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Expository Writing

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Introduction

The purpose of the expository writing program is for students to master the techniques required to complete a well-organized informational piece of writing that includes

- a clear introduction with an attention-grabbing lead and a clear, concise topic sentence or thesis statement
- three well-defined paragraphs, each containing a distinct main idea and a variety of supporting details, such as quotes, statistics, interesting facts, anecdotes, or descriptions
- a concluding paragraph that summarizes the main ideas in a new way

This program provides instruction in specific techniques so that revisions are reduced and clarity of writing is increased. Each lesson outlines these techniques in a step-by-step process to ensure student success. Unit 6 requires students to apply their skills in completing an entire expository piece over a period of time, using a process-writing approach. Specific tasks are reviewed and completed each day to provide an ongoing supportive framework.

Individualizing the Program

In each component of the writing skills program the specific techniques are presented in a scaffolded format, with the teacher first modelling the skill, then guiding the students in practising the skill, and finally providing opportunity for independent application.

The following teaching strategies have been incorporated throughout the program to address the needs of the range of developmental levels in any one classroom, and to provide support for students experiencing difficulty with the reading and writing process:

Read-Aloud: The teacher reads prompts to the class, using student responses to model the required techniques.

Pre-writing Activities: Each lesson addresses background knowledge and understanding of the specific writing skill during the “Introducing the Skill” and “Modelling the Skill” sections. A pre-writing planner is provided as a graphic organizer.

Shared and Modelled Writing: The teacher records student input in a shared-writing format and models the composition process, verbalizing each step in a “Think-Aloud” approach.

Co-operative Learning: This format, which provides access to peer support in a small group, may be used for the completion of each written response.

Structured Writing: Frameworks for completing practice activities are provided to assist students in completing each component of the paragraph.

Focus on Process — a Series of Small Successes: A step-by-step approach provides a series of small successes to encourage the growth of confidence and skills.

Risk-Taking Is Encouraged: Most of the practice activities focus on revising a prompt rather than individual student work, which removes the fear of risk-taking associated with having your own work evaluated. Only when the skill has been thoroughly practised in this manner are students expected to apply one skill at a time to revise their own writing.

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Unit 1: Organization and Structure

Lesson 1

Purpose

- Recognize the organization and structure of an expository piece of writing.

Materials

- ✓ Chart copy of the Pre-writing Planner
- ✓ Overhead transparency or student copies of “The Invention of Foods” and “The Dragon” on Blackline Masters 2 and 4
- ✓ Blackline Masters 1 – 5

Introducing the Skill

- Walk students through the Pre-writing Planner (BLM 1) as a structural guide to writing an expository or informational piece. Discuss each of the five paragraphs.

Introductory Paragraph: The introduction consists of two parts — an interesting lead to catch the reader’s attention and a thesis statement (topic sentence) that briefly and clearly states what this piece of writing is going to be about. The thesis statement may actually state the three main ideas of the body paragraphs, or it may simply hint at what is to come.

Body: The body is made up of three paragraphs. Each paragraph contains a main idea or topic sentence that explains what the paragraph is about and includes at least 3 – 4 supporting details.

Concluding Paragraph: The final paragraph summarizes the three main ideas and restates the thesis.

Modelling the Skill

- Expository Model: Display the overhead of “The Dragon” (BLM 2) or distribute student copies.
- Structural Analysis: Read “The Dragon” aloud and have students identify the structural elements of each paragraph, using the Pre-writing Planner (BLM 1) as a guide.
- Curriculum Connection: As a further example, you may wish to have students examine an informational text that supports a current topic of study.

Guided Practice

- Have students complete an analysis of “The Dragon” (BLM 2) and “The Invention of Foods” (BLM 4) by responding to the questions on BLMs 3 and 5.
- Use “The Dragon” to demonstrate the process of paragraph analysis to the class, and then assign “The Invention of Foods” as a class or small-group assignment. Explain to students that they need to analyse the paragraphs’ structural elements and locate specific information.

Tasks include:

- numbering the paragraphs
- labelling the introductory and concluding paragraphs
- underlining the main idea in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4
- summarizing the information in these paragraphs
- listing the supporting details
- locating specific information within the paragraphs
- summarizing the topic

Name: _____

BLM 1

Pre-writing Planner

Introduction

Lead/

Thesis

Statement

Body

Main Idea #1

Detail #1:

Detail #2:

Detail #3:

Main Idea #2

Detail #1:

Detail #2:

Detail #3:

Main Idea #3

Detail #1:

Detail #2:

Detail #3:

Conclusion

Name: _____

BLM 2

The Dragon

If you travel to many parts of the world you will find stories of giant, flying reptiles. These strange creatures are called dragons. The word "dragon" is from the Greek word for serpent. In some places, dragons may have two heads, but they all have wings like a bat and the scales of a reptile. It is interesting that the dragon can be friendly or evil depending on whether it is from China or Europe.

The dragon in Chinese myths was usually friendly and able to bring you good fortune. It was important to please the dragon because it could control the weather. An angry dragon could cause a flood, drought, or even an eclipse of the sun. The Chinese farmers tried to please the dragon so they could get the rain they needed for their crops. This is why you can still see the dragon in Chinese New Year parades.

On the other side of the world we find a very different type of dragon. The dragons in stories from England are evil, ugly, fire-breathing creatures. They often live in caves and might guard a treasure. Some of the most famous stories describe how brave knights saved beautiful princesses from wicked dragons. The most famous English legend is the tale of Saint George and the Dragon, which tells the story of how Saint George killed a dragon that had grabbed a beautiful girl.

In Scandinavia they also wrote about aggressive, evil dragons. Viking myths tell us about dragons that guarded the places where the warriors were buried. The dragon was a symbol of war for the Vikings. To scare their enemies, the Vikings painted pictures of fierce-looking dragons on their shields and on the prows of their ships.

It is interesting that people see dragons in very different ways in the East and the West. The question is why do these stories even exist? They describe a creature that has never been discovered. Many people wonder why the dragons in these legends look so much like dinosaurs when people didn't even know dinosaurs existed in those days. Is it just a coincidence or did the dragon really roam the Earth hundreds of years ago?

Name: _____

BLM 3

The Dragon — Analysis

1. Number each paragraph.
2. Write the word "Introduction" above the introductory paragraph.
3. Circle the lead sentence in the introduction.
4. Draw a box around the thesis statement in the introduction.
5. Write the word "Conclusion" above the concluding paragraph.
6. Read paragraphs 2, 3, and 4. Underline the main idea (topic) sentence in each of these paragraphs.
7. Summarize paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 in one or two words. In the left margin, write these words next to the appropriate paragraph.
8. List three supporting details that describe the dragon in stories from England:
 - a) _____

 - b) _____

 - c) _____

9. If you wanted to find out what the Chinese thought of dragons, which paragraph would you skim? _____
10. What is this piece of writing all about? _____

Name: _____

BLM 4

The Invention of Foods

Have you ever wondered where all those new foods on the supermarket shelf come from? Hundreds of new foods are invented every year, and each one is the result of an inventor at work. Potato chips, chewing gum, and peanut butter are three popular foods that were invented here in North America.

Today, potato chips are the biggest selling snack food in Canada. The average Canadian eats about 4.5 kilograms of potato chips every year. Sometimes inventions happen by accident. This is how the potato chip was invented about 150 years ago by a chef named George Crumb. One night a customer at the restaurant asked George to make the potatoes thinner and George cut them as thin as paper and fried them in oil. The customer loved them and the idea soon caught on. But it wasn't until a potato peeling machine was invented that potato chips could be made in factories and sold all over North America.

