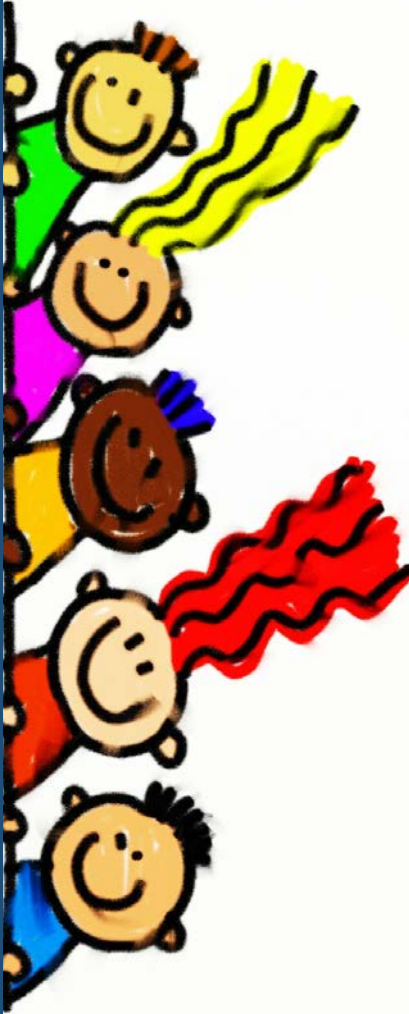


Writing Skills-Composing

Composing Strategies – If your child has a hard time organizing their writing or coming up with ideas, these strategies can help. Ask your child’s teacher which ones you should try at home:



Create a plan for a story – Help your child sketch out ideas before starting the actual writing of a story. Help them JOT (Just One to Ihree Words, no sentences) ideas to start.

Characters: *little girl, Jordan, her mom, her grandma*

Setting: *at the park*



Beginning

go to park, girl is excited



Middle

she gets lost, crying mom and grandma worried, yelling



End

grandma finds Jordan, hug, scary lesson

Now, help your child use the plan they created to start writing their story.

If your child just starts writing and makes up the story as they are writing it, it’s harder to get good results. Starting with a plan increases the chances that your child’s story will have a beginning, middle and end, that the order of the story will be logical, and that the reader will enjoy the story.



Create a plan for informational writing - If your child is writing NON-FICTION (informational writing), help them create an informal outline plan. Instead of focusing on characters, the setting and events, non-fiction writing shares information in a logical order. A great paragraph starts with a plan!

J.O.T. is Just One to Three Words. Don't have your child write sentences YET. It's easier to make changes to a plan when it's only a few words rather than a full sentence.

Informal Plan for Informational Writing

Topic: *Fish Make Great Pets*

Big Idea #1: *Nice to Have*

Elaboration: *Calming to watch*

Evidence: *Not much work*

Big Idea #2: *Inexpensive and Easy*

Elaboration: *Cheap food*

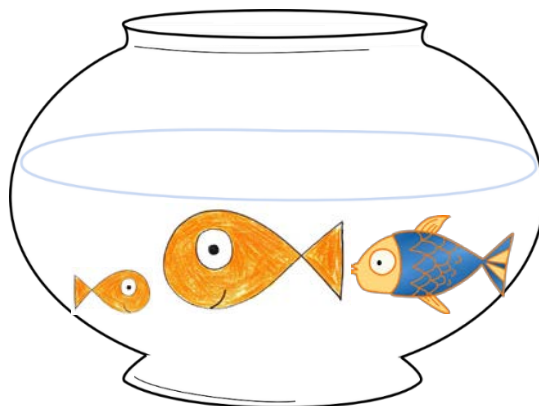
Example: *Take up little space*

Conclusion: *You should get a fish, too.*

Once the plan is created, your child writes a sentence for each part of the plan.

Fish make great pets.

If you are looking for a great pet, you should consider getting a fish. It is so relaxing to watch them swimming around. They don't take much work. They need just a little food and you have to clean the tank sometimes. Fish do not cost much money, either. The food is about three dollars and a tiny container lasts a long time. A small fish tank will fit almost anywhere. If you're looking for a pet, you can't go wrong with a fish.

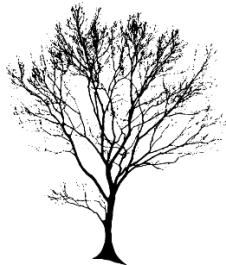


Brainstorming - What about brainstorming? Many parents remember using brainstorming when they were in school to generate ideas before writing. This strategy, on its own, can actually make writing worse if students try to use all the ideas in their writing without organizing them first. Help your child use List, Cross-out, Connect and Number to write a well-organized paragraph or essay.

List, Cross-out, Connect, Number (Write)

1. **List** – make a list of important ideas
2. **Cross-out** – any unnecessary or weak ideas
3. **Connect** – ideas that could go in one sentence
4. **Number** – the ideas in the order that they will appear in the paragraph
5. **Write**

Having something easy to remember as they are planning their writing can be very helpful. Teaching the following strategies, **TREE**, **BRANCH**, and **TAP**, can help your child remember important steps, even if you're not there to help them.



TREE

- T - Topic Introduction
Did I state my opinion or topic and catch the reader's attention?
- R - Reasons – 3 or more
Are my reasons or facts clear, interesting, and strong?
- E - Elaborate
Did I explain my facts and provide evidence?
- E - End
Does my ending convince the reader or encourage action?

BRANCH

- B – Brainstorm ideas
- R – Recite self-talk to keep going strong
- A – Ask myself about the task (Topic, Audience, Purpose)
- N – Now write NOTES that are a plan for my writing
- C – Compose your paragraph or essay using your plan
- H – Have a close look for mistakes

TAP - While planning and writing, help your child TAP their pencil and remember to take into consideration the topic, audience, and purpose for writing.

- T= topic
- A= audience
- P= purpose

Writing Frames – a writing frame can help a young writer learn how to write a well-organized paragraph with complete sentences. You provide the frame, and your child fills in some of the words. Each time, you write a little less and your child writes a little more of each sentence. Eventually, they are writing all of the paragraph, including the punctuation.

Name _____ Date _____

I like _____ for three reasons.

First, _____

Next, _____

Last, _____

That is why I like _____

Name _____ Date _____

I had specials yesterday. We went to _____

Our teacher is _____

The first thing we did was _____

Then _____

Next _____

At the end of class _____

I think _____ is _____ because _____

Grade One examples, credit D. Peruski, Cass City Public Schools

Example #3 (Writing Frame to Accommodate Emerging Writer)

_____ (State)

_____ is a very fascinating state. It is found in the _____ part of the United States. It is bordered by the following states: _____, _____, _____, and _____.

_____ has a variety of land and water forms. In terms of landforms, this state has _____, _____, and _____.

The most dominant landform is its _____.

The largest lake in _____ is _____.

_____ also has a number of rivers including _____, _____, and _____.

_____ has a diverse economic base. One aspect of its economy is agriculture. Some of the crops grown in _____ include _____, _____, and _____.

Its most important crop is _____.

Grade 2-3 Example from A. Archer, Writing Strategies Training, August 2015

Planning and Drafting for Older Students

Four Paragraph Report – In Grade Two, children can work together to write a report that is several paragraphs long. In Grade Three, children can write a report with just a little support from you. Help your child follow these steps to write an informational report. This example shows how your child can expand a paragraph topic into a report using the “Fish Make Great Pets” paragraph on page two.

Step 1 – Make a PLAN - J.O.T. is Just One to Three Words. Don't write sentences YET.

Introduction

Plan how you will turn the first sentence into the first paragraph.

Plan the introductory paragraph:

1. Write a title (you can make it better later)
2. Write a Topic Sentence
3. Write ideas for one or two sentences that tell a little about your body paragraph topics so the reader knows what you are going to explain

Body Paragraphs

Plan how you will create 2 or 3 body paragraphs, one for each Big Idea.

5. J.O.T. an informal outline for each ★ idea

★ Big Idea (Fun to Have)

(transition word)

- explanations (relaxing to watch)

• elaboration (dr offices)

• effective illustrations (slow moving but colorful)

(transition word)

- examples (not much work)

• evidence (feeding takes seconds)

• expert opinion (pet store staff)

6. Find transition words that introduce each ★ idea. (first, second, finally, most importantly, in addition)

Conclusion

Plan how you will end your report. Now get help to review your plan.

7. Plan your conclusion.

GET AN ADULT TO LOOK IT OVER AND MAKE SUGGESTED CHANGES TO YOUR PLAN.

Draft

Revise

Edit

Publish and Share

8. Use your plan to write your first draft.

9. Revise your paper. Check for correctly written sentences, a variety of sentences types, both longer and shorter sentences, and good word choices.

10. Edit your paper for mistakes in capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling.

11. Create a final copy.

12. Read it aloud to yourself one more time to catch any errors. Share it with others!

Sample report written using the plan:

Fish make great pets

Convincing your parents to get a family pet can be hard because they think about all the work and cost that goes into owning a pet. If you are looking for a great pet, you should consider getting a tank of fish. Last year, our class got a fish tank and we think it's wonderful for several reasons.

It is so relaxing to watch fish swimming around! Even if you choose just one type of fish for your tank, they move so gracefully through the water. Fish come in a variety of colors and shapes which makes them more interesting to look at. Sometimes at school when the work gets hard, our teacher has a take a quick break and we watch the fish swimming around in the tank. Just a minute of watching the fish makes you feel like you can tackle that hard work. In fact, fish are so relaxing to watch that some doctor offices have fish tanks in their waiting rooms.

Another reason to consider fish is that they don't require much work. They need to be fed just a little food each day and that takes a few seconds. We take turns at school. The food is about three dollars and a tiny container lasts a long time. A small fish tank will fit almost anywhere. Fish also need to have their tank occasional cleaned to keep them healthy. The staff in the pet store can help you decide which fish are the easiest to care for and which ones get along best with other types of fish.

Your parents will be surprised by how easy it is to take care of fish. Everyone can use a little relaxation and fish can provide that with very little work or money. If you're looking for a pet, you can't go wrong with fish.



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