

Sample Pages From

Exploring Writing
Level 6

Exploring Writing Overview

A Program for Developing Nonfiction and Fiction Writing Skills

Exploring Writing is a supplementary writing program that is designed to teach and booster writing skills in both nonfiction and fiction. The program uses *Time for Kids* articles and resources as the basis for student learning, engaging them in the high-interest reading that is so critical for their own development as writers. The article cards included in the kit serve as both good writing samples and springboards for the students' own writing.

Four genre-specific *Teacher's Guides* are used in conjunction with the articles to provide educators with step-by-step methods for teaching the following writing genres: Narrative Nonfiction, Expository, Persuasive, and Fiction and Poetry. The lessons naturally employ the writing process while encouraging students to become better impromptu writers, as is so often required in both school testing and real-world experiences.

Each of the writing genres is divided into categories for ease of instruction. They are as follows:

- **Narrative Nonfiction:** *Personal, Biographical*
- **Expository:** *Informative, Descriptive*
- **Persuasive:** *Letters, Editorials, Reviews*
- **Fiction and Poetry:** *Poetry, Historical Fiction, Myth, Science Fiction*

Technology is key to the program. *Exploring Writing* also includes a CD-ROM with downloadable communicators, checklists, graphic organizers, and worksheets to support writing skills. The program's *Teacher's Guides* also include tips for utilizing your current writing technology to its fullest potential.

Exploring Writing uses universal curricular standards for the basis of the lessons. The Scope-and-Sequence Matrix of Writing Standards provided in this book and referenced in the *Teacher's Guides* allows teachers of all grade levels to find the support they need for any aspect of their writing curriculum.

This kit also offers two supplementary books designed to aid and build students' overall writing skills and specifically their grammar, usage, and mechanics skills. They are the *Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics* workbook and the *Writer's Notebook*, both geared to this level.

While *Exploring Writing* is a self-contained writing workshop, it is best used as a supplement to your existing writing and reading curriculum, therein providing the support necessary to create the most successful language arts program. *Exploring Writing* coupled with traditional curriculum will ensure writing interest and success—a dynamic combination.

Teacher's Guides and Lessons

Teacher's Guide and Components

There are four *Teacher's Guides* provided in this kit, one for each of the primary genres covered. They are the *Narrative Nonfiction Teacher's Guide*, the *Expository Teacher's Guide*, the *Persuasive Teacher's Guide*, and the *Fiction and Poetry Teacher's Guide*. For ease of use, you may wish to put the four guides together into one binder. The books have been printed with that possibility in mind.

Following are the main components included in each *Teacher's Guide*:

- Introduction and genre overview
- Assessment checklists and rubrics
- Technology support and activities
- Parent letters
- Graphic organizers
- Lessons corresponding to the article cards
- Grammar, usