activity can also be especially effective before and after field trips.

1. The two questions at the beginning of the activity are meant to get students thinking about their level of observations. You can ask these or ones like them to warm up your students for the reflective thinking called for in the rest of the lesson.

2. A few of the questions in the second activity are likely to bring on disagreements among students. Promote discussion. The activity should make students contemplate what they experience every day and at least some of their responses should be tentative.

3. We ask students to check one or two of their responses regarding the opening of doors, taste of food, cat's eyes, and so on, because it is easy to toss out an answer and let it go at that. Corroborating a statement or hypothesis requires some extra effort, but it is necessary in almost any venture. Students will go to parents, librarians, and authorities, and will try to repeat the phenomena to determine whether or not their memories are accurate.

4. After gathering additional information, students are asked to share what they have learned in a report. This provides you an opportunity to go over some of the principles of report writing. Probably the best time to go over those points, however, is after students have written first drafts (or even second drafts). Stressing form too early in the process could stifle students' enthusiasm.

Reference

Torrance, E. P. and H. T. Safter. *Making the Creative Leap Beyond*. Buffalo, NY: Creative Education Foundation Press, 1999.

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Are You Aware?

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. How aware are you of the everyday happenings around you? Do you know, for example, what time the streetlights came on last night? If so, when was it?

_____

Who was the first person to speak to you this morning when you arrived at school?

_____

2. Here are ten experiences that most of us have fairly often. See if you can make an observation about each by completing the sentences below. For most, there won't be just one correct answer. Respond in a way that is true for you.

A. When I put my shoes on, I put the _____ shoe on first.

B. Doors in houses open _____.

C. Most signs have _____ letters.

D. The _____ of a cat's eyes grow larger in the dark.

E. When the wind whips in from the _____, I can expect rain.

F. It's hard to get the true taste of food when _____.

G. When I raise my hand in class, it's almost always the _____ one.

H. Just after it rains, one of the first sensations I have is _____.

I. When most people smile, you see more of their _____ teeth.

J. If I put on a sweater or a shirt, I put my _____ through the sleeve first.

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Are You Aware? (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

3 You may be quite sure of some of your statements above, and less sure about others. Which ones are you least sure about?

_____

_____

_____

Check out the answer you are most unsure of by asking an adult (but not your teacher) to help you determine its correctness. Find out whether your statement is factual by testing, smelling, tasting, listening, or observing in some other way.

4 Now that you tested the accuracy of your statement, you can write a report about what you found out. First, write your statement below.

Your statement: _____

_____

_____

On the back of this piece of paper, write your report. Tell what you found out when you tested the statement, including evidence to support your statement. When you have finished writing, go back and read the report again, revising as you go. Finish by giving your report a title.

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Lesson 17

Can We Coax a Hoax from You?

Writing a Newspaper Story

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Understand the meaning of the word *hoax*.
- Make up a newspaper story featuring a hoax.

About the Lesson

This lesson begins by defining a hoax. A good learning tool would be to craft a hoax of your own. Perhaps the most effective lesson ever devised for this lesson was a hoax inflicted on a very bright class of fourth graders. One teacher asked the students to do some library research about several topics, among which was a biographical sketch of "Sylvester Orey, one of Zebulon Pike's cohorts." Because the students were quite conscientious, every librarian in town that evening was searching frantically for information about Orey. By the time several students had asked about the imaginary frontiersman, more than one librarian was convinced of his importance in the Westward Movement. The point to the lesson was that we should check our sources and corroborate stories. The lesson did its job because the next morning, the children were chanting, "Sylvester Orey is a fake! Sylvester Orey is a fake!"

The perpetrator of a hoax has a good chance of succeeding if there is some factual information to set it up and if there is some reason for people to want to believe it. (In the case of the fourth graders, the authority of the teacher when he incorporated the mythical Orey into an otherwise legitimate assignment convinced children of Orey's importance.)

To some degree, almost all of us are gullible. If we banish wonder and naiveté from our lives, we extinguish creativity. The creative person sees possibilities and is open to experience, suspending disbelief until the evidence dictates otherwise.

After discussion, invite students to come up with ideas for a story about a hoax. If they need inspiration, remind them that many hoax stories appear around April Fool's Day. As the lesson states, they should choose a topic or event in which many people are interested. Remind them to start the story with facts to lend it credibility. Then they can add in misleading statements and downright untruths. When they are finished writing, encourage them to revise their stories before sharing them with the class.

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Can We Coax a Hoax from You?

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. Occasionally, all of us wonder if a particular article we read in the news is true. More often than not, they are, but sometimes a reporter—and the rest of us—can be fooled. When that happens, we call the phony story a hoax.

   How can you tell if a story is a hoax? A story that is a hoax seems plausible on the surface and usually includes a number of facts. However, the careful reader will find those facts accompanied by incorrect information, lies, an unreliable source, or distortions. It is often about a subject that many people are emotionally invested in.

   Let's see how good you are at making up a hoax. Choose a topic or event in which many people are interested. Write a story on this topic/event, starting off with a few facts to establish the story's credibility and draw in the reader. Then, lead the reader into the "trap" by incorporating false details and statements into your story.

   When you're finished, take time to revise your story. Then share it with the class and see which details fool your readers.

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Lesson 18

The Paws That Refreshes

Inventing Funny Names

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Recognize the humor in puns.
- Invent three puns, using the names of famous people for animals.

About the Lesson

This lighthearted lesson deals with puns and drawing. That doesn't mean that students won't have to think, however. They will have to invent punny names, and that can be difficult. The emphases will be on originality and humor. So, for students to be in a playful and creative mood, warm them up with a few puns. Select a couple of good headlines from the newspaper, or make up your own samples. "Copy Cat" (about the first kitten to be cloned) or "Knights Slay Dragons" (a basketball team whose nickname is "Knights" beats one that is nicknamed "Dragons") would be good examples. You might also ask them what a "seal of approval" looks like. Is it a seal that smiles?

1. Students should have little difficulty in determining which animals go with the dozen names concocted by the Humane Society, until they reach the last two. Those two names might have been given to several animals. Here are the answers:

   A. Clint Eastwoof: a dog

   B. The Great Catsby: a cat

   C. Elvis Purrsly: a cat

   D. Napoleon Bone-Apart: a dog

   E. Jane Hounda: a dog

   F. Carol Purrnet: a cat

   G. Winston Church-hare: a rabbit

   H. Kitty-Patra: a cat

   I. Drew Burybone: a dog

   J. Bark Antony: a dog

   K. Ronald Reekin: a skunk or a weasel

   L. Pokey Roberts: a turtle, tortoise, sloth, snail, or slug

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2. Drawing a picture of one of the animals should appeal to students, especially if they are talented artistically. Allow those students who aren't talented in this way to copy from photographs found in reference books or even in the comic section of the newspaper.

3. Punning comes naturally to some people but is either difficult or distasteful to others. Glancing at a newspaper or news website, especially in the sports section, will confirm the fact that punning is not a forgotten art.

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The Paws That Refreshes

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. The Humane Society placed a full-page advertisement in the local newspaper asking people to adopt its animals. All of the animals were pictured, and each picture's caption included a clever description of the animal. As you can see by scanning the assigned names for the animals, the people at the Humane Society used puns to try to capture the attention of hoped-for adopters. What animal do you think each name describes?

A. Clint Eastwoof _____

B. The Great Catsby _____

C. Elvis Purrsly _____

D. Napoleon Bone-Apart _____

E. Jane Hounda _____

F. Carol Purrnet _____

G. Winston Church-Hare _____

H. Kitty-Patra _____

I. Drew Burybone _____

J. Bark Antony _____

K. Ronald Reekin _____

L. Pokey Roberts _____

2. Draw a picture of any of the animals that the Humane Society was putting up for adoption.

3. Can you come up with three other punny names for animals? You need not restrict yourself to dogs and cats. There have been some funny names given to animal characters in cartoons, such as skunks, coyotes, bears, wolves, pigs, birds, and foxes.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

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Lesson 19

Name That Occupation

Naming

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Supply occupations for names with initials.
- Create initialed names for occupations.
- Write names for seven characters in productions.

1 This is a lighthearted activity that has students think of occupations that are suggested by names with initials. Many people prefer to use their initials instead of a given name, and so we are used to seeing names such as J.R.R. Tolkien and J. K. Rowling. The initials combined with the surnames are highly suggestive of certain occupations.

Suggested answers:

1. R. U. Hirt: paramedic, doctor
2. C. A. Starr: Hollywood tour bus driver, seller of telescopes, astronomer
3. U. O. Mee: bill collector
4. C. D. Player: disk jockey
5. I. M. Small: little person in a circus
6. U. R. Dunn: mortician, judge
7. X. Paynter: former artist
8. Y. B. Goode: crook, panhandler
9. U. Blewett: traffic cop
10. I. D. Light: actor, singer, entertainer
11. I. M. Witte: writer of a humorous newspaper column
12. M. T. Binns: sanitation worker, janitor
13. U. B. Young: cosmetician
14. I. B. Purdy: chorus girl, beauty pageant winner
15. I. Plante: gardener, farmer
16. C. A. Lott: optometrist, private detective

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17. E. Z. Reeder: TV newscaster, reading specialist

18. I. C. Brown: dispatcher or driver for UPS

2 The second activity provides occupations that might go with initialed names (C. A. House for a real estate agent, for example). Students provide an appropriate name for each occupation. Suggested answers:

A. ecologist: R. Land, I. M. Green

B. body builder: I. M. Strong

C. dentist: R. U. Reddy, A. Payne

D. real estate agent: C. A. House, C. R. House

E. deep-sea fisherman: A. C. Fisher

F. librarian: B. A. Reader

G. automobile salesperson: C. R. Carr

H. forest ranger: C. R. Woods

I. comedian: A. Kidder

3 Finally, students provide appropriate names—with or without initials—for seven characters in various productions or books. This should lead in nicely to a writing activity in which names are important.

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Name That Occupation

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. In the early years of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the agents were dubbed "G-Men" by the newspapers. "G" stood for government. We don't hear that expression anymore, but if the agency recruited someone named George Mann, he could humorously call himself G. Mann. What occupations would be appropriate for people with these names?

1. R. U. Hirt _____
2. C. A. Starr _____
3. U. O. Mee _____
4. C. D. Player _____
5. I. M. Small _____
6. U. R. Dunn _____
7. X. Paynter _____
8. Y. B. Goode _____
9. U. Blewett _____
10. I. D. Light _____
11. I. M. Witte _____
12. M. T. Binns _____
13. U. B. Young _____
14. I. B. Purdy _____
15. I. Plante _____
16. C. A. Lott _____
17. E. Z. Reeder _____

_____

18. I. C. Brown _____

_____

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Name That Occupation (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

2 What names would be appropriate for people in the following occupations?

A. ecologist _____

B. body builder _____

C. dentist _____

D. real estate agent _____

E. deep-sea fisherman _____

F. librarian _____

G. automobile salesperson _____

H. forest ranger _____

I. comedian _____

3 Many writers are fond of giving the characters in their stories names that fit their personalities, such as Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn. What would be good names—with or without initials—for characters in these stories?

A. The villain in a melodrama about stealing an elderly couple's land rights when they strike oil in their apple orchard

B. The hero in a story about a cowboy in Wyoming who has lost his memory as a result of being thrown from a horse

C. The comic character in a television sitcom about rich, spoiled Americans who have migrated to Tahiti

D. A young boy in a juvenile novel who is very bright but also quite naive

E. A San Francisco cable car conductor in a short story who is afraid of heights and is upset by loud noises

F. A superstar running back in a boy's book about professional football

G. An elderly woman in a novel who is a terrible gossip and busybody

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Lesson 20

Fitting Partners

Naming

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Supply "ideal businesses" for a dozen partners.
- Produce five additional partnerships that are fitting for businesses.

About the Lesson

"Fitting Partners" is designed to give students a chance to think about names and the role they play in our lives and in literature. It is brief and ideally should precede a story-writing assignment. Suggested Answers:

A. Rose and Flowers: florists, nursery owners

B. Crabbe and Salmon: seafood market owners

C. Hammer and Wood: building contractors

D. Hope and Chance: casino operators

E. Storm and Raines: meteorologists

F. Strange and Wonder: spiritualists

G. Rich and Sage: financial planners

H. Flack and Popoff: press agents

I. Waite and Service: caterers

J. Neal and Crouch: proprietors of a school to train people in using firearms

K. Weaver and Woolley: garment manufacturers

L. Groom and Dryer: owners of a pet supply and grooming business

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Fitting Partners

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. As proper nouns, people's surnames are always capitalized. They often indicate the occupations of an ancestor, as is the case for people named Baker, Miller, Carter, Potter, Weaver, Gardner, Butler, Painter, and Beeman. If a Morris Diamond should look for a partner with whom to go into the jewelry business, he might look up his friend Gertrude Pearl. Their sign would read: "Diamond and Pearl, Jewelers." What would be the ideal business for each of these pairs of partners?

   A. Rose and Flowers _____

   B. Crabbe and Salmon _____

   C. Hammer and Wood _____

   D. Hope and Chance _____

   E. Storm and Raines _____

   F. Strange and Wonder _____

   G. Rich and Sage _____

   H. Flack and Popoff _____

   I. Waite and Service _____

   J. Neal and Crouch _____

   K. Weaver and Woolley _____

   L. Groom and Dryer _____

2. Now look in the phone book or online for five other partnerships that have ideal names for businesses and list them.

   A. _____

   B. _____

   C. _____

   D. _____

   E. _____

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Lesson 21

Pete and Friends

Writing Dialogue

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Write an original expression with a person's given name.
- Be able to distinguish between direct and indirect quotations.
- Write a conversation that will take place in the future, using correct punctuation.

About the Lesson

1. It is probably a good bet that most students won't readily come up with the old expressions featured in "Pete and His Friends." It is a chance to use their thinking skills (From what era are these names from?) and their creative skills, as you can be sure they will make up their own sayings and nicknames if they get overly frustrated.

   Answers:

   A. By George!

   B. Will-o'-the-wisp

   C. Plain Jane; Calamity Jane

   D. Nervous Nellie

   E. Jim-dandy

   F. For Pete's sake!

2. Allow students enough time to write two or three of their own sayings. They will use these in the next part of the lesson.

3. The task of putting three of the old expressions, or three of their own, into a conversation is a daunting one. It requires two of E. Paul Torrance's and H.T. Safter's (1999) creative thinking skills, namely, putting things into context and originality. If a student feels this is simply too difficult, tell her or him that it may take some experimentation and persistence. During revision time, have students check to see if they have punctuated their dialogue correctly.

Reference

Torrance, E.P. and H.T. Safter. *Making the Creative Leap Beyond*. Buffalo, NY: Creative Education Foundation Press, 1999.

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Pete and Friends

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. What do these names have in common?

   Pete Hannah Harry Katie

   All of these names are found in familiar expressions or nicknames. Can you think of what they are?

   A. George _____

   B. Will _____

   C. Jane _____

   D. Nellie _____

   E. Jim _____

   F. Pete _____

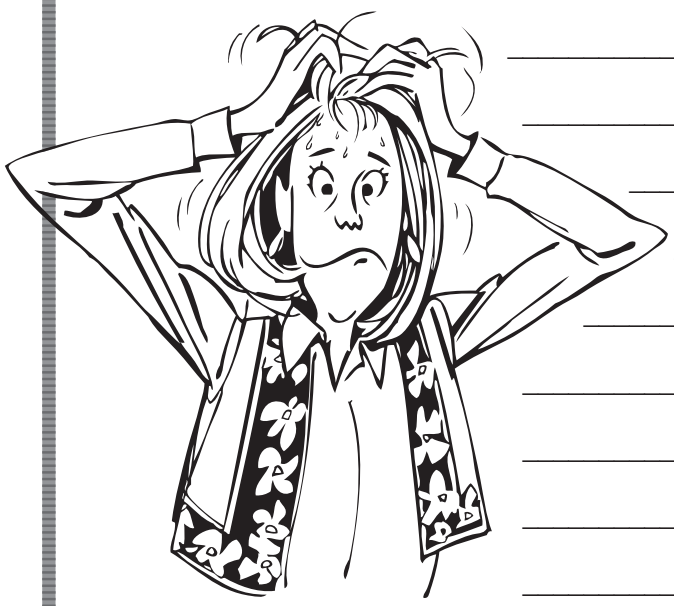
   If you are stuck on any of these expressions, ask someone who is older than you are if they know.

2. Think of two or three original sayings like the ones above.

_____

_____

_____



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_____

_____

_____

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Pete and Friends (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

3 Now, take three of these expressions, and/or three others that you have invented, and put them in a conversation between you and one or two other people. Imagine that you have graduated from high school and are thinking to the future, as well as reminiscing. Remember that direct quotations should have quotation marks enclosing the exact words of the speaker. Indirect quotations do not need quotation marks, as in a sentence such as this:

George heard Will say that he wasn't going to hand in his homework.

You can work out the conversation in the space below. When you are finished, have a friend act it out with you.

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Lesson 22

They Don't Talk Back (or Do They?)

Writing Dialogue

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Consider the personal relationships people have with their cars.
- Write a conversation between a car and its owner.
- Use the correct punctuation for writing conversation.

About the Lesson

Although this activity features fantasy, it is not so far-fetched. Beyond *Herbie,* many people name and personify their cars. The idea of the activity, however, is not to have students engage in fantasy, but to practice the skills needed to write conversation in their compositions.

The lesson includes a sample of a conversation between an owner and his car (in which the owner gets the last word). The exchanges are presented in a straightforward style; there are no broken or interrupted quotations. You can decide to give a lesson about broken quotations if you think your students will benefit from it.

Following Through

This follow-up activity will give you an indication of whether students understand the difference between direct and indirect quotations. Give students the following paragraph and ask them to identify the direct and indirect quotations. Students are to place the quotation marks in the appropriate places and indicate separate paragraphs by indenting.

Molly's Warning

Larry was a practical joker of the worst kind. Not only did his jokes embarrass his victims, but usually they humiliated them. In Molly's case, though, Larry had gone too far too often. If Larry plays one more joke on me, he'll regret it, Molly vowed. What will you do, Molly? asked Bernice. Just you wait and see! replied Molly. Larry did play one or two practical pranks on his classmates in the following week. One of them was on Jim. Bernice told Molly that Jim said he was fed up with Larry's practical jokes, too. No one was going to embarrass him the way Larry did and get away with it!

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They Don't Talk Back (or Do They?)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 There is no doubt that some car owners regard their cars in a personal way. Automobile owners have been known to pat their vehicles and commend them for getting them safely to their destinations.

No one has claimed that cars perform better if they are spoken to, but what if they did? What if cars could talk back? What would they say? Write a short conversation between an owner and his/her car. Be sure to use punctuation marks to indicate exactly what the car owner and the car said to each other. This is an example of such an exchange:

Owner: "Man! You're really cold this morning. All you do is cough and sputter."

Car: "You'd be cold too if you were out here all night. What do you expect?"

Owner: "With all the additives I pour into your tank, I expect some response from your starter."

Car: "Well, if you wouldn't pile all that junk in the garage, maybe there would be some room in there for me. I have to stay all night out here in the driveway. You're a clutter-bug!"

Owner: "Maybe it's about time I got you a cozy spot in some junkyard. You wouldn't feel a draft there, and you'd have a lot of company with all those other wrecks."

_____

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They Don't Talk Back (or Do They?) (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

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Lesson 23

Playing Ball and Making Stitches

Writing Dialogue with Metaphors

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Understand the meaning and uses of metaphors.
- Record metaphors heard during a 24-hour period.
- Write a conversation containing at least two metaphors.

About the Lesson

1. Because our language is so heavily laced with figures of speech, life can be confusing to the very young. If you have a story about a child taking an expression literally, that anecdote would be an ideal way to introduce this activity. Most of the misconceptions that children have when they take language too literally are humorous, and so this activity attempts to capitalize on that element by conjuring up images of women floating on pink clouds. We ask students to sketch their ideas of these misconceptions instead of explaining them in words. One reason for not asking for a written description is that it is natural to get a *picture* of the misguided notion. We also think it is a good idea to encourage those students who are good at representing their ideas graphically to do so.

2. The second activity asks students to listen for metaphors in everyday speech. Make sure that students can differentiate between a metaphor and a simile. It would seem to be appropriate, then, to check them on the differences. Remind students that a simile makes a comparison using the words "like" or "as." Then give some examples and ask students to identify each as a simile or metaphor:
    - James pulled off that trick as slick as a whistle. (simile)
    - The line hit the ball carrier like a ton of bricks. (simile)
    - Nell tripped herself up when she forgot the last part of her alibi. (metaphor)
    - Larry is as sly as a fox. (simile)
    - Valerie stared at him like a frightened kitten. (simile)
    - Jerry cast his eyes at Trisha. (metaphor)

    After listening for metaphors in the conversation of friends and others, it shouldn't be difficult for students to compose a conversation that has two metaphors. As a matter of fact, if your students are able to, they might reproduce conversations that they have actually heard.

3. Before students embark on the third part of the lesson, offer a brief review of the different kinds of quotations and their punctuation. For some, a review of the difference between quoting directly and indirectly would also be in order.

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Playing Ball and Making Stitches

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. Young children can be confused by the many expressions our language contains. Such expressions as "After the victory, she floated home on a pink cloud" are often above their language comprehension. This particular kind of expression is called a *metaphor*. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which the speaker or writer asserts that one thing is another in some way, or suggests that it acts like or has some of the qualities of something else.

   We use these expressions in our speech much of the time—so often, in fact, that we aren't aware that we are using metaphors. They provide color to our language.

   Imagine what a confused child would visualize when he or she hears the following expressions. Draw a sketch of each of the scenes that might come to the child's mind.

   A. I convinced Barry that he should play ball with us or our plan won't work.

   B. After her boss criticized her, Courtney crawled into her shell.

   C. Robert always makes a pig of himself.

   D. The tracks of the field mice were stitched across the surface of the snow.

   E. "Daddy, be a lamb and give me five dollars," pleaded Nora.

2. In the next 24 hours, listen for metaphors as people speak to and around you, and in the media. Try to remember at least four and write them down in the space below.

   A. _____

   _____

   B. _____

   _____

   C. _____

   _____

   D. _____

   _____

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Playing Ball and Making Stitches (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

3 During the past 24 hours, you've probably heard a few of the most common metaphors in our language, and you just may have heard one or two that were unusual. Some expressions are found only in a particular part of the country, or from another country altogether, and they sound strange when a native of that region says them outside his or her area. Write a conversation between two people that has at least two metaphors in it. The conversation can be one you heard or one you imagine.

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Lesson 24

Six

Writing a Character Sketch

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Answer thirteen questions about the six young people illustrated in the activity.
- Write a character sketch about one of them.

About the Lesson

1 Students' snap judgments about the six young people in this lesson may reveal some stereotypical thinking about people whose appearances are distinctive or predictable. In recent times, profiling has been a controversial procedure that authorities use in airports as a security measure. In a way, this procedure is the essence of stereotyping. However, in literature, the use of "stereotypical" archetypes allows readers to quickly understand characters, authors to make stories into myths, and so on.

The intent here is to get students thinking about personalities in preparation for writing a character sketch. They are to designate one of the six young people in the activity to each of the questions posed (e.g. "Which one loves sunflower seeds?"). After responding to the questions, students are to select one of the young people and write a character sketch about that person.

To give students a more thorough comprehension of the elements of a character sketch, present them with the following:

- **Purpose:** The primary purpose of a character sketch is to inform, but it can also be to impress or entertain the reader or to praise the subject.
- **Subject:** Select someone you know quite well; that person should also be interesting to your readers.
- **Audience:** Bear in mind the ages, backgrounds, and interests of your readers.
- **Subject's Characteristics:** The facts, traits, idiosyncrasies, and accomplishments of the subject provide the fabric of the character sketch. Anecdotes and quotes are also helpful in portraying the subject. Your purpose in writing the sketch will determine which of those details are included.
- **Emphasis:** Stress the subject's personality, appearance, character, or accomplishments.

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- **Organization:** A character sketch has an introduction, middle section, and closing. The introduction contains one or two of the most important traits of the subject. The middle section contains more details and also provides a revealing glimpse of the subject. The close summarizes the subject's personality or character.
- **Revision:** Examine your first draft with a critical eye. Look to see if your sketch gives the reader a clear picture of your subject. It helps a great deal to have another person read your second draft in an objective way.

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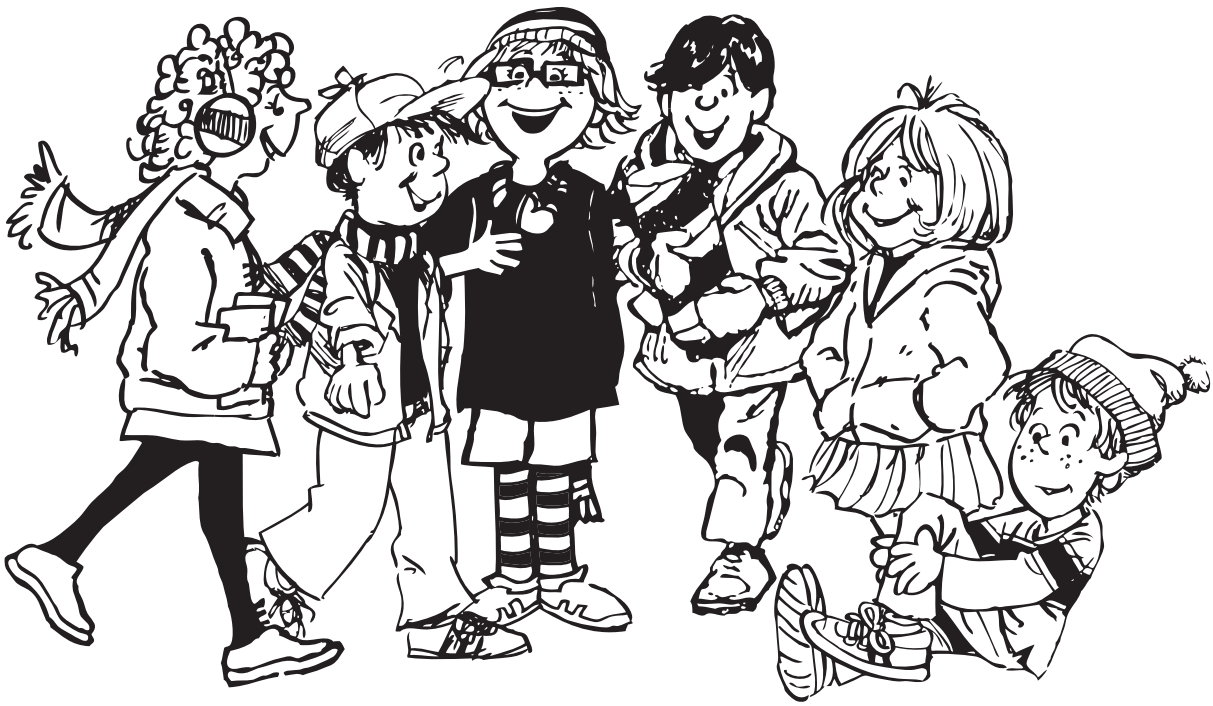
Six

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 Here are six young people about your age. They are alike in some ways, but they all have very different personalities. Just from looking at the sketches of the six young people, make some guesses about what they are like.

The purpose of a character sketch or profile is to allow the reader to feel he or she has gotten to know the subject of the piece. It is not organized chronologically, but should be organized by topics. The character sketch is informal in tone, and it benefits from humor, quotes, and anecdotes. In this activity, you must first imagine what the person would be like in real life. What does he or she look like? What are his or her chief characteristics and idiosyncrasies? Where does he or she live? Who are his or her friends? Let your imagination take over.



A. Which one is near-sighted? _____

B. Which one chews gum constantly? _____

C. Which one thinks toads are cute? _____

D. Which one is left-handed? _____

E. Which one collects baseball cards? _____

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ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

F. Which one never wears pink? _____

G. Which one plays the mandolin? _____

H. Which one loves sunflower seeds? _____

I. Which one is hard of hearing? _____

J. Which one swims like a fish? _____

K. Which one refuses to play "Monopoly"? _____

L. Which one sings in the shower? _____

M. Which one is a tattletale? _____

2 Choose one of the six and do some more speculating about him or her. Imagine what the young person's friends are like and what he or she likes to do. Think about what the person's strengths and weaknesses might be and what kind of a disposition he or she has. Then write a character sketch of this young person, adding even more details to give the reader a good picture of his or her personality. Use the space below to jot down your ideas.

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Lesson 25

Life's Paradoxes

Relating a Personal Experience

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Understand the meaning of the term *paradox*.
- Write about a personal paradoxical experience.

About the Lesson

Contrast an ironic situation with one that is paradoxical to bring out the distinctions between the words and to deepen students' understanding of paradox. A *paradox* is an act, situation, or statement that seems contradictory, unbelievable, or absurd, but may be in fact true.

Irony is a combination of circumstances that is opposite of what might be expected or considered appropriate. An ironic statement can simply be one that means the opposite of what is expressed, notably in sarcastic statements, e.g. "What a sweetheart!" (to denigrate a cruel person) or "Nice going" (to someone who has just goofed). A paradox can be more broadly applied to life situations.

This type of activity is most successful when it is administered individually and then followed by a class discussion of the prompts. It calls for a large amount of analyzing and judging and is therefore more of a critical thinking exercise than some of the others in this book.

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Following Through

These are a few of the activities that can follow "Life's Paradoxes":

- **Verbal-Linguistic:** Hold a discussion about the paradoxical experiences students have had. They may need a little coaxing, but in the proper atmosphere, they may relate a number of amusing, poignant, or insightful anecdotes.
- **Mathematical-Logical**: For students with highly logical minds, a paradox such as "trying hard not to make mistakes and making more than usual" can be explained in a straightforward manner. They can analyze situations in which people are under pressure to perform in certain ways, and as a result they become uptight, which works against their success. Any of the paradoxes presented in the activity can be explained in a similar way. You can ask for other examples like these from the class.
- **Bodily-Kinesthetic:** Those who are talented at expressing themselves in movement can perform a skit to act out one of the paradoxes.
- **Intrapersonal:** This activity encourages students to reflect on their own experiences. If you or other teachers have encouraged them to keep a journal, they will already engage in reflection regularly. Ask them to write a journal entry about a time that they experienced a paradox. If they have not started a journal, this activity will afford you the opportunity of inviting them to do so.
- **Visual-Spatial:** Some students might want to illustrate a paradox in line and color. Those that have a keen sense of humor should be able to capture the humor in a paradoxical situation, maybe expressing it in a comic.

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Life's Paradoxes

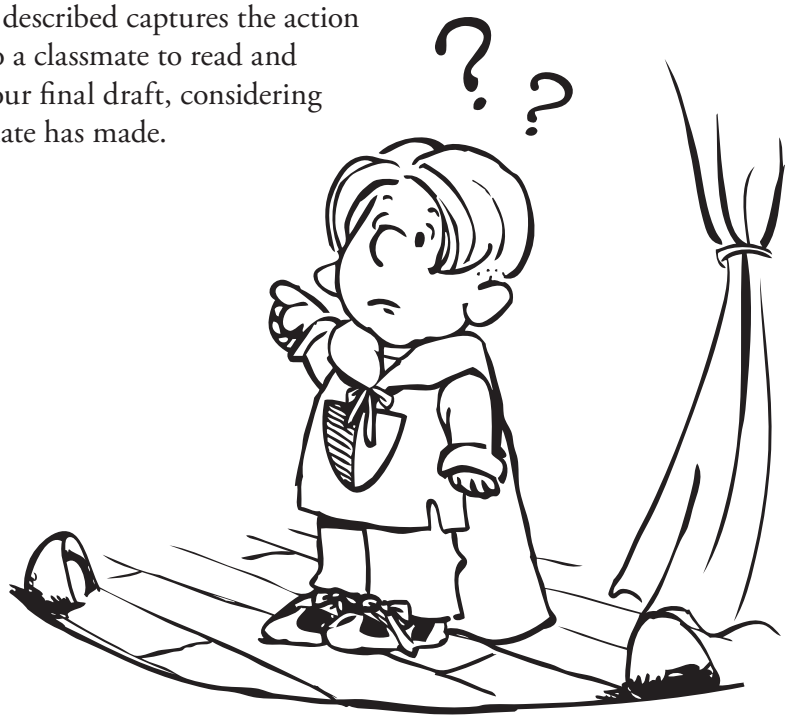
ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

"The more things change, the more they stay the same" is an old saying. It demonstrates one of life's paradoxes. A paradox is a statement or situation that seems to have contradictory or inconsistent features. Another of life's paradoxes is that when you try to preserve something, you may destroy it (the color in the leaves of autumn, for example, or deep sea creatures that collapse and change color when brought to the surface). Sometimes when we try to keep something just as it is, we actually hasten its change. Here are a few more common paradoxes:

- Trying to hold on to something and thereby losing it (e.g., fame, water, love)
- Not wanting to miss any details in order to understand, and thereby losing the big picture (e.g. studying for a test; focusing on the features of something and not seeing the thing itself)
- Trying to be mature or sophisticated and thus appearing naive
- Praising something or someone excessively so that the listener or reader thinks less of the subject
- Protesting sincerely that you aren't an expert and thus are regarded as one
- Trying hard not to make a mistake and making more than usual

What paradoxical experiences have you had? Perhaps you have experienced the paradox of trying hard not to make a mistake and thus making more mistakes than usual. Give an account of what the experience was like. Try to re-create the episode vividly so that a reader can understand your feelings when undergoing the experience. Jot down your ideas. Then write a rough draft to see if the incident you have described captures the action and your feelings. Give it to a classmate to read and comment on. Then write your final draft, considering the suggestions your classmate has made.



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Lesson 26

What's Going on Here?

Writing an Anecdote

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Interpret three puzzling scenes.
- Gain one or more insights about how people help or hurt one another by interfering.
- Write about a personal experience when someone intervened or interfered in his or her affairs.

About the Lesson

1. The first part of this lesson offers descriptions of three scenes in which people seem to be experiencing intense emotions. Students are to interpret and briefly react to the scenes, using whatever personal experiences they have had to gain insight into the behavior of the people in the scenes.

2. At the end of the lesson, students are asked if they have had an experience in which there was an interference or intervention. This is an opportunity for students to write a short narrative of a meaningful experience in their lives. They can complete the assignment at home or in class the next day.

   An anecdote is a short, entertaining account of an occurrence, usually personal or autobiographical. It can be one or two pages long. An anecdote should be a little story in itself, with enough details for the reader to get a clear picture of the scene, the characters, and the action. Anecdotes generally follow a time sequence, so students can structure their writing in a chronological manner, thus showing the reader how things got started, what happened, and how it ended.

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What's Going on Here?

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 Imagine that you are an observer of the following scenes. You are just close enough to see what the people are doing, but not close enough to hear what they are saying. How would you interpret their actions?

Situation 1

A man stands in the middle of a busy downtown street, interrupting traffic, yelling and waving at something or somebody in a high building across the street. He keeps yelling, but no one stops to find out why. Finally, after many chaotic moments, he slowly walks to the sidewalk. Two cars narrowly miss him. When he reaches the sidewalk, he falls down.

_____

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Situation 2

A dark-haired little girl sobs as she emerges from a beauty salon. She is nicely dressed. A woman in her late twenties follows the little girl out of the shop. She is blonde, attractive, and also smartly dressed. Suddenly the girl stops, wipes her tears, and reaches back for the woman's hand. Instead of taking the little girl's hand, the woman pulls her away. They enter a car in silence.

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What's Going on Here? (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

Situation 3

A disheveled old man enters a post office. He stands in line, waiting for his turn to talk to a clerk. When he finally gets to do so, he and the clerk have a long conversation. The clerk does a good deal of talking and appears to be quite calm. As the conversation progresses, the old man develops a scowl. Slowly and deliberately, the man turns away and walks out of the building.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Have you ever witnessed a scene such as one of those above? If you have, was your interpretation influenced by your previous experience?

_____

_____

_____

3. People have gotten into trouble because they have interfered in situations that didn't need any intervention. Did that ever happen to you? What were the circumstances?

_____

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Lesson 27

Wordsmiths

Composing a Cinquain

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Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Produce five analogies for writers.
- Write a cinquain about writers.

About the Lesson

One of the least painful lessons in teaching poetry is introducing the cinquain. Like haiku, the verse has very few words and is highly structured. Before introducing students to cinquains, you may want to have them think in terms of analogies. This lesson asks students to compare writers with various other workers, professional and non-professional. This is a good starting point—think of what the subject is similar to, so as to enhance one's understanding of the subject itself.

1. The first activity includes remarks about the power of writers. Then the student is asked to find an animal to compare to writers. Any animal that builds—from a spider or tent caterpillar to a bower bird or beaver—will do.

2. Second, students are asked to examine four analogies. They are to make comparisons to carpenters (writers put words together and carpenters put building materials together), gardeners (writers nurture ideas and develop them and gardeners grow plants and bring them to fruition; writers prune excess or unwanted verbiage and gardeners prune unwanted parts of bushes and trees), architects (writers create structures such as plots and verse forms and architects create plans for physical structures), and mechanics (writers fix defective prose and poetry and mechanics fix engines).

3. Last, students are asked to write a cinquain. The lesson includes a model of the type of cinquain that follows a pattern of words, rather than syllables, because it is easier to master. The "pure" cinquain, invented by Adelaide Crapsey, has a 2-4-6-8-2 pattern of syllables for the five lines. Our example faithfully follows the 1-2-3-4-1 scheme of words, but it certainly isn't necessary for students to adhere exactly to that pattern. An extra word here or a shorter line there is acceptable.

   You might notice that nowhere in the lesson is mention made of poetry. Teachers have found that there is less resistance to writing cinquains than there is to writing formal "poetry," especially among male students. Because cinquains don't rhyme, it is fairly easy to ignore the terms *poetry* and *verse.*

Wordsmiths

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. Writers are people who put words together for people to read. They can use words to instruct, to entertain, to mystify, to persuade, and to inspire. Words have power, and so good writers are powerful people.

   What animal could be compared to a writer? _____

   Why do you think so? _____

   _____

   _____

2. Writers are also like other workers. How is a writer like a(n):

   A. Carpenter? _____

   _____

   _____

   B. Gardener? _____

   _____

   _____

   C. Architect? _____

   _____

   _____

   D. Mechanic? _____

   _____

   _____

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Wordsmiths (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

3 One kind of cinquain has a pattern like this:

Line 1: one word, naming the subject
Line 2: two words, describing the subject
Line 3: three words, expressing an action
Line 4: four words, expressing a feeling
Line 5: another word for the subject

Here is an example of a cinquain about writers, using this structure:

Weavers
Of words,
Instructing, persuading, inspiring
Making us wise, happy—
Writers.

This cinquain compares a writer and a weaver; in other words, the author made an analogy. As was done in this cinquain, some people like to reveal what the subject is in the last line, as a small surprise. Try writing one or two cinquains of your own about writers in the space below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Lesson 28

Naturally Five

Composing Tanka and Haiku

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Compose one or more haiku.
- Compose one or more tanka.

About the Lesson

This activity is likely to be your students' introduction to tanka, the Japanese verse whose shortened form is haiku. This lesson asks students to produce both verse forms. After producing a three-line haiku, students should take readily to extending the three lines to five for the tanka. By adding those two extra lines, they can obtain more depth in their imagery.

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Naturally Five

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 Although you are probably familiar with haiku, you may not have known that the Japanese verse form derived from the tanka, a poem of five lines that was popular in Japan predating the haiku. The theme of both haiku and tanka is nature. The tanka has a pattern of 5, 7, 5, 7, and 7 syllables per line, respectively. This is an example of the verse:

A chilled lily floats
Below shifting horizons
Quavering at dawn.
Now prismatic rays of light
Radiate from a frog's back.

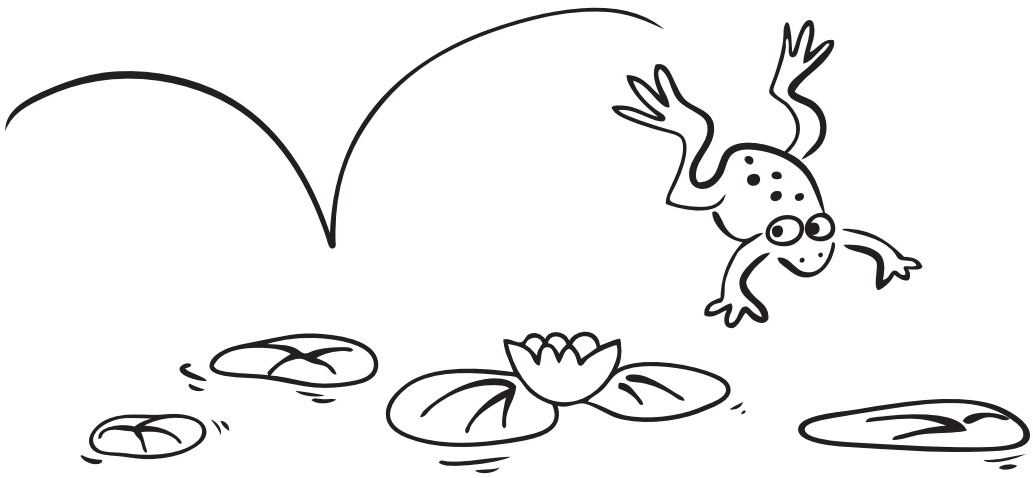
Read this haiku thoughtfully:

Toad's coppery eyes
Gleam above a pulsing throat—
A tongue flashes out.

_____

_____

Add two lines of seven syllables each to the haiku and make it a tanka.



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ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

2 Now write your own haiku. Give it to a classmate, who will make it into a tanka. To illustrate, a seventh-grade student once wrote this haiku:

By the ocean's edge
Polluted, lifeless fluid
Fills rock cavities.

Someone else read the haiku and added these two lines:

But look! Breaking the surface
Are tiny creatures darting.

Write ideas for your haiku below. When you have composed your haiku, give it to a classmate, who will then add two lines.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

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_____

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Lesson 29

Couplets

Composing Couplets

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Learn about the couplet as a verse form.
- Compose two or more couplets.

About the Lesson

As Leonard Nathan of the University of California, Berkeley, put it, "In a good poem, you live through an experience imaginatively. You experience meaning with your mind, body, and psyche. Everything is summoned." A good reason for choosing the couplet as the vehicle for writing poetry is its brevity, which is a big plus when it comes to coaxing young people to write poems. Because the two lines usually rhyme, the couplet also has an appeal that is attested to constantly in the lyrics of contemporary music. Emily Dickinson's poem about the "happy little stone" is a good example of couplets because it is relatively easy to understand and it (mostly) rhymes. To help students connect this lesson to real life, find one of these examples and read it or play it for them to inspire their own couplets. In this lesson, students will first learn about couplets and then try their hands at writing two of their own.

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Couplets

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 Many things come in pairs—twins, hands, lungs, tango dancers, and so on.

Two is an important number in poetry as well. One unit of poetry is the couplet. It has just two lines, and they usually rhyme. Therefore, if the writer writes only two lines, we have the shortest verse form of all. (Most poets, however, don't quit after two lines.) The principal problem with couplets is that they tend to become doggerel, a trivial comic verse that is usually poorly or hastily constructed. However, in a larger piece, they give the poem rhythm.

Some very great poets such as Emily Dickinson used the couplet most successfully. Here is one of her poems, which is made up of couplets:

> How happy is the little stone
> That rambles in the road alone,
> And doesn't care about careers
> And exigencies never fears—
> Where coat of elemental brown
> A passing universe put on,
> And independent as the sun
> Associates or flows alone,
> Fulfilling absolute decree
> In casual simplicity—

The next-to-last couplet doesn't rhyme, but Emily Dickinson wasn't one to adhere closely to the strictures of conventional poetry.

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Couplets (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

See if you can write two or three couplets that have both meaning and imagery. First choose a subject that interests you. Then think of words that bring forth pictures to the mind. Put the phrases together in meaningful groups. If you want the ends of the lines to rhyme, experiment with how you can arrange and rearrange the words. Use the space below to try out your ideas.

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Lesson 30

Going Nowhere Fast

Writing a Short Story

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Gain a better understanding of what a paradox is.
- Learn what constitutes a good short story.
- Write a short story about a paradoxical situation.

About the Lesson

English has a surprising number of paradoxical expressions, as the opening of "Going Nowhere Fast" points out. Students are challenged to interpret seven paradoxical statements and then to consider one of them as the germinating idea for a short story. The elements and characteristics of a good short story are offered.

These are among the many ways students could explain the seven paradoxical statements:

A. Friendships are supposed to be blessings, but some friends can be burdensome if they depend too much on you, cause you headaches because they get you in trouble, and so on.

B. It seemed like at least an hour because the talk was so boring or repetitious.

C. Often humor is based on someone's mistake or misfortune.

D. You can overwhelm a listener or reader with too many facts and too much explanation.

E. A few people have the knack of looking graceful while moving in a seemingly awkward way.

F. Anticipation is sometimes more enjoyable than actual realization.

G. To someone who thrives on change (or just enjoys the rain), the monotony of day after day of great weather can be onerous.

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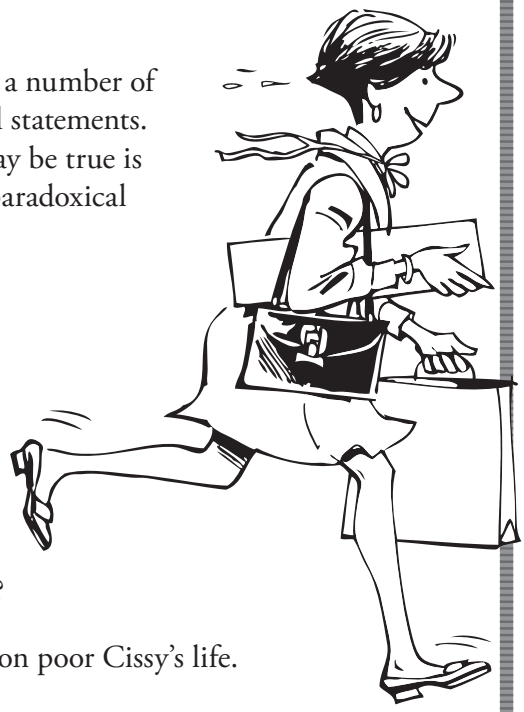
Going Nowhere Fast

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____



"Less is more," insisted a famous architect. We have a number of sayings like that in our society. They are paradoxical statements. A statement that appears to be absurd but in fact may be true is a paradox. Here are some well-known examples of paradoxical statements:

- "He's going nowhere fast."
- "Parting is such sweet sorrow."
- "The silence is deafening."
- "The more things change, the more they stay the same."

There are some other paradoxical statements that aren't so well known. What can each of these mean?

A. Her friendship proved to be an enormous blight on poor Cissy's life.

_____

_____

B. The three-minute talk took at least an hour.

_____

_____

C. There can be no humor without sadness.

_____

_____

D. The more he drove those simple, crystal-clear points, the more obscure the whole idea became.

_____

_____

E. He flopped into the chair so awkwardly, it was quite graceful.

_____

_____

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Going Nowhere Fast (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

F. The waiting was delicious agony for her.

_____

_____

G. The weather was perfect—day after day of clear blue skies—and it was terrible.

_____

_____

To explain how those paradoxical statements can make sense, make up a short story. For instance, the last one about the individual who hated the perfect weather can be explained when you answer the questions:

- Where was the "perfect" weather?
- Who is the speaker?
- Why would he/she find the weather terrible?

Select one of the paradoxical statements as the central idea or theme for a short story. The author of a short story combines the elements of characters, plot, setting, point of view, and meaning to produce an entertaining story. First of all, the short story is written to be enjoyed. It tells the reader only one thing (the unifying idea). The story offers a look at life from a particular perspective. It portrays one or more people in depth. The action in a well-written short story is believable.

Use the space below to jot down your ideas before you begin to write your short story.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Lesson 31

Lines

Writing an Essay

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Make a sketch based on the incomplete figure in the lesson.
- Name the quality or ability that he/she likes most about the sketch.
- Write an essay.