Imagine a chewing gum made from tree sap. The earliest chewing gum was invented by the Aboriginal peoples, who used the resin from the black spruce tree for a kind of chewy snack. The Aboriginal peoples shared this idea with the pioneers who settled in North America. In 1850, John Curtis decided to turn this idea into a chewing gum business. He cooked the gum until it was thick, rolled it out, and cut it into small pieces. They called it "pure spruce gum." It wasn't until 1906 that the first bubble gum was invented. It was called "blibber-blubber." Today there are over a hundred different kinds of bubble gum and new flavours are always being invented.

It's hard to believe that four out of every five homes in Canada has peanut butter in the cupboard. Peanut butter was invented by a doctor from St. Louis, U.S.A. in 1890. He wanted to give his patients a high-protein food that was easy to digest. There are eight grams of protein in two tablespoons of peanut butter. It also contains some vitamins and minerals. Now there are lots of factories that make peanut butter and this sticky food is the most common sandwich filling in children's lunches. What kind is your favourite, smooth or chunky?

Our food is always changing thanks to inventors who continue to think up new foods. So go ahead, crunch that potato chip, chew that gum, and spread the peanut butter! Perhaps someday you will create a food of your own.

Name: _____

BLM 5

The Invention of Foods — Analysis

1. Number each paragraph.
2. Write the word "Introduction" above the introductory paragraph.
3. Circle the lead sentence in the introduction.
4. Draw a box around the thesis statement in the introduction.
5. Write the word "Conclusion" above the concluding paragraph.
6. Read paragraphs 2, 3, and 4. Underline the main idea (topic) sentence in each of these paragraphs.
7. Summarize paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 in one or two words. In the left margin, write these words next to the appropriate paragraph.
8. List three supporting details that explain how chewing gum was invented:
 - a) _____

 - b) _____

 - c) _____

9. If you wanted to find a statistic or number fact about a food, which paragraph would you skim? _____
10. What is this piece of writing all about? _____

Unit 1: Details: Organization and Structure

Lesson 2

Purpose

- Write supporting sentences for a main idea.

Materials

- ✓ Chart copy of the Pre-writing Planner (BLM 1)
- ✓ Overhead transparency and student copies of Blackline Masters 6 and 7

Introducing the Skill

- Review the organization and structure of the body of a piece of expository writing.

Body: The body is made up of three paragraphs. Each paragraph contains a main idea or topic sentence that explains what the paragraph is about and includes at least 3 – 4 supporting details.

Modelling the Skill

- Adding Details: Model how to add detail sentences that support the three main ideas contained in the body of the text. Read the introduction, main idea sentences, and conclusion on BLM 6. Present this BLM on an overhead or provide students with individual copies.
- Main Idea or Topic Sentence: Define and discuss with the class each main idea or topic sentence (these two terms are interchangeable). Remind students that a topic sentence gives the main idea of a paragraph.
- Shared Writing: Using BLM 6, ask the class to brainstorm three details that illustrate and explain each main idea sentence. Translate some of their suggested details into complete sentences on an overhead or chart.
- As you complete each paragraph, draw students' attention to the fact that each paragraph presents new information and does not overlap with information in the other two paragraphs.
- When the entire piece is completed, read it aloud to the class, checking that all details fit.

Guided Practice

- Distribute Blackline Masters 6 and 7. Instruct students to apply the skills you have modelled by adding three details to support each main idea listed on the BLMs. Remind students that each paragraph is to contain new information on the topic and the details they add should be written in complete sentences.
- Explain that BLM 7 illustrates a process paragraph structure (a process paragraph tells you how to do something step by step). Discuss examples of process pieces students have read, such as cookbooks and instructions for assembling models, bicycles, etc. Before asking students to begin their independent work, brainstorm and list possible supporting sentences with the whole class.
- When both exercises are complete, read and share student work in a whole-class or small-group format. Compare the details identified by different students or how individual students wrote on the same idea in a different way. Which sentences are clear? Which ones overlap? Do they all support the main idea and the overall topic?

Name: _____

BLM 6

Summer

Introduction

Don't you love those hot sunny days and the way the landscape comes alive again in summer? Aren't summer holidays worth waiting for? Summer is by far the best time of year!

Main Idea #1

After a long winter, summer weather turns the world into a colourful, lively place to live.

Main Idea #2

There must be hundreds of fun activities you can do in the summer. _____

Main Idea #3

I love summer holidays! _____

Conclusion

Whether swimming or simply going for a walk and enjoying the warm sunshine on my face, summer is spectacular. You can keep spring, fall, and winter. Summer is the best season of them all!

Name: _____

BLM 7

Making a Pizza

Introduction

So you want to know how to make your own pizza!

Main Idea #1

To begin with, you need to prepare the pizza dough. _____

Main Idea #2

Now your pizza is ready for the sauce and cheese. _____

Main Idea #3

Of course, everyone agrees it's the toppings that make your pizza really special.

Conclusion

Now that you have your own home baked pizza fresh from the oven, there's nothing left to do but sit down and enjoy it. With all that bread, zesty cheese, and toppings, pizza is not only delicious, it's nutritious too!

Unit 1: Organization and Structure

Lesson 3

Purpose

- Compare and contrast pieces of expository writing to identify well-organized and elaborated details.

Materials

- ✓ Overhead transparency of Blackline Master 8
- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Masters 9 and 10

Introducing the Skill

- Read and review student work from Lesson 2.
- Present students with BLM 8 (a completed version of BLM 7 from Lesson 2). BLM 8 gives examples of supporting sentences added in a disorganized manner. Use prompts to direct student attention to the random supporting sentences and to the overlap among the three body paragraphs.

Modelling the Skill

- Compare and Contrast: Compare BLM 8 to a student's completed copy of BLM 7. The student copy should have three distinct paragraphs and a well-organized sequence of supporting details that do not overlap with information in any other paragraph. Discuss and list the characteristics of a well-organized, elaborated paragraph: Why is the student's example effective?

Guided Practice

- Distribute copies of BLMs 9 and 10. Instruct students to generate three supporting sentences for each main idea.
- Brainstorm and record possible answers with the whole class before assigning this exercise as a small-group or individual activity.
- Invite students to share and compare their work, paying attention to the organization and elaboration of each detail. Have students read their work to check that they have included the details in the appropriate paragraph and that there is no overlap of information or ideas.

Name: _____

BLM 8

So you want to know how to make your own pizza!

Main Idea #1

To begin with, you need to prepare the pizza dough. To make a thin crust pizza, roll it out so it is quite thin. Pizza dough is made of flour, water, yeast, and a little sugar and oil. Some people like to add herbs to their dough. Pan pizza is baked in a pan so that the sides can hold a thick filling, while regular pizza can be baked on a cookie sheet.

Main Idea #2

Now your pizza is ready for the sauce and cheese. You can buy your cheese already grated or grate it yourself. How much you put on is up to you. First you will need to decide what type of sauce and cheese to use. There are many varieties of pizza sauces that may contain mushrooms, garlic, pesto, or olives. If you want to make your own, you will need fresh tomatoes and herbs.

Main Idea #3

Of course, everyone agrees it's the toppings that make your pizza really special. Pizza is baked in a very hot oven, so preheat the oven before you begin. Dust the cookie sheet with cornmeal before you put the crust on it to give it flavour. The most common toppings are pepperoni, mushrooms, and olives. Why not try something different, such as a meatball, chicken and salsa, or vegetarian pizza! The possibilities are endless, so use your imagination to create something truly unique.

Conclusion

Now that you have your own home baked pizza fresh from the oven, there's nothing left to do but sit down and enjoy it. With all that bread, zesty cheese, and toppings, pizza is not only delicious, it's nutritious too!

Name: _____

BLM 9

Supporting Sentences: Our Wildlife

Sentences that support the main idea with details are called supporting sentences.

- Write supporting sentences that give three details for each main idea below.
- Reread your work and check that the details are in sequence and that they fit in each paragraph.

In our province there is an abundance of wildlife. _____

Our wild animals survive the cold winters in a variety of ways. _____

The future of these beautiful creatures can be protected. _____

Name: _____

BLM 10

Supporting Sentences: Snacks

Sentences that support the main idea with details are called supporting sentences.

- Write supporting sentences that give three details for each main idea below.
- Reread your work and check that the details are in sequence and that they fit in each paragraph.

Cold, fast snacks are perfect when you are in a hurry. _____

A hot snack picks you up on a cold winter day. _____

With a blender you can whip up a nutritious liquid snack. _____

Unit 2: Introductory Paragraphs: Lead and Thesis Statements

Lesson 1

Purpose

- Recognize a lead and thesis statement in an introductory paragraph.
- Identify six different techniques for writing an effective lead.

Materials

- ✓ Overhead transparency or chart examples of the six techniques
- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Masters 11 and 12

Introducing the Skill

- Define the terms “lead” and “thesis statement” for the class. Outline the functions of these components in an introductory paragraph: The lead comes first and its purpose is to attract the readers’ attention and arouse their interest. The thesis statement is the sentence that gives the main idea. It is the most important sentence in the essay and needs to be given careful thought. After these two components, there may be supporting sentences that outline what is to come in the next three paragraphs.
- Discuss the importance of a strong lead to hook the reader. Techniques that help to create strong leads include:

- an amazing or unusual fact
- a description
- a quote, proverb, or saying
- a question
- a bold opinion
- a statistic

Modelling the Skill

- Read the following examples to the class (each example illustrates a different technique for writing an effective lead). For each example, ask students to identify the technique the author used. Can they think of another way of writing the lead?

An Amazing or Interesting Fact

During the Apollo 11 mission to the moon, the astronauts spotted a large object flying in the same direction.

A Description

Reports of flying saucers, flashing lights in the sky, strange burn marks on the ground, and men in shiny spacesuits have continued over the years.

A Quote

"The recent explosion in UFO reports has more to do with the increase in UFO study groups around the country than it does with an increase in alien visitors," said Rutkowski of Ufology Research, Manitoba.

A Question

Is there life in outer space?

A Bold Opinion

We are not alone in the universe.

A Statistic

Almost 75% of all UFO reports turn out to be a weather balloon, meteors, or the reflection from clouds and ice.

Guided Practice

- Distribute copies of BLMs 11, 12, and 13.
- Have students:
 - read the introductory paragraph
 - circle the lead and identify the technique the author used to write it
 - locate and underline the thesis statement

Name: _____

BLM 11

Leads and Thesis Statements

- Read the introductory paragraphs below.
- For each paragraph:
 - circle the lead
 - underline the thesis statement
 - identify the type of lead the author used.

Types of Leads:

- an amazing or unusual fact
- a description
- a quote
- a question
- a bold opinion
- a statistic

Did you ever wonder where we would be without chocolate fudge sundaes, chocolate milkshakes, and chewy chocolate bars? The discovery of the cocoa bean and the invention of chocolate as we know it today is a remarkable story.

Type of lead: _____

Forty-five kilometres of white, soft sand and crystal clear blue ocean awaits you. Surfers Paradise, Queensland, Australia, is a holiday paradise. There you will find endless sand, sun, and surf, as well as exciting nightlife and amusement parks.

Type of lead: _____

“Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country,” said John F. Kennedy. We each have a unique contribution we can make to our own communities. Joining a volunteer organization is an excellent way to contribute.

Type of lead: _____

Name: _____

BLM 12

Leads and Thesis Statements

- Read the introductory paragraphs below.
- For each paragraph:
 - circle the lead
 - underline the thesis statement
 - identify the type of lead the author used.

Types of Leads:

- an amazing or unusual fact
- a description
- a quote, proverb, or saying
- a question
- a bold opinion
- a statistic

Canada is the best country in the world in which to live. Each year, thousands of immigrants come to Canada to begin a new and better life.

Type of lead: _____

The ozone layer protects the Earth from nearly 90% of the sun's ultraviolet rays. In the 1970s, scientists discovered a hole in the ozone layer above Antarctica and since that time, the hole has got much worse. Exposure to ultraviolet rays has serious consequences for our health, but there are ways that we can help solve this problem.

Type of lead: _____

The largest coral reef in the world is 2,000 kilometres long. It is the Great Barrier Reef off the coast of Queensland, Australia. Here you can snorkel and scuba dive to see the coral, fish, and other sea creatures.

Type of lead: _____

Unit 2: Introductory Paragraphs: leads and Thesis Statements

Lesson 2

Purpose

- Apply each of the six techniques to complete a lead in an introductory paragraph.

Materials

- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Masters 13 and 14

Introducing the Skill

- As a class, review the six techniques for writing an effective lead:
 - an amazing or unusual fact
 - a description
 - a quote, proverb, or saying
 - a question
 - a bold opinion
 - a statistic
- Present the thesis statements provided below. Brainstorm with students for possible leads that would grab the reader's attention and motivate him or her to read on to the thesis statement.
- Prompt students to use each of the six techniques. Record all six techniques for each lead sentence.

_____ The new super stores have something for everyone.

_____ Dogs help people in many ways.

Modelling the Skill

- Model how to write an effective lead by translating student suggestions into several phrases.
- For an amazing fact or statistic (number in percentages, ratios, fractions, etc.), ask students to think of something reasonable that could be used here as a placeholder. In an actual research project, this placeholder would be replaced with accurate facts.
- Read aloud the leads for each thesis statement and ask students to evaluate them. Do these leads catch their attention and make them want to read on? Are they directly related to the main idea?

Guided Practice

- Provide students with copies of BLMs 13 and 14. Instruct students to use the technique listed to compose a lead sentence for the thesis statement.
- Remind students that these leads should be complete, grammatical sentences.
- Review the concept of a statistic with the class. Tell students that any facts and statistics used should be reasonable and believable (although students do not need to find actual facts or statistics). The quote should also be something they think a weather reporter, meteorologist, or “tornado hunter” would probably say.
- Review some sayings or idioms that could be related to a tornado.

Examples:

- “Red sky at night, sailor’s delight. Red sky in the morning, sailor’s warning”
- “by the skin of your teeth”
- “calm before the storm”
- “sweep you off your feet”
- “no stone unturned”
- “wrong side of the tracks”
- “rain or shine”
- “rain cats and dogs”
- “every cloud has a silver lining”
- “hit the roof”
- “walking on air”

Name: _____

BLM 13

Writing a Lead Sentence for an Introduction

- Read the thesis statement.
- Use the space provided below to write leads for the thesis statement, using each of the following techniques:
 - an amazing or unusual fact
 - a description
 - a quote, proverb, or saying

An Amazing or Unusual Fact

_____ A tornado is a destructive force.

A Description

_____ A tornado is a destructive force.

A Quote, Proverb, or Saying

_____ A tornado is a destructive force.

Name: _____

BLM 14

Writing a Lead Sentence for an Introduction

- Read the thesis statement.
- Use the space provided below to write leads for the thesis statement, using each of the following techniques:
 - a question
 - a bold opinion
 - a statistic

A Question

_____ A tornado is a destructive force.

A Bold Opinion

_____ A tornado is a destructive force.

A Statistic

_____ A tornado is a destructive force.

Unit 2: Introductory Paragraphs: Leads and Thesis Statements

Lesson 3

Purpose

- Revise an ineffective lead for an introductory paragraph.

Materials

- ✓ Overhead transparency of student work from Lesson 2 (both effective and ineffective leads)
- ✓ Chart of the six techniques for an effective lead
- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Masters 15 and 16

Introducing the Skill

- Share student work from the previous lesson with the class to illustrate each of the six techniques for writing an effective lead:
 - an amazing or unusual fact
 - a description
 - a quote, proverb, or saying
 - a question
 - a bold opinion
 - a statistic
- Use anonymous samples of student work to compare the effectiveness of different leads — Do some leads really grab students' attention, while others do not? Do the leads give some information about the topic or a hint about the topic?

Modelling the Skill

- Select several samples of ineffective leads and display them on the overhead for revision. Ask students to brainstorm ways in which the leads could be improved using the same technique. Record student responses on the overhead.

Guided Practice

- Distribute copies of BLMs 15 and 16.
- Inform students that the leads on these BLMs are boring and need to be revised using one of the six techniques. Remind students that they may use each technique only once. The thesis statement has been provided on the BLMs, so the topic is already stated.

Name: _____

BLM 15

Revising a Lead Sentence

- Revise the lead sentence in each introduction using one of the six techniques. Write your revision on the lines provided. (The lead sentence in each introduction is underlined.)

Techniques:

- an amazing or unusual fact
- a description
- a quote, proverb, or saying
- a question
- a bold opinion
- a statistic

1. I like hockey a lot. Ice hockey is a great Canadian sport.

2. I have a cat. Cats make wonderful pets.

3. Toronto is great. In Toronto there are many exciting things to do and see.

Name: _____

Revising a Lead Sentence

- Revise the lead sentence of each introduction using one of the six techniques. Write your revision on the lines provided. (The lead sentence in each introduction is underlined.)

Techniques:

- an amazing or unusual fact
- a description
- a quote, proverb, or saying
- a question
- a bold opinion
- a statistic

1. This is about Mexico. Mexico has amazing scenery and a fascinating culture.

2. I know a lot about acid rain. Acid rain is a serious threat to our environment and our health.

3. Some people go hungry. Famine can be caused by floods, earthquakes, pests, diseases, and war.

Unit 2: Introductory Paragraphs: Leads and Thesis Statements

Lesson 4

Purpose

- Write an effective thesis statement (topic sentence).

Materials

- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Masters 17 and 18

Introducing the Skill

- Define the term "thesis statement" for students. Explain that this statement may include a list of the three main ideas that are to follow in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4. Use introduction #3 on BLM 16 as an example.
- Explain that a thesis statement may also be more general and suggest the main ideas without stating them. Use introductions #1 and #2 on BLM 15 as examples of this type of thesis statement.
- Emphasize that, in either case, the thesis statement briefly and clearly tells the reader what the entire piece will be about. The thesis statement should be one sentence.

Modelling the Skill

- Present several topics that students have a general knowledge about.
- Invite students to brainstorm two possible thesis statements related to one of these topics. One statement should be general; the other should list three components that will be expanded upon in the following paragraphs.

Example:

Topic: Dogs

Thesis Statement #1: Dogs are popular pets.

Thesis Statement #2: Dogs are loyal, useful, and excellent companions.

Guided Practice

- Distribute student copies of BLMs 17 and 18.
- Review the two types of thesis statements (general and specific) and discuss how they might be applied to each of the topics listed on the Blackline Masters.
- Ask the class to brainstorm three main ideas for each topic. List and record these ideas for students to refer to as they complete the assignment.
- Have students write two possible thesis statements for each topic. The first statement should be general. The second should expand on the topic, specifically listing three main ideas for the following paragraphs.

Name: _____

BLM 17

Writing a Thesis Statement

- Read each topic listed below. Write two thesis statements for each topic. Use one complete sentence for each thesis statement.
- The first thesis statement should suggest what your main ideas will be. The second should include each of your three main ideas.

Topic: Fast Food Restaurants

Thesis Statement #1 (general)

Thesis Statement #2 (include 3 main ideas)

Topic: Going to the Mall

Thesis Statement #1 (general)

Thesis Statement #2 (include 3 main ideas)

Name: _____

BLM 18

Writing a Thesis Statement

- Read each topic listed below. Write two thesis statements for each topic. Use one complete sentence for each thesis statement.
- The first thesis statement should suggest what your main ideas will be. The second should include each of your three main ideas.

Topic: Summer

Thesis Statement #1: (general)

Thesis Statement #2: (include 3 main ideas)

Topic: Sports

Thesis Statement #1: (general)

Thesis Statement #2: (include 3 main ideas)

Unit 2: Introductory Paragraphs: Leads and Thesis Statements

Lesson 5

Purpose

- Write an introductory paragraph that includes a lead and thesis statement.

Materials

- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Masters 19 and 20

Introducing the Skill

- Share student work from Lessons 2, 3, and 4 with the class. Review the six techniques for an effective lead and the two kinds of thesis statements (topic sentences).

Modelling the Skill

- Present the following topics or topics that you have chosen to represent current curriculum projects.
- Invite students to brainstorm possible leads and thesis statements.

Example:

Topic: The Beach

Lead: When you think of summer, do you imagine yourself lying on a sandy beach?

Thesis Statement #1: The beach offers activities that all age groups can enjoy.

Thesis Statement #2: At the beach you can swim, sunbathe, or build sandcastles.

Guided Practice

- Distribute student copies of BLMs 19 and 18.
- Have students write a lead and thesis statement. The lead may be one or two sentences. The thesis statement is to be written in one sentence.
- Read and discuss the topics as a class before asking students to begin their independent work. Ask students to generate possible leads using each of the six techniques. List these leads on an overhead or on the blackboard. Create two possible thesis statements for each topic as an example for student writing.

Name: _____

BLM 19

Writing the Introductory Paragraph

- Read the topics below and decide which type of lead you will use to introduce each one. Will you use:
 - an amazing or unusual fact?
 - a description?
 - a quote, proverb, or saying?
 - a question?
 - a bold opinion?
 - a statistic?
- Write a thesis statement to follow each lead. The thesis statement should be one sentence. Decide if you will list the three main ideas or use a general statement about the topic.

Topic: The Perfect Playground

Lead: _____

Thesis Statement: _____

Topic: Changes I Would Make to My School

Lead: _____

Thesis Statement: _____

Name: _____

BLM 20

Writing the Introductory Paragraph

- Read the topics below and decide which type of lead you will use to introduce each one. Will you use:
 - an amazing or unusual fact?
 - a description?
 - a quote, proverb, or saying?
 - a question?
 - a bold opinion?
 - a statistic?
- Write a one-sentence thesis statement to follow each lead. Decide if you will list the three main ideas or use a general statement about the topic.

Topic: A Special Person (relative, friend, hero, etc.)

Lead: _____

Thesis Statement: _____

Topic: How I Get My Exercise

Lead: _____

Thesis Statement: _____

Unit 3: Writing Main Idea Sentences

Lesson 1

Purpose

- Generate three distinct main ideas on a given topic.

