

First Grade Writing Units of Study

Unit Overviews, Graphic Organizers, Rubrics,
Self-Assessments, Toys That Teach, Posters,
& Awards



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Writing Workshop & Professional Resources

These units of study are intended to be used within a writing workshop model, including a minilesson, independent writing time, Student-teacher conferring, and sharing (either with a partner, small group, or whole group).

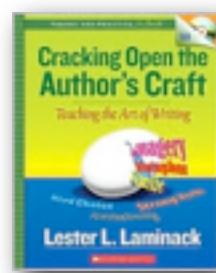
If you are new to writing workshop, or want something additional to read, check out one these books. They're great professional resources.



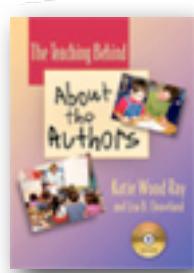
First Grade Writers
by Stephanie Parsons



*One to One: The Art of
Conferring with Young
Writers*
by Lucy Calkins



*Cracking Open the
Author's Craft*
by Lester Laminack



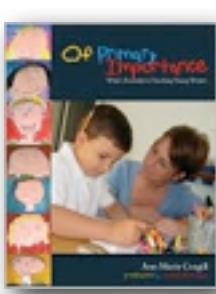
About the Authors
by Katie Wood Ray



*A Curricular Plan for
Writing Workshop: Gr. 1*
by Lucy Calkins
(This is a PDF document
from Heinemann.)



*Don't Forget
to Share*
by Leah
Mermelstein



*Of Primary
Importance*
by Ann Marie
Corgill



...And with a Light Touch
by Carol Avery

Note to the Reader

The units in this packet support the new Common Core State Standards and were written to be an outline or guide for your writing instruction. In each unit, you'll find:

- a suggested time frame
- a unit essential question
- suggestions for mentor texts
- a list of possible minilessons
- ideas for publishing & sharing celebrations
- sample writing templates
- a scoring rubric specific to the unit
- a student self-assessment
- graphic organizers

The units were not written in a "Day One," "Day Two," "Day Three" manner because each class is unique and requires special consideration for sequence and pace. Instead, the minilesson ideas are listed in a logical order, but there are several for you to pick and choose from to meet your specific needs. You likely wouldn't have time to address all the minilessons, nor would that be necessary. This was done purposely to allow for teacher creativity, so you can decide "how" you want to convey the ideas to your students. Often it's done with a good mentor text and your modeling.

Essential Questions

If you need to provide an essential question for each lesson, you can rewrite the minilesson topic in the form of a question. for example:

Minilesson topic - Writers of nonfiction use text features to share information.

Lesson essential question - How do writers of nonfiction use text features to share information?

Writing Unit Overviews
Sample Writing Templates
Unit Rubrics
Student Self-Assessments
Graphic Organizers

Personal Narrative Writing Unit



Unit of Study: Personal Narrative

Suggested Unit Time Frame: 30 Days

Unit Essential Question: How do writers share the small moments of their lives?

Possible Mentor Texts for Instruction:

Salt Hands by Jane Chelsea Aragon

Roller Coaster by Marla Frazee

The Underbed by Cathryn Hoellwarth

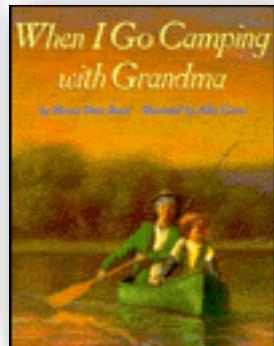
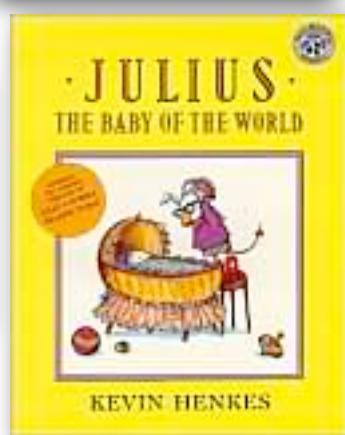
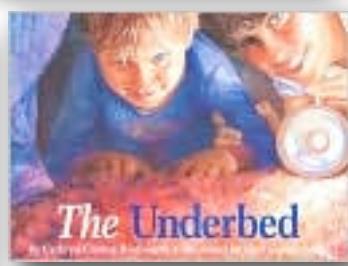
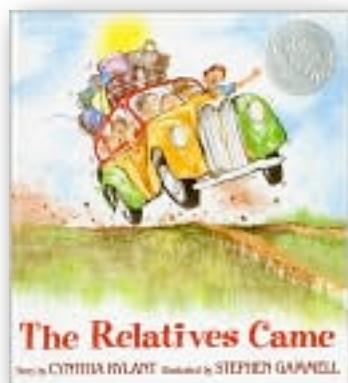
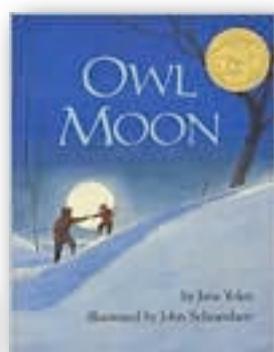
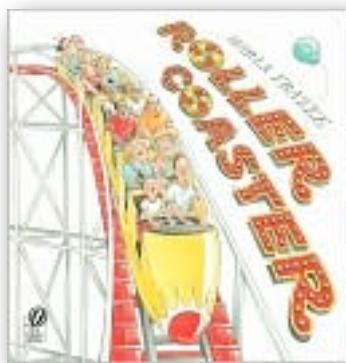
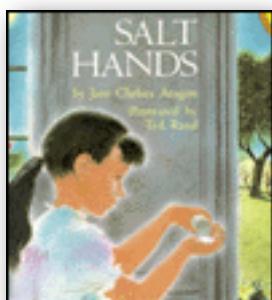
When I Go Camping with Grandma by Marion Dane Bauer

The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant

Owl Moon by Jane Yolen

The Big, Big Sea by Martin Waddell

Julius, the Baby of the World by Kevin Henkes



Personal Narrative: Possible Minilesson Topics

Purpose and Planning

- Writers know their lives are important... important enough to write about.
- Writers live a “writerly life.” They pay attention to their lives and collect story ideas to write about later.
- Writers write to remember the small moments of their lives. They know stories are a way to save a memory forever.
- Writers keep a list of possible topics and choose ones that are close to their heart.
- Writers choose topics that are tied to emotions... times they felt happy, sad, mad, or scared.
- When writers write a personal narrative, they choose a small, meaningful moment to share with a reader.
- Narrative writers use planning tools to help them remember important parts and organize their story. They think hard to remember the people, the setting, and the things that happened.
- Sometimes, writers sketch their story before they start writing words. This is a good way to think and remember.
- Writers of narratives sometimes practice telling their story out loud to a partner. That's a good way to try on a story and see how it sounds before writing it.

Craft

- Writers of narratives think about what their story is really about and work hard to keep it focused on that one idea.
- Narrative writers know a good story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. They plan these parts before writing.
- Writers know it's important to “hook” a reader right from the beginning with an interesting lead. One way to begin a narrative is by describing the setting. (Other ways include using dialogue, describing a character, writing a sound word, asking a question, or hinting toward a problem.)
- Writers make the middle of their stories just like the middle of a sandwich. It's the biggest and best part.
- Writers can slow down an important part in the middle by elaborating and telling more. That's one way to make the middle of a story the best part.
- Writers make the middle of a story interesting by adding dialogue, feelings, or thought-shots. (Thought-shots describe what the character is thinking at that moment.)
- Writers use dynamic details to show the reader what is happening, instead of just telling.
- Narrative writers use transition words to keep the story moving along. When stories stand still, the reader may lose interest.
- Writers think hard about ways to end their stories and they study other authors for ideas. One way to end a story is with a big feeling. (Other ways include writing an opposite ending, putting in a sound word, writing dialogue, or sharing the lesson learned.)

Revision

- Writers always read their work and think, “Does this make sense? Does it say what I wanted it to say?”
- Writers reread their stories to see if any words are missing. They add missing words with a caret.
- Narrative writers reread their stories to a partner and ask for feedback. They think about what their partner said and make changes to fix up confusing parts.

Personal Narrative, Continued

Revising, continued

- Writers reread their stories to check for wimpy words. They trade the wimpy words for stronger words... words with "muscle!"
- Narrative writers reread their stories and listen for parts that might be "standing still." They think about transition words they can add to keep it moving along.
- Writers check their work, searching for parts that might not belong. They cross out parts that aren't focused on the main topic.

Editing

- Writers reread their stories and listen for stop-spots at the ends of sentences. They make sure the right punctuation is there. (? . !)
- Writers reread their stories and listen for places where characters are talking. They wrap the talking inside quotation marks to give it a voice. (" ")
- Writers put capital letters at the beginnings of sentences and people's names.
- Writers reread their stories and search for words that look funny and ask themselves, "Is that spelled right?" They use the word-wall and other resources to help them fix up words they know.

Publishing

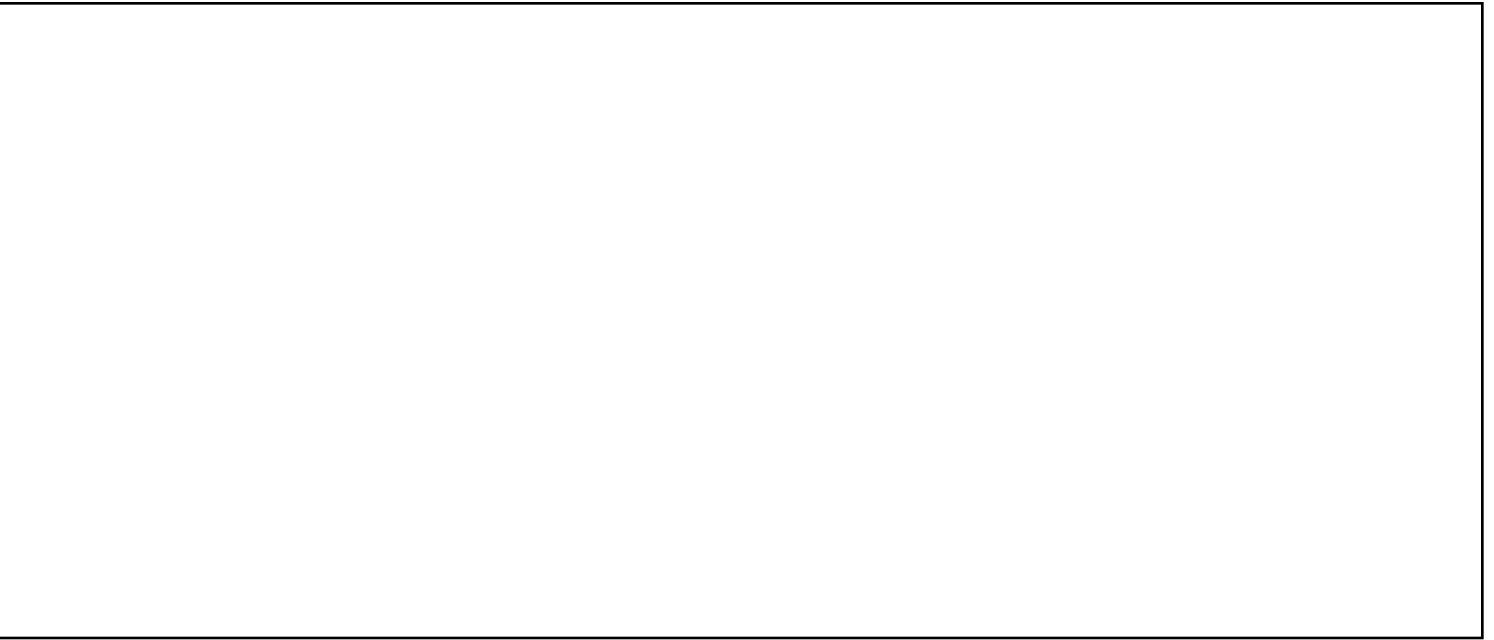
- Writers of personal narratives brainstorm a few interesting titles for their story. They read them several times to see which one sounds best.
- Writers of realistic fiction know they created a great work. They list their name as the author and illustrator on the cover.
- Writers fix up their illustrations when publishing. They know the illustrations are an important part of telling the story.

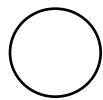
Possible Published Forms

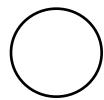
- Books

Ideas for Sharing & Celebrating

- Plan an **Authors' Tea** and serve small snacks and juice after sharing stories.
- Have a **Picnic in the Park**. Spread blankets on the ground and read outside with friends.
- Allow students to read their finished stories to **Book Buddies** from another class.









Writing Rubric

Student:

Unit of Study: Personal Narrative

4

3

2

1

What is being assessed?	More Than Expected	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely
The writer chooses topics that are important to him/her.				
The writer focuses all the pages of one piece on a main idea.				
The writer organizes stories with a beginning, middle, and end.				
The writer elaborates the middle of stories. (dialogue, feelings, etc.)				
The writer uses dynamic details to create clear images.				
The writer uses transitions effectively to "move" the story.				
The writer's illustrations support the story.				
The writer spelled words carefully so the story is easy to read.				
The writer uses punctuation marks at the ends of sentences.				
The writer capitalizes names and the beginnings of sentences.				

Additional Notes:

Self-Assessment of My Published Piece

Author: _____

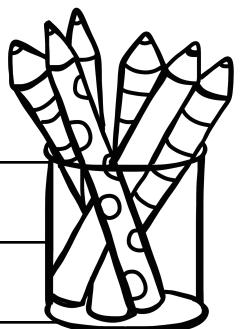
Title of Work: _____

Unit: PERSONAL NARRATIVE

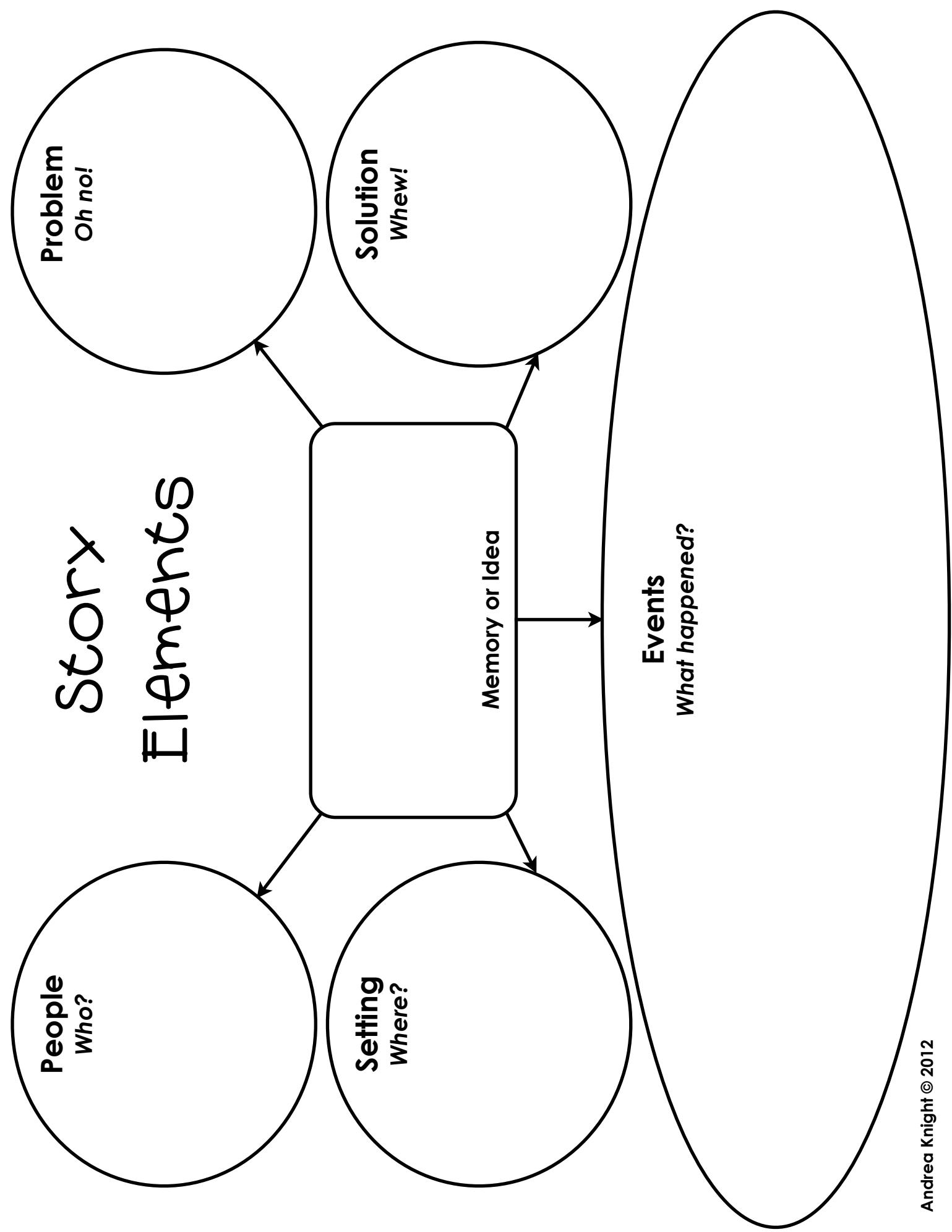
	YES	NO
• I chose a topic that is important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• My story is focused on one main idea.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• My story has a clear beginning , middle , and end .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I used dynamic details to make my story more interesting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I elaborated in the middle by adding something interesting like dialogue, thoughts, or feelings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I used transitions to keep my story moving in a smooth way.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• My book is easy for others to read. I worked hard on my spelling , my capital letters , and my punctuation .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If I wrote another personal narrative, it would probably be about...

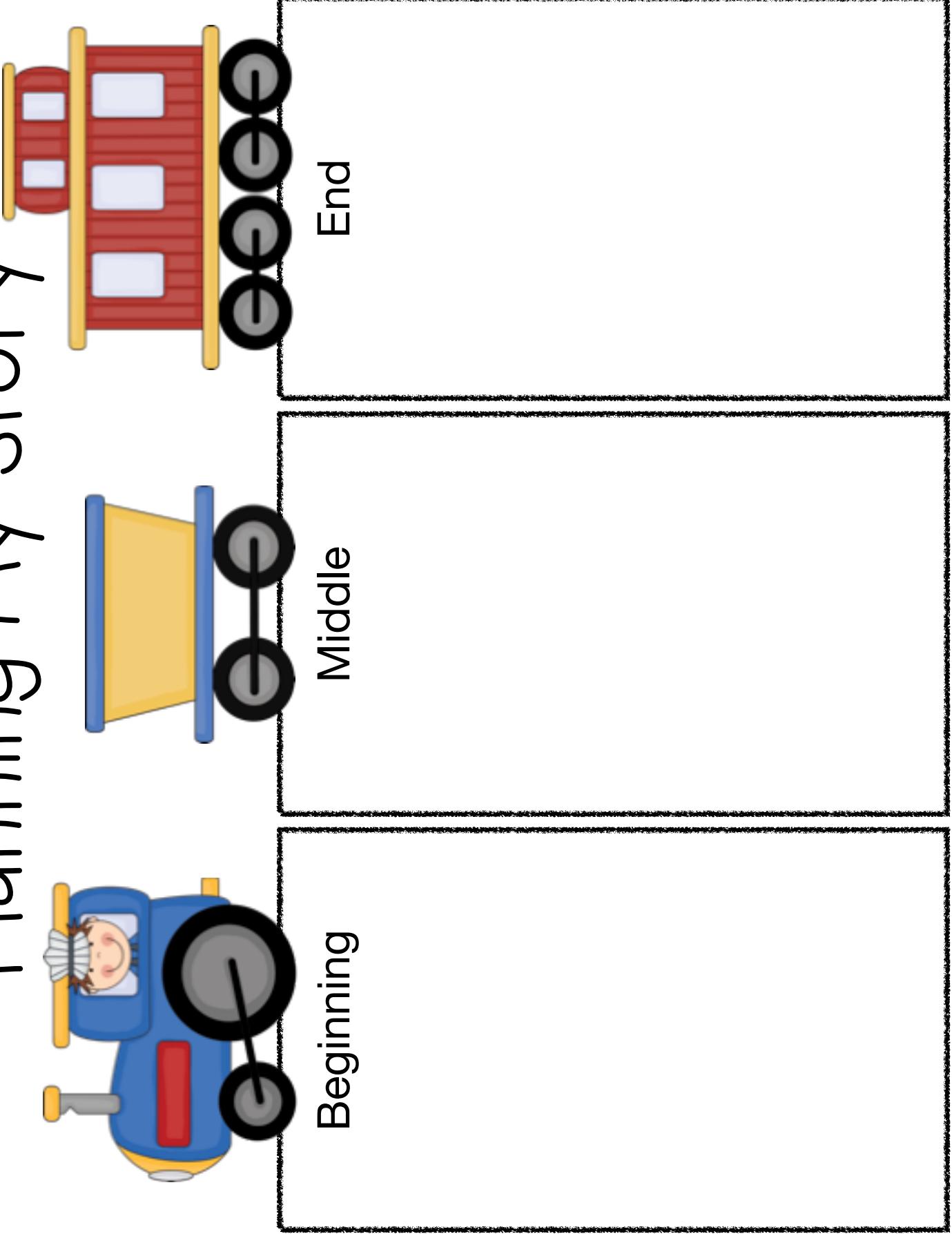
I chose to publish this piece because...



Story Elements



Planning My Story





Stretching Out my Middle...

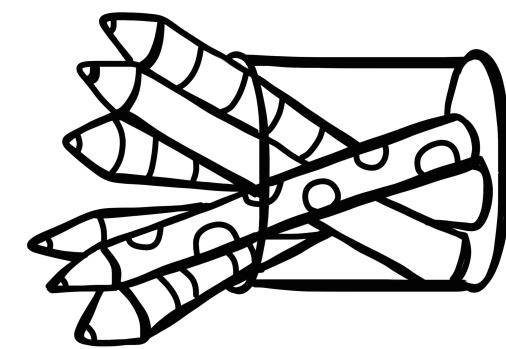
...thinking about how to make the middle of my story the biggest and best part.

Beginning

Middle

Ending

A Week to Remember



My Weekend

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Persuasive Writing Unit



Unit of Study: Persuasive Letters

Suggested Unit Time Frame: 20-30 Days

Unit Essential Question: How do writers use letters to convince others to do something?

Possible Mentor Texts for Instruction:

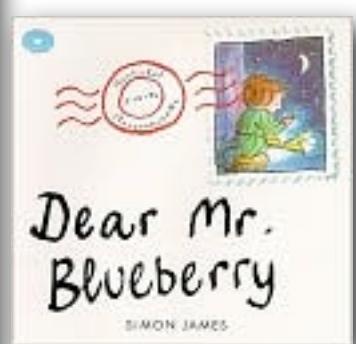
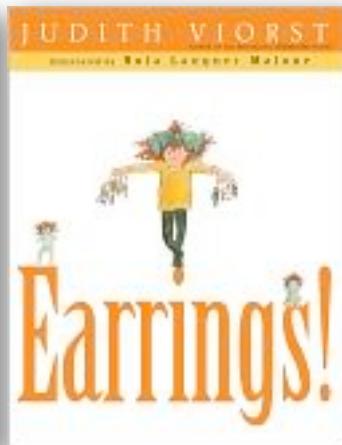
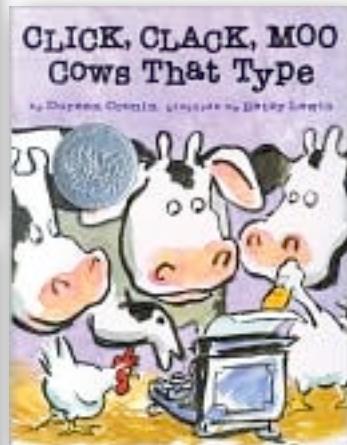
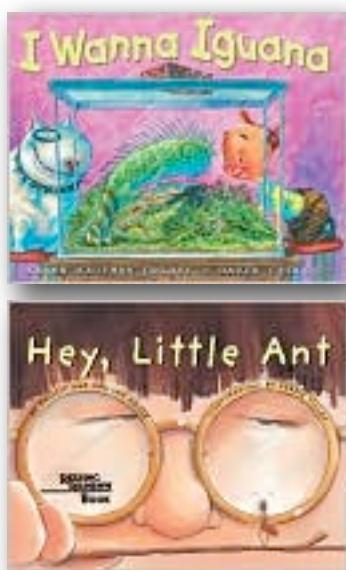
I Wanna Iguana by Karen Orloff
(persuasive letters exchanged between mom and son)

Click, Clack, Moo...Cows That Type by Doreen Cronin
(persuasive letters between a farmer and his cows)

Hey Little Ant by Philip Hoose
(example of persuasive argument)

Earrings by Judith Viorst
(examples of persuasive language)

Dear Mr. Blueberry by Simon James
(example of letter format)



Persuasive Letters: Possible Minilesson Topics

Purpose and Planning

- Writers know a letter looks and sound different than a story.
- Sometimes, writers write letters to persuade people in charge to do things differently. (Parents, Teacher, Principal, President)
- Sometimes, writers write letters to persuade businesses to do things differently. (Movie Theater, Grocery Store, Doctor's Office, Bowling Alley)
- Letter writers don't just change their own lives. They can change the lives of many other people, too.
- Letter writers notice problems. They think about who could help them solve the problems. (Audience)
- Letter writers notice needs. They think about how they can convince other people to help.
- Sometimes, writers plan their letters out loud before they write. They touch the parts of the letter paper and think about the words they might write.
- Letter writers can use webs to help them think of good reasons something might need to be changed.
- Persuasive writers have to think ahead and predict questions or arguments the reader might have. They have to be prepared with good answers or reasons of their own. ("My reader might think _____, so I could give this smart reason.")
- Sometimes, writers talk with a partner to see if their ideas and reasons make sense.

Craft

- Letter writers think, "What is it I'm trying to say?" Then they work hard to say that one thing. (Focus)
- Letter writers use reasons in their writing. The reasons make the writing important to the reader.
- Sometimes, letter writers use a mini-story as a reason. A mini-story is a specific example that helps the reader understand the problem.
- Letter writers choose their words depending on who they're writing to. They know a letter to Mom and Dad will sound differently than a letter to the principal.
- When letter writers are writing something important, they reach past ordinary words for "words with muscle." Words with muscle carry more weight with the reader. (Word Choice)
- Writers who persuade know their reasons have to sound super smart and important, not whiny.
- Letter writers have special words for moving from one important part of the letter to the next. (Transitions)
- Often, letter writers put the date on their letter so the reader knows when it was written.
- Writers have special words for beginning and ending a letter.

Revision

- Writers revise to make sure their writing is as focused as it can be. They think, "Did I say what I was trying to say?"
- Writers who want to persuade the reader always reread their writing to make sure their reasons are clear and sound important. They fix up parts that might sound weak or whiny.
- Letter writers reread their letters out loud and listen for strong, important words. They think about underlining those words or making those words **BOLD** so the reader will know they're important.
- Letter writers read their writing to a partner and ask, "Does this sound right?" and "How does it make you feel?"

Persuasive Letters, Continued

Editing

- Letter writers know punctuation marks help make the words important. Writers might end very important sentences with an exclamation mark and put a question mark at the end of an important question they want the reader to think about.
- Letter writers make sure they have capital letters in dates, names, and beginnings of sentences.
- Writers reread their stories and search for words that look funny and ask themselves, "Is that spelled right?" They use the word-wall and other resources to help them fix up words they know.

Publishing

- Letter writers can mail or deliver their letter to the person it has been written for.
- Letter writers can turn their letter into a speech by reading it out loud to the intended audience.
- Letter writers can include illustrations or photographs with their letter to help persuade the reader.
- Letter writers can share the responses to their letters with others.

Possible Published Forms

- Letters
- Letters with enclosed photographs/illustrations of problem/need
- Class book of letters to a specific person such as the principal, the president, or the public library manager

Ideas for Sharing & Celebrating

- Mail or deliver the letters.
- Share the responses to the letters.
- Plan a **SPEECH DAY**.



Writing Rubric

Student:

Unit of Study: Persuasive Letters

4

3

2

1

What is being assessed?	More Than Expected	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely
The writer uses a planning tool to plan out their reasons.				
The writer states the problem or the need.				
The writer includes at least two reasons to support the argument.				
The writer uses transition words to keep the letter moving along.				
The writer uses persuasive language effectively.				
The writer spells words carefully so the letter is easy to read.				
The writer uses commas in the date, greeting, and closing.				
The writer uses punctuation marks at the ends of sentences.				
The writer capitalizes names, dates, and sentences.				

Additional Notes:

Self-Assessment of My Published Piece

Author: _____

Title of Work: _____

Unit: PERSUASIVE LETTERS

- I wrote about a specific **problem** or **need** in my letter.
- I have important **reasons** in my letter.
- I used powerful **persuasive words**.
- I remembered to put in all the important **parts of a letter**.
- I **spelled words** carefully so my story is easy to read.
- I used **commas** in the date, the greeting, and the closing.
- I used **capital letters** in the date, names, and beginnings of sentences.

YES NO

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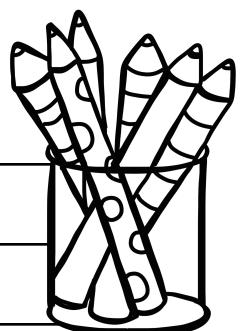
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Another letter I'd like to write is...

A challenge for me when I was writing this letter was...



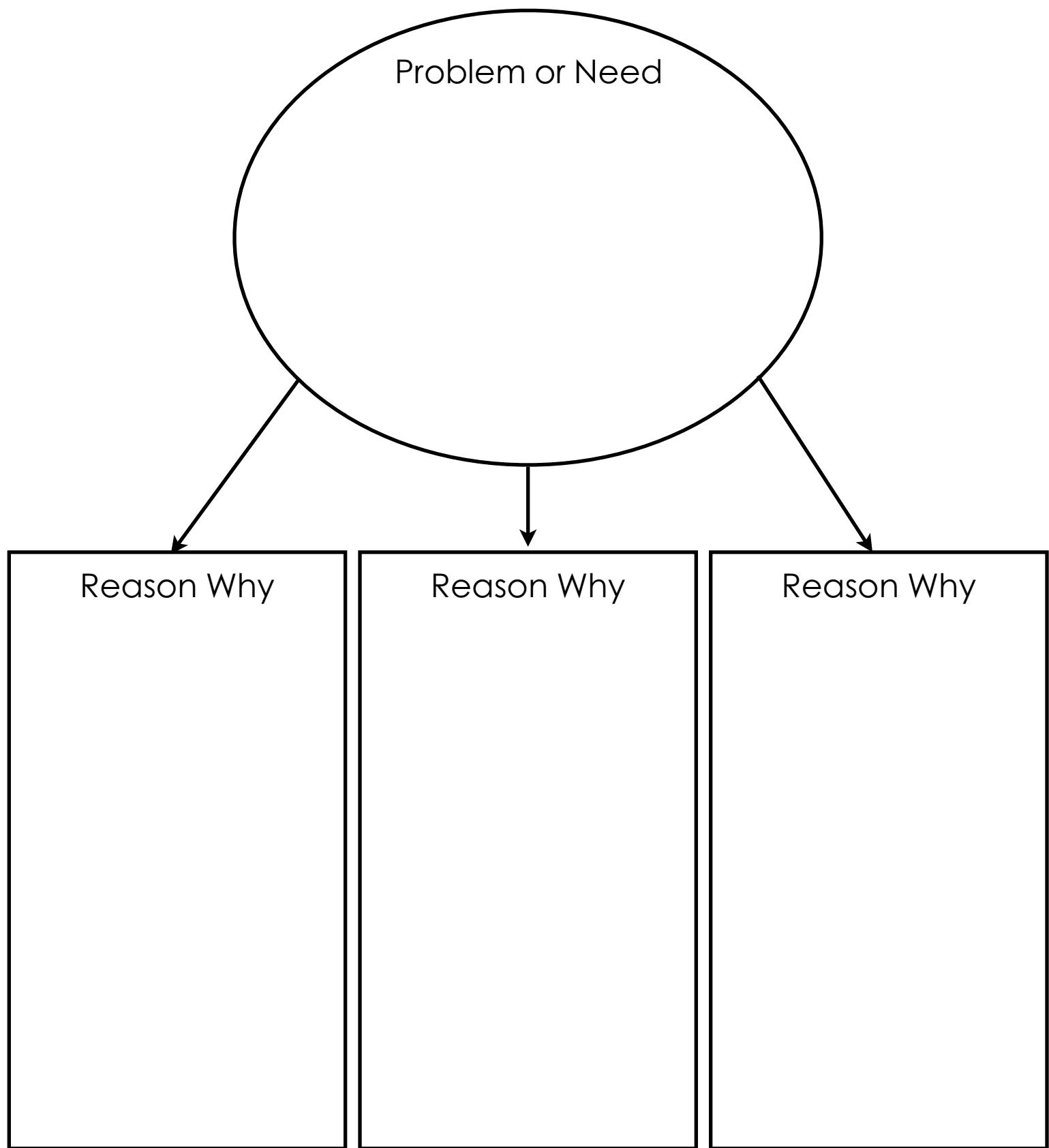
Date

Greeting

Body

Closing

Persuasive Planning Web



“Serious” Words

should _____

could _____

must _____

need to _____

have to _____

important _____

right away _____

very _____



“Why?” Words

here's why _____

because _____

reason _____

example _____

good for you _____

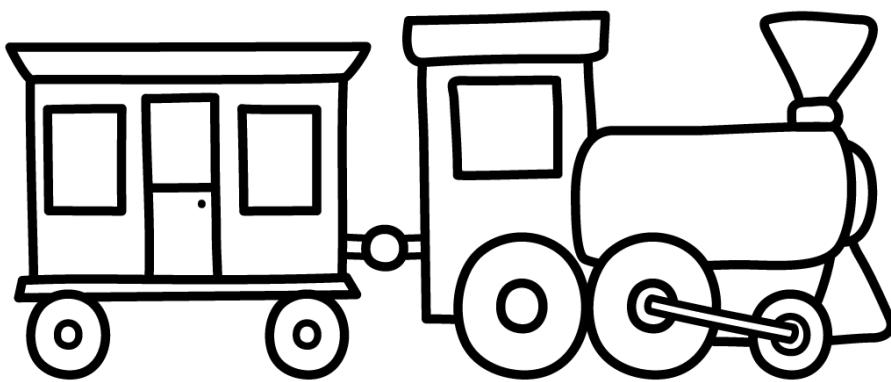
help you _____

if . . . then



“Keep It Moving”

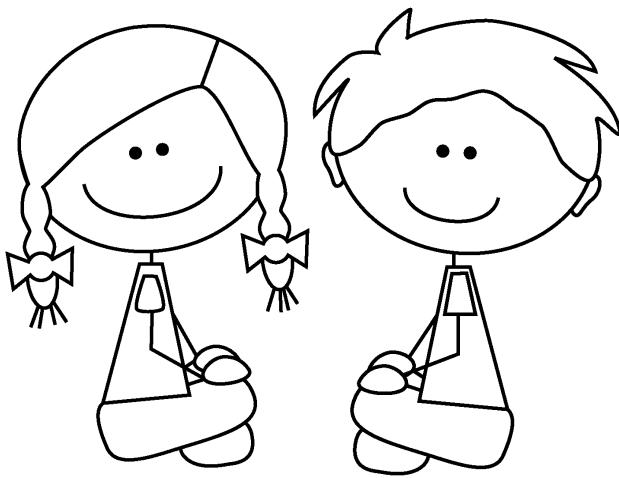
Words



first	also	_____
next	another	_____
then	by the way	_____
last	finally	_____

"Good Manners"

Words



please

thank you

sir

ma'am

respect

“Good Bye” Words

Love,

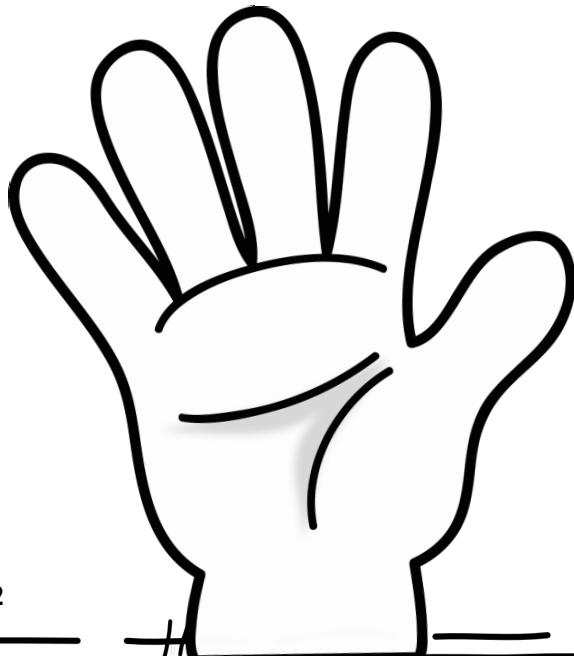
Sincerely,

Your Friend,

Thank You,

Thanks,

Respectfully,



Informational Texts

Writing Unit



Unit of Study: Informational Texts

Suggested Unit Time Frame: 30 Days

Unit Essential Question: How do writers give facts about a topic and explain instructions?

Possible Mentor Texts for Instruction:

Walk On! A Guide for Taking Your First Step by Marla Frazee

How to Be a Good Cat by Gail Page

Let's Make a Pizza by Mary Hill

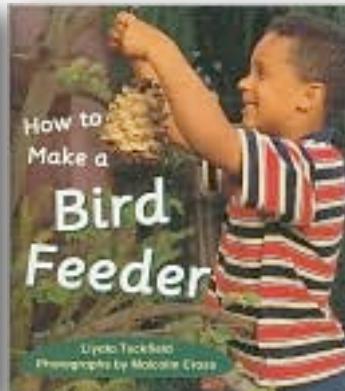
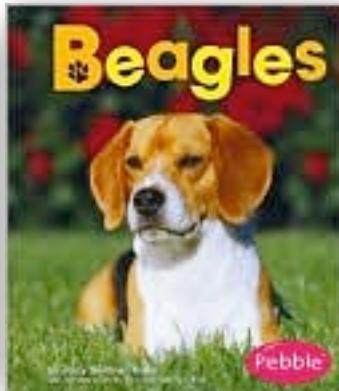
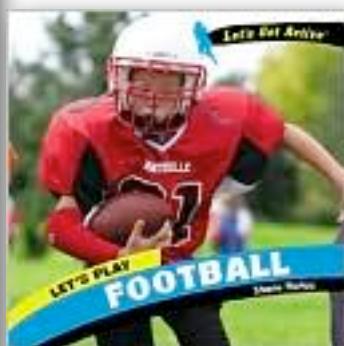
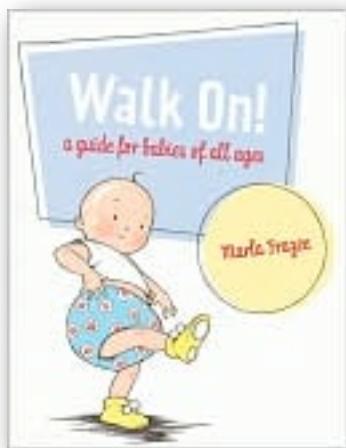
How to Be Friends with a Dragon by Valeri Gorbachev

How to Make a Bird Feeder by Liyala Tuckfield

Let's Play Football by Shane McFee

Beagles by Jody Rake

The collection of possible mentor texts for this unit is large. You'll likely find books in your own guided reading collections or school library that are "All-About" books or "How-To" books. You can use any of them to support instruction in this unit. Instead of separating this unit into two units (All-About Books & How To Books), it's designed to be an Informational Writing Unit, which includes both types of writing. In this unit, the students essentially create an All-About Book that has How-To pages effectively placed within it. For example, if a student is writing a book all about ballet, there might be a page inside the book about how to do a particular move or how to tie your ballet shoes. Pages like this are common in informational texts.



Informational Texts: Possible Minilesson Topics

Purpose and Planning

- The things writers already know a lot about are book worthy, so sometimes writers write books to teach others. (*This unit doesn't include a heavy emphasis on research. Instead, the students are encouraged to pick a topic they already know a lot about.*)
- Writers of informational books know this type of writing looks different than story writing.
- Writers of informational books study other writers to see how they organize their informational books.
- Nonfiction writers make lists of the things they know a lot about and love.
- Writers "test" their knowledge of their topic by doing a planning web. (*Can the student think of at least three different things they know about their topic? If not, they may need to brainstorm other topics.*)
- Writers think about how to organize their work by drafting a table of contents and naming their chapters.
- Often, writers use different paper templates throughout their book depending on what they're trying to teach.
- When planning a "How-To" page, writers visualize the steps needed before they write them down. Sometimes, they say them out loud before they write them, just to make sure they didn't miss anything important.

Craft

- Nonfiction writers try to grab the attention of the reader. They know one way to begin their book is by asking a question. (*Other Ways: Try a sound or share an amazing fact.*)
- Writers use nonfiction text features to share important information. (*Use mentor texts as a way to notice and study these features. They include: captions, labels, diagrams, close-ups or zooms, tips, maps, flaps, illustrations, bold words, underlined words, speech bubbles, section headings, etc.*)
- Writers of informational books know their illustrations or photographs are part of teaching.
- Writers who are experts on a topic know special words that go with that topic. They include these words in their books and might even **BOLD** or underline these special words.
- Writers of nonfiction can make their books more fun and interesting by using flaps to reveal important information, like the answer to a question, a special word and picture, or an amazing fact.
- When writers want to show their reader how to do something, they put a "How-To" page in their book.
- Writers of "How-To" pages, think carefully about the steps and materials that are needed. They list the materials and write the steps in order.
- Writers of "How-To" pages, include illustrations with their steps. This lets the reader "see" how the steps are done.

Revision

- Writers always read their work and think, "Does this make sense? Does it say what I wanted it to say?"
- Writers can add pages to their books to make the writing more clear.
- Writers can elaborate on ideas by adding speech bubbles, captions, tips, fun facts, etc.
- Writers reread parts and think, "Can I add a specific example?"
- Writers of nonfiction elaborate by thinking ahead about their readers' questions.

Informational Texts, Continued

Revising, continued

- Writers elaborate by anticipating what readers want to learn more about.
- Writers reread to see if all their ideas are organized by chapters (or sections).
- Writers reread to make sure information that goes together is together.
- Writers of nonfiction read their work to a partner to see if there are any unanswered questions.
- Writers of "How-To" pages read their writing to a partner and act out the steps to make sure nothing important was missed.

Editing

- Writers of nonfiction use capital letters at the beginnings of sentences, in the book title, and in the chapter titles.
- Writers reread their stories and listen for stop-spots at the ends of sentences. They make sure the right punctuation is there. (? . !)
- Writers use commas when listing items in a series.
- Writers reread their stories and search for words that look funny and ask themselves, "Is that spelled right?" They use the word-wall and other resources to help them fix up words they know.
- Writers stretch out words they can't find on the word wall and listen for all the sounds in the word. They add missing letters to make the writing readable.

Publishing

- Writers of informational texts can publish their work in a book, using colorful illustrations and nonfiction text features to help teach.
- Writers of nonfiction can publish their work by making a **Did You Know?** poster.
- Writers of nonfiction can share their expertise with others by making a teaching video.

Possible Published Forms

- Books
- Videos
- Posters

Ideas for Sharing & Celebrating

- Plan a **Teaching Tots Day** where your expert writers teach their topic to a younger grade level.
- Have a **Sharing Expo** where another class can come in and "Meet the Experts."
- Plan a **DIY Day**. (If your students made teaching videos, make some popcorn and watch the videos together.)

Note: There aren't a lot of writing templates for this unit because the students really create these on their own depending on their needs. It's difficult to have "standard" templates for this unit because it doesn't lend itself well to a "one size fits all" plan.

Table of Contents







Table of Contents

Table of Contents

How To _____

1

2

3

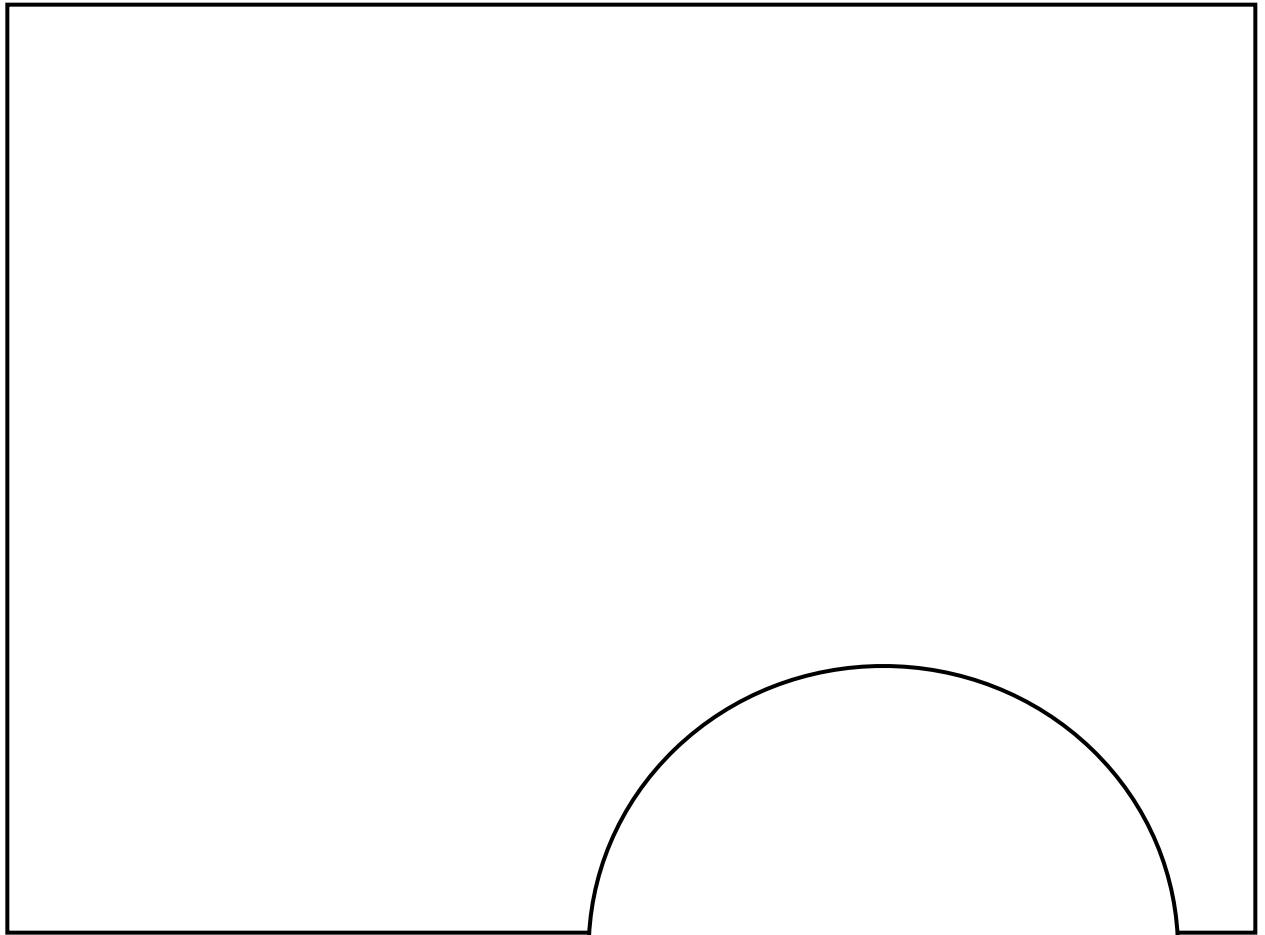
How To _____

1

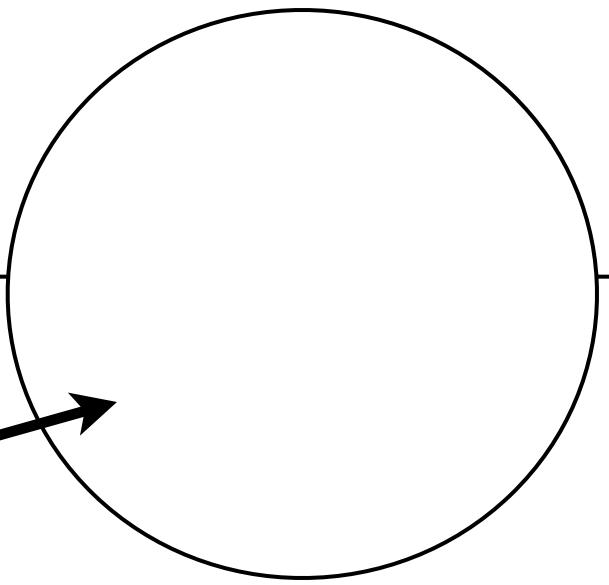
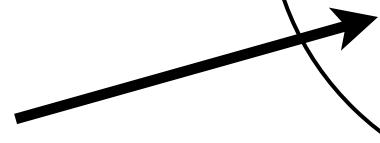
2

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4



Zoom!



Writing Rubric

Student:



Unit of Study: Informational Texts

4

3

2

1

What is being assessed?	More Than Expected	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely
The writer chose a topic they know a lot about.				
The writer's work is organized into logical chapters or sections.				
The writer uses an introduction to grab the reader's attention.				
The writer uses nonfiction text features to support the teaching.				
The writer identifies important words by bolding or underlining.				
The writer uses "How-To" pages effectively.				
The writer's illustrations are detailed and support the topic.				
The writer wraps up the work with an ending.				
The writer spelled words carefully so the story is easy to read.				
The writer uses commas and ending marks correctly.				
The writer capitalizes titles and the beginnings of sentences.				

Additional Notes:

Self-Assessment of My Published Piece

Author: _____

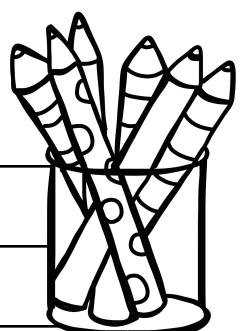
Title of Work: _____

Unit: INFORMATIONAL TEXTS

	YES	NO
• I chose a topic I know a lot about.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• My book is organized into chapters or sections that make sense.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I have a beginning and an ending .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I tried out at least two different kinds of text features .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I used bold letters or underlines on really important words.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• My illustrations are detailed and match my topic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• My book is easy for others to read. I worked hard on my spelling , my capital letters , and my punctuation .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

I LOVE my book! You have to look at page _____ because...

The hardest part of publishing this work was...





Poetry
Writing Unit



Unit of Study: Poetry

Suggested Unit Time Frame: 30 Days

Unit Essential Question: How do writers express their feelings, ideas, or experiences through poetry?

Possible Mentor Texts for Instruction:

Little Dog Poems by Kristine O'Connell George

Here's a Little Poem collected by Jane Yolen

The Random House Book of Poetry for Children collected by Jack Prelutsky

Dirty Laundry Pile by Paul Janeczko

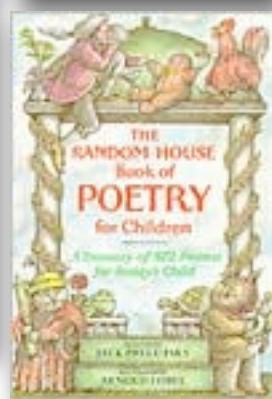
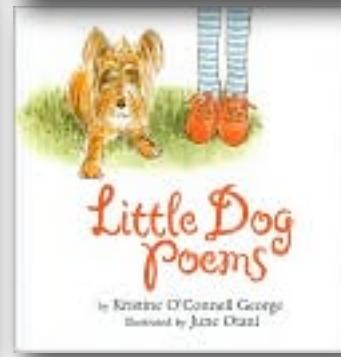
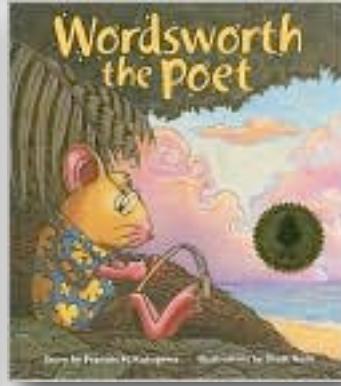
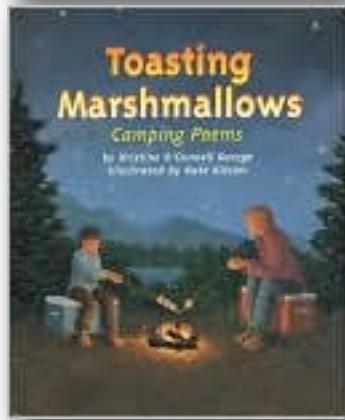
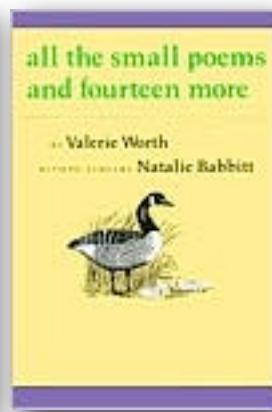
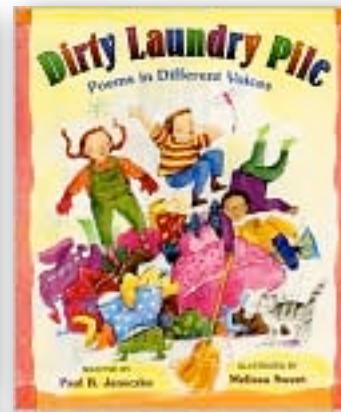
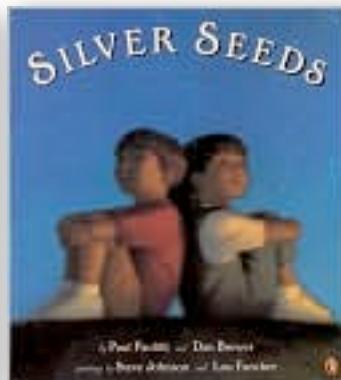
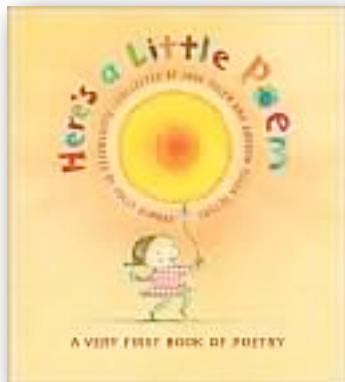
Silver Seeds by Paul Paolilli

Toasting Marshmallows by Kristine O'Connell George

all the small poems and fourteen more by Valerie Worth

Wordsworth the Poet by Frances Kakugawa

Joyful Noise by Paul Fleischman



Poetry: Possible Minilesson Topics

Purpose and Planning

- Poets are observers of life... they see ideas for poems everywhere and collect them. The smallest treasure or moment is a poem waiting to be written.
- Poets read and listen to poetry. They find other poets they like and try out their styles.
- Poets know that poetry looks and sounds different than stories.
- Poets know that poems are meant to be read out loud.
- Poets know there are many different kinds of poetry. They have fun experimenting with different kinds.
- Poets know that sometimes poems rhyme and sometimes poems don't rhyme.
- Sometimes, poets write many poems about one topic, like a favorite pet, friend, experience, or person in their family.
- Poets can use graphic organizers like webs and charts to help them plan their ideas before writing.
- Often, poets visualize their topic before writing. They see all the details in their minds and then think of the perfect words to match.

Craft

- Writers of poetry think about how to write their poems in short, but powerful, ways.
- Poets focus each poem on a single idea or topic.
- Poets can write parts-of-sentences in their poems. These are called phrases or fragments.
- Poets think of perfect words to express their ideas and feelings.
- Poets think of words that will take the reader's breath away... pretty words that make the reader sigh. :)
- Writers of poetry are emotional. They write from the heart and put their feelings into their poems.
- Poets use descriptive words to evoke senses and feelings.
- Poets can write about any emotion. They can write about being happy or sad or angry or scared...
- Poets make "sense." They use their senses to describe things in their poems so the readers can see it, hear it, and feel it, too.
- Poets play with language by using words in a creative way or by making up words.
- Writers of poetry sometimes use sound words to make their poems come to life.
- Poets can bring an object to life by personifying it... or making it seem like a person.
- Sometimes, poets play with language by using words that have similar beginning or middle sounds. This is called alliteration and it can make a poem fun to read.
- Poets know that one way to share feelings is by showing them, not just telling them.
- Poets use metaphors to compare objects or feelings.
- Poets can repeat important words or phrases that carry big feelings. This helps the reader feel the same thing.
- Sometimes, poets write their poems in the shape of the topic to help the reader understand the poem better.
- Poets can experiment with line breaks and white spaces to change the way a poem sounds.
- Poets can be creative with rhyme, repetition, and syllables to create poems that have a rhythm or beat.

Poetry, Continued

Revising

- Poets reread their poems to see if any words are missing.
- Poets can rethink a poem and try out different ways it might look on paper. They might turn it into a shape or move the words around on the page until it feels right.
- Poets look at their poems and think about how the words are laid out on the page. They ask themselves, “*Will the reader be able to tell how my poems needs to be read? Do my words go in a clear direction that makes sense?*” (This is especially important for shape poems.)
- Poets reread their poems to check for ordinary words. They trade the ordinary words for extraordinary words... words that will take the reader’s breath away.

Editing

- Poets reread their poems and ask themselves, “Are my poems easy to read? Are my word wall words spelled correctly? Are other words spelled carefully?”
- Poets use punctuation marks in creative ways so the reader knows how the poem should sound.
- Poets don’t always follow the rules of capital letters because poems are so different from stories.

Publishing

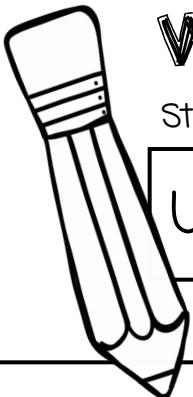
- When poets get ready to celebrate their poems, they practice reading them and rereading them, asking themselves, “How do I want my voice to sound? Should I speed up here? Should I slow down here? Should this part be soft or loud?” This way they can make sure their voice matches the feelings and meaning behind their poems.
- Sometimes, poets illustrate their poems with beautiful artwork or photographs that bring the poems to life.
- One way poets share their poems is by putting a collection together in a book. This collection is called an anthology.
- When poets want to show other poets how much they enjoy hearing their poems, they snap their fingers instead of clapping. This is how poets do it.

Possible Published Forms

- Posters with watercolor paintings
- Student or class anthology

Ideas for Sharing & Celebrating

- Set up a **Poetry Cafe** and have a **Poetry Jam**. Videotape the jam and make a DVD for each child. (Don’t forget to dim the lights and snap after each poem.)
- Build a **Poet-Tree** to highlight your poets. Let each child paint a self-portrait and display them on the branches of the tree.



Writing Rubric

Student:

Unit of Study: Poetry

4

3

2

1

What is being assessed?	More Than Expected	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely
The poet chooses topics that are interesting or meaningful.				
The poet tries different forms of poetry.				
The poet writes in a creative poetic form, not a story form.				
The poet focuses each poem on a single idea or topic.				
The poet uses specific details and vivid word choice.				
The poet experiments with white space and line breaks.				
The poet's illustrations support the topic.				
The poet uses punctuation and capitalization in creative ways.				
The poet spelled words carefully so the poem is easy to read.				
The poet willingly shares his/her poems out loud with others.				

Additional Notes:

Self-Assessment of My Published Piece

Author: _____

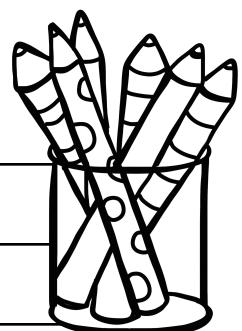
Title of Work: _____

Unit: POETRY

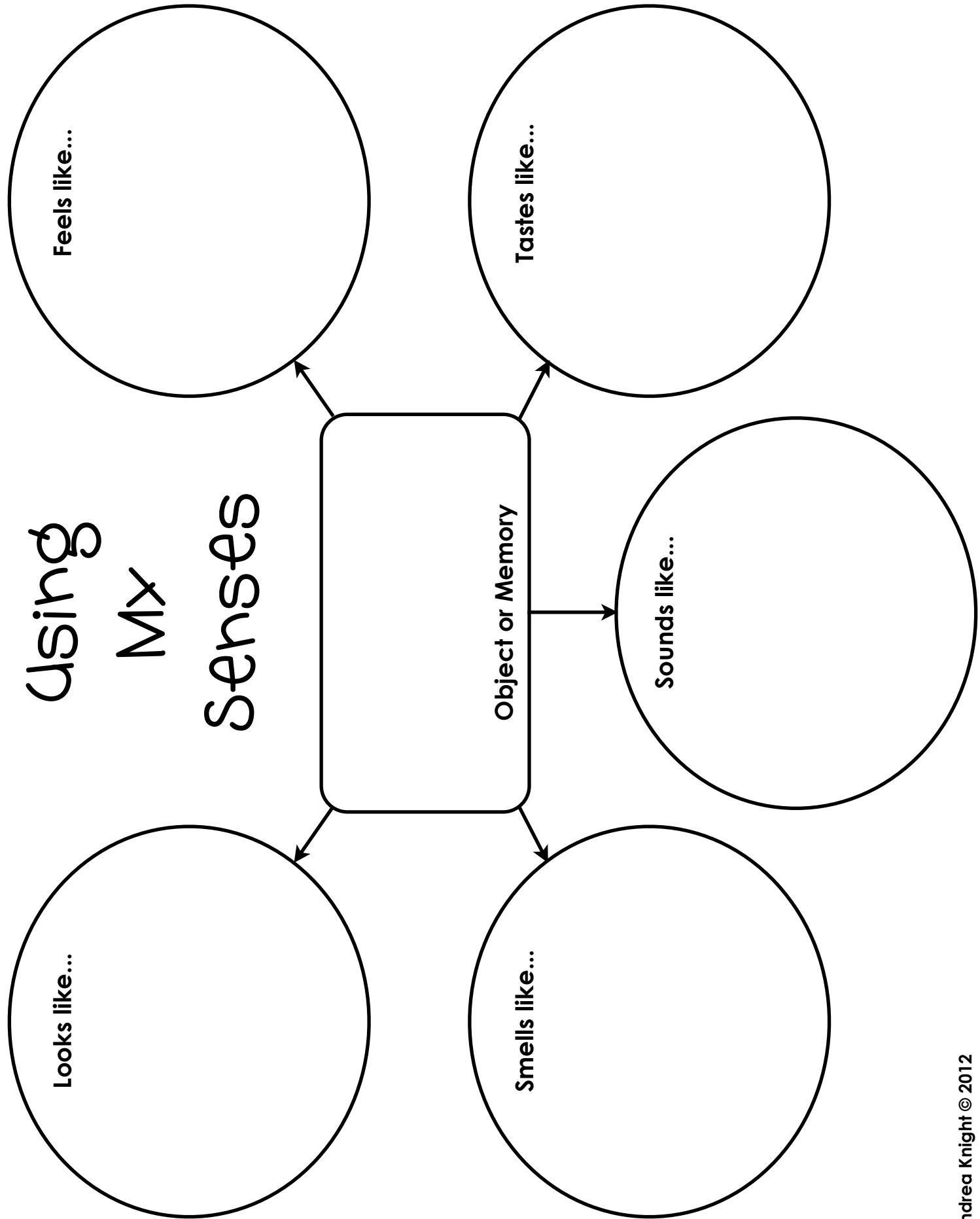
	YES	NO
• My poem is written in a <u>poetic form</u> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• My poem is <u>focused</u> on a single idea or topic.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I have specific <u>details</u> to take the reader's breath away!	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I experimented with <u>line breaks</u> and <u>white spaces</u> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• My <u>illustration</u> matches the topic and brings my poem to life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• My poem is easy to read because I <u>spelled</u> words carefully.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I tried something new in my poem, such as using <u>my senses</u> , <u>sound words</u> , <u>comparisons</u> , <u>feelings</u> , or <u>repeating parts</u> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Here's a **TIP** for someone just starting out as a poet:

This is something I **LOVE** about being a poet:



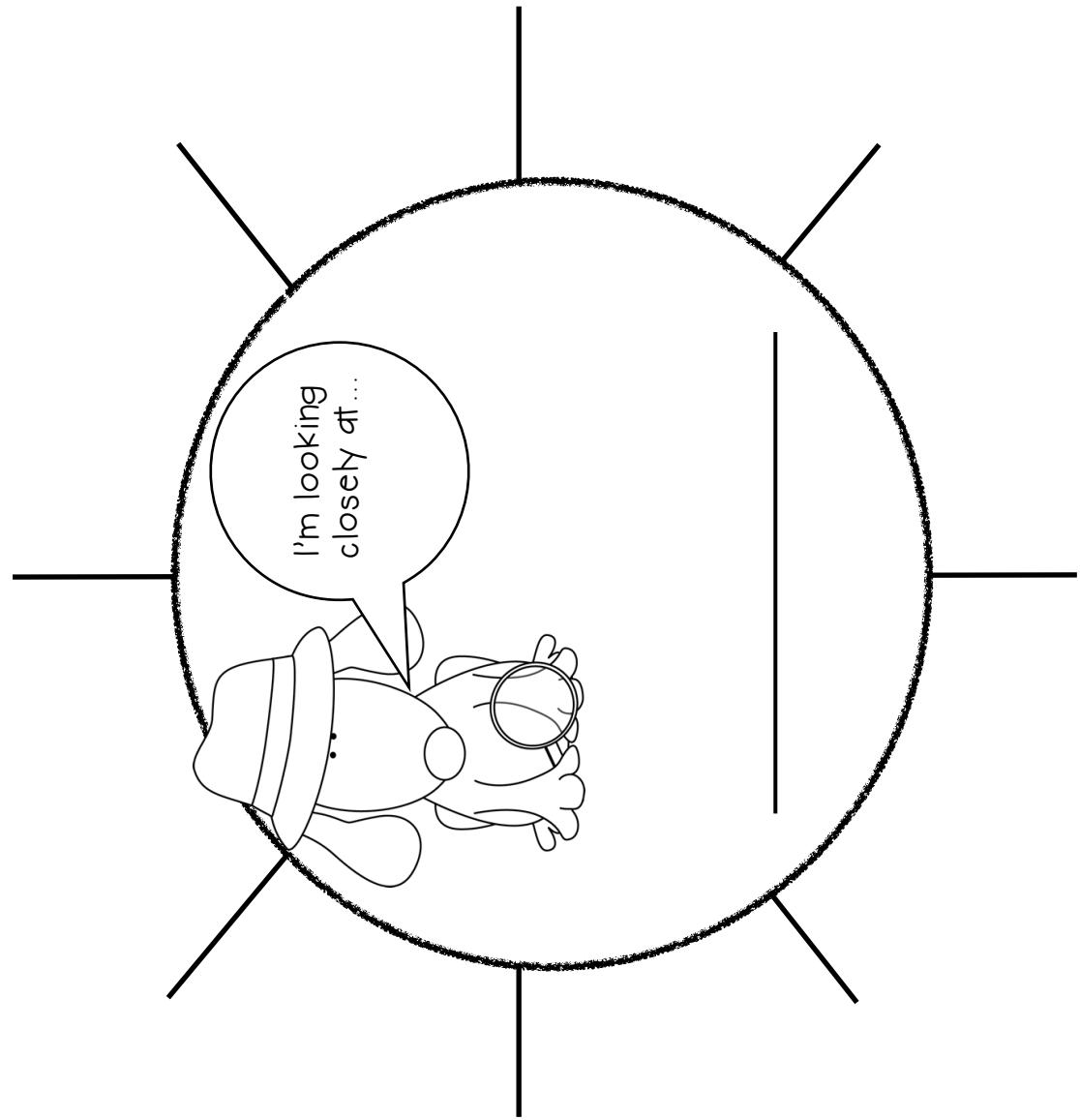
Using My Senses



Sensory Details

Object	Looks...	Feels...
		Tastes...
		Smells...

Detail Detective



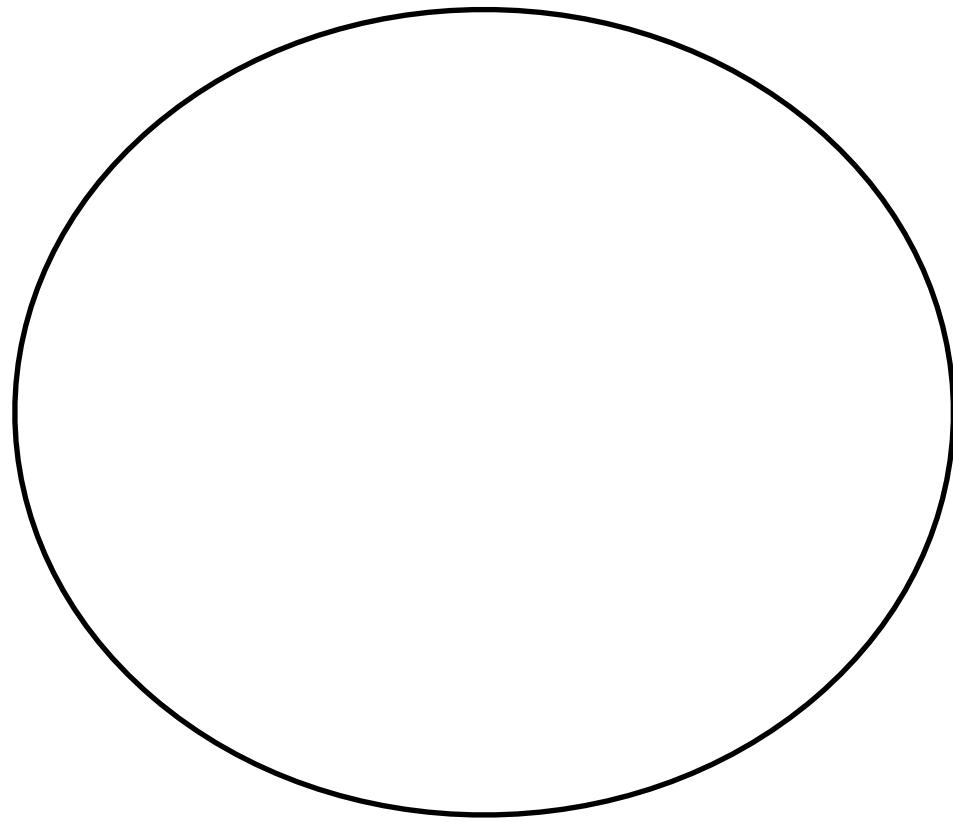
Thinking of Comparisons

This object...

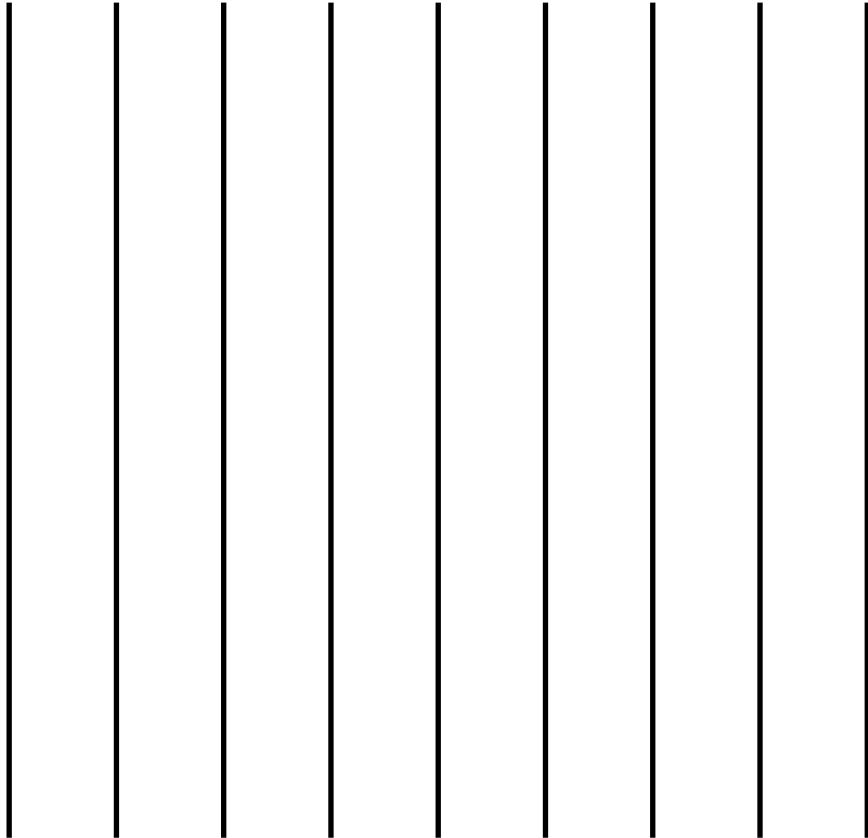
reminds me of...

Personify Me!

If this object were a person...



it might be able to...



Realistic Fiction

Writing Unit



Unit of Study: Realistic Fiction

Suggested Unit Time Frame: 30 Days

Unit Essential Question: How do writers use their experience and their imagination to write a realistic fiction story that will entertain readers?

Possible Mentor Texts for Instruction:

Knuffle Bunny by Mo Willems

Ira Sleeps Over by Bernard Waber

Crab Moon by Ruth Horowitz

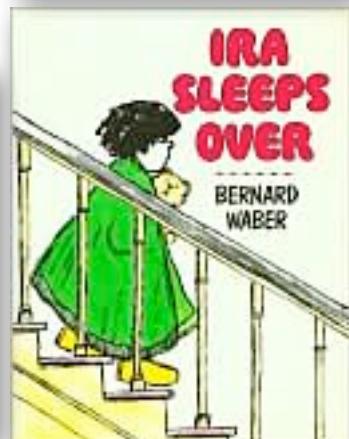
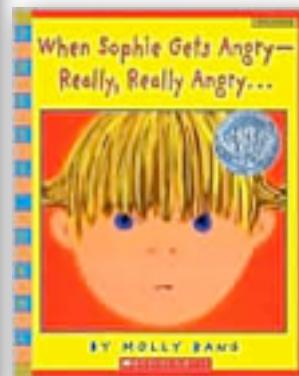
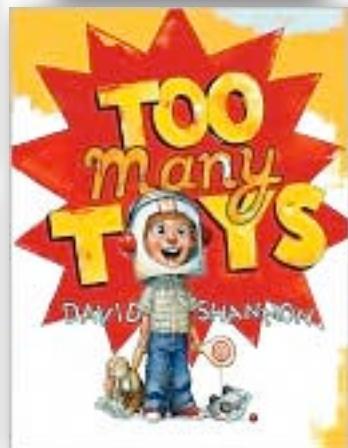
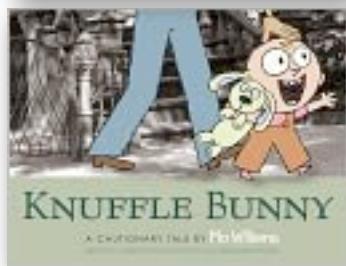
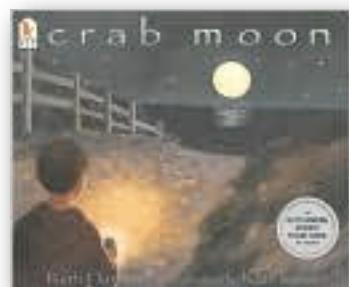
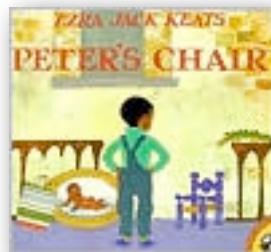
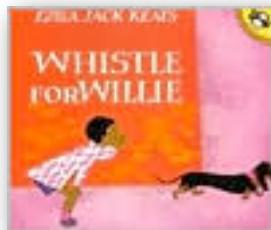
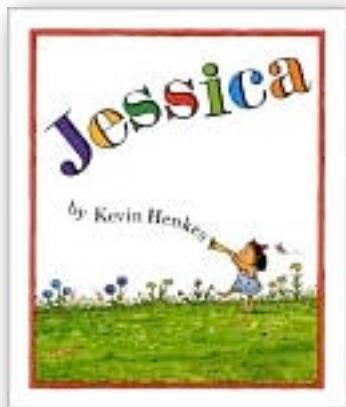
Whistle for Willie by Ezra Jack Keats

Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats

Jessica by Kevin Henkes

When Sophie Gets Angry - - Really, Really Angry by Molly Bang

Too Many Toys by David Shannon



Realistic Fiction: Possible Minilesson Topics

Purpose and Planning

- Sometimes, writers mix their own experiences with their imaginations to write realistic fiction.
- Writers of realistic fiction get their ideas from their own lives.
- Writers of realistic fiction also get ideas for stories from other authors. (Mentor Texts or Peers)
- Writers of realistic fiction write about believable characters in believable places with believable problems, but they get to make them up! Wow.
- Writers of realistic fiction invent characters sort of like themselves and think about how to get them into trouble.
- Writers brainstorm everyday problems and solutions.
- Writers of realistic fiction brainstorm different ways to solve a problem before picking just one for their story.
- Sometimes, writers practice telling their stories out loud to a writing partner before writing down all the words.
- One way writers organize the ideas and parts of their stories is to use a web or chart.

Craft

- Writers of realistic fiction picture the setting in their mind and then try to find the perfect words to describe it so other can “see it.”
- Writers of realistic fiction remember that their character is made up, so they call their character he or she... not I.
- Writers of realistic fiction think about how to slow down and stretch out the problem in the story so the reader can see it playing like a movie.
- Writers stretch out the middle of a story to make it last longer for the reader... that makes it more interesting!
- Writers can let the reader hear the character talking (*dialogue*). That’s one way to stretch out the middle of a story.
- Writers can find the most important part, or the “heart,” of the story and say more about it (*elaboration*). That’s another way to stretch a story.
- Writers of realistic fiction can write what a character is thinking or feeling. That makes the character so interesting and believable.
- Writers of realistic fiction know the character(s) must solve the problem in a real way... there’s no magic in realistic fiction.
- Writers use transition words to keep their story moving along.

Revision

- Writers always read their work and think, “Does this make sense? Does it say what I wanted it to say?”
- Writers of realistic fiction make sure their stories are believable by conferring with a writing partner and asking for feedback.
- Sometimes, writers “try on” a new beginning or ending to see if it works better than the first one written.
- Writers reread their stories to check for wimpy words. They trade the wimpy words for stronger words... words with “muscle!”
- Writers reread their stories to see if any words are missing.

Realistic Fiction, Continued

Editing

- Writers reread their stories and listen for stop-spots at the ends of sentences. They make sure the right punctuation is there. (?, ., !)
- Writers reread their stories and listen for places where characters are talking. They wrap the talking inside quotation marks to give it a voice. (" ")
- Writers reread their stories and search for words that look funny and ask themselves, "Is that spelled right?" They use the word-wall and other resources to help them fix up words they know.

Publishing

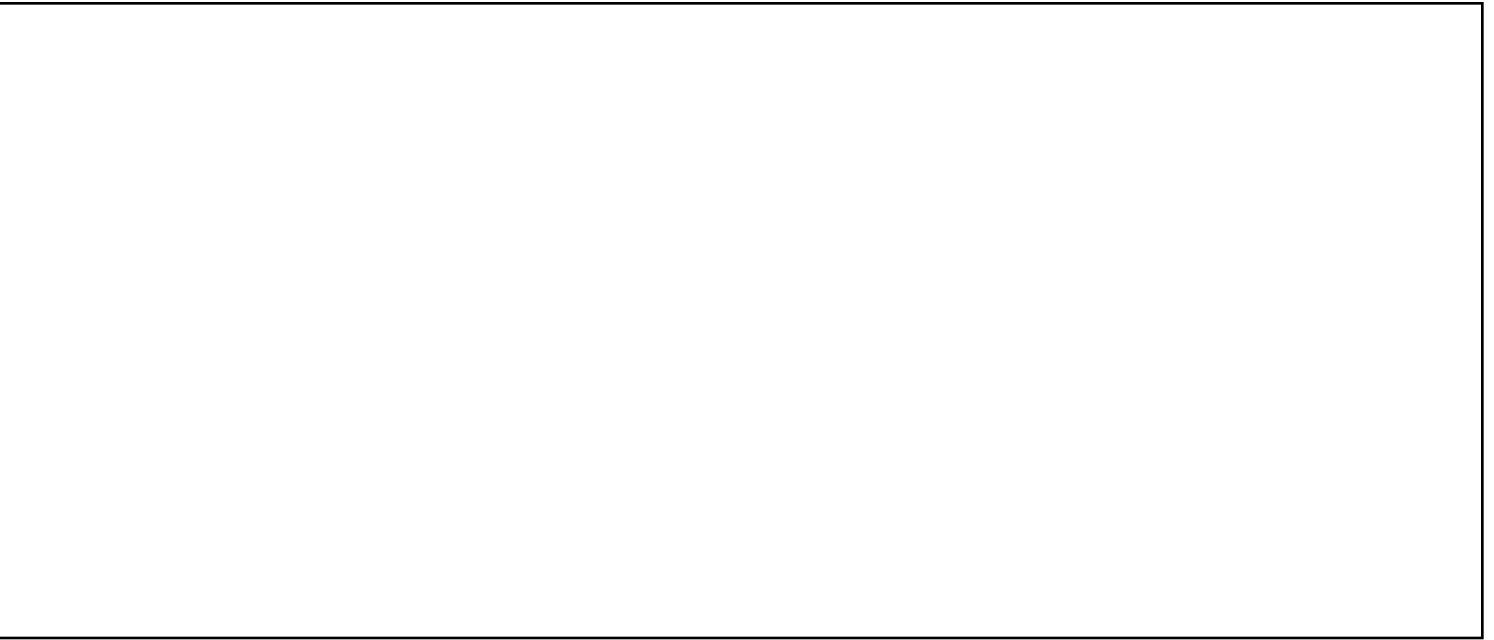
- Writers of realistic fiction brainstorm a few interesting titles for their story. They read them several times to see which one sounds best.
- Writers of realistic fiction design an exciting cover for their book, with catchy cover art and a big, bold title.
- Writers of realistic fiction know they created a great work. They list their name as the author and illustrator on the cover.
- Writers know there is an audience waiting to "meet" the author. They, sometimes, write an *All About the Author* blurb to include in the book.
- Writers remember the people who inspire them. They dedicate their stories to special people on a *Dedication Page*.

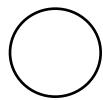
Possible Published Forms

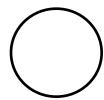
- Books with illustrations
- Books on tape (record students reading their stories... great support for fluency)
- Simple Chapter Books (for proficient writers who have multiple drafts about the same character)

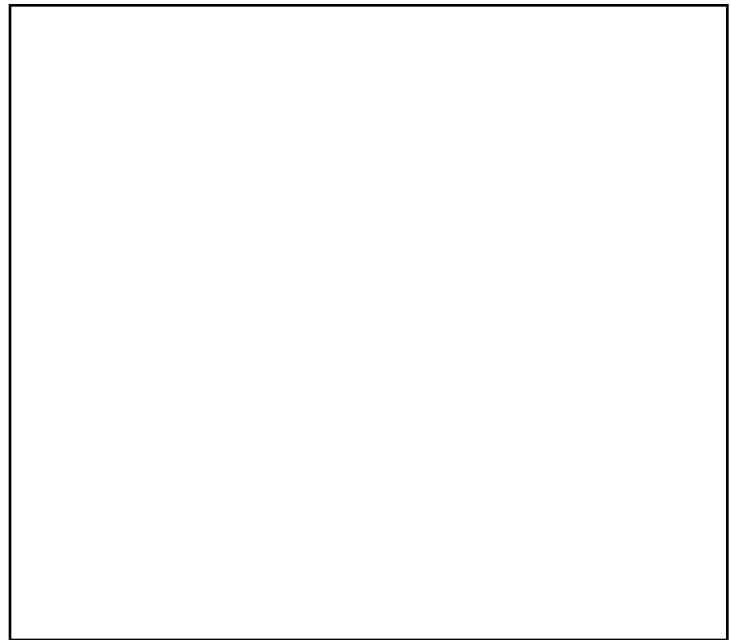
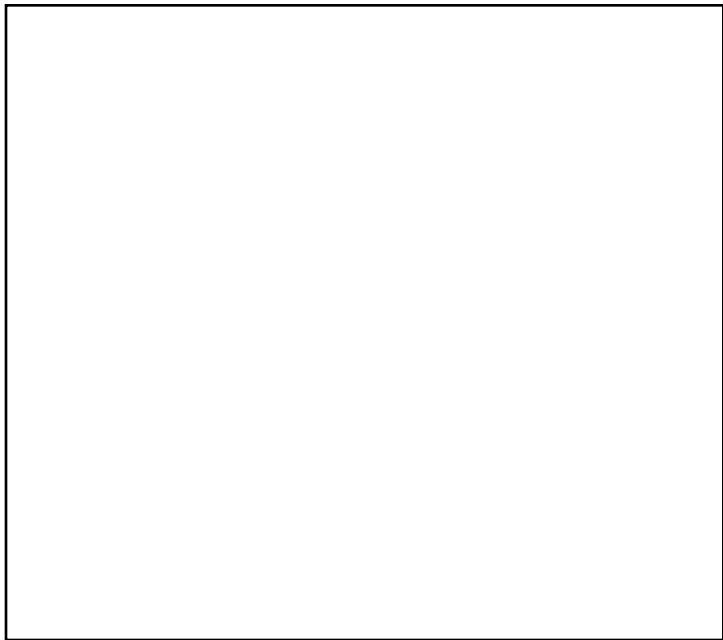
Ideas for Sharing & Celebrating

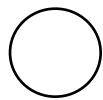
- Have a **Bedtime Stories Party** and let students read their stories to each other (pajamas, stuffed animals, blankets...)
- Put on **Puppet Shows** (children make a scenic backdrop and simple stick puppets for their characters and perform the stories)













Writing Rubric

Student:

Unit of Study: **Realistic Fiction**

4

3

2

1

What is being assessed?	More Than Expected	Most of the Time	Sometimes	Rarely
The writer uses a planning tool to plan story elements.				
The writer creates a believable character.				
The writer sets the story in a realistic place.				
The writer uses dynamic details to describe the setting.				
The writer creates one realistic problem for the character.				
The writer creates a logical solution for the problem.				
The writer uses transition words to move the story along.				
The writer stretches out the middle with dialogue or feelings.				
The writer spelled words carefully so the story is easy to read.				
The writer uses punctuation marks at the ends of sentences.				
The writer capitalizes names and the beginnings of sentences.				

Additional Notes:

Self-Assessment of My Published Piece

Author: _____

Title of Work: _____

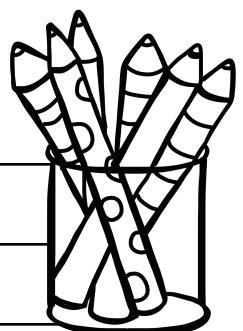
Unit: REALISTIC FICTION

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- My story is focused on one topic.
- My story has a beginning, middle, and end.
- My story is believable. It could happen in real life.
- I stretched out the middle to make it interesting.
- I spelled words carefully so my story is easy to read.
- I used punctuation marks at the ends of sentences.
- I used capital letters at the beginnings of sentences and names.

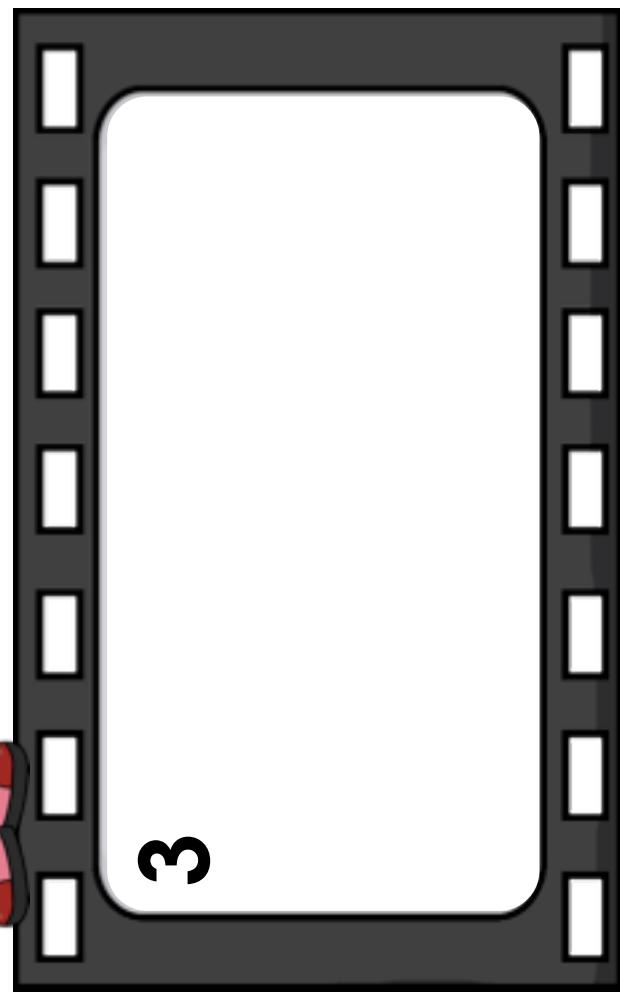
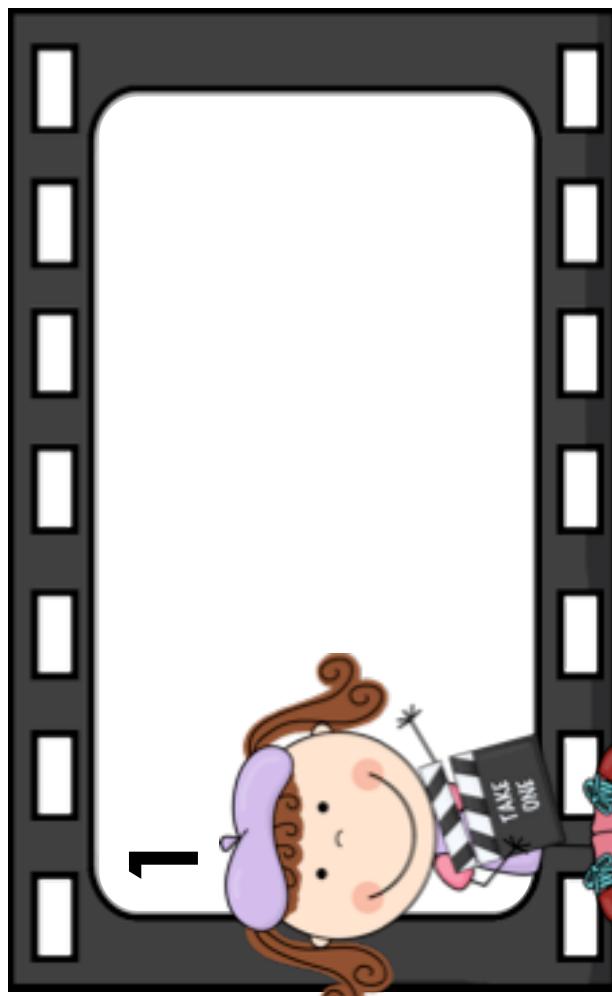
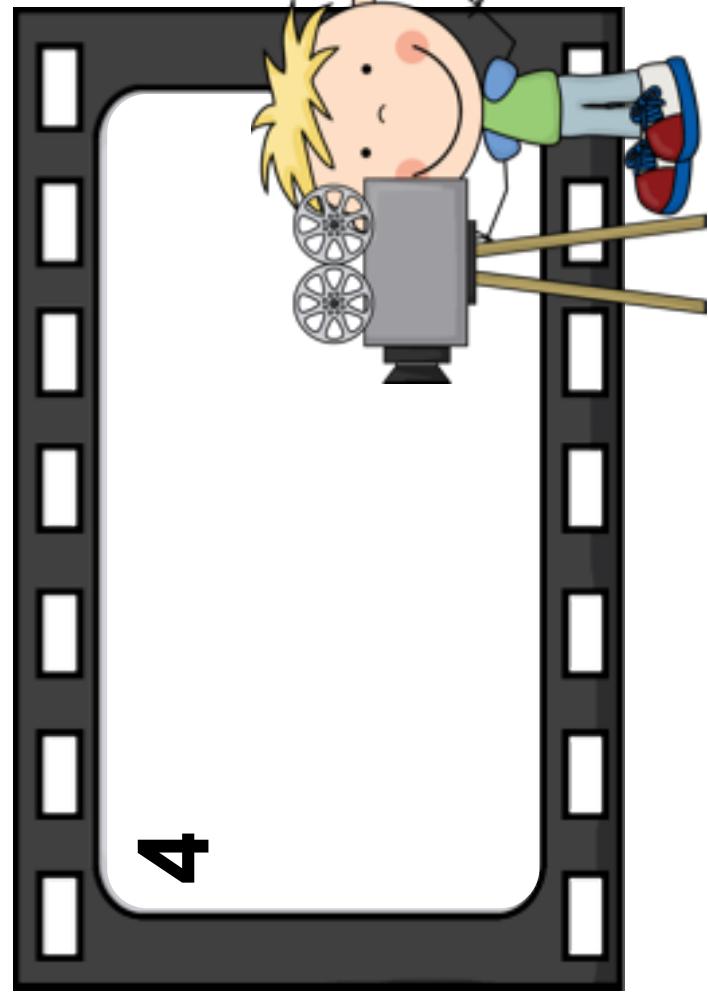
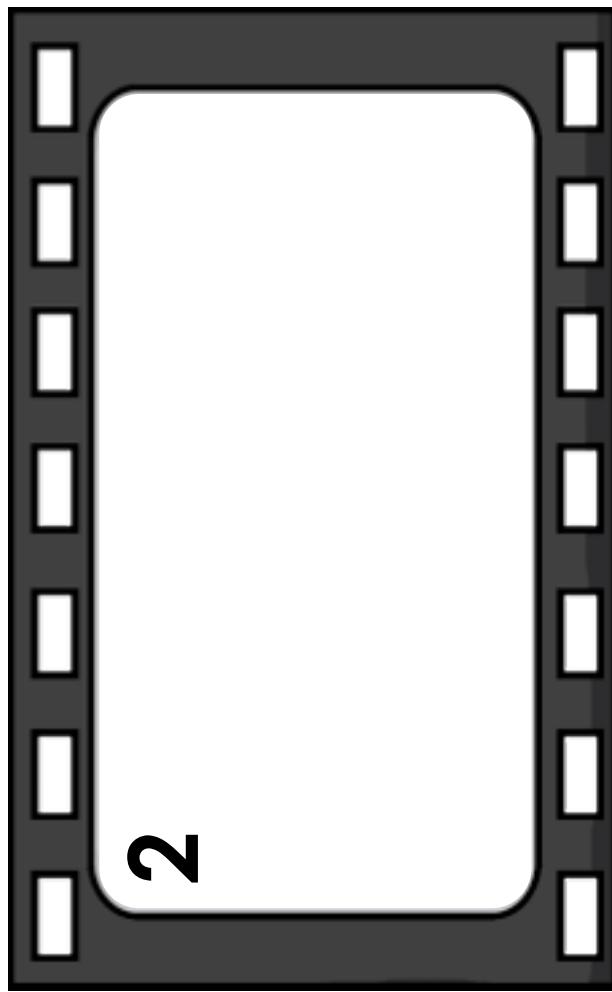
This is an idea I tried to help me stretch out the middle of my story to make it more interesting for my audience:

My best revising work on this piece was when...



Sketch-to-Stretch

Sketch to stretch out the problem in your story so it plays like a movie in the reader's mind.





Trying on Different Leads

Question Lead

Setting Lead

Quote Lead

Sensory Lead

Something else...

Toys
That
Teach

Toys That Teach

The following ideas use common toys to teach writing concepts to young children. Because the toys are familiar to most children, and because the lessons are visual, playful, and invite hands-on activity, the lessons lend themselves well to being understood and remembered. I like to use them when I'm introducing a concept for the first time. It helps the children comprehend the idea and later I can use mentor texts and modeling to show examples of the skills.

After using a toy to teach, I keep it displayed in the room so I can refer to it during follow-up lessons and when I confer with a child during independent writing time. Because the toy lessons are engaging, they are remembered by the children. That comes in handy when I want to remind a child about something we learned that could help him in his writing. I might say, "Remember when we played with the Legos and we talked about how writers add sentences onto other sentences to elaborate an idea? I wonder if that would work in your story today?"

Parent donations can be a great way to collect these toys, but if you can't get them, think of logical substitutes for the toys listed here. For example, you could trade the Slinky for an exercise band or use building blocks in place of the Legos.

Some of the toys lend themselves well to more than one idea. The Legos, for example, could be used to talk about story structure or elaboration. If you think multiple messages might confuse your students, choose the one that will best suit your needs and consider a substitution for the other (like blocks).

Note:

The following lessons were not written in any particular order. Please review them and choose a sequence that fits the writing genre you're studying, as well as your students' instructional needs.



Toy: Binoculars

Teach: Living a Writerly Life

Idea:

This lesson is simple, but important. Children need to be taught to lead “writerly lives.” Lucy Calkins writes, “Authorship begins in living with a sense of awareness.” And James Dickey echoes by saying, “A writer is someone who is enormously taken by things anyone else would walk by.” Show the children the binoculars and talk about how they are made to help us observe things in life, things we might not ordinarily pay attention to. Share the quote from James Dickey and explain what it means. Encourage the children to pay attention to their lives and to always observe the world around them. Revisit this concept often and soon they will begin to notice story ideas everywhere. You can help develop this awareness by modeling your thought processes during other minilessons. You might say, for example, “Today as I was driving to school, I saw two girls riding their bikes side by side. They reminded me of riding bikes with my sister we were little girls. I don’t even know them, but it’s funny how noticing them made me think of something important from my own life. I’m going to write about my sister today and a time we rode our bikes together.”



Toy: Play-Doh

Teach: Buried Treasure

Idea:

This lesson is about creating writing identities and realizing our lives are important enough to write about and share with others. You’ll need one jar of Play-Doh (or other soft clay). Show the children the Play-Doh and say, “This looks like a big bunch of nothing. What is this? What can you do with this?” Accept their responses and ask, “Have you ever sat down to work with clay without knowing what you might make? Have you ever been surprised by what you made?” Again, invite discussion. (During your questions and discussions, fiddle with the dough, all the while crafting something simple you can share with them at the end of the discussion, such as a snake or a diamond ring.) When the children are finished responding, show them what you made and remark, “Wow, this whole time we were talking, I’ve been working with this plain lump of clay and, little by little, I uncovered a treasure hiding inside. I wasn’t sure what I would make, but I like the way it turned out.” Talk about how writers do the same thing with paper and pencil. Show them how ordinary a piece of paper is until it has been played with... with WORDS... that inside this paper, a treasure is hiding... their treasure, a story. Talk about how sometimes we don’t know what our story will be about or how it will even end until we start playing with words on the paper. Writing is about unlocking our treasures!



Toy: Magnifying Glass

Teach: It's Alright to Be Little Bitty

Idea:

This lesson will teach the children that the little things in their lives matter; that there can be real significance in the things that seem small and that we shouldn't ignore those moments. Show the children the magnifying glass and explain how it works. Talk about the way it can help us see the greatness in something as small as an ant. Ask, "Have you ever had a time where you couldn't think of a great story idea? Does a good story have to be about something BIG like a day at Disney World or meeting a famous person?" Explain, "Let me share a secret about writing with you. The best stories are the stories about the little things that happen in our lives... the stories that sound like us and that come from our hearts... the little things that leave us with big memories. Finding a spider in your shoe, watching your dad shave in the morning, or noticing a worm on the sidewalk after a hard rain and wondering if it will make it back to the grass in time... these are all worth writing about. Don't ignore the small things. Sometimes, they're very important and leave us with big memories." Throughout the year, model your thought process as you select ideas for your stories. Focus on making meaning from small events rather than grand tales.



Toy: Legos

Teach: Building a Story Over Time

Idea:

Show the children the Legos and ask, "How are these used?" As most respond that they're used for building, make a connection. "Did you know that just as you can build a tower with these blocks, a writer can build a story with words? Let's pretend these Legos are words or sentences for a story. I'll add more pieces to this first Lego as I tell you a story about something that happened to me yesterday. Listen to my words and watch what happens." Begin telling your story and, with each new sentence, add another Lego. As your story lengthens, your tower will become taller. Somewhere in the middle of building a tower with blocks when you hear your mother say that it's time for dinner? You've worked so hard, but it's not finished. What can you do?" Invite the children to respond and gently lead them to the notion that the tower can stay just as it is until dinner is done (or even until the next day). Ask, "Can you keep working on it tomorrow?" Relate this idea to story writing, reminding children that often our best stories are written over a few days. Throughout the year, model this behavior in your own writing so children see the importance of returning to their work.



Toy: Legos

Teach: Beginning, Middle, End

Materials Needed:

3-4 Green Legos, 6-10 Yellow Legos, 1-2 Red Legos

Idea:

This lesson is similar to the previous Lego lesson but with one modification focused on the concept that there are three parts in a narrative story: the beginning, the middle, and the end. In this lesson, tell the children a story from your own life. As you build the story, also build the tower. For each sentence you share from the beginning (or lead) of your story, add a green Lego to symbolize Go...the story is starting. Then, build the middle of the story with yellow Legos. Remind the children that on a traffic light yellow means to slow down. Talk about how writers slow down, too, in the middle of their stories to make sure they tell all the important parts. As you wrap up the story with a short ending, add one or two red Legos to show that the story coming to a stop. When you are done building your story (and tower), the children should be able to clearly see that the middle of the story is the longest and the ending is the shortest.



Toy: Legos

Teach: Elaboration

(This is a good piggyback lesson to the previous one.)

Idea:

To help young writers experiment with elaboration, use Legos to show how you can take one idea and keep building upon it by adding more information. Each time you add another piece of relevant information, add another Lego right on top of it so the children can see how the idea is "growing" in size. Say, "*Elaborate means tell more*, so as I tell more, I'm going to add more so you can see more." Sample dialogue:

- 1st Block: "My dad let go of the bike."
- 2nd Block: "I was feeling very scared."
- 3rd Block: "My hands were so sweaty and shaky."
- 4th Block: "The handle bars were twisting back and forth because I was so nervous."

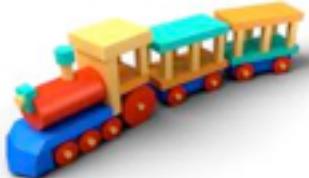


Toy: Stacking Rings

Teach: Logical Order

Idea:

Use any set of stacking rings to illustrate the idea that things must go together in a certain order to "make sense." Play around with the rings and purposely arrange them out of the logical order. Ask the children, "Does this look right? Does this make sense?" Discuss how this toy has an order that makes sense just like our stories do and when we have parts that are out of order, our stories don't make sense either. A few times during this lesson, arrange the rings incorrectly and ask for volunteers to "fix up" the rings. Talk about how when we rearrange confusing parts of our stories we are helping it to make sense, just like when we rearrange the toy.



Toy: Train

Teach: Story Structure

Idea:

Use a toy train to talk about how stories are structured with three parts... a beginning, a middle, and an end. A train is the perfect toy to illustrate this concept because the engine is strong just like the beginning or lead of a story must be. The engine is strong enough to pull the whole train and the lead must be strong enough to pull the reader into the story. The cars in the middle of the train carry the important stuff, just like the middle of a story carries the most important parts. And the caboose is little which is similar to a story ending, "short and sweet." If your children are ready to learn about stretching out the middle of a story by including several events, add more cars to the middle of the train to illustrate how the middle of a story is often the longest part.



Toy: Magnet

Teach: Leads

Idea:

This simple lesson illustrates the “attractive” power of a good, strong lead. Use magnets to show and talk about how things are attracted to one another. Then, connect that concept to writing by discussing how a good, strong lead (or beginning) will attract a reader to a story. The better the attraction, the more likely the reader will hang onto the story just like strong magnets hang onto each other.

From here, it will be important to study mentor texts and discover how other authors begin their stories. Make a chart of the types of leads you and your students uncover in books and encourage them to try them in their own writing. Some examples of leads include: sounds, questions, dialogue, character description, setting description, or an amazing fact.



Toy: Marbles

Teach: Focus

Idea:

For this lesson, you will need many marbles in a clear, plastic cup. One of the goals of this lesson is to teach children how to maintain focus in a story and avoid those “bed-to-bed” stories children often write in which they tell everything they did from the moment the sun came up until it set. Tell the children you have a great idea for a story today and that you’ll pull out a marble each time you have another idea to add to the story. As you continue to brainstorm ideas out loud for your story, pull a marble out of the cup with one hand and place it in the other hand. Keep sharing new ideas and putting more marbles into your other hand. Exaggerate the brainstorming of unrelated ideas until marbles start spilling out of your hand. Talk about how it was very hard to handle all those marbles at once and how it can be hard to handle so many ideas at once as a writer. Say, “Sometimes we have so many ideas in our stories, the story becomes hard to handle.” Teach how much easier it is to limit yourself to just one main idea and share how that helps maintain focus. For example, instead of writing about your whole day at the beach, maybe you just write a really focused story on searching for shells.

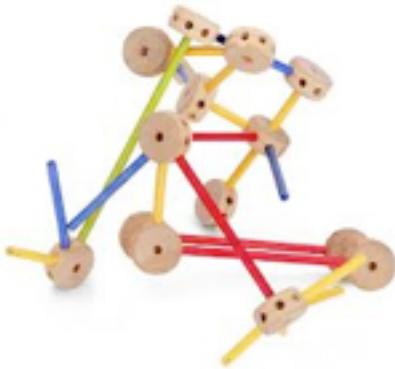


Toy: Mr. Potato Head

Teach: Details

Idea:

Start the lesson with a plain Mr. Potato Head (no body parts added). Talk about how plain and uninteresting he is without his missing parts. Add one body part and ask, "How does he look now?" Talk about how the body parts are like the details in our stories. Without them, our stories are plain and uninteresting, but the more we add, the more interesting and clear our stories become... just like Mr. Potato Head. Sometimes, when we leave details out of stories, the reader doesn't have a clear picture of what we're trying to share. Say, "Remember when Mr. Potato Head didn't have body parts? It wasn't clear what he was supposed to look like, was it? That's just like our stories. The details help the reader see what we want them to see."



Toy: Tinker Toys

Teach: Revision

Idea:

To begin this minilesson, build a weak structure made of Tinker Toys and be sure it's one that won't stand on its own. When complete, try to stand it on the floor in front of the children and watch it fall. Say, "Oh boy, this isn't what I wanted it to look like. I wanted it to stand. I wanted it to be strong. What should I do?" The students will have several ideas on how to make the structure stronger. Allow a few minutes for them to share their thoughts. Then say, "It seems like I need to add some more pieces and move a few others around. The way I built it the first time just isn't strong enough." Redesign the Tinker Toys until you have a sturdy structure that will stand on its own. Say, "Now it looks like I planned," and explain that it happened because you were willing to go back and make some changes. Discuss how writers go through this same process when changing their stories to make them stronger. Tell them this is called revision and it's something important all writers do. Over the next few days, show the children a piece of your own writing. Think aloud and model how you add and move parts to make your story stronger.



Toy: Yo-Yo Teach: Circular Endings

Idea:

The way a yo-yo always comes back to the starting position is a good way to demonstrate one type of ending writers use in their stories... a circular ending.

After you discuss what it means to end a story in a circular way, you'll need to show the students examples of this type of ending in literature and list it as a possible ending writers use in their stories. Study other pieces of literature with your students and make a chart of the different types of endings you discover together. Other ways to end stories include: using a sound, sharing some dialogue, describing a feeling, or sharing a lesson learned. One of my favorite ways to end a story is with an opposite. For example, if I was mad in the beginning of my story, I'm happy by the end. If I can't swim in the beginning of my story, I can swim by the end.