About the Lesson

"Lines" is fundamentally a change-of-pace activity, one that is nearly sure-fire because students have the absolute freedom to express any ideas they have about the lines in any ways that occur to them. The ideal time for introducing it is after a highly structured lesson. They can elaborate on the lines and forget memorizing dates, names, rules, or whatever they have been stretching their minds to do.

1. Transition into the activity by directing students to look at the lines on their handout and asking them what it suggests to them. After some discussion and time for thought, ask them to use their pencils to connect the lines and create a drawing.

2. When they are done drawing, ask students to do some evaluating: What do they like best about what they have created? Have them think about the attributes of their drawings, taking notes to be used in the next part of the lesson.

3. Last, allow time for students to write an essay, with an opening paragraph, three supporting paragraphs, and closing paragraph, centered on their drawings and notes.

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Following Through

Here are a few additional activities for this lesson:

- **Verbal-Linguistic:** Although "Lines" starts out in a very permissive fashion, it evolves into a traditional essay-writing activity. The essays produced can be read to the class by their authors or included in a student publication if they are outstanding.
- **Mathematical-Logical:** The arguments put forth in the essays can be tested for their logic. Students should critique themselves to see if they have been logical in their arguments and have avoided fallacious thinking.
- **Visual-Spatial:** You can follow up the drawing part of the lesson with another incomplete figure for students to elaborate on, using the figure above or one of your own invention.
- **Bodily-Kinesthetic:** An uninhibited student might enjoy pantomiming a person, animal, or machine, adding color and depth to his or her creation.
- **Musical-Rhythmical:** It is possible that one or more students could also make up a verse and put it to music, giving the drawing even more depth and color.
- **Interpersonal:** Students can pair up and critique each other's essays. Constructive criticism can help the finished products immensely.
- **Naturalist:** If a student has made the four lines into an animal, chances are good that the student indeed is an animal lover.

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Lines

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 Very often persons who have heard the same sound or words will disagree considerably about what they heard. It is the same way with seeing; when several people see something happen, they often have surprisingly different versions of what they witnessed. The lines below suggest many kinds of objects to different individuals. What do they make you think of?

Make a sketch of the object you think of when you see the lines. You may use as many of the lines as you like, and you may add as many lines or colors as you wish. Draw your picture in the space above, and make the lines a part of whatever you draw.

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ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

2. Use the space below to jot down ideas about your drawing. If you have created an original animal or plant, describe it. If you have drawn a machine, explain how it works. If you have drawn a building, tell about its construction and functions.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What quality or ability do you like best about the thing you have drawn? Does it have one feature that is particularly pleasing or useful?

_____

_____

If it didn't possess this valuable characteristic, would there be fewer of these things? Why or why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Make your drawing and your notes the basis for an essay. Remember:

- A persuasive essay is written from a particular point of view and is meant to persuade the reader to adopt that point of view.
- Support your opinion with facts, examples, and anecdotes. To make your opinion acceptable, you need facts to back it up. Direct quotations also help to make your position more persuasive.
- The beginning and ending of an essay are the most important parts. In repeating your thesis at the end of the essay, vary the wording from the way it was originally stated.

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Lesson 32

What's Your Answer?

Writing a Short Story

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Respond to five ambiguous questions.
- Write a story about a misunderstanding.

About the Lesson

1. To get students ready for a writing session, it is sometimes a good idea to loosen them up with nonsense. The lesson's first activity asks students what they think of silly questions and ambiguous questions.

2. The second activity presents five questions that may cause either consternation or hilarity.

   In general, there are three ways in which students have responded to these questions. Some students are "literal-minded" and reject the questions because they seem outlandish or meaningless. For example, they think the question "Is Alabama inside?" is nonsensical. A few catch the spirit of the questions and fire back far-out responses, such as "Certainly, every time Connecticut is outside." Some students will attempt to analyze the questions and give logical responses. For instance, they often say "Yes" to the question about marshmallows in summer—that's the time when people toast marshmallows over a fire at the beach.

3. The questions highlight how risky communication can be, and this leads to the story-writing assignment in the last part of the lesson. Have students jot down their thoughts about a miscommunication between two people and then develop those ideas into a short story. When students have finished their first drafts, allow time for revision and sharing.

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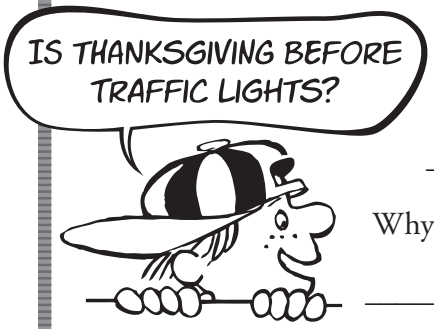
What's Your Answer?

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 How do you feel about people asking silly questions? Have you ever laughed at a question that you thought was silly or absurd and then found out that the person asking the question was quite serious? How do you feel about questions that don't have just one right answer? Does it bother you that there isn't just one correct answer?



_____

_____

_____

Why or why not? _____

_____

1 Here are some questions that may seem crazy to you, but maybe you can make sense of them. Try to answer each of the questions as well as you can.

A. Do marshmallows come in the summer? _____

_____

B. When is the moon? _____

_____

_____

C. What comes after "z"? _____

_____

_____

D. Is Alabama inside? _____

_____

_____

E. Is Thanksgiving before traffic lights? _____

_____

_____

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What's Your Answer? (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

3 When we don't understand what someone means, what can we do to understand the person better? _____

_____

What can the person do to make him or herself better understood?

_____

_____

4 Write a short story about a misunderstanding between two people. The misunderstanding may have come about as a result of a question or a statement by a person who was misinterpreted by the other. The consequences of the misunderstanding might be humorous, serious, or enlightening for both of them.

A short story's focus is often a single incident or crisis in human relationships, and can be either real or imaginary. The essential elements of the short story are the same as they are for the novel: setting, characters, and plot. Starting with the misunderstanding, think of an appropriate setting and then develop your ideas about the descriptions and actions of your characters. You can use the space below to outline your short story.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Lesson 33

Campaign Slogans and Songs

Writing Song Lyrics

Targeted Learner Outcome

The student will write campaign song lyrics and a campaign slogan.

About the Lesson

1. This lesson offers students a chance to vent any gripes or frustrations they have. You may want to substitute a few of your students' complaints, if you know them.

2. Although the tenor of this lesson appears to be negative, it is really lighthearted and leads to a definite change of pace as a writing exercise. We hope that students really will attempt to write song lyrics—if not about perfumed ads or lawn flamingoes, then about something they enjoy.

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Campaign Slogans and Songs

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 Do you have a cause? Is there something you want to happen that isn't happening? Or is there something that you want to stop? Listed below are a variety of issues, one of which may be dear to your heart. Do you want to:

A. Stop salespeople from saying, "Have a nice day"? _____

Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

B. Outlaw perfumed ads in newspapers and magazines? _____

Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

C. Insist that newspapers report more positive, and fewer negative, stories? _____

Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

D. Curtail the number and length of television commercials? _____

Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Campaign Slogans and Songs (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

E. Put a stop to telemarketing? _____

Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

F. Stop people from going barefoot at school? _____

Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

G. Start a campaign to make all candy wrappers edible? _____

Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

H. Ban lawn decorations, such as statues of pink flamingoes? _____

Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

2 Select one of the issues above or any other issue. Do some research about it, reading or getting other opinions. Then, choose one of the options below:

A. Pick a tune and write some lyrics based on your thoughts concerning the issue. In writing your song, you might want to use couplets or some other simple form, as in "Yankee Doodle" (a, b, c, a).

B. Compose a slogan for your imaginary campaign to rid the world of your pet peeve. Use the space below for your ideas.

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Lesson 34

Make Us Free

Writing an Essay

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Explore the concept of freedom.
- Write an essay about an area that should be "free" of something.

About the Lesson

In this lesson, students will think of the word "free" and its many applications and connotations in our society. They are to consider a dozen places and conditions that would be "wonderful" if they were free of something.

1. In the first activity, students explore and evaluate the concept of freedom as it pertains to the terms shown.

2. Next, they create names for new "free" zones, areas, environments, and conditions and state which one of these new items is most important to them.

3. Finally, students write an essay about the item they chose in the second activity and tell why it is so important to them. Before they begin writing, take a few moments to review the aspects of good essay writing.

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Make Us Free

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. We have a lot of free things in our society. Here are some of the more common ones:

- caffeine-free
- sugar-free
- duty-free
- drug-free
- pollen-free
- dust-free
- nuclear-free
- pesticide-free

What does "free" mean in this usage? _____

_____

Which one of the free things above is most important to you? _____

Why? _____

_____

2. Let's devise some new free areas, environments, and products. For example, you could have a pun-free zone. And wouldn't it be wonderful if we had a virus-free world?

What would be an excellent free area:

C. At school? _____

D. In the home? _____

E. On the playing field? _____

F. In religion? _____

G. In the world of commerce? _____

H. In urban development? _____

I. In the atmosphere? _____

J. In transportation? _____

K. In entertainment? _____

L. In communications? _____

M. On a street? _____

N. With regard to noise? _____

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Make Us Free (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

Which of these proposed free things would you most like to see? _____

Why? _____

_____

_____

_____

3 Select one of those areas that should be free of something and write an essay about it. Here are some general points about writing an essay:

- A persuasive essay is written from a particular point of view and is meant to persuade the reader to adopt that point of view.
- Support your opinion with facts, examples, and anecdotes. Direct quotations also help to make your position more persuasive.
- The beginning and ending of an essay are the most important parts. In repeating your thesis at the end of the essay, vary the wording from the way it was originally stated.

Use the space below for sketching out your ideas for your essay.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Lesson 35

You, the Magician

Writing an Essay

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Think of what ten qualities he/she could change to make objects better.
- Describe the consequences of his/her world if one of the changes took place.
- Write an essay about one of the changes that will most benefit people.