Materials

- ✓ “Pick, List, Choose” chart (see “Introducing the Skill”)
- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Masters 21 and 22

Introducing the Skill

- Use the Pre-writing Planner (BLM 1) from Unit 1 to review the structure of an expository piece of writing.
- Use a “Pick, List, Choose” chart (see below) to outline the process involved in writing the body of an expository piece. Remind students that the body includes paragraphs 2, 3, and 4, and that each paragraph discusses one main idea. This idea is stated in the main idea or topic sentence at the beginning of the paragraph.

Pick, List, Choose

- **Pick** a topic.
- **List** your ideas about the topic. Write each idea in a (topic) sentence. Read your sentences. Cross out any that overlap.
- **Choose** the three best main idea sentences. Check that each sentence is distinct.

Modelling the Skill

- **List:** Ask students to choose one of the following topics and then generate 4 – 6 ideas about each one. Record these ideas in list form on an overhead or on the blackboard.

Topics

- sports
- street smarts
- space exploration (or a curriculum topic)
- crocodiles (or another reptile or animal that students are familiar with)

- **Write:** Model how to translate these points into complete main idea sentences.

Main Ideas	Main Idea Sentences
Why basketball is fun	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
The benefits of playing basketball	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
The equipment you need to play basketball	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

- **Read and Check:** Read through the sentences and revise as necessary. Ask students to identify any sentences that overlap. One way to check if the sentences overlap is to restate them in one or two words and see if they make the same or a similar point on the topic. Have students summarize each sentence in one or two words to see if there is any redundancy.
- **Generate Details:** Ask students to generate 3 – 4 details about each main idea sentence that remains — Are the ideas broad enough to expand upon or are they too narrow?

Main Idea Sentence	Detail Sentences
<hr/>	<hr/> <hr/>

-
- **Choose:** Select three main idea sentences that are distinct yet give enough scope for adding more details. Sequence these sentences as paragraphs 2, 3, and 4. Example:

Main Idea Sentences

Paragraph #2: _____

Paragraph #3: _____

Paragraph #4: _____

Guided Practice

- Distribute student copies of BLMs 21 and 22.
- Have students write three main ideas for each topic and translate these ideas into sentences.
- To modify this activity, you may wish to provide students with the three main ideas and then have them translate these ideas into sentences.

Curriculum Connection

You may wish to provide students with a curriculum topic and specify the three main areas they must include in their main idea sentences.

Name: _____

BLM 21

Writing Main Idea Sentences

- **Read** the topic.
- **Think** about what you know or wonder about this topic.
- **List** three distinct main ideas for the topic.
- **Write** these ideas in complete sentences.
- **Check** that your sentences do not overlap.

Topic: Pollution

Main Idea #1: _____

Main Idea Sentence #1: _____

Main Idea #2: _____

Main Idea Sentence #2: _____

Main Idea #3: _____

Main Idea Sentence #3: _____

Name: _____

BLM 22

Writing Main Idea Sentences

- Read the topic.
- Think about what you know or wonder about the topic.
- List three distinct main ideas for the topic.
- Write these ideas in complete sentences.
- Check that your sentences do not overlap.

Topic: Sports Equipment

Main Idea #1: _____

Main Idea Sentence #1: _____

Main Idea #2: _____

Main Idea Sentence #2: _____

Main Idea #3: _____

Main Idea Sentence #3: _____

Unit 3: Writing Main Idea Sentences

Lesson 2

Purpose

- Write a main idea that states what the supporting sentences are about.

Materials

- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Master 23

Introducing the Skill

- Review: Read aloud and discuss samples of student work from Lesson 1. Examine how the main idea sentence in each exercise did or did not clearly tell the reader what the supporting sentences were going to be about. Ask students to consider whether there was any overlap of ideas.
- Revise: Revise student work on an overhead if possible so that the main idea or topic sentence is clear.

Modelling the Skill

- Present the following example on the blackboard. Have students identify the topic and generate several possible main idea sentences for these supporting sentences. Record each main idea sentence and have students decide which is the most effective. Ask them to explain why this sentence is most effective.

Main Idea Sentence: _____

Supporting Sentences

If you travel to the Northern Territory, you can see Ayre's Rock, the largest single rock in the world.

Off the coast of Queensland is the Great Barrier Reef, which is the largest coral reef in the world.

Sydney is Australia's largest city and is famous for its Harbour Bridge and Opera House.

Kakadu National Park in the Northern Territory is the place to see Aboriginal rock art and crocodiles in their natural environment.

Guided Practice

- Distribute student copies of BLM 23.
- Instruct students to read the supporting sentences, decide what the topic is, and then write a main idea sentence that tells the reader what the paragraph is about.
- Before students begin the assignment, have them read the supporting sentences and discuss possible main idea (topic) sentences as a class.

Name: _____

BLM 23

Missing Main Ideas

- **Read** the supporting sentences below.
- For each group of supporting sentences, write a main idea sentence that tells the reader what the paragraph will be about.

1. _____

Pizza, spaghetti, and lasagne are Italian.

Tacos and tortillas are foods that were adopted from Mexico.

Egg rolls and fortune cookies originally came from China.

Hamburgers were introduced from Germany.

2. _____

Wear a wide-brimmed hat, T-shirt, and sunglasses.

Keep in the shade as much as possible.

Drink lots of water.

Use sunscreen on any skin that is exposed.

3. _____

Helmets protect your head and face.

Knee and elbow pads help prevent injuries to your joints.

Mouth guards can save your teeth.

Gloves prevent bruises and cuts to your hands and wrists.

Unit 3: Writing Main Idea Sentences

Lesson 3

Purpose

- Revise a main idea sentence using a variety of sentence starters and effective word choices.

Materials

- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Master 24
- ✓ Chart of sentence starters and alternative adjectives (see "Introducing the Skill")

Introducing the Skill

- Present students with the dull main idea sentence below. Ask them to identify the problem with the sentence and suggest how it could be solved.

Prince Edward Island is a beautiful place.

- Lead students to understand that the beginning of the sentence and the adjective used need to be revised to make the sentence more interesting. Show how more descriptive words, such as breathtaking, majestic, magnificent, fascinating, unique, etc., can be substituted for common general adjectives, such as beautiful, great, small, cold, scary, etc.
- Use student input to create charts of alternative word choices for the adjectives your students are overusing.

Modelling the Skill

- Model how to revise the main idea sentence above with an exclamation, question, or statement that is more descriptive and interesting. Some suggested sentence starters include the following:

Sentence Starters

Would you believe that ...

There are many reasons why ...

Have you ever wondered ...

Without a doubt ...

It's hard to believe, but ...

It is interesting that ...

Have you ever thought about ...

Guided Practice

- Distribute copies of BLM 24. Have students revise the boring main idea sentences using one of the suggested sentence starters or a statement, question, or exclamation of their own. Remind students that the adjectives used should add interest, and that each main idea sentence on the same topic should begin in a different way ("The ..." or "There are ..." should not begin every sentence).
- Review and display the charts of alternative adjectives for students to refer to as they work on their writing.

Name: _____

BLM 24

Revising Main Idea Sentences

- Read the main idea sentences. They are boring.
- Make these sentences interesting. Begin the sentence in a different way and replace the underlined word with a better word.

1. Snowboarding is a great sport.

Revision: _____

2. Mexico is a nice place to take a trip to.

Revision: _____

3. It is really hot at the beach.

Revision: _____

4. Some music videos are scary.

Revision: _____

Unit 4: Writing Supporting Details

Lesson 1

Purpose

- Recognize and identify the five kinds of supporting details.
- Apply this understanding to writing supporting sentences.

Materials

- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Masters 25 and 26
- ✓ Chart of the five kinds of supporting details (see "Introducing the Skill")

Introducing the Skill

- As a class, review the purpose of an expository piece of writing (i.e., to give information). Explain that the clarity of this information depends on the specific details that support each main idea sentence.
- Display the chart of the five kinds of supporting details (see below). Four of these details are similar to the techniques used to write effective leads (quotes, statistics, descriptions, and interesting facts). In supporting sentences, these techniques are used to present a number of relevant points on the topic.

Quote: The words of an expert or authority on the subject. State the name of the person and their qualifications if possible. Example: "The number of grizzlies surviving in the wild is rapidly dwindling," reported the spokesperson for the Save the Wildlife Fund, Mr. Ted E. Bear.

Statistic: Information presented as a number, percentage, fraction, or ratio. Example: Studies show that over 50% of people/9 out of 10 people/on average one million people every day ...

Interesting Fact: A little-known fact that readers may not be aware of. Example: It's hard to believe, but a baby kangaroo is only the size of a jellybean when it is born.

Anecdote: A short story that illustrates the main idea. Example: I remember the time a hockey puck hit my facemask. This event certainly proved the importance of using the right sports equipment.

Description: Words and phrases that convey an idea, impression, or image to the reader. Example: People rush by on the sidewalk. Cars and buses go by in an endless flow of traffic. The air is filled with horns, sirens, and construction. The city never sleeps!

Modelling the Skill

- Present the following main idea sentence. Have students generate five kinds of detail sentences to support this topic.
- Record student input and use a “think aloud” process as you translate student ideas into complete sentences.

Main Idea Sentence: The Internet has certainly made a difference in our lives.

Guided Practice

- Assign the Task: Distribute copies of BLMs 25 and 26. Ask students to read the main idea sentence and write a supporting detail sentence. The type of supporting sentence they are to use is identified on the BLMs.
- Read and Examine: Invite students to share and compare their detail sentences — Do the sentences give specific information or commentary on the topic?
- Extension: To extend this activity, have students write a complete paragraph consisting of three detail sentences.

Name: _____

Writing Supporting Details

- Read this main idea sentence. It tells you what the paragraph will be about.
- Use the specified technique to add a supporting detail in a complete sentence.
- Begin each sentence in a different way. You may use one of the sentence starters at the bottom of the page or your own ideas.

Main Idea Sentence

Living with brothers and sister can be difficult

Convince your reader with an anecdote: _____

Convince your reader with a statistic: _____

Sentence starters for anecdotes:

I'll never forget the time when ...

There is always ...

You may not believe it, but ...

You'd be surprised at how I ...

Sentence starters for statistics:

The majority of kids report that ...

Over 90% of kids say they ...

Statistics show that ...

Four out of five kids ...

Name: _____

Writing Supporting Details

- Read this main idea sentence. It tells you what the paragraph will be about.
- Use the specified technique to add a supporting detail in a complete sentence.
- Begin each sentence in a different way. You may use one of the sentence starters at the bottom of the page or your own ideas.

Main Idea Sentence

The day after the first snowfall brings a winter wonderland of scenery.

Convince your reader with a description: _____

Convince your reader with an interesting fact: _____

Sentence starters for descriptions:

On every tree you can see ...

You can almost feel ...

The sound of ...

You can imagine ...

Sentence starters for an interesting fact:

It is amazing that ...

Every year ...

Without a doubt ...

It is interesting to note that ...

Unit 4: Writing Supporting Details

Lesson 2

Purpose

- Recognize the different types of transitional phrases and their functions.

Materials

- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Master 27
- ✓ “The Purpose of Transitional Phrases” and “Transitional Phrases” charts (see “Introducing the Skill”)

Introducing the Skill

- Introduce the chart of transitional phrases and their functions to the class.

Transitional phrases enable a writer to:

- move smoothly from one detail sentence to the next
- link similar ideas or introduce an example
- express alternative or contrasting views and connect cause and effect situations
- provide clues to the reader regarding the nature of the next fact (e.g., Is it a similar or contrasting idea?)
- provide sentence variety within the paragraph

- Use the transitional phrases below to compose sentences that refer to a topic the class has studied or that students are familiar with. Read these sentences aloud. Point out the function of each type of phrase, using the above chart as a guide.

Transitional Phrases

A) Express Alternative Ideas (compare similarities and contrast differences):

Similar Ideas

Yet another
In addition to this
Another similarity

In the same way
Similarly

It's also true that
Not only that, but

Contrasting Ideas

In contrast
However
Nevertheless
Unlike

On the other hand
Yet
By contrast

Despite this
But
Instead of

B) Express Cause and Effect (reasons):

For this reason
Yet another reason
Therefore

Because of _____
The main reason
Still another reason

As a result
In view of _____

C) Show an Example:

For example
For instance

As an example of _____ is
Yet another example

An illustration of _____ is
I remember when

D) Tell How To Do Something (process paragraph):

To begin with
The last thing

At this point
When

Finally
Next

E) Classification Paragraph (divide things into groups):

The first
Another kind

One kind
The second

The first type
The last type

- Review the different types of expository writing that these transitions would be used in.

Example Paragraph (gives examples)

Process Paragraph (tells how to do something)

Reason Paragraph (gives reasons for something)

Classification Paragraph (divides things into groups)

Definition Paragraph (defines something with examples)

Comparison and Contrast Paragraph (compares and contrasts things, ideas, etc.)

Modelling the Skill

- Identify the Type of Phrase and Its Purpose: Read the paragraph below and have students identify the two types of transitional phrases (underlined) that are used ((1) alternative ideas — contrast (2) cause and effect (3) alternative ideas — contrast). Discuss why the author used these particular types of transitional phrases. What function do they serve? Do they link similar ideas, present an example, express alternative or contrasting ideas, or illustrate cause and effect? Refer to “The Purpose of Transitional Phrases” chart as a guide.

Example:

Many people believe that dieting is the best way to lose weight. (1) However, dieting is only a short-term solution. When we eat less, our bodies think we are starving and burn calories more slowly. (2) As a result, we soon stop losing weight. (3) Instead of eating less, why not exercise more to burn up those calories and get fit at the same time?

Guided Practice

- Recognizing and Analysing Transitional Phrases: Distribute student copies of BLM 27. Have students find and circle the transitional phrases and identify which type of phrase is used. Remind students to refer to “The Purpose of Transitional Phrases” chart as a guide.
- Analyse the Author's Purpose: Review completed assignments as a class and discuss why the author used this particular type of transitional phrase.
- Word Hunt: Have students look for examples of transitional phrases in their textbooks. Encourage them to share their findings and add new examples to the chart.

Name: _____

BLM 27

Transitional Phrases

- Read the paragraphs below.
- Find and circle each transitional phrase.
- Identify the type of transitional phrase you find. Is the phrase used to
 - express another similar idea?
 - show an example?
 - express a different point of view?
 - express a reason for something?

Volunteering in your own community brings many rewards. For example, many young people help take care of the environment by participating in “clean up” and planting projects in their areas. This type of project is an excellent chance to meet other people with the same interests. In addition, you also gain the satisfaction of knowing that you have made your hometown a better place in which to live.

Types of Transitional Phrases Used

1. _____
2. _____

Wild animals do not make good house pets for several reasons. First of all, there is the safety of other people to consider. For this reason, animals such as tigers should be kept in zoos where they cannot harm anyone. Still another reason is the health and happiness of the animal itself. Many of these so-called “pets” are kept in small cages or pens and have no contact with other animals of the same kind. Therefore, it should be against the law to keep wild animals as pets.

Types of Transitional Phrases Used

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Unit 4: Writing Supporting Details

Lesson 3

Purpose

- Revise vague details so that they are more specific.

Materials

- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Master 28
- ✓ “The Purpose of Transitional Phrases” and “Transitional Phrases” charts (see “Introducing the Skill” in Lesson 2)

Introducing the Skill

- Read and discuss the following paragraph. Invite student observations by asking the following questions: What is the problem with this piece of writing? (vague details) How could it be improved? (revised to be more specific, use transitional phrases)

Beavers are interesting animals. They are brown with a flat tail. I've never seen another animal that looks anything like a beaver. They are interesting. They have four legs and big front teeth. They are good swimmers too.

- Discuss the need to avoid:
 - vague words (e.g., “nice,” “fun,” “great,” “interesting,” or “things”)
 - a series of lists (e.g., “Dingoes eat wombats, rabbits, kangaroos, wallabies, and koalas.” “Tasmanian devils eat wombats, wallabies, rabbits, and chickens.”)
 - boring, repetitive sentence beginnings (e.g., “The ...” “There are ...” “The ...” “There are ...”)

Modelling the Skill

- From Vague to Specific: In shared-writing format, revise the vague details so that specific information is provided. Discuss the need for:
 - 3 – 4 separate details
 - sentence variety (begin each sentence in a different way, using transitional phrases where necessary)
 - the use of vivid words (choose words that will grab the attention of the reader)
 - the use of the five different kinds of supporting details (quotes, statistics, interesting facts, anecdotes, and descriptions)

-
- Questioning as a Guide to Revision: Use questioning and transitional phrases as a guide to revising. Point out the vague wording in the beaver paragraph. Ask students what the paragraph makes them wonder about and what they need to know more about. For example,

Sample Questions:

- What is a beaver's fur like?
- What kind of legs do beavers have? Short? Long? Thick? Thin?
- What kind of head, eyes, and mouth do beavers have?
- Where do they live?

- From Questions to Answers: Model how to translate answers to these questions into specific details using sentence starters that include quotes, statistics, interesting facts, descriptions, or anecdotes.

Sentence starters:

- Description: The remarkable beaver has ...
These funny looking beasts have ...
You'd be amazed by ...
Looking closely you will detect ...
- Anecdote: I remember when I saw one ...
During our visit to the conservation park, the park superintendent said ...
- Quote: In the past ten years the number of beavers in Ontario has ...
The baby beaver is called a ...
- Fact: This unusual creature lives ...

- Read and Compare: Read aloud the revised version of the paragraph and compare it with the original. Ask students what they like better about the revised copy.

Guided Practice

- Distribute copies of BLM 28. Instruct students to revise this paragraph by replacing the vague details with specific ones.
- Discuss other aspects of the paragraph (e.g., unanswered questions and repetition) that need to be revised. Invite students to brainstorm alternative detail sentences.
- Review the types of detail sentences and appropriate transitional phrases, such as those used to express cause and effect (reasons) and to show examples.

Name: _____

Writing Specific Details

- Read the paragraph below.
- Replace each vague detail with a specific example.
- Ask yourself: What does the reader want to know? What questions would he or she have? Use the answers to these questions to write specific details.
- Begin each sentence in a different way.

Gym is our class's favourite period. We really like the fun games we play. We get to use great equipment to do stuff with. Our gym teacher is nice. We exercise so we will be fit.

What questions do you have about this paragraph?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Use your answers to revise the paragraph. Give the reader specific details.

Unit 4: Writing Supporting Details

Lesson 4

Purpose

- Write a complete paragraph that includes a main idea and specific supporting details.

Materials

- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Masters 29, 30, 31, and 32
- ✓ “Five Kinds of Supporting Details,” “The Purpose of Transitional Phrases,” and “Transitional Phrases” charts

Writers’ Workshop

- Review Detail Sentences: Review examples of student work from Lesson 3. Examine how these examples do or do not provide specific detail sentences. Draw students’ attention to the kinds of detail sentences and transitions used.
- Review Main Idea Sentences: Remind students of the purpose of a main idea sentence and review the process for writing these kinds of sentences:
 - Think about what you know about the topic.
 - List three distinct main ideas.
 - Write these ideas in complete sentences.
- Four Types of Paragraphs: Have students use the outlines provided on BLMs 29 – 30 to write four types of basic paragraphs, including both the main idea sentences and supporting details. Once students have completed their outlines, have them write the entire paragraph in their notebooks. The four paragraph types include the following:

Paragraph Types:

- Example Paragraph (e.g., different sources of energy)
- Cause and Effect or Reason Paragraph (e.g., why smoking is hazardous to your health)
- Comparison and Contrast Paragraph (e.g., oil vs. electricity as a source of energy for heating your home)
- Process Paragraph (e.g., how to set up a science experiment)

- Choice of Topics: Base the topic for the main idea and detail sentences on curriculum content areas and current student interests.

Name: _____

BLM 29

Main Ideas and Detail Sentences: Example Paragraphs

An example paragraph gives examples related to a particular topic. Each supporting detail sentence includes an example.

- Write an example paragraph.
- Include a main idea and three supporting detail sentences.
- Complete the outline first to help you organize your thoughts.

Topic: _____

Main Idea Sentence: _____

Details — Example #1: _____

Details — Example #2: _____

Details — Example #3: _____

Name: _____

BLM 30

Main Ideas and Detail Sentences: Process Paragraphs

A process paragraph tells you how to do something. Each step is a supporting sentence.

- Write a process paragraph.
- Include a main idea and three supporting detail sentences.
- Complete the outline first to help you organize your thoughts.

Topic: _____

Main Idea Sentence: _____

Details — Step #1: _____

Details — Step #2: _____

Details — Step #3: _____

Name: _____

BLM 31

Main Ideas and Detail Sentences: Reason Paragraphs

A reason paragraph gives reasons for something. Each detail sentence includes a reason that supports the main idea.

- Write a reason paragraph.
- Include a main idea and three supporting detail sentences.
- Complete the outline first to help you organize your thoughts.

Topic: _____

Main Idea Sentence: _____

Details — Reason #1: _____

Details — Reason #2: _____

Details — Reason #3: _____

Name: _____

BLM 32

Main Ideas and Detail Sentences: Comparison and Contrast Paragraphs

A comparison and contrast paragraph compares and contrasts different things. When you compare things, you may first describe what is similar about them, and then contrast them by describing how they are different.

- Write a comparison and contrast paragraph.
- Include a main idea and four supporting detail sentences.
- Complete the outline first to help you organize your thoughts.

Topic: _____

Main Idea Sentence: _____

Details — Similarity #1: _____

Details — Similarity #2: _____

Details — Similarity #3: _____

Unit 5: Concluding Paragraphs

Lesson 1

Purpose

- Identify three effective techniques for writing a concluding paragraph.

Materials

- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Master 33
- ✓ “Three Techniques for an Effective Conclusion” chart (see “Introducing the Skill”)

Introducing the Skill

- Define the term “concluding paragraph” for students (the concluding paragraph sums up the main ideas in the expository piece). Emphasize that the three or four main ideas are not simply restated in list format — the conclusion may include a summary of the main ideas, but these ideas need to be presented in an interesting way. Present the following paragraph on the blackboard and discuss the effectiveness of this type of summary.