Toy: Glitter Teach: Magic Writing Dust

Idea:

Sometimes, the energy during writing workshop just seems to hit a low. When that happens, perk up your young writers with "magic writing dust." This comes from the magic writing fairies to help writers break through a dull spot. :)

Or try special pencils.

Provide colored paper.

Play different music.

Bring in lamps from home and turn off the overhead lights.

Rearrange their desks. "A change in view can make a change in you."



Toy: Slinky Teach: Stretching Sounds

Idea:

Who doesn't love a Slinky? It's a great toy to use for showing children how writers stretch out the sounds in words they don't know how to spell. Pull the slinky slowly while stretching out the sounds in words that aren't on your word wall... they already know how to spell those words. After you stretch it out, snap the Slinky back together while you snap the word back as a whole. Encourage the children to stretch an imaginary Slinky while you're holding the toy. Do this several times, allowing different volunteers to stretch the Slinky, too.

For greater engagement during this activity, provide a small Slinky to each child (or pairs of children). They often can be found inexpensively at discount stores.



Toy: Dominoes Teach: Word Spacing

Idea:

Set up the dominoes so there is a space between each one and so that, when you touch the end domino, they'll all fall over, one by one, in a smooth chain reaction. Show the children how the dominoes *flow*; how one falls into the next. Demonstrate this action again, asking for volunteers to set up the dominoes and push them over as before. Remark how this works because spaces have been left between each domino. Then ask, "What do you think would happen if we set up the dominoes in a line without leaving a space between each one?" Try this and have the students notice that there is no longer a smooth flow, but rather the dominoes are pushed together and fall into a pile. Connect this demonstration to writing by saying, "Imagine that each domino is a word. We put a lot of dominoes together to make a long line just like writers put a lot of words together to make a whole sentence. When pushed, the dominoes really flowed well when we built the line with spaces. This works when you are writing stories, too! When you leave spaces between words, the sentence is smooth and easy to read because it flows." Continue by talking about how difficult it is to read writing that doesn't have spaces. Sharing a non-example on chart paper and trying to read it out loud is a funny way to model.



Toy: A Red Ball

Teach: Capitals and Periods

Idea:

Begin the lesson by bouncing a ball and letting it roll to a complete stop. When the ball is done rolling, pick it up and show it to the children. Explain that a sentence goes through a similar process as it *rolls* through a story. Discuss how the sentence begins with a capital letter that is *higher* than the other letters that follow, just like the beginning bounce of the ball is *higher* than the other bounces that follow. Also, point out that when the ball stops bouncing, it's like the ball at the end of a sentence of words... a period.

Then ask, "Imagine if every time you bounced a ball, it was the last time you could play with it because it never stopped bouncing. A bouncing ball needs to stop or it will roll further and further away until it is completely lost." Connect this observation to the structure of a sentence by explaining that a sentence that keeps on going and going and never stops causes the reader of the sentence to "get lost," too. Reinforce the need to end sentences with a ball... the period.

(I like to use a red ball to symbolize stopping, like the red on a stop sign or traffic light.)



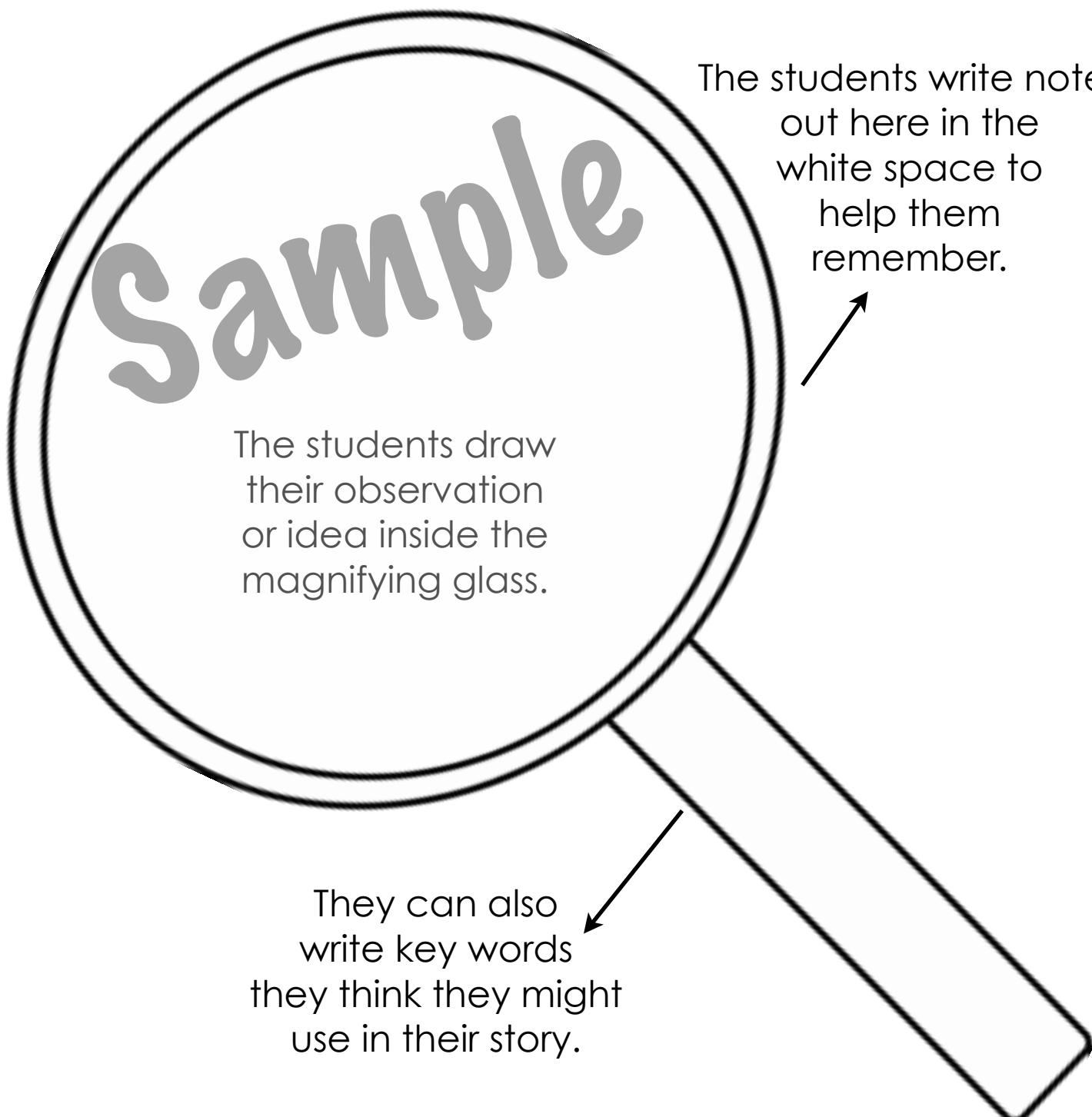
Toy: Bubbles

Teach: Paragraphs

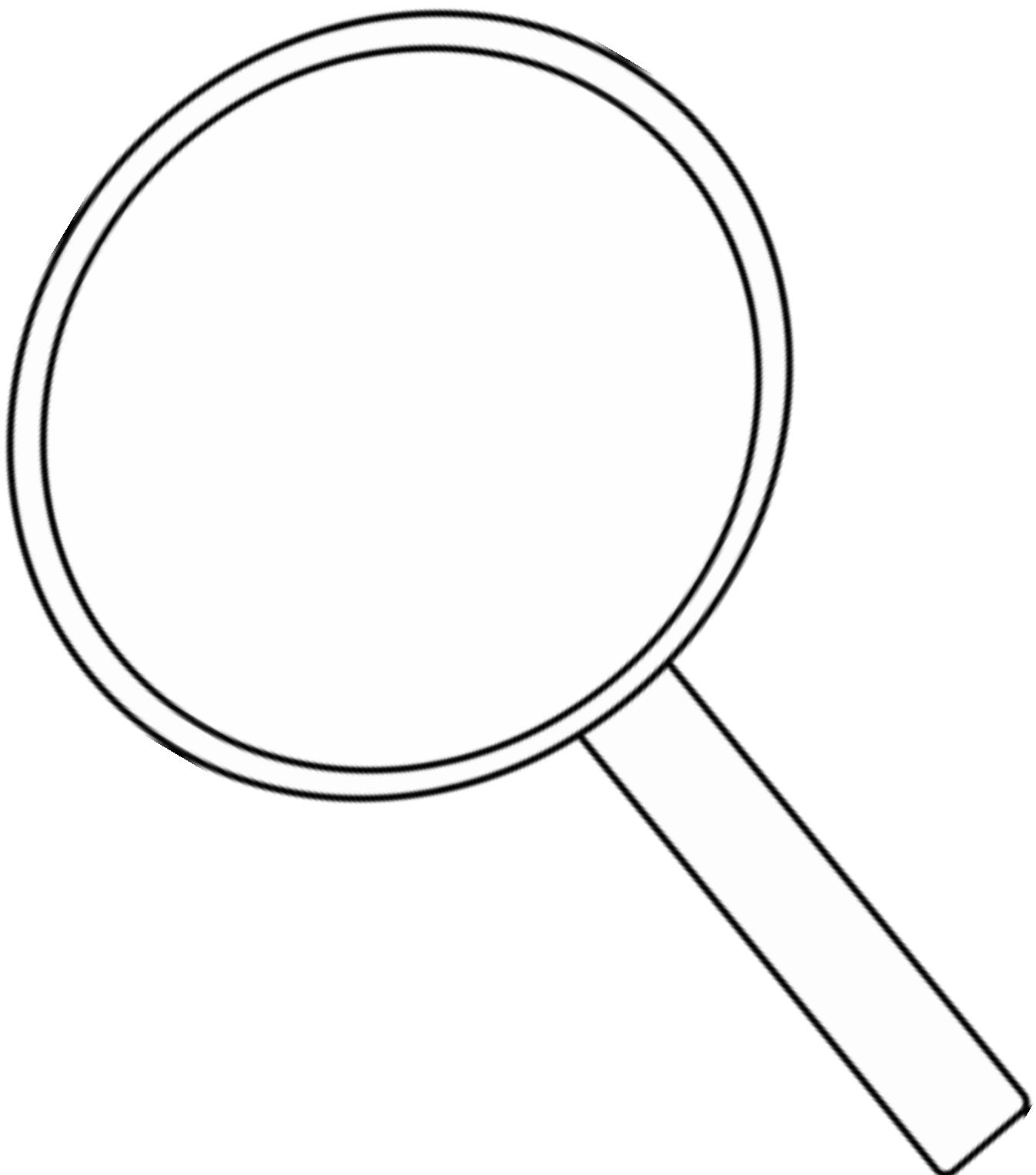
Idea:

Explain to the children that writers use paragraphs to break up one big, important idea into smaller parts. Each "part" is called a paragraph and is like its own little story, but all the paragraphs are focused and work together to tell more about the one big idea at the beginning. Take out the bubbles and blow into the wand once. Have students watch as you blow air into the wand, causing many bubbles to float in the air. Say, "Wow. did you see that? With just one breath, I made lots of tiny bubbles! Watch again." Repeat a few more times and continue, "I can do this in my writing, too! If I'm writing about one big idea, like my fun day at the beach, I can break up that story into smaller parts called paragraphs. I can write one paragraph about swimming, one about searching for shells, and one about building a castle. All three paragraphs tell more about my one big idea... my fun day at the beach!"

I spy with my two eyes,
A great idea that's such a prize!



I spy with my two eyes,
A great idea that's such a prize!



Words for Writers



In this section, [Words for Writers](#), I have included spelling resources for children to use independently during writing workshop. We provide a hole-punched copy to each student for his or her writing notebook. Blank copies have also been included in this section so you and your students can personalize words.

Another way to use these sheets is to enlarge them to poster-size and use to teach from during your minilessons. I've also placed 8 1/2 x 11 size copies in clear acrylic frames to display on team desks so everyone can easily see what was just taught without always having to go inside their writing notebooks.

Of course, the best tool for spelling independence is a well-planned, thoughtful word wall that you build over time with your class. It should contain common sight words, word family words, contractions, students' names, etc.

Words for Special Days

Halloween

pumpkin
costume
candy
trick-or-treat
carve

night
October
fall
boo
ghost



Thanksgiving

turkey
dinner
feast
family
thankful

football game
November
celebrate
potatoes
grace



Christmas

tree
Santa Claus
presents
sleigh
letter
decorate

cookies
milk
reindeer
elves
bells
ornaments



St. Patrick's Day

tricky
pinch
luck
green
trouble

clover
leprechaun
sneaky
hide
March



Easter

bunny
basket
eggs
hunt
candy

spring
carrots
decorate
hide
church



Birthdays

ice cream
cake
sing
happy
thank you

gifts
presents
friends
party
balloons



Words for Special Days

Halloween



Thanksgiving



Christmas



St. Patrick's Day



Easter



Birthdays



Family words



Grandpa
Grandad
Papa

Grandma
Nana
Grandmother



Cousins



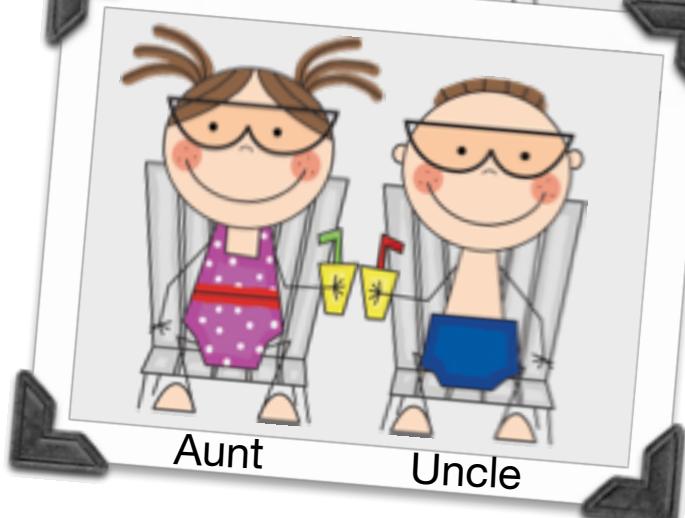
Brother

Baby

Sister

Dad
Daddy
Father

Mom
Mommy
Mother



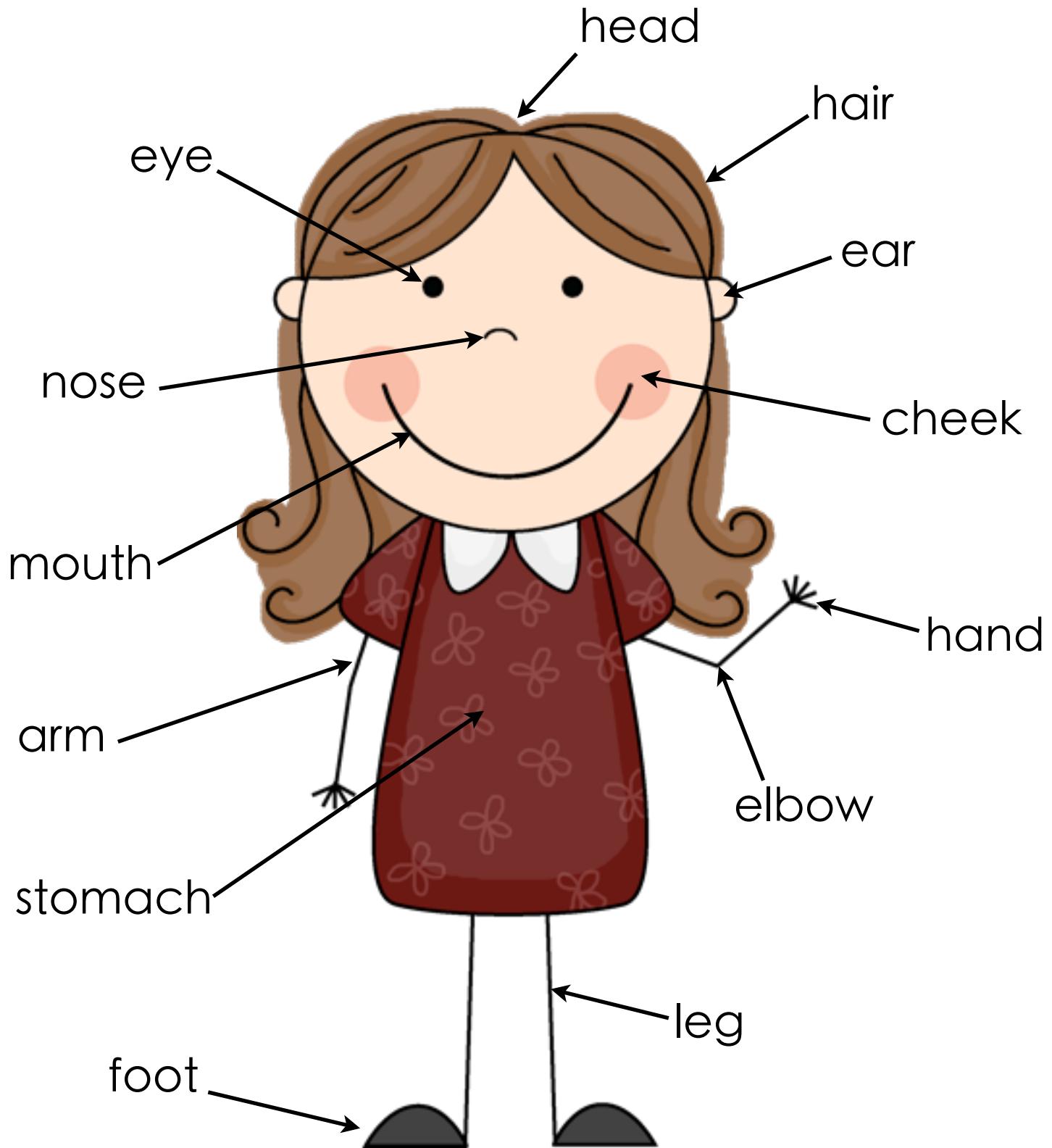
Aunt

Uncle

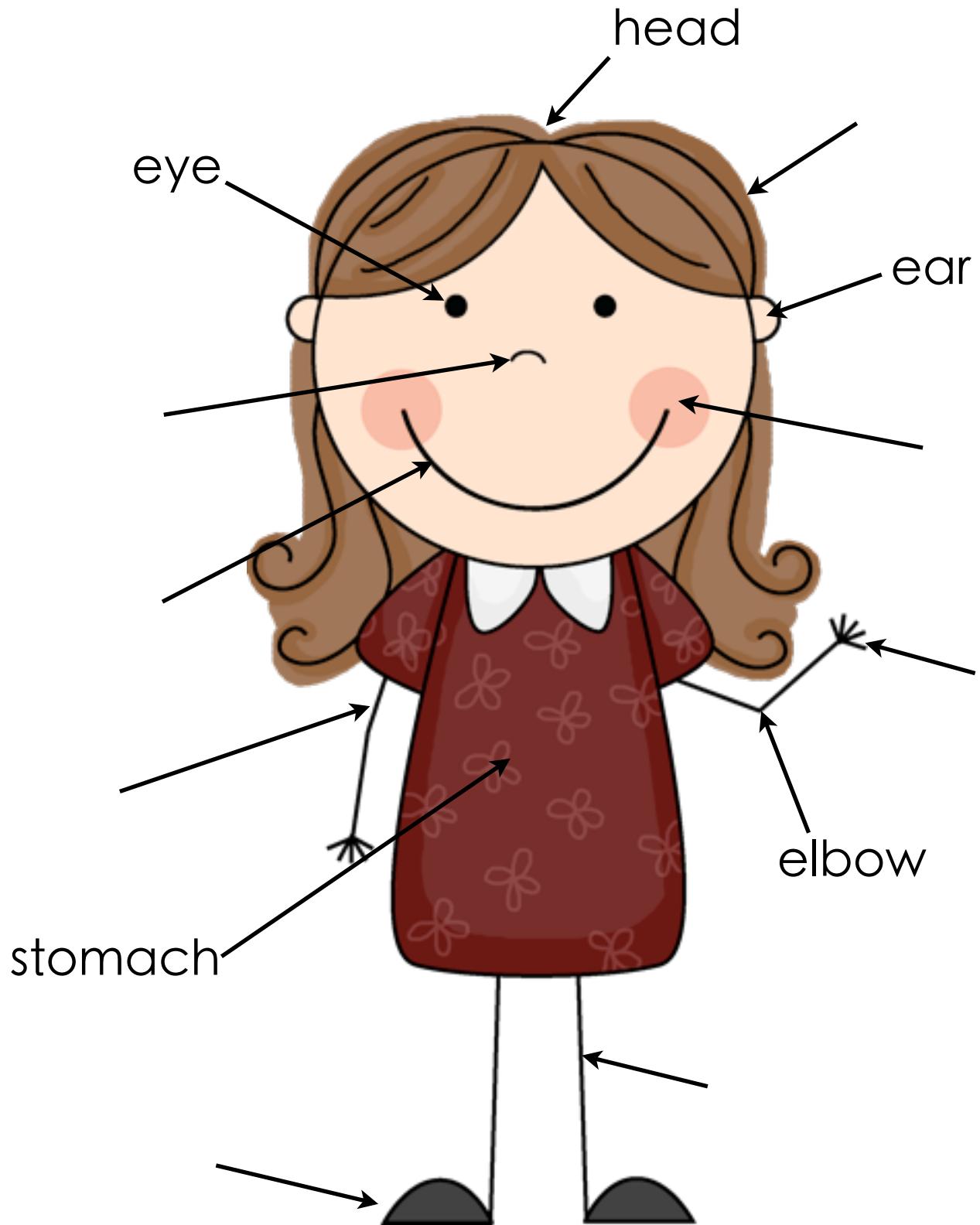
Family words



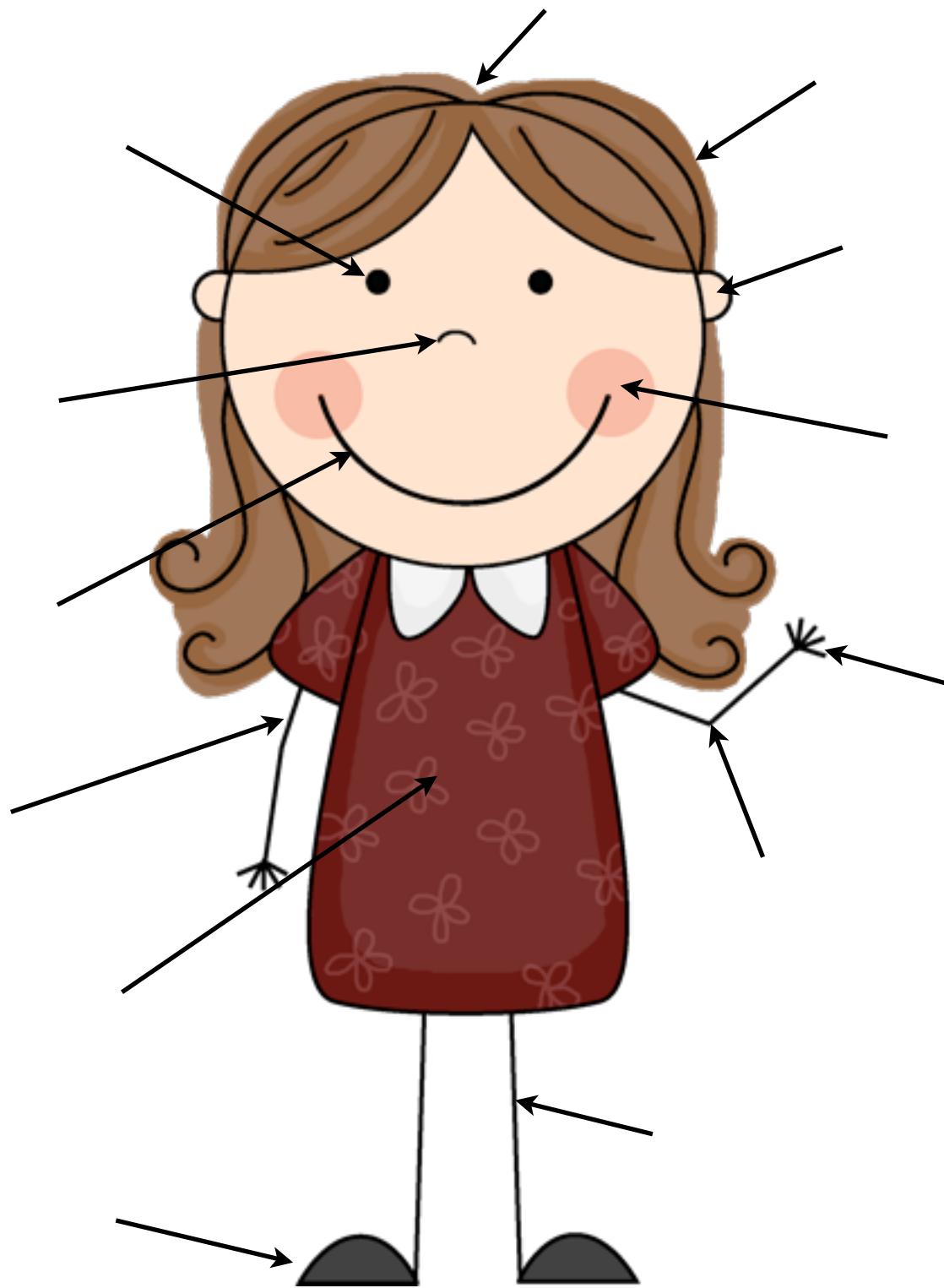
Body Words



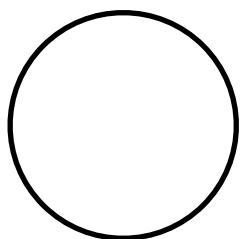
Body Words



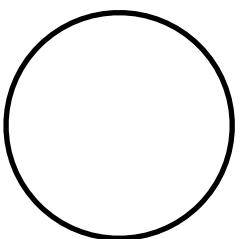
Body Words



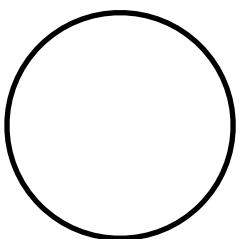
Color Words



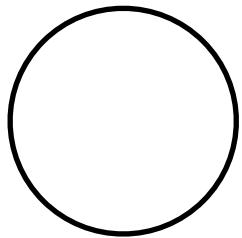
red



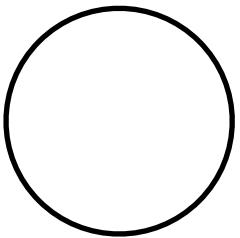
orange



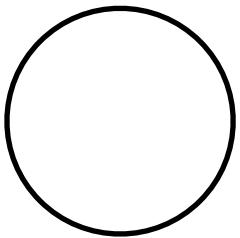
yellow



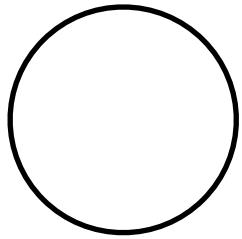
green



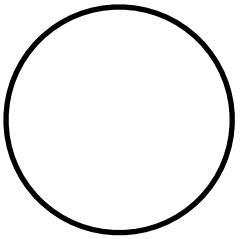
blue



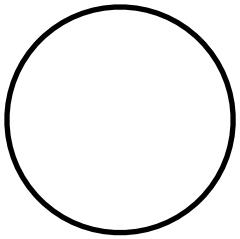
purple



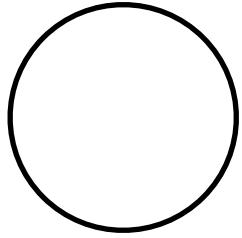
pink



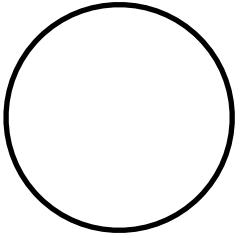
white



gray



brown



black

Can you color
the circles?