About the Lesson

This activity was designed to make students more aware of their sense experiences by asking them to inspect some of the qualitative aspects of life. In addition, they will be stretching their minds to see consequences of human activities that have personal and societal implications. As such, this activity can be adapted particularly well to science and social studies units.

1. The activity should cause students to think of how aspects of their environment can be changed. (Children usually have less difficulty than adults do in coming up with answers for this kind of task because their imaginations have not been blunted by the realities of adult life.)

2. Next, students are asked to choose one of the items and think about how their suggested change would affect their own lives.

3. The last activity prompts students to examine the consequences of their suggested changes. They must think more globally; which of their suggested changes would be best for the world in general? You might initiate this part of the lesson with a discussion so students can bounce ideas off each other. At the end of the discussion, before students begin writing, review the tips for writing essays presented on the student page.

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You, the Magician

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 There are many toys, gadgets, tools, conditions, and objects that might serve us better if we had the magic powers to change them. In this activity, you will be given an opportunity to imagine that you can change things the way you would like them to be. If you had the power, what things would you change?

A. What would be more comfortable if it were round? _____

Why? _____

B. What would be economical if it were faster? _____

Why? _____

C. What would be easier if it were automatic? _____

Why? _____

D. What would be quicker if it were smooth? _____

Why? _____

E. What would be friendlier if it were smaller? _____

Why? _____

F. What would be more exciting if it floated? _____

Why? _____

G. What would be more pleasant if it were louder? _____

Why? _____

H. What would last longer if it were solid? _____

Why? _____

I. What would be more powerful if it were thick? _____

Why? _____

J. What would be funnier if it were green? _____

Why? _____

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You, the Magician (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

2. Describe the changes that would take place in your life if you were able to put into effect one of the changes listed above.

   Which would be best for you? Why?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

   _____

3. Which of those changes would be best for people generally? Put your ideas into the form of an essay. These are some points to keep in mind:

   A. Get the reader's attention with a story, joke, reference to a recent event, and the like.

   B. Know your audience. Adjust your language so that it is appealing and understandable to the reader.

   C. Without being too obvious, establish your relationship with your audience. (What views do they share with you? What is common in your background with theirs?)

   D. Give your audience a road map of where you are going in the essay, or at least make it clear that you have a message. Then try to make your message clear.

   E. Repeat important ideas, but try to alter the language slightly in the repetition.

   F. Use humor, but use it naturally.

   G. What actions are you urging, if any? If members of the audience accept your ideas, what should they do?

   H. Reiterate your thesis in forceful and simple language at the end.

   When you have finished your rough draft, give it to a classmate to read. The classmate can offer suggestions about how effective the essay is and how it might be improved. Use those suggestions to revise your essay.

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Lesson 36

Preservation

Writing an Essay

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of the concept of preservation.
- Explore the value of preservation activities.
- Write an essay about the value of preservation.

About the Lesson

1. Some students may find the lesson's philosophical element to their taste; others may not bite. If their minds are engaged at this stage, however, they will find it easier to tackle the next two activities of the lesson. Choose the method of assigning the activity that you think will achieve this result best, whether it be to individuals or in a small group discussion.

2. The second activity leads students away from the idea of preserving something specific, to the larger question of the value of preservation. Encourage discussion among students as they work through these questions.

3. The final activity asks students to flesh out, in an essay, their ideas about the value of preservation. Encourage students to consult at least two reliable sources for more information about preservation. Then, before they start their essays, review the tips on the student page.

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Preservation

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. Preserving things we want to use or to remember is important to us. Some people preserve strawberries in jam, others like to dry flowers to keep them indefinitely. Parents take ink prints of babies' feet to remember them just as they were when their children were young. You probably do a little preserving, too. If you have a camera, you preserve the memory of a scene or a person by photographing your subject. You may freeze foods such as ice cream, meat, and bread to keep them fresh and edible.

   How would you preserve:

   A. Cucumbers? _____

   _____

   B. The fragrance of roses? _____

   _____

   C. The softness of down? _____

   _____

   D. The excitement of a holiday? _____

   _____

   E. Honesty? _____

   _____

   F. Authority? _____

   _____

   G. Territorial boundaries? _____

   _____

   H. The status quo? _____

   _____

   I. Youth? _____

   _____

   J. Healthy self-esteem? _____

   _____

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Preservation (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

Which of the above items would you most like to preserve? _____

_____

Why? _____

_____

_____

_____

Would it really be the same if you tried to keep it just as it is? _____

_____

_____

_____

Is there anything that actually never changes? _____

_____

Why or why not? _____

_____

_____

_____

What is the difference between conserving something and preserving it?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Preservation (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

2 Write an essay about the wisdom or futility of preserving something. Choose a subject that interests you and do some research to make your essay interesting and persuasive. Jot down the ideas for your essay in the space below.

These are a few things to keep in mind when you are writing an essay:

- Have you developed your ideas fully? Are there sufficient details so that the reader gets a good idea of what you are trying to convey?
- Is your choice of words appropriate to your subject and your audience?
- Are the points in your argument arranged logically? Taken together, will they persuade the reader?
- Do you have a good concluding paragraph that sums up your position concisely?
- Is your title catchy enough to get the reader's attention?

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Lesson 37

Here's Some Advice

Writing a Personal Anecdote

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Learn the essentials of a personal anecdote.
- Write an amusing personal anecdote.

About the Lesson

This lesson was designed as a change-of-pace activity for you and your students. You might set the stage for the activity by reading an anecdote by your favorite humorist. Then have students read the eight admonitions on the student page. These items are variously facetious, ironically practical, or whimsical—and none is especially good or bad advice.

After they have read, ask students to choose one that reminds them of an incident they or someone they know has experienced. Then ask them to write about the incident in a piece of writing called a "personal anecdote." Go over the tips on the student page. Tell them to focus on getting their story on paper and not to worry too much about mechanics at this point.

Then, when they have finished writing, encourage them to proofread their anecdotes before pairing off to read them to one another. Students can offer comments to each other, which they can use to revise their writing.

Following Through

As you know, one of the best ways to encourage young people to write is to give them recognition for their efforts. Students can read their papers in class, or you can include them in student publications. Keep in mind that most writers want very much to have their writing read. A humorous piece, generally speaking, is a relatively safe showcase for a young person's ideas, so you will probably want to encourage students to share their essays with the class when this lesson is completed.

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Here's Some Advice

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

Here are eight random pieces of advice. Read them thoughtfully.

- Don't try to pet striped cats with pointed noses.
- Be sure to wear gloves when you grab an eel.
- Never sit next to a teacher's pet if you can help it.
- Be sure to keep your mouth closed when you ride a bicycle.
- Avoid people who call their pets "Fang."
- If you have a health problem, don't mention it to a hypochondriac.
- Don't try to flatter a flatterer.
- Don't wear white to a spaghetti dinner.

Does one of those warnings remind you of an amusing experience you have had or one that someone you know has had? Jot down some ideas about a humorous experience in the space below, and then expand them into a personal anecdote that would be of interest to others.

Personal anecdotes are mostly brief, and the action in them tends to move more rapidly than in other kinds of writing. They often feature an amusing conversation or an incident that is significant to the writer. The opening sentences should inform the reader about the characters and the setting of the incident. The close should be straightforward. If the ending is effective, it is likely that the overall effect of the anecdote will be to entertain the reader.

Here are some points to bear in mind when you write an anecdote:

- **Single Event:** Your anecdote should relate a single episode and not attempt to tie several incidents together.
- **Point of View:** If you are recounting your own experience, use first-person pronouns (*I, me, we, us, my, mine, our, ours*) throughout the anecdote. If you were the observer, use third-person pronouns (*he, him, his, she, her, hers, they, them, their, theirs*). Be consistent.
- **Tone:** Keep your language natural.
- **Time:** Because most anecdotes are relatively brief, you will probably put the events in chronological order and not use flashbacks.
- **Story Elements:** The anecdote should have a setting and characters, as a story has. Describe your characters with enough detail so that your readers can visualize them.
- **Narrative Element:** Don't try to explain the action or the motives of the people in your anecdote. Just present the events as they happened.

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Lesson 38

Only Three

Composing Questions

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Ask three questions each of ten outstanding people.
- Recognize the value of composing questions that should elicit desirable information.

About the Lesson

This activity prompts students to write questions that would be appropriate to ask of particular individuals sometime in the future. Because students are restricted to posing only three questions for each of the ten prominent people listed, they must write questions that will elicit the most information possible from the subject.

Following Through

It is important to follow this activity with a discussion of student-generated questions. Students will discuss which questions are most effective in eliciting information. Some questions will inevitably be frivolous or silly, and this will become apparent to the group; however, students who compose those questions will be contributing to an understanding of what kinds of questions are appropriate for acquiring serious information and what kinds are not.

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Only Three

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

Suppose you could have a private interview with a number of very important people at a point in the future, twenty years from now. Your time with each would be limited, and so you would be able to ask each person only three questions. What would you most like to learn from these eminent individuals?

The wealthiest athlete in the world

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

A revered religious leader

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The president of the world's foremost environmental organization

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The chief executive officer of the world's fastest-growing corporation

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

A Nobel Prize winner in medicine

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Only Three (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

A Nobel Peace Prize winner

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The winner of the Academy Award for Best Actor or Best Actress in a Motion Picture

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The winner of the Miss America contest

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

A musician who is regarded as the greatest living composer

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

The fashion designer whose line of clothing is regarded most highly throughout the world

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

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Lesson 39

Take Your Choice!

Writing an Exciting Story

Targeted Learner Outcome

The student will combine four elements of story-making and add characters to create a plot for a story.

About the Lesson

This activity is like tossing a lot of different ingredients into a stew and then discovering what it tastes like. Students will choose story elements from four lists—activity, place, event, and time—and then write an exciting story using only those elements. They will choose elements that appeal to them, of course. Although those elements may derive from their reading or television viewing, there is a good chance that juxtaposing them will stimulate some good ideas. Students must add their own characters into the kettle.

