

Introduction and Pretest

Your students should be familiar with the proofreading and technology skills in the beginning level of the Writer's Guide before beginning this unit.

PREPARATION Each student will need lined paper and a folder to use as a writing portfolio in which to keep writing assignments.

Introduction

Introduce the students to the unit with an explanation like the following: *We're going to have fun learning to be authors who can write many different kinds of things. Sometimes authors work with other authors to make one piece of writing. A group of people who work together to make a piece of writing is called a cooperative writing group. They enjoy sharing ideas. Sometimes we'll work as a cooperative group to make a piece of writing. When we work together, I'll write our ideas on a chart for the whole class. Everyone will give ideas to the class piece of writing.*

Sometimes authors work alone. After we practice together, you'll make a piece of writing of your own.

For the next few lessons, you'll be learning about descriptive writing. Descriptive writing uses words to make clear pictures in the reader's mind.

Beginning Writing Sample

PREPARATION Write the following starter on the board: *When I sit at my desk, I can see many things.*

Explain to the students that before they learn about descriptive writing, you'd like to have a sample of their writing. Tell them you'll save this sample so you and they can see how their writing improves as they learn more about descriptive writing.

Read the starter sentence to the students. *You're going to make a piece of descriptive writing that tells what you see around you as you're sitting at your desk in our classroom.* Have the students look around them. Ask the students to make a plan for their descriptive writing. Ask them to write on lined paper, describing what they see. Remind the students to include details to make their writing more interesting. Tell them to write on every other line so they can make changes if they wish.

Allow the students time to write. Ask them to check their writing to see if there's anything they'd like to add or change. Have them write a final copy including additions and corrections. Evaluate the students' writing using the rubric on the following page. Keep the writing sample and the scoring rubric for comparison at the end of the unit.

RUBRIC

Pretest

Posttest

Scoring the Samples

Give the student a score of 0 if there is no evidence of the element.

Give the student a score of 1 for each element at the emergent or minimum level.

Give the student a score of 3 for each element at a satisfactory level.

Give the student a score of 5 for each element at the mastery level.

Evaluating the Elements of a Piece of Descriptive Writing		
	The author of this piece of descriptive writing showing spatial order . . .	Points Earned
O R G A N I Z A T I O N	Writes a beginning sentence that tells the topic.	
	Writes a middle with six related sentences that tell what the writer sees.	
	Writes a closing sentence that gives a personal response.	
	Uses a logical order.	
	Uses transition words to move the reader from one detail to the next.	
C O N T E N T	Writes a beginning sentence that tells the location.	
	Writes two sentences telling what the writer observes in front.	
	Writes two sentences telling what the writer observes to the right.	
	Writes two sentences telling what the writer observes behind.	
	Writes two sentences telling what the writer observes to the left.	
S T Y L E	Uses specific vocabulary to identify simple objects.	
	Uses at least four adjectives to describe nouns.	
	Uses at least three adverbs that tell how, when, or where.	
	Uses at least one simile.	
	Presents a clear picture to the reader.	
M E C H A N I C S	Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.	
	Capitalizes / and first and last names.	
	Capitalizes the first word of sentences.	
	Uses correct end punctuation.	
	Indents paragraphs.	
Total Points		

If the student scores . . .	
85–100 points	Administer the pretest for the intermediate level of Descriptive Writing.
20–84 points	The student is properly placed in the beginning level of Descriptive Writing.
0–19 points	Administer the placement test for <i>Language for Learning</i> , an SRA program, or place the student in a lower-level language program.