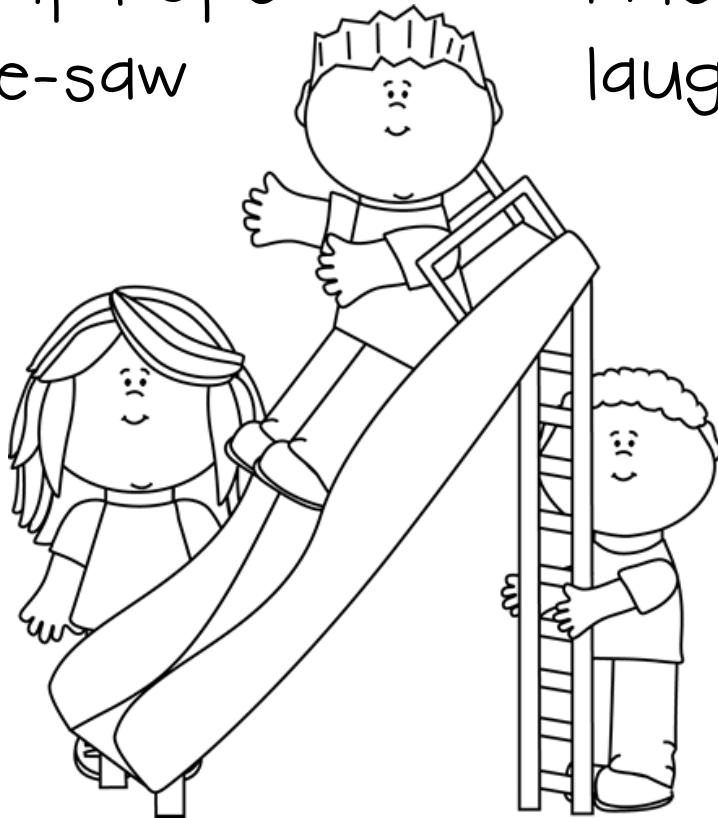
Playground Words

Nouns

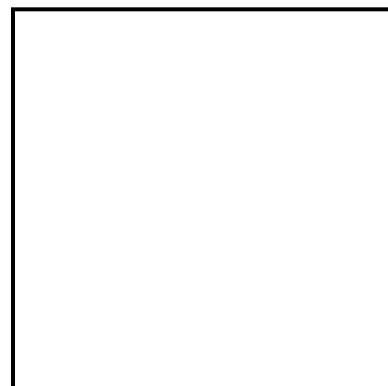
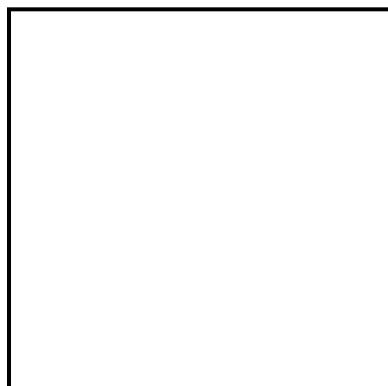
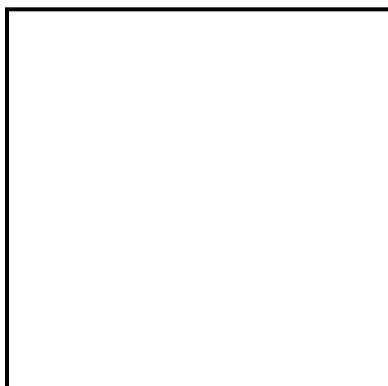
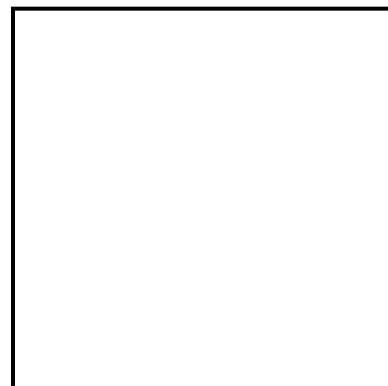
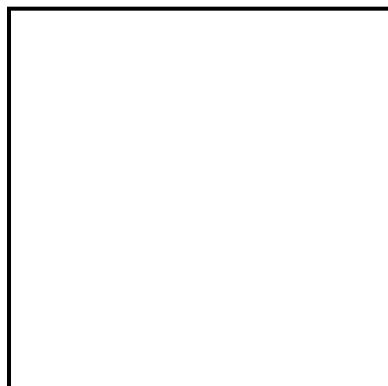
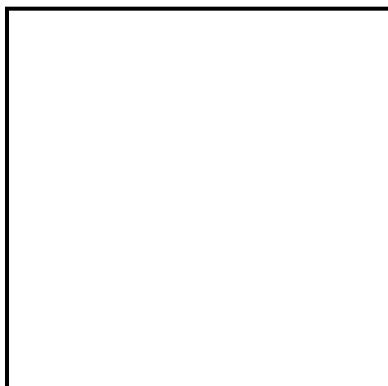
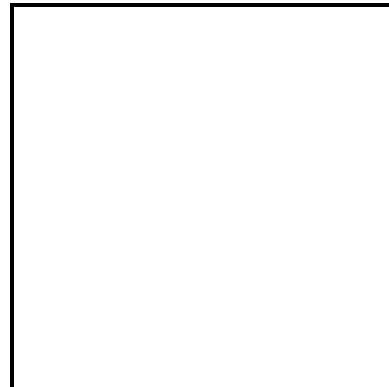
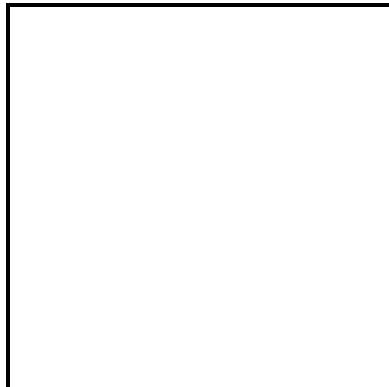
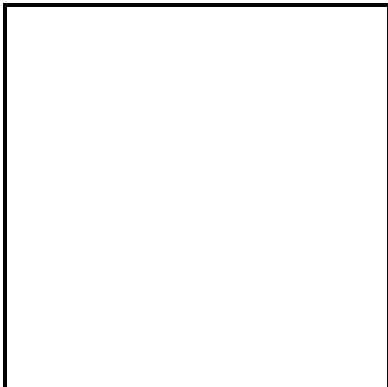
slide
swing
ball
monkey bars
friends
grass
jump rope
see-saw

Verbs

run
play
throw
kick
fall
climb
hide
laugh



Playground Words



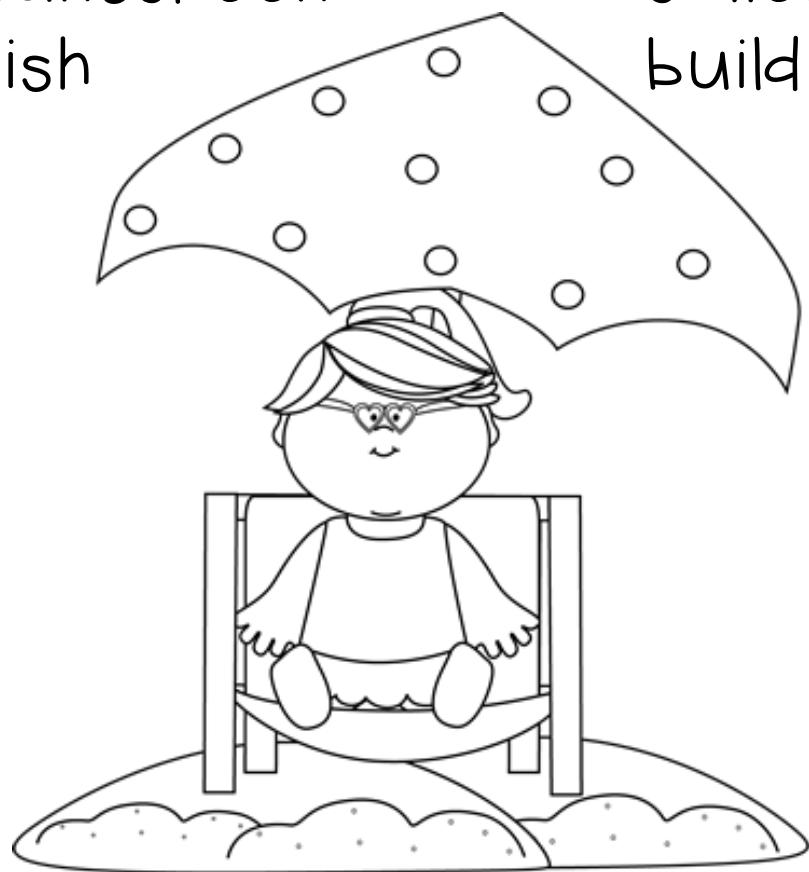
Beach Words

Nouns

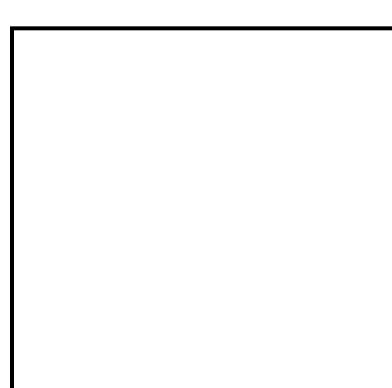
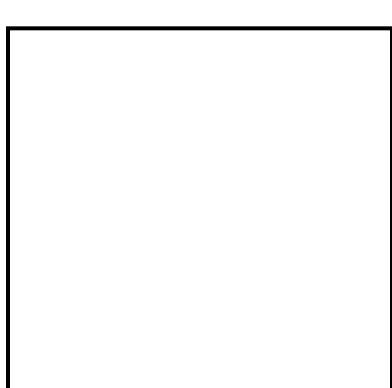
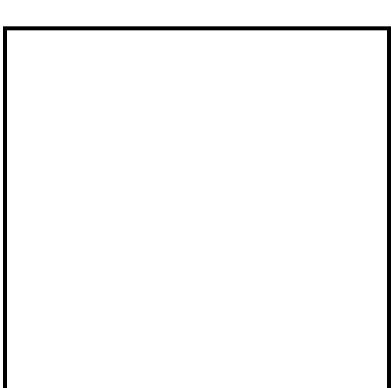
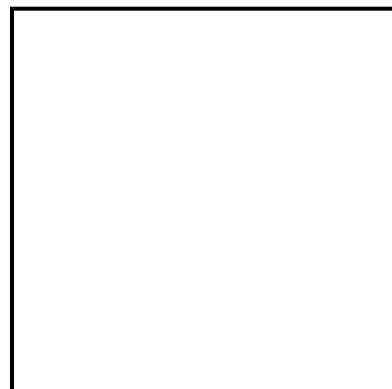
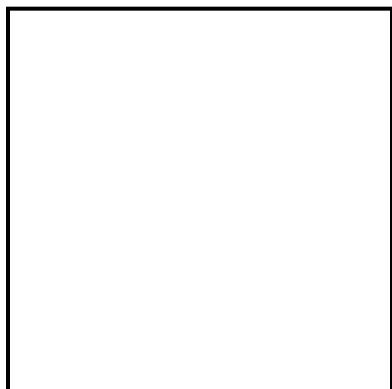
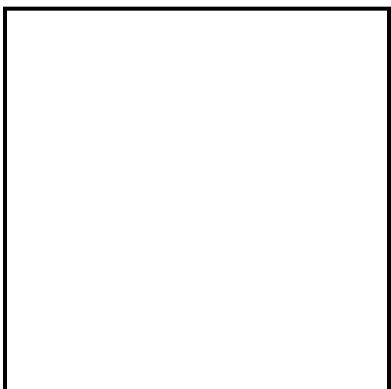
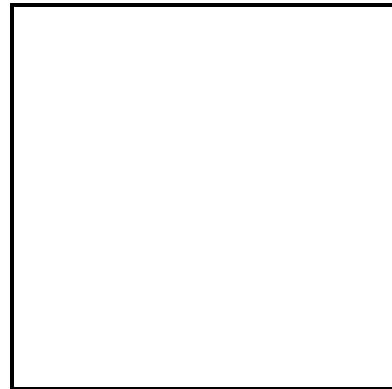
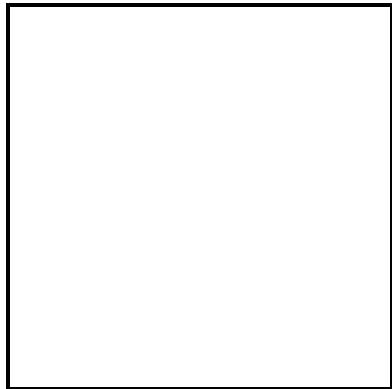
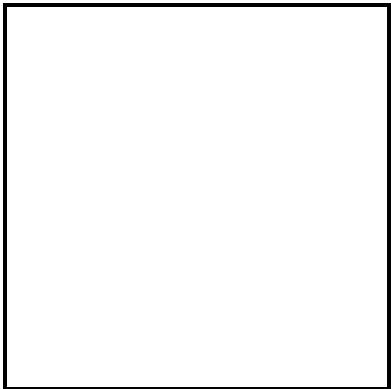
bucket
towel
shovel
raft
sand
water
sunscreen
fish

Verbs

swim
play
throw
kick
dig
hunt
collect
build



Beach Words



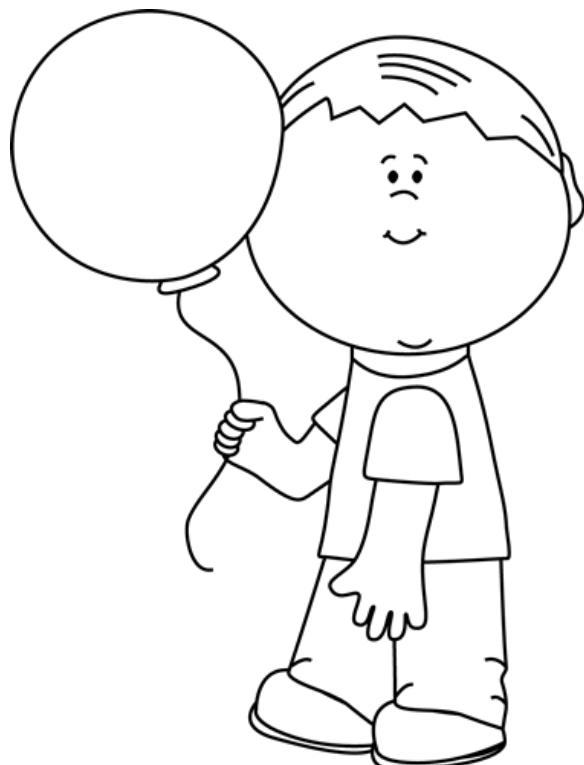
Party Words

Nouns

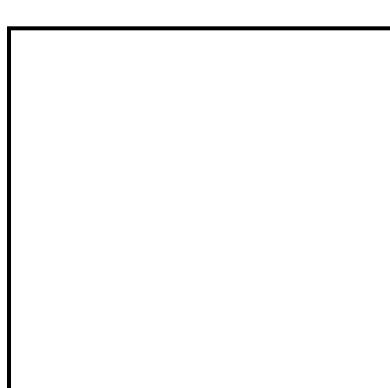
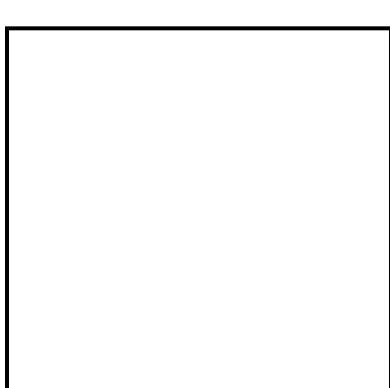
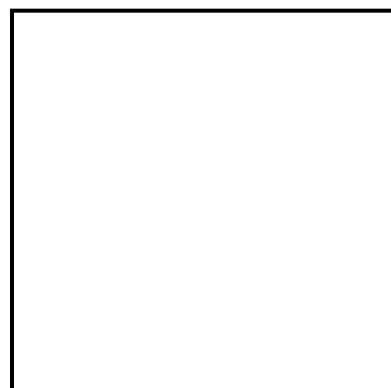
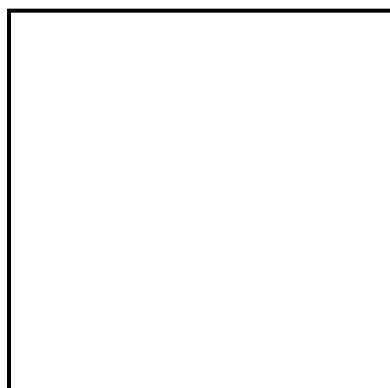
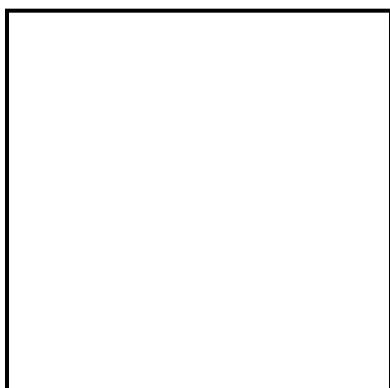
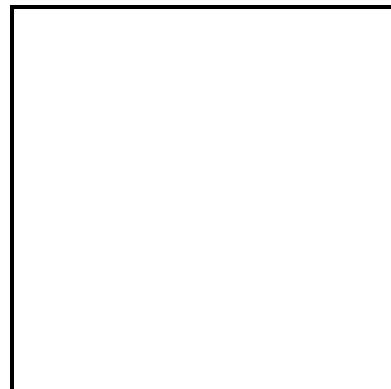
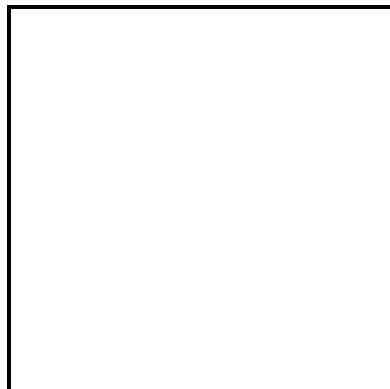
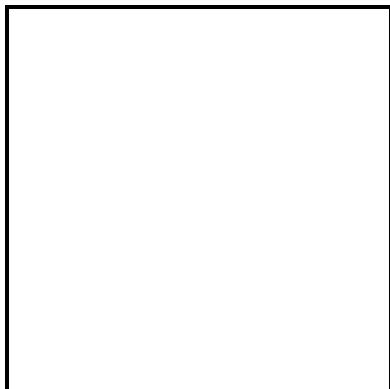
present
gift
cake
candles
ice cream
friends
balloons
treats

Verbs

play
give
open
thank
yell
scream
laugh
shout



Party Words



SPORTS

Words



volleyball

ball spike
net bump
serve court
game point



soccer

goal goalie
ball field
team pass
run kick



baseball

bat glove
catcher pitcher
bases strike
umpire home run



basketball

net hoop
guard dunk
dribble pass
shoot court



football

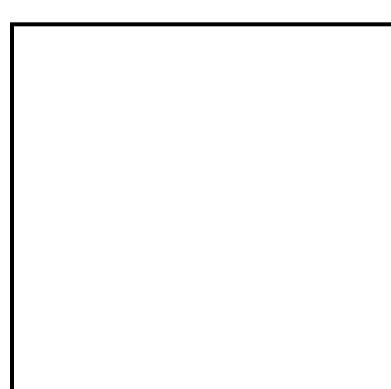
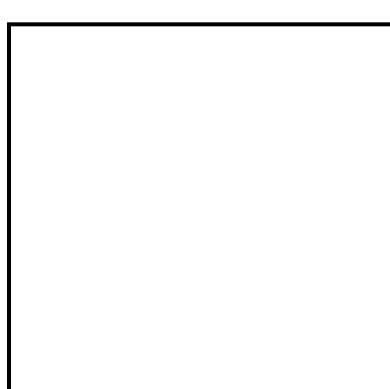
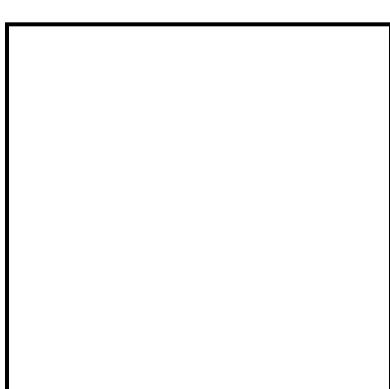
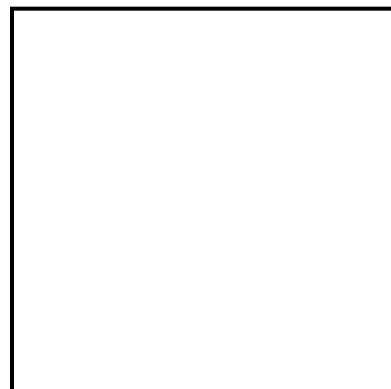
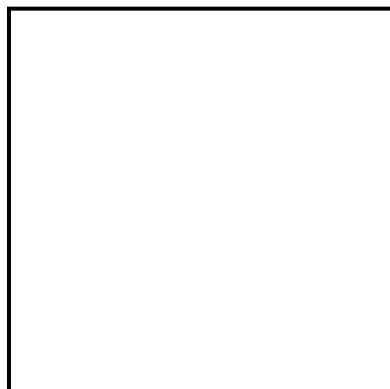
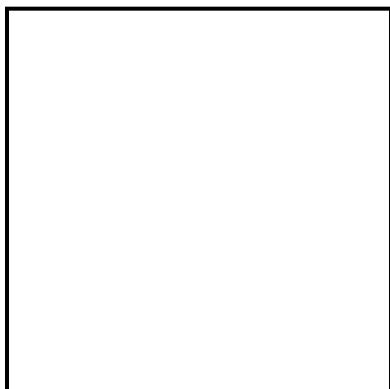
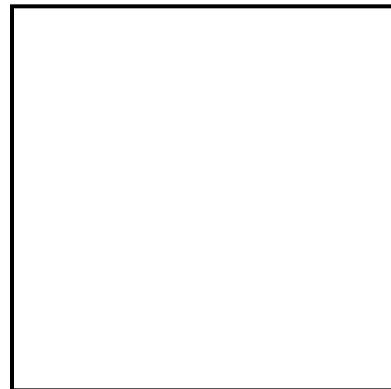
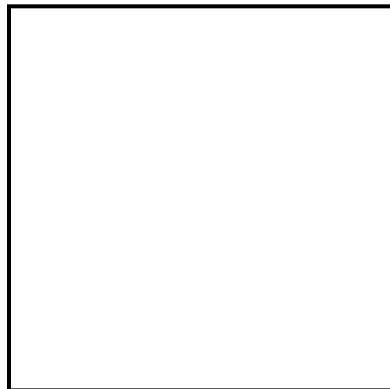
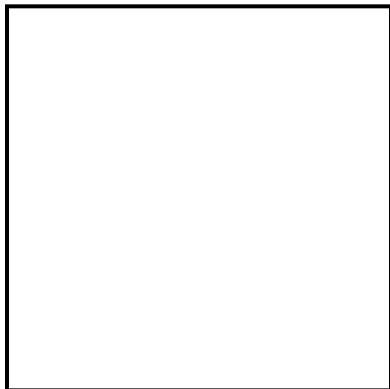
pass quarterback
tackle touchdown
block huddle
intercept hike



tennis

serve racket
ball return
net court
partner game

Sports Words



WHERE WORDS

in

on

under
below

over
above

across

through
behind

WORD WALL WORDS

A a	B b	C c
D d	E e	F f
G g	H h	I i
J j	K k	L l

M m

N n

O o

P p

Q q

R r

S s

T t

U u

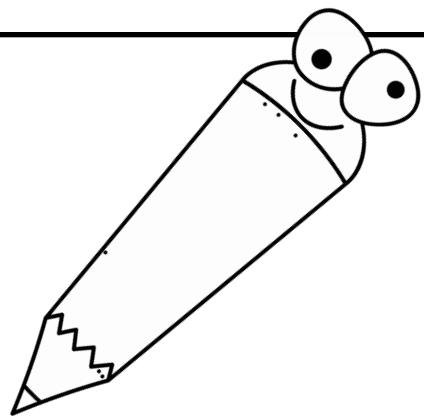
V v

W w

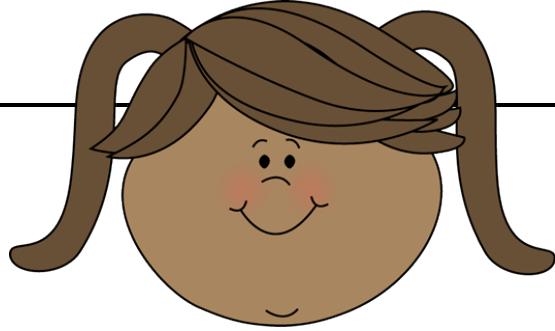
X x

Y y

Z z



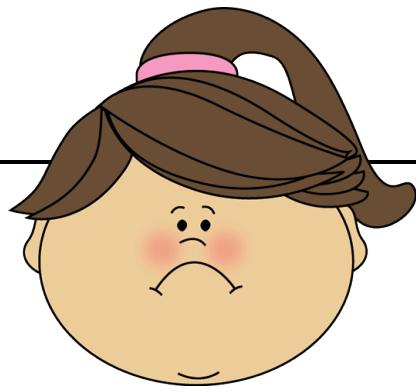
Writers Use **FEELiNG** Words



happy

glad

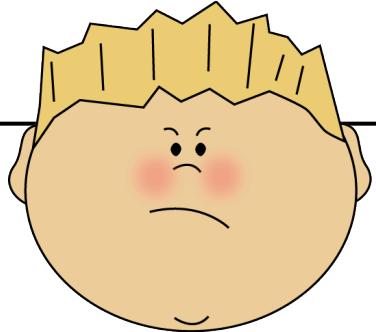
proud



sad

upset

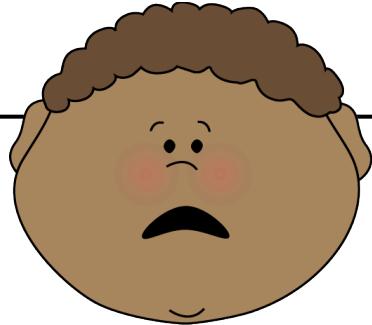
disappointed



mad

angry

furious

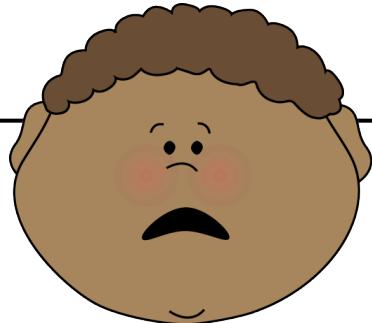
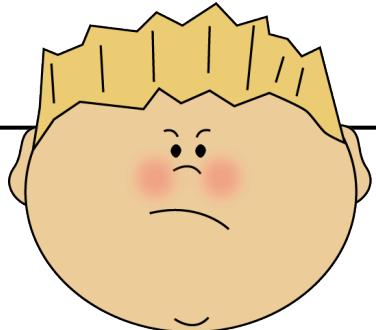
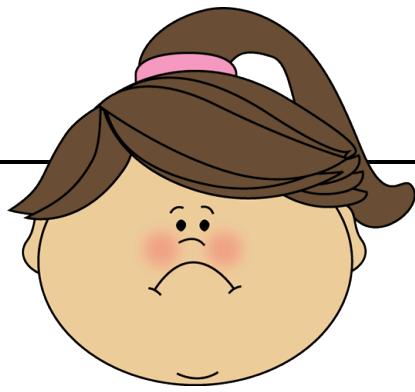
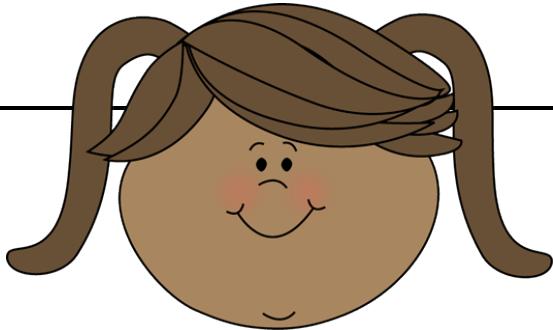


scared

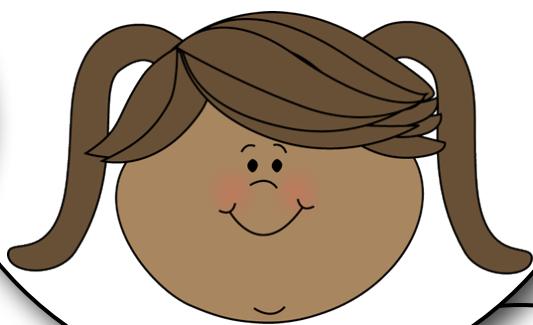
nervous

worried

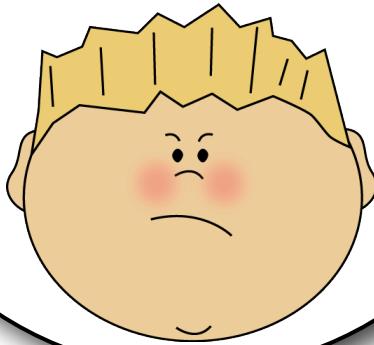
Writers Use **FEELiNG** Words

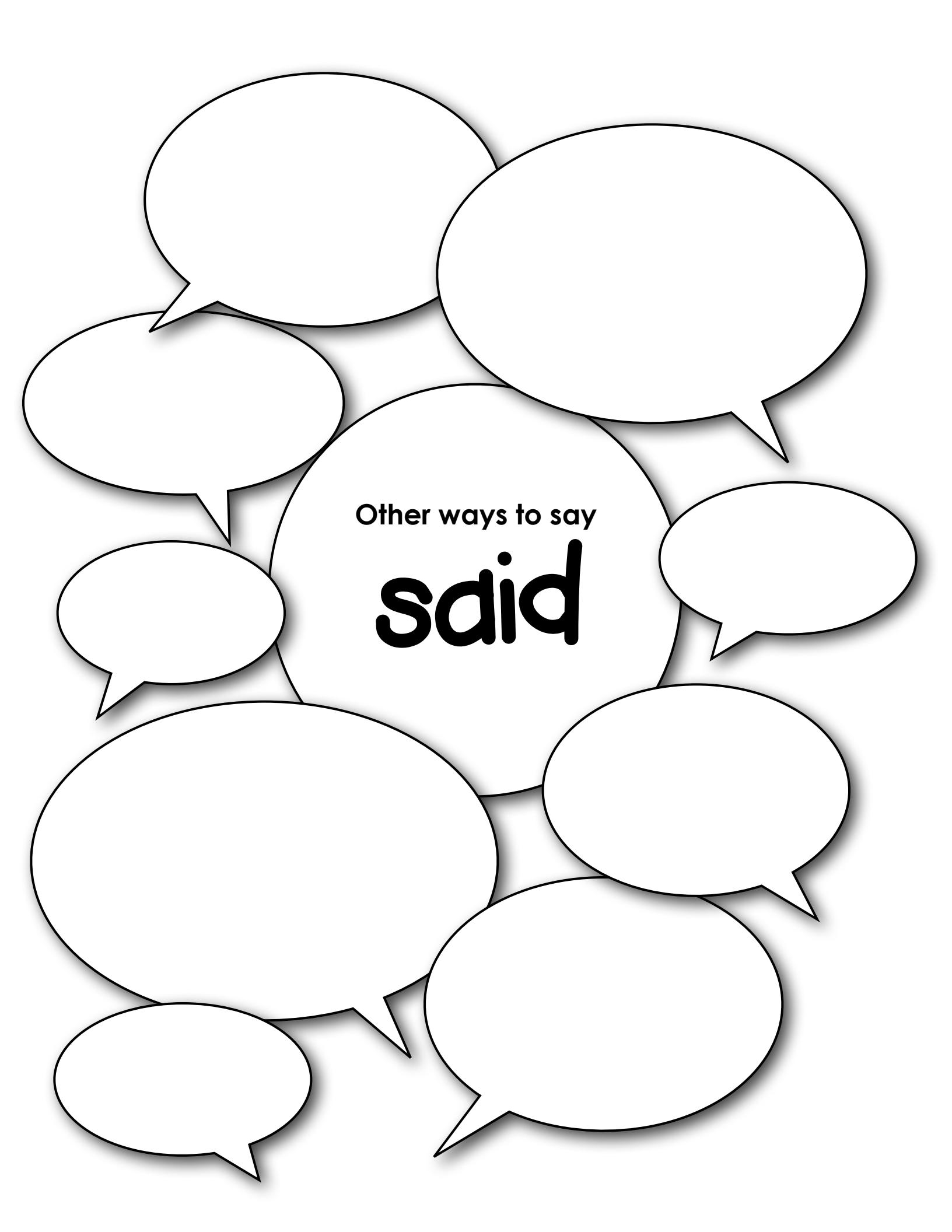


Other ways to say
HAPPY



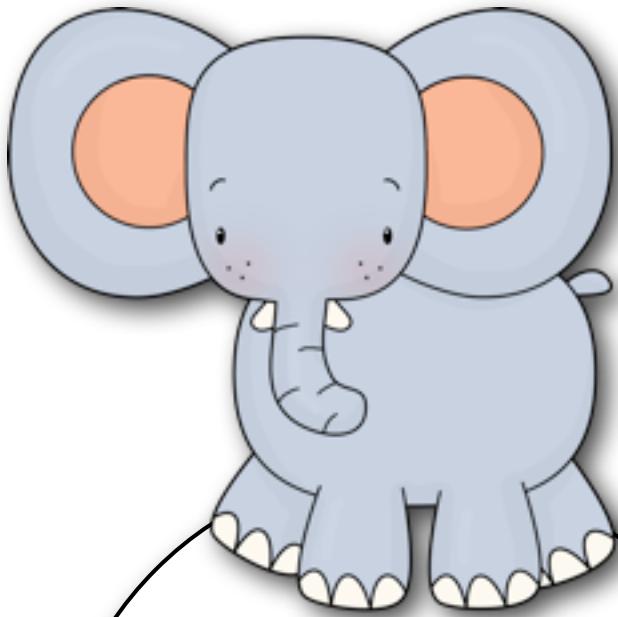
Other ways to say
MAD





Other ways to say

said

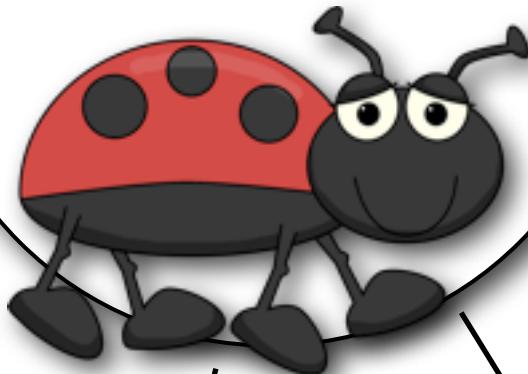


Other words for

Big

Other words for

SMALL



OTHER WAYS TO SAY...

BIG

tall

gigantic

huge

humongous

enormous

large

giant

super-sized

wide

OTHER WAYS TO SAY...

HAPPY

OTHER WAYS TO SAY...



Writing Posters

Writing Posters

I like to use these posters to motivate my writers and to let them in on the little secrets of other writers, like Mark Twain & William Wordsworth. You can enlarge them to poster-size or print them as 8.5 x 11 sheets for the students' writing notebooks. I have also placed them inside clear, self-standing acrylic frames and put them on teams' tables to reference during writing workshop.

Some of the posters are "inspirational" or reflect what it means to live the life of a writer. Others can actually inspire a minilesson. For example, Mark Twain's quote is a nice launch for talking about specific word choice and Elmore Leonard's quote ties in nicely when you want to discuss revision and the techniques writers use to make their stories more interesting to the reader.

The first four posters teach children the reasons writers write and gives them a purpose for their writing. These genres support the expectations outlined in the Common Core State Standards and suggest that writing is often combined with research and reading.

The final poster in the set is a fun song we sing to start off our writing workshop each day. We sing it after the minilesson as we're walking back to our seats to write.

NARRATIVE WRITING

Sometimes writers write to remember and to share their personal experiences with others.



OPINION WRITING

Sometimes writers write to share their opinions or to tell an audience how they feel about a topic.



I'm writing to share my opinions about the character. She wasn't very honest.

PERSUASIVE WRITING

Sometimes writers write to persuade or to convince others to do something differently. This kind of writing can change people's minds.

I hope this letter will convince my parents to let me have a pet!



INFORMATIONAL WRITING

Sometimes writers write to share their knowledge about a specific topic or to explain how to do something.

I'm going to write what I learned and know about rocks!



1. think
about what you're going
to write!



2. Say
your sentence!



3. Write

it down before your thoughts
POP!



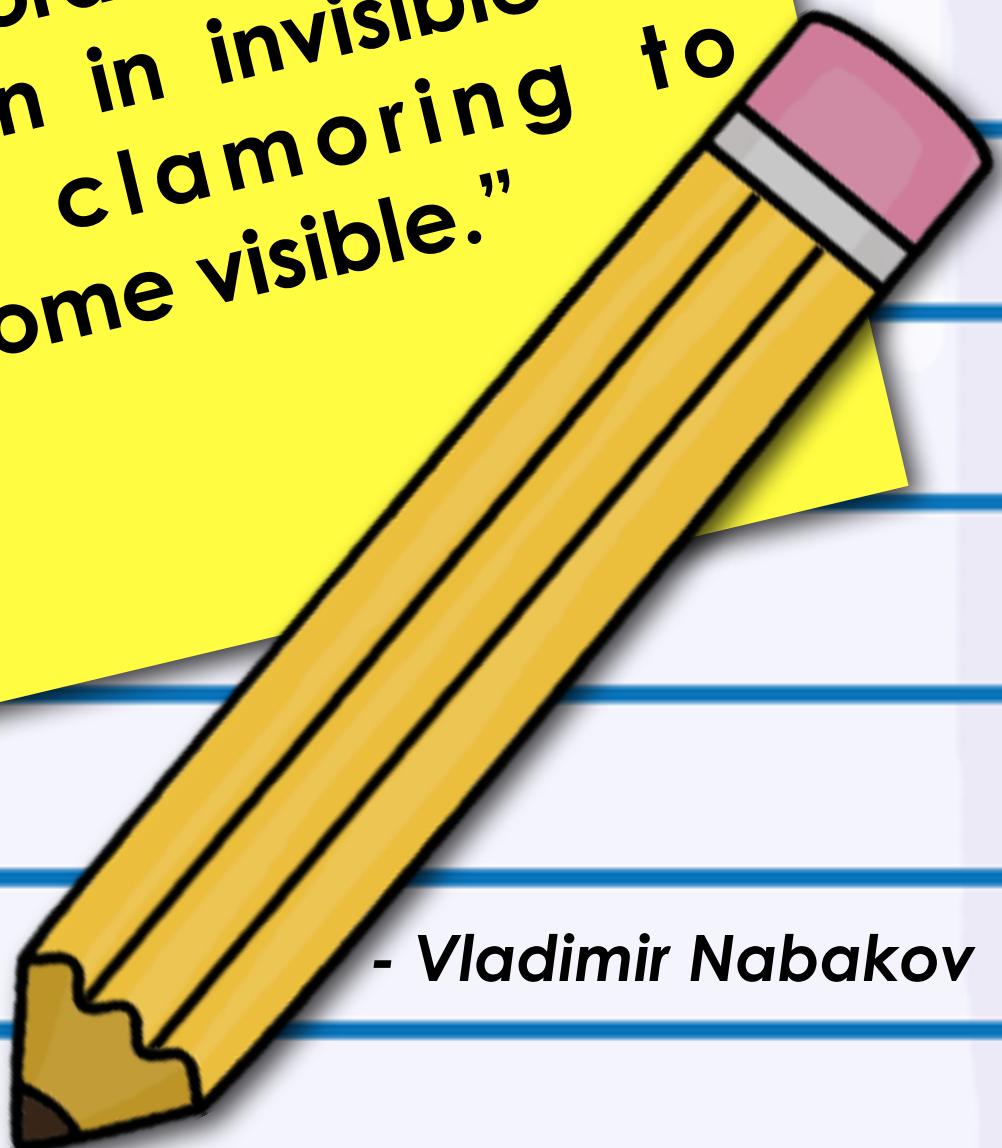
venus

**“Fill your paper with
the breathings of
your heart.”**

- William Wordsworth



"The pages are still blank, but there is a miraculous feeling of the words being there, written in invisible ink and clamoring to become visible."



- Vladimir Nabakov

**“Writing is a way of
talking without being
interrupted.”**

- Jules Renard



“If I fall asleep with a pen in my hand, don’t remove it... I might be writing in my dreams.”

- Terri Guillemets



“The difference between the almost right word and the right word is the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning.”

- Mark Twain



"I try to leave out the parts that people skip."

- Elmore Leonard

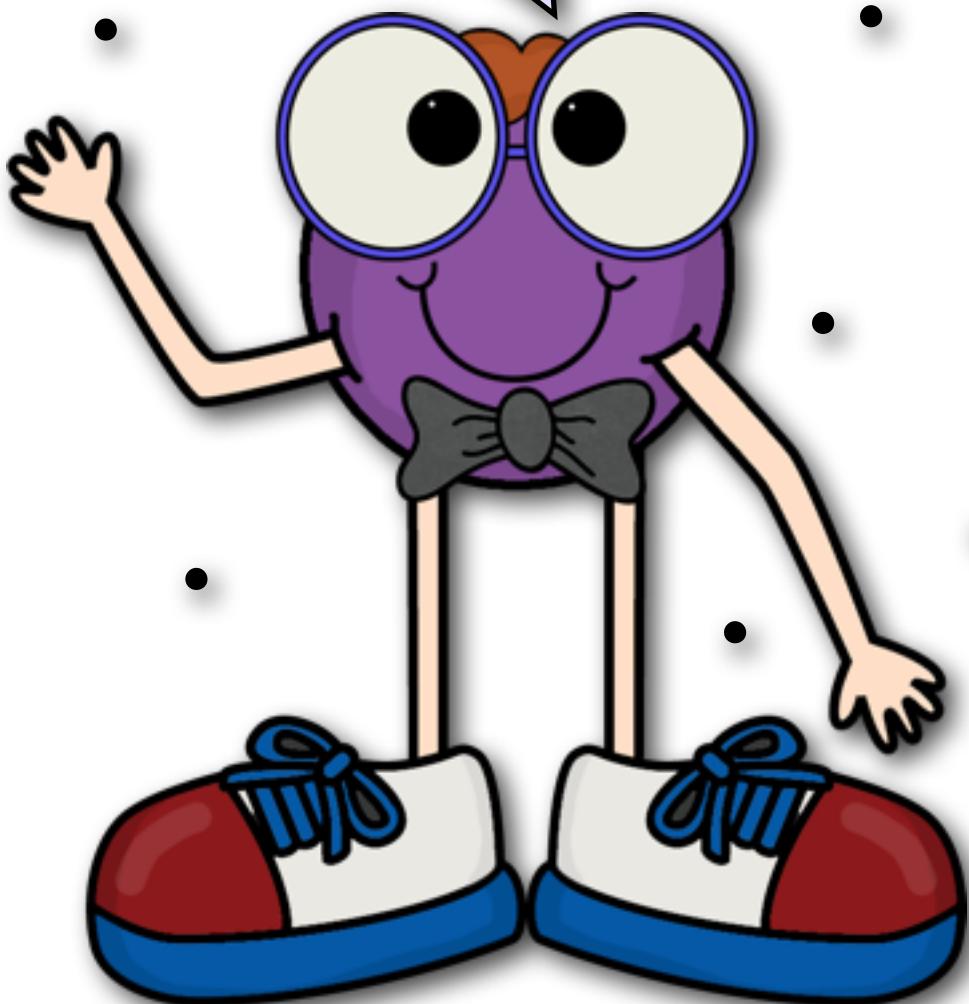


“Writing became such a process of discovery that I couldn’t wait to get to work in the morning. I wanted to know what I was going to say.”

- Sharon O’Brien

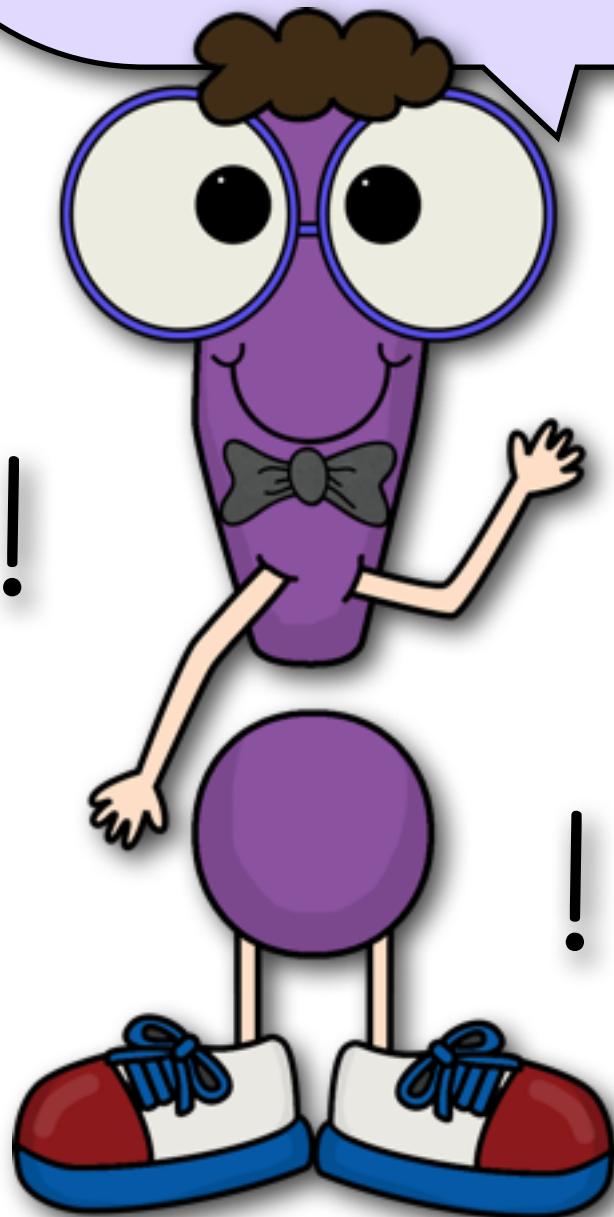


Hi! I'm Peter Period.
My favorite place to be is at the
end of a telling sentence.
I let the reader know
it's time to STOP.



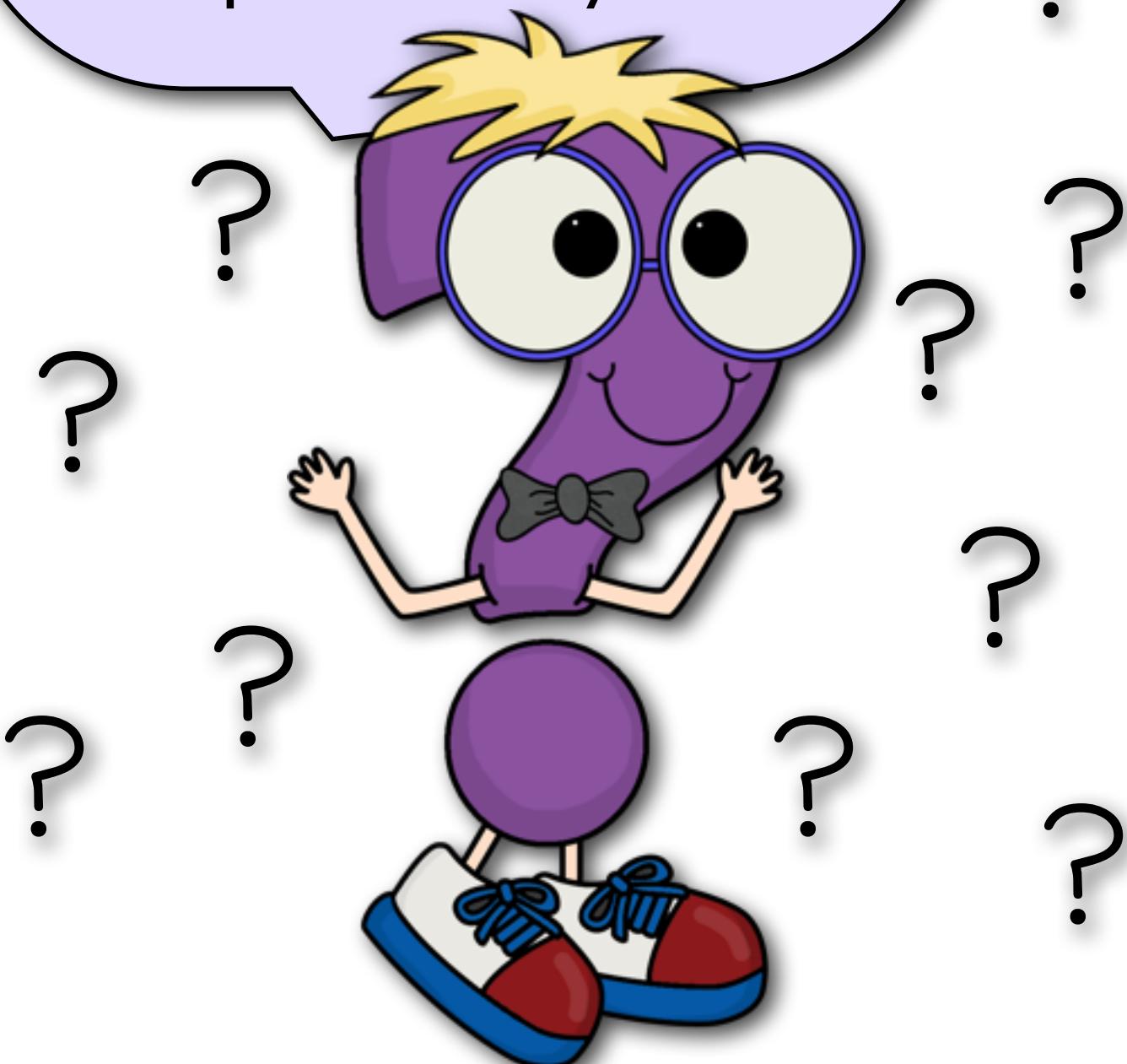
peter period

I'm Eddie Exclamation
and I'm so EXCITED!
Use me at the end of a sentence
when you are excited,
angry, or surprised!