So, now you know what beavers look like, where they live, and how they make their home. The end.

- Stress the importance of avoiding redundant conclusions. The above example may make it clear what the main ideas are, but the ideas need to be presented in varied formats to keep the reader’s attention. The following three techniques help writers avoid redundancy:
 - a series of questions
 - a description
 - an anecdote

Modelling the Skill

- Read aloud the following revisions of the beaver paragraph. Have students compare the various revisions and identify the techniques the author used.

A concluding paragraph that uses a series of questions:

Are you interested in watching animals at work? Would you enjoy a nature walk by a beaver pond? Do you have an interest in conservation? If so, you should get to know our fascinating Canadian animal, the beaver.

A concluding paragraph that uses a description:

Whether round, furry babies or full-grown, tail-slapping adults, these amusing creatures are the delight of the pond! Now that you know these animals a little better, you will appreciate them more.

A concluding paragraph that uses an anecdote:

So, if you're ever strolling near a pond in the woods and come across a fascinating flat-tailed animal, stop and take another look! From kits to adults, these creatures are amazing!

- As a class, discuss the differences among these revised versions. Use a "Before and After" format to compare the new paragraphs to the original summary, making reference to the three techniques. How does each paragraph differ?
- Review the concept of anecdotes with the class. An anecdote is a comment that sums up what you have learned, gives advice about what the reader can learn, or places the information in a time or place. Examples of anecdotes: "It often took explorers months of arduous travel to navigate the rivers and lakes" or "Before the Industrial Revolution, there wasn't a pollution problem."

Guided Practice

- Distribute student copies of BLM 33. Instruct students to read the concluding paragraphs, locate and underline the main ideas, and state the technique used.
- Discuss how these paragraphs incorporate the main ideas by using the three techniques (as opposed to being stated in list format).

The three main ideas in paragraph #1:

- scenery — sounds and sights in the forest
- health — clean air and sunshine
- use of our national parks for your holidays

The three main ideas in paragraph #2:

- transportation routes last century
- individual explorers who established these routes
- exploration in the future

The three main ideas in paragraph #3:

- plants you can grow — vegetables
- fruits for the garden
- fresh air and exercise

Name: _____

BLM 33

Concluding Paragraphs: Identify the Technique

- Read the concluding paragraphs below.
- Underline the three main ideas that are summarized.
- Identify which techniques the author used:
 - a series of questions
 - a description
 - an anecdote

The blaring noises of the city and the harsh concrete buildings are replaced with the sounds of birds singing and towering canopies of green trees. The fresh, clean air fills your lungs and the sunshine warms your face. There is nothing as restful as a camping trip in our national parks.

Technique used: _____

When the first explorers arrived in Canada, there were no paved highways and it could take years to travel from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Without the group of brave men and women who established the transportation routes, the early settlers could not have survived. Perhaps a hundred years from now astronauts and aquanauts will have explored new frontiers to open the doors for a new kind of settlement.

Technique used: _____

Do you enjoy fresh corn on the cob and sweet tomatoes straight from the vine? Does the spring weather get you thinking about succulent fruits like strawberries and watermelon? Can you imagine yourself digging and planting in the fresh air and sunshine? Then start planning that garden so you can soon enjoy the benefits of fresh foods right in your own backyard.

Technique used: _____

Unit 5: Concluding Paragraphs

Lesson 2

Purpose

- Revise an ineffective concluding paragraph using the three techniques.

Materials

- ✓ Student copies of Blackline Masters 34, 35, and 36
- ✓ "Three Techniques for an Effective Conclusion" chart

Introducing the Skill

- Review the definition of a concluding paragraph and examples of the three techniques used to create effective conclusions from Lesson 1 (i.e., a series of questions, a description, and an anecdote).
- Invite students to share their responses to BLM 33. Discuss how the main ideas were restated in the conclusion and the different impact that may be achieved by using each technique.

Modelling the Skill

- Display the example of an ineffective concluding paragraph (below) on an overhead, chart, or blackboard. Ask students to brainstorm ways the conclusion could be revised and improved by applying each of the three techniques.
- Model and verbalize the revision process as you underline the ineffective phrasing. Revise the conclusion by writing a new sentence beside each of the main ideas.

Now, don't you just love going to the lake. You can swim, boat, and fish.

swim: _____

boat: _____

fish: _____

Guided Practice

- Distribute copies of BLMs 34, 35, and 36. Tell students that the concluding paragraphs are boring and need to be revised using each of the techniques. Remind students to state the topic and main ideas before revising the paragraph. Each BLM requires students to rewrite the paragraph by applying a different technique. Inform students that the “awesome room” (see BLM 34) may be a fictional room that they might like to design for themselves.
- Have students share and compare their revisions in a “Before and After” format. Display samples of students’ completed exercises on a bulletin board as examples of effective revisions. You may wish to adapt the BLMs so that they feature curriculum-related concluding paragraphs on a topic of current study.

Name: _____

Concluding Paragraphs: Revise a Boring Conclusion

- Read this concluding paragraph. It sums up the main ideas in a boring way.
- List the topic and the three main ideas.

It is obvious that our hometown has much to offer. There are interesting places to visit, sports activities, and special events that happen each year.

The **topic** is _____

The **three main ideas** are _____

- Revise the concluding paragraph by using an anecdote. Remember to include a suggestion for each main idea.

Unit 6: Short-Term Writing Projects

Purpose

- Write a complete expository piece using a process-writing approach.

Writers' Workshop

Procedure

- Students work on a given or individual topic over approximately seven days.
- Each day they work on one section of the expository piece.
- Each session is 40 – 45 minutes. Sessions need not be on consecutive days.
- Option: You may wish to present the topic in a 50-minute timed writing period in which students complete all sections as a form of school-based assessment or preparation for provincial assessments.

Timetable

Day 1

- Establish a topic (curriculum-based).
- Have students list three broad main ideas related to this topic.
- Review the Pre-writing Planner (BLM 1) from Unit 1. Ask students to complete the planner using the new topic.

Day 2

- Ask students to begin their introductory paragraph. Review possible types of leads from Unit 2: amazing or unusual facts, descriptions, quotes, questions, bold opinions, or statistics.
- Instruct students to write a lead with a brief, clear thesis statement (topic sentence). Review the two types of thesis statements from Unit 2, Lesson 4 — a general statement that suggests what the main ideas will be, or a statement that specifically outlines each of the main ideas in one sentence.
- Invite students to share their leads and thesis statements with the class. Ask students to consider the following:
 - Do their leads grab the reader's attention?
 - Do their leads and thesis statements make it clear what this piece is going to be about?

Day 3

- Instruct students to begin the body of the text by completing the first main idea paragraph.
- Remind students to state facts using specific, descriptive language. Review the importance of word choice (Unit 3, Lesson 3).
- Review types of supporting details: quote, statistic, interesting fact, anecdote, and description (Unit 4). Tell students to include at least one of these types of details in their first paragraph.
- Invite students to share their drafts of the first body paragraph. Discuss the effectiveness of the supporting details they chose.

Days 4 and 5

- Repeat the Day 3 procedure for the two remaining main idea paragraphs (one paragraph for each day).

Day 6

- Have students read and revise their work as necessary.
- Review the techniques for creating an effective concluding paragraph.
- Allow students time to complete their concluding paragraphs.
- Share student examples of successful conclusions with the whole class.

Day 7

- Have students reread their entire expository piece, editing for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.