After students have produced a first draft, have them refer to the checklist in Lesson 16 to evaluate their stories before revision. Then, pair up students and have them read their stories aloud to one another. Students can use the points on the checklist as criteria for critiquing their partners' stories. Allow time for revision.

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Take Your Choice!

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

Can you write a whole story by starting with just a few story elements? Connect one or more items from the first two columns with one or more items from the third and fourth columns below. Simply choose the elements that appeal to you and then link them together in a story. For example, if you were to connect *cove* and *swimming* with *typhoon* and *dusk,* you might come up with a story about some boys who are suddenly swept out to sea by a storm while the other members of their village are eating dinner on the beach, completely oblivious.

Place	**Activity**	**Event**	**Time**
mine	running	blizzard	2:30 a.m.
space capsule	dancing	revolution	siesta
mountain shack	swimming	wedding	noon
cove	playing a game	collision	4:00 p.m.
island	spanking	fight	evening
stream	washing dishes	nightmare	autumn
railroad boxcar	riding	typhoon	Easter
laboratory	taking an exam	oil strike	dusk
kitchen	eating	gold strike	morning
street	hiking	earthquake	winter
orchard	walking slowly	illness	midnight
desert	escaping	fall	1:00 p.m.
freighter	talking	deception	summer
barn	watching TV	discovery	dismissal
field	getting lost	frost	7:00 a.m.
school	stealing	fire	Christmas
cave	sleeping	encounter	spring

1. Write the most stimulating items here.

Place	**Activity**	**Event**	**Time**
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

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Take Your Choice! (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

Now strike out those items that you think will not prove productive, or add items that you think might give your story excitement, depth, and color. You can work on the plot's outline in the space below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Lesson 40

Putting It Briefly

Writing Punny Questions

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Review the definitions of adverb and prepositional phrase by playing the "Briefly" game.
- Devise punny questions.

About the Lesson

This activity attempts to induce students who are usually averse to writing to put words on paper (or computer). Although it is meant to tickle students' funny bones and get them thinking and writing, you can incorporate a brief review of adverbs and prepositional phrases.

1. "Putting It Briefly" was designed to confound a single student by herself or himself. It might be entertaining, however, to allow the student to try his or her own "Brieflies" on classmates. In that way, there also would be a natural check on the correctness of the student's use of adverbs and prepositional phrases, as the subjects will know that the answers should be in these two forms.

   Gifted students will realize that all of the answers provided below don't include adverbs or prepositional phrases. Here are some possible answers to the six questions in the first activity:

   A. Jerry won the match handily.

   B. Herbert finished barely.

   C. Ellen's experience of going through the maze without a mistake was amazing.

   D. Doug is regarded highly.

   E. The tightrope walker performed with airs, loftily.

   F. Jack behaved impatiently.

   Students may be challenged in trying to invent three "Brieflies" that can be answered by an adverb or a prepositional phrase. After allotting time to write, have students share their ideas.

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Putting It Briefly

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1 Sometimes all you need to respond to a question is one or two words. The usual short answers to a question are *Yes* and *No,* but in some cases you can use an adverb or prepositional phrase to adequately express your response. For example, if a man who is blind makes a purchase in a store and is given a nickel in change instead of a quarter, how should he react? "Feelingly" (an adverb) or "with feeling" (a prepositional phrase) would be good answers.

Let's see how you are at coming up with short answers to questions such as the one above. Each answer you give should be a pun. What would you say in these situations?

A. Jerry is a skilled boxer who is exceptionally quick with his hands. A brash young newcomer challenged Jerry to a fight one day in the gym. How did Jerry win?

_____

_____

B. Herbert joined a hundred swimmers in a race across the channel, but halfway across, he lost his swim trunks. How did he finish?

_____

_____

C. The first time Ellen encountered a maze in an English garden, she got through it without a mistake. How would you describe Ellen's experience?

_____

_____

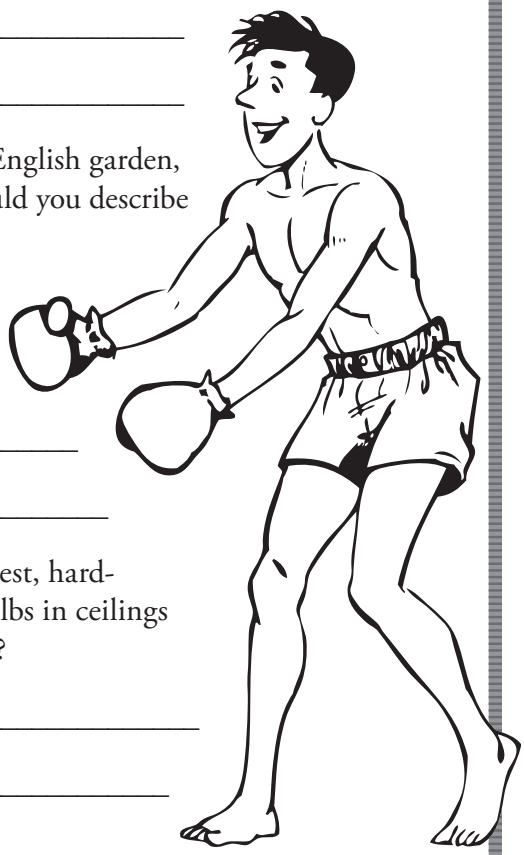
_____

_____

D. Doug was nearly seven feet tall. He was an honest, hard-working electrician who often replaced light bulbs in ceilings without a ladder. How did people regard Doug?

_____

_____



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Putting It Briefly (continued)

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

E. The stuck-up tightrope walker thought he was above everyone in the circus, both literally and figuratively. How did he perform his act?

_____

_____

F. Grumpy Jack Houser raced to the hospital after nicking his finger whittling sticks. But other folks, with perhaps more serious injuries, much to his annoyance, kept nudging him aside in the emergency room. How did Jack behave?

_____

_____

2 Why don't you see if you can come up with some questions with similar one- or two-word answers in the form of adverbs and prepositional phrases? Write at least three in the space below.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Lesson 41

Big Game

Recognizing Clichés

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Learn what constitutes a cliché.
- Recognize five clichés in a written piece about a football game.
- Substitute appropriate expressions for the clichés.

About the Lesson

Although we will always have hackneyed expressions in our speech, we don't have to have them in our writing. Because these words and phrases come so readily to mind, it is natural for students to use them, but students should learn that clichés do not enhance their writing. They should be alerted to the problems of using clichés and learn to substitute fresher expressions.

These are the intentional clichés in the paragraph about the football game:

- breathtaking sight
- higher than a kite
- cool as a cucumber
- fans in the stands went wild
- head and shoulders above

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Big Game

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

1. Certain phrases are passed along from one person to another, and soon everyone is using them all of the time. Words and phrases that are overused in this way are called *clichés.* Expressions such as "That went over like a lead balloon," "dry as dust," "with the greatest of ease," and "slick as a whistle" are so overworked that we get tired of them and they don't pack any punch (to use another cliché).

   Clichés creep into our writing, too. The result is that a passage is less effective than it should be. What clichés do you hear too often?

   _____

   _____

   _____

2. The following passage is a description of a football game. It contains at least five clichés. Underline them and then rewrite the paragraph, substituting appropriate words for the tired expressions.

   From the stadium, the spectators could see the city looming up from the bay. It was a breathtaking sight in this cloudless afternoon. The partisan crowd was higher than a kite because this was the "big game." Two traditional rivals were meeting on the gridiron, and a great deal was at stake for both teams. Shortly after the kickoff, Cal's young quarterback, cool as a cucumber, threw a long pass to his favorite receiver for a touchdown. The fans in the stands went wild. Stanford was completely helpless, as the Bears marched up and down the field. As the half ended, it was clear that one team was head and shoulders above the other in skill and coaching.

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Lesson 42

Game Shows

Recognizing Malapropisms

Targeted Learner Outcomes

The student will:

- Identify seven malapropisms in a piece about television game shows.
- Understand that malapropisms occur when writers attempt to impress their readers with fancy language.

About the Lesson

This is a short activity in which students identify malapropisms in a little piece about television game shows. There are a total of seven malapropisms in the piece, a couple of which may escape students on first reading.

Malapropisms occur when writers attempt to use fancy language with which they are unfamiliar. Accordingly, the real lesson here is that students should avoid trying to impress with "big" words. Usually, the simplest word or phrase is the right choice.

These are the malapropisms and the words the student really wanted to use in the talk about game shows:

- constituents—contestants
- apprise—comprise
- exhibitors—exhibitionists
- proclamation—provocation
- squib—quip
- churlish—childish

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Game Shows

ACTIVITY

Name _____ **Date** _____

Sometimes people use words that sound and seem like the words they are searching for, but these words don't quite fit. They are called malapropisms, after a character in Richard Sheridan's play, *The Rivals.* "Mrs. Malaprop" made these blunders rather often.

The following is a short oral report by a sixth-grade student who was fulfilling an assignment to talk about some aspect of television. Cross out the malapropisms and write the word the speaker was groping for above each. You should find seven words that are fairly close to the words the student wanted, but are used incorrectly.

Game Shows

Although I don't watch game shows on television much, I think I get the idea. The first requirement of a game show is that what the constituents do is not too hard. If they can't get the answers right part of the time, the show will soon be cancelled. The second requirement is that the studio audience apprise mostly exhibitors who scream and clap at the slightest proclamation. The last requirement is that the people who conduct the proceedings be attractive and glib. That is, the host and/or hostess should be good-looking and quick with a squib.

The whole idea is for people at home to get hooked on the game because they themselves can answer some of the questions and feel a little superior to the excited constituents on the show and at the same time get caught up in the churlish goings-on.

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