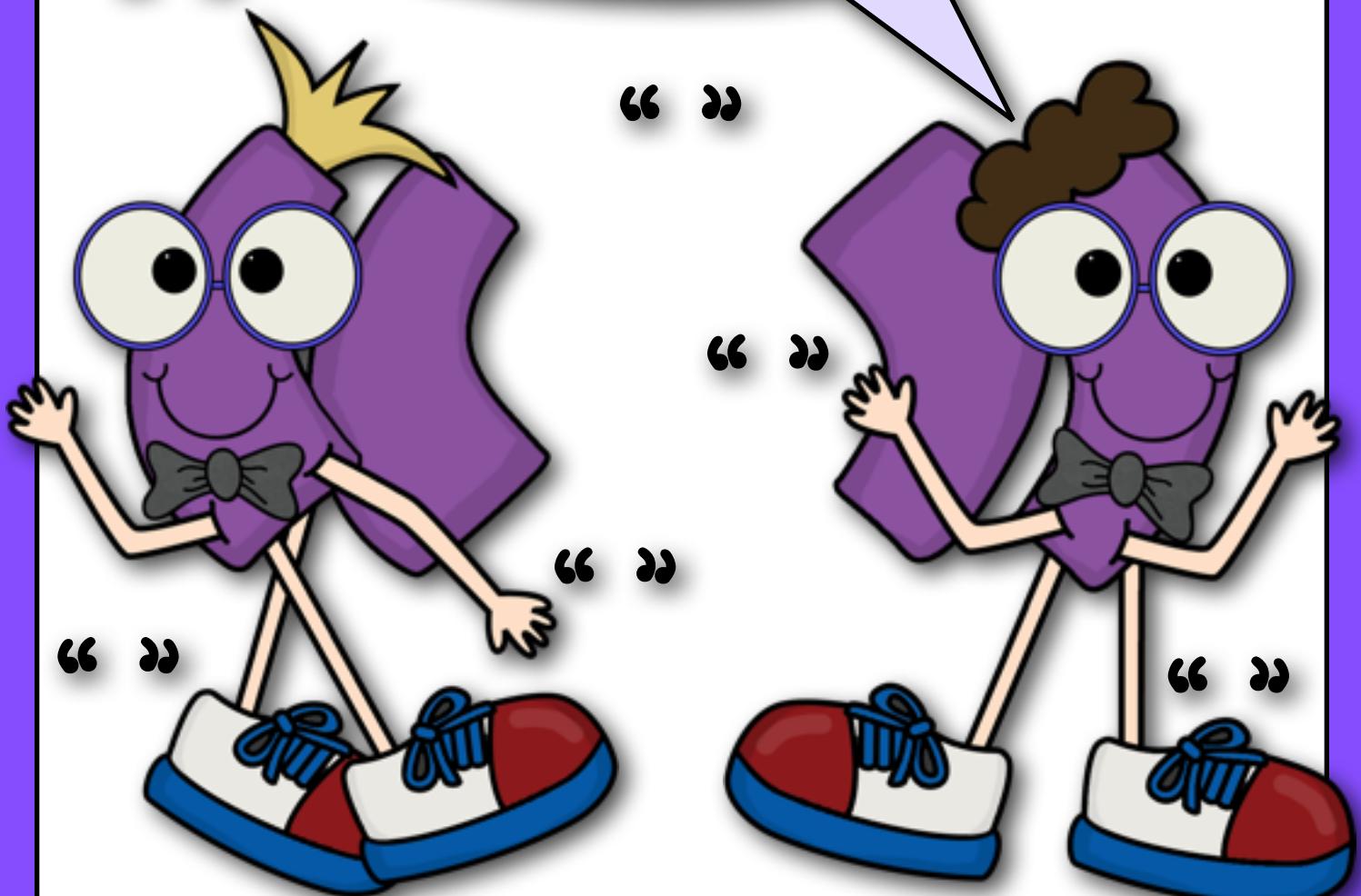
Eddie Exclamation

**Some people call me
Squigley Quigley
because of my shape.
I like to be at the end of
questions. Do you?**



Quigley Question Mark

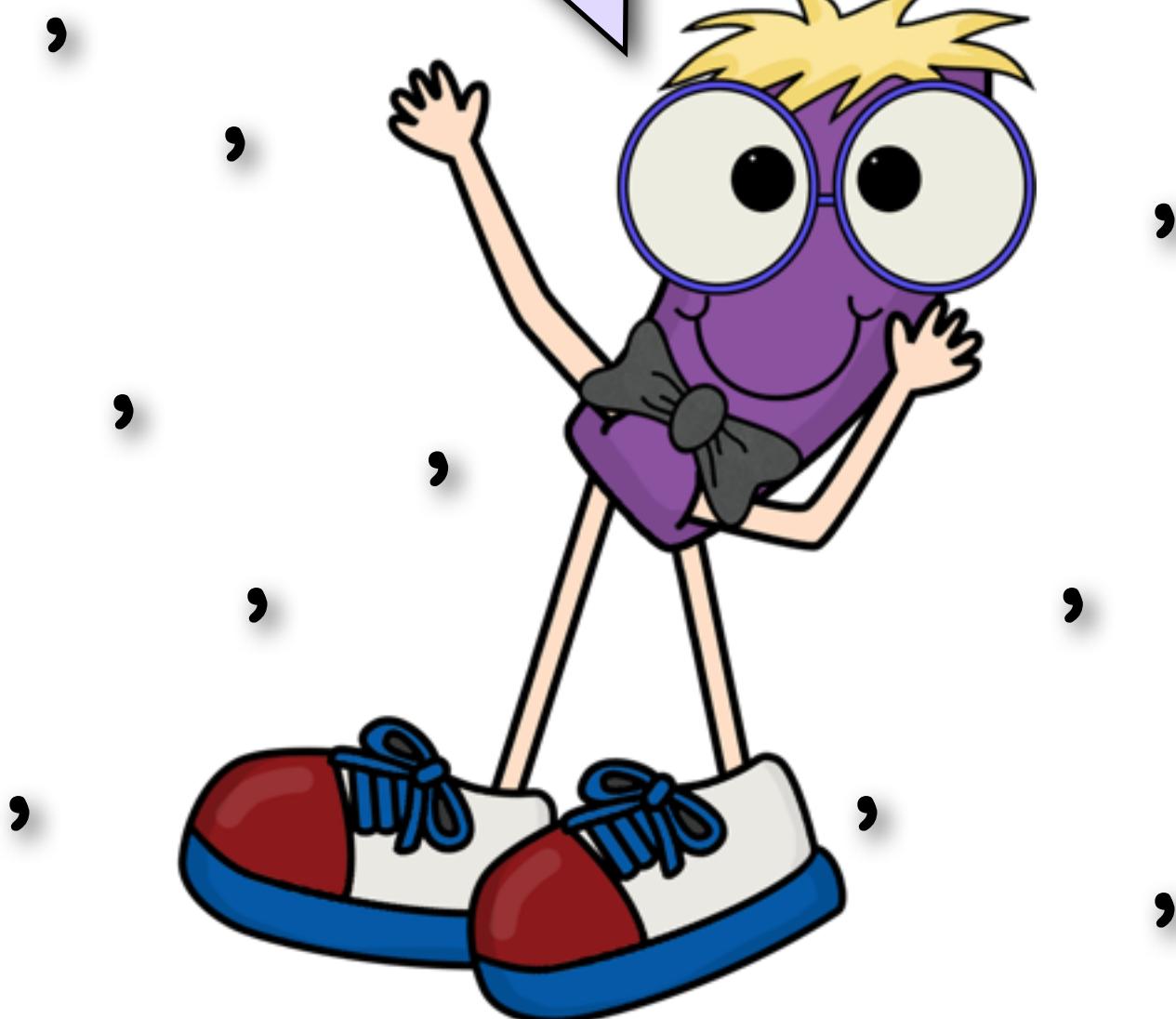
We are the
TALKING TWINS!
We love to hang around
where people are talking.
We don't want to miss a thing
anybody says!



The Talking Twins

Hi, I'm Casey Comma.
Just in case you need your
reader to take a breath, you can
use me between words where
you want them to pause.

,



Casey Comma

Hi, I'm Casey Comma.
Just in case you need your
reader to take a breath, you can
use me between words where
you want them to pause.

,

,

,

,

Use me when writing a
series of objects,
a date, or the greeting
in a letter.

,

,

,

,

,

,



Casey Comma

use your
Speaker

* voice when you share your * journal



Be a good
audience
By listening and asking **questions**

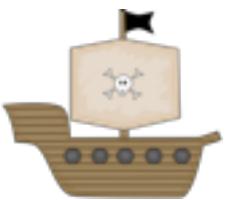
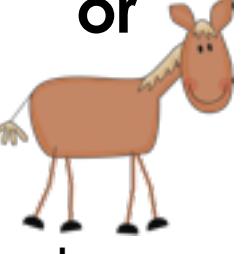
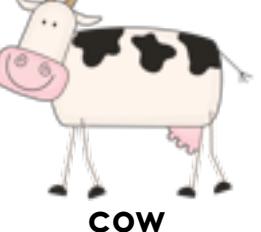


a  apple	b  butterfly	c  caterpillar	d  dog	e  elephant
f  fish	g  grapes	h  heart	i  igloo	j  jar
k  kite	l  lion	m  mouse	n  nail	o  octopus
p  pumpkin	q  quarter	r  rainbow	s  sun	t  turtle
u  umbrella	v  vacuum	w  watermelon	x  fox	y  yarn
z  zebra	LETTER SOUNDS			



SUPER SOUNDS

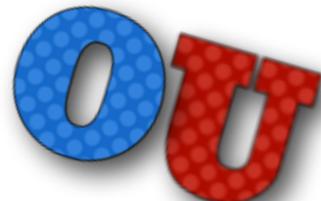


sh  <u>ship</u>	ch  <u>chair</u>	th  <u>Earth</u>	ph  <u>trophy</u>
wh  <u>whale</u>	ar  <u>barn</u>	er  <u>flower</u>	ir  <u>bird</u>
or  <u>horse</u>	ur  <u>turkey</u>	ow  <u>cow</u>	ou  <u>cloud</u>
ee  <u>tree</u>	ea  <u>read</u>	oo  <u>moon</u>	oy  <u>boy</u>

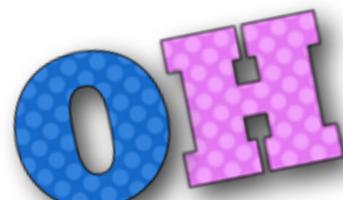
OW!

The letters 'O' and 'W' are large and stylized. The letter 'O' is blue with white polka dots. The letter 'W' is green with white polka dots. They are positioned above the first two lines of text.

O and W went out to play,
They ran and jumped and hopped all day,
But W was rough and pushed O down,
“OW!” said O with a little frown.

The letters 'O' and 'U' are large and stylized. The letter 'O' is blue with white polka dots. The letter 'U' is red with white polka dots. They are positioned above the first two lines of text.

O asked U if he could play,
They ran and jumped and hopped all day,
But U was rough like W,
“OU!” said O, “I can’t play with you.”

The letters 'O' and 'H' are large and stylized. The letter 'O' is blue with white polka dots. The letter 'H' is pink with white polka dots. They are positioned above the first two lines of text.

O asked H if he could play,
They ran and jumped and hopped all day.
O hugged H and said, “OH, that’s good.”
H plays nice like a good friend should.

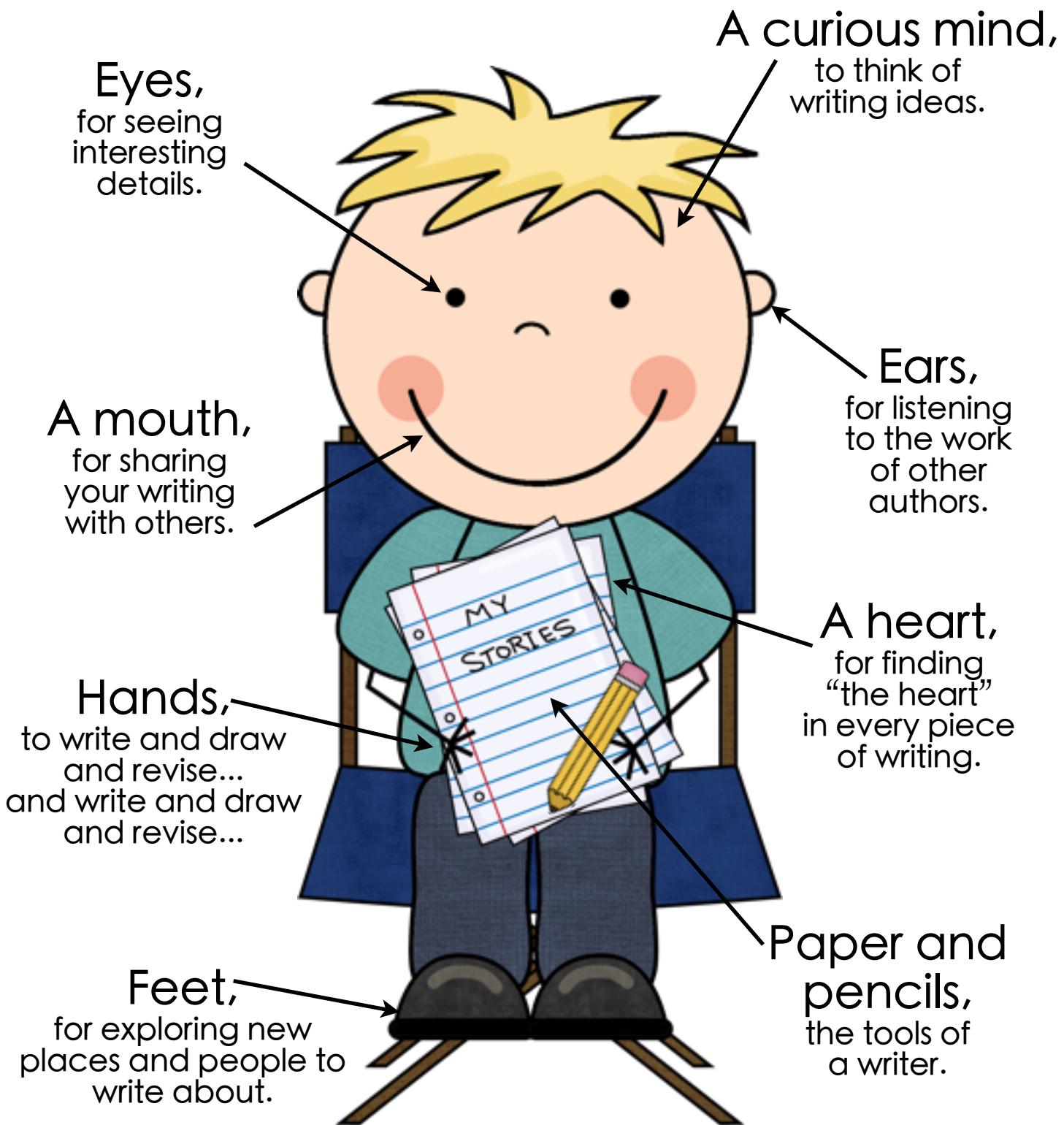
The Parts of a Writer



The Parts of a Writer



The Parts of a Writer



The Parts of a Writer





The biggest and
best part of a
sandwich is the
middle.

Make the **middle** the biggest and
best part of your story by:

adding details

using dialogue

slowing down an important part

trying out WOW words

sharing a “thought-shot”

Let's Write a Story!

Let's write a story,
It is writing time again,
It will be so fun writing words today,
Oh, I can't wait to begin...

So, let's write a story,
It is easy and it's fun,
There are great ideas in all of us,
And we'll share them one by one!



Tune: *Frosty the Snowman*
Written by Andrea Knight
©2012



Student Writing Awards

Student Writing Awards

Give these awards out to your students at the end of each unit, or at anytime in between... whenever you need to motivate your writers or when you see something great worth recognizing. There are a wide variety of awards, so hopefully you'll find something in this set for each child in your classroom, regardless of their skill level.

- Tantalizing Topics
- Bright Idea
- You Had Us Hooked!
- Sizzling Sentences
- Vivid Verbs
- Delicious Details
- Wonderful Words
- Dynamic Dialogue
- Fabulous Feelings
- Terrific Transitions
- Lovely Lead
- Marvelous Middle
- Excellent Ending
- Practically Perfect Punctuation
- Super Speller
- The Expert Award (Informational Writing / Nonfiction)

Wow!

You are receiving a writing award for having a

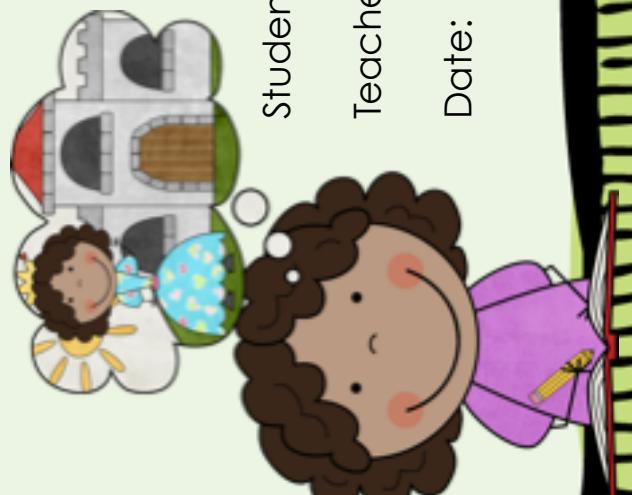
Tantalizing Topic!



Student:

Teacher:

Date:



Wow... You had a

Really Bright Idea!



Student:

Teacher:

Date:

You Had Us

HooKed!

From The Beginning!

To:

What a
GREAT
GRABBER!

From:
Date:



Outstanding!

You are receiving a writing award for...



Delicious Details!

Student: _____

Teacher: _____

Date: _____

Sizzlin' Sentences!

Congratulations!

You are receiving a writing award for...

Student: _____

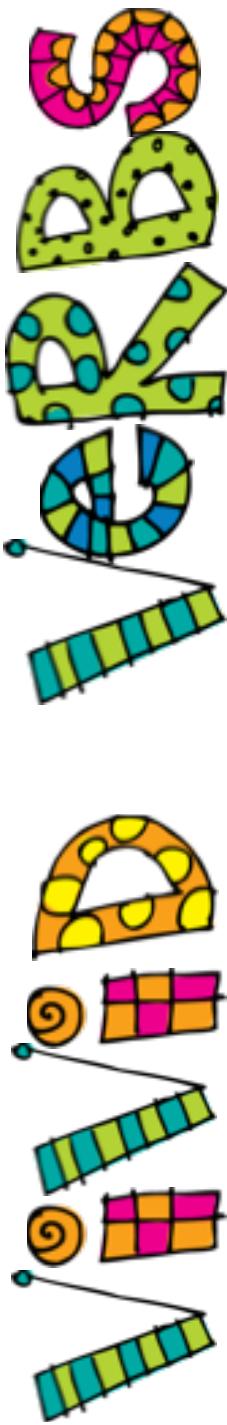
Teacher: _____

Date: _____



You go!

You are receiving a writing award for...



Student:

Teacher:

Date:

Outstanding!

You are receiving a writing award for using

**Wonderful
Words!**

Student:

Teacher:

Date:



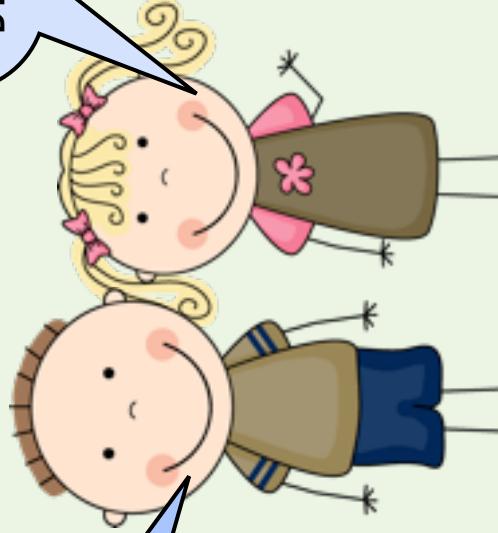
Congratulations!

You are receiving a writing award for...

Dynamic Dialogue!

Yes!
It was
DYNAMIC!

Wasn't that
great
dialogue?



Student:

Teacher:

Date:

You Shared
Fabulous Feelings!



Student: _____

Teacher: _____

Date: _____

You Keep Things moving!

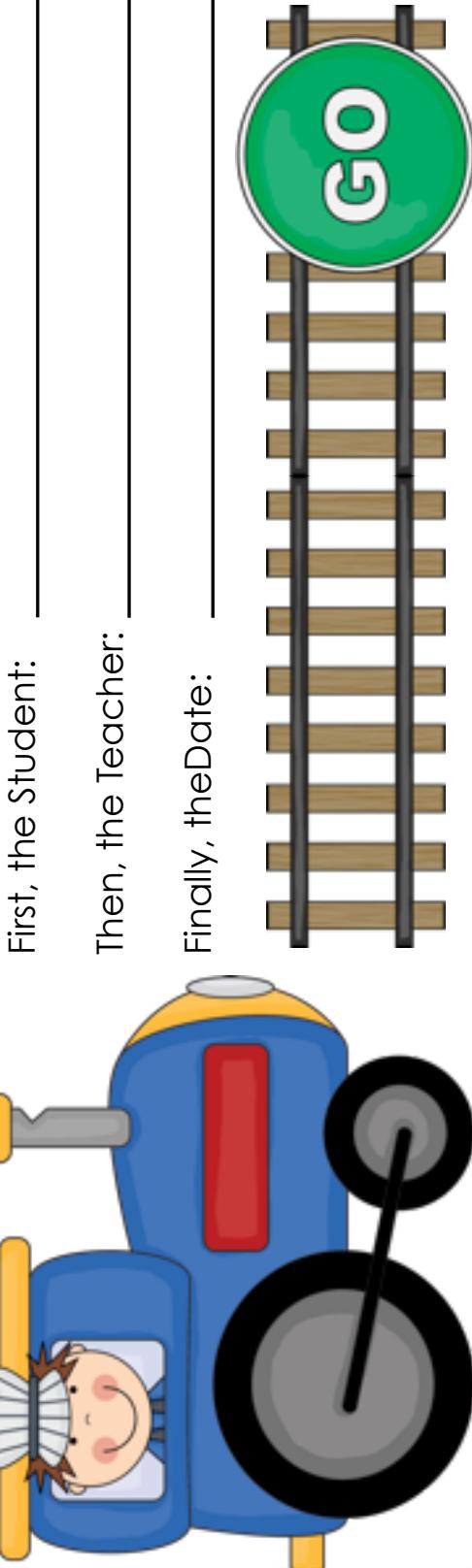
You are receiving a writing award for...

Terrific Transitions

First, the Student:

Then, the Teacher:

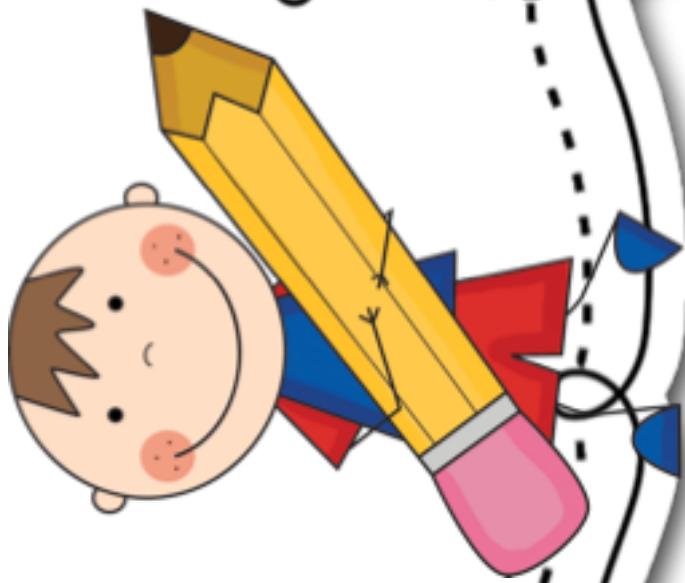
Finally, the Date:



Congratulations!

You are receiving a writing award for a

Lovely Lead



Student:

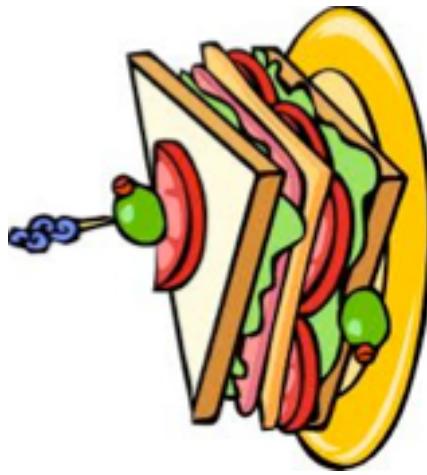
Teacher:

Date:

Congratulations!

You are receiving a writing award for a

marvelous middle



Student: _____

Teacher: _____

Date: _____

Halt!

You are receiving a writing award for an

Excellent Ending



Student:

Teacher:

Date:

Congratulations!

You are receiving a writing award for...

Practically Perfect Punctuation

Student:

Teacher:

Date:



A B C D E F G

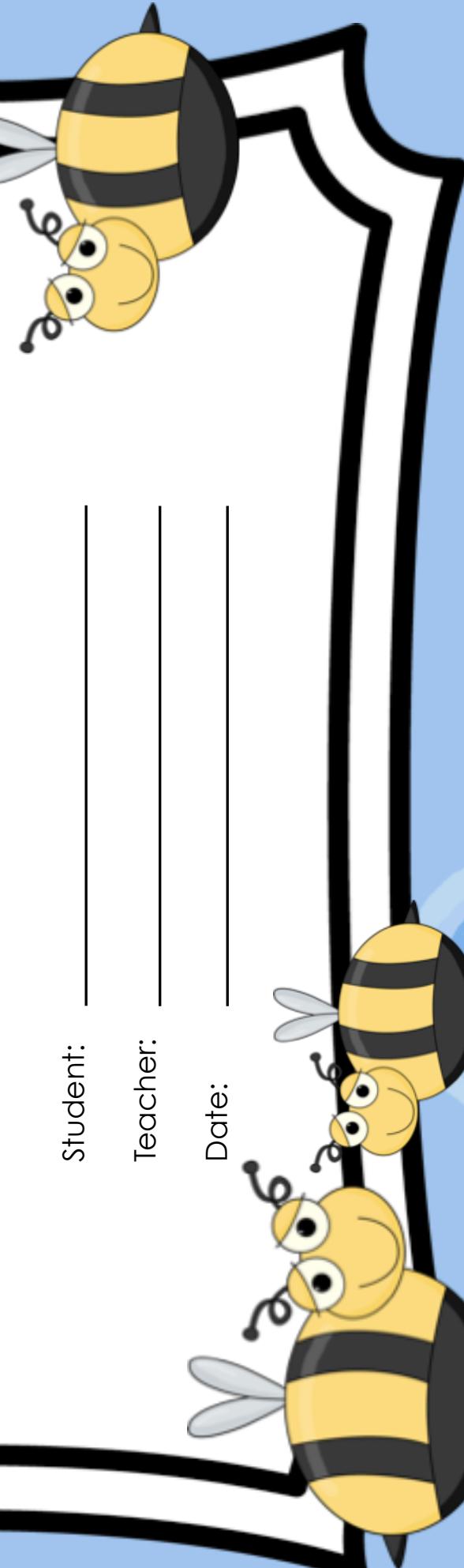
You're a super spelling Bee!

SUPER SPELLER!

Student:

Teacher:

Date:



This

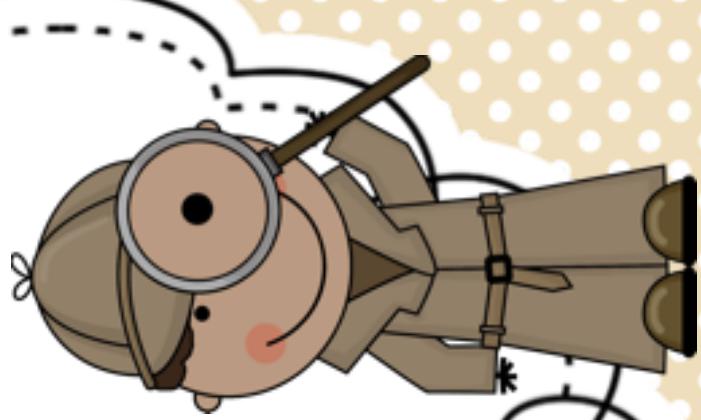
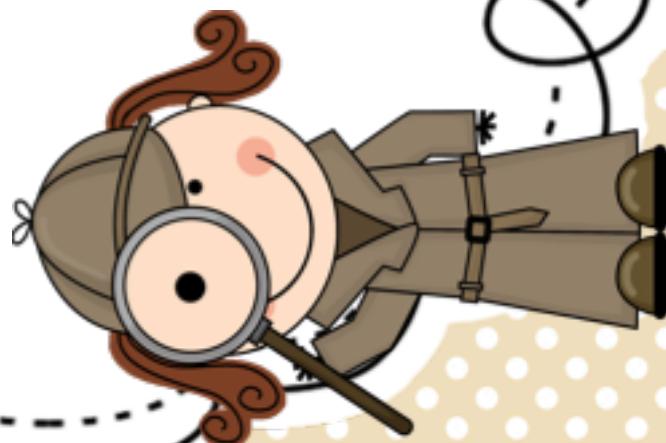
Expert Award

Goes to:

You sure know your facts!

Teacher: _____

Date: _____



Thank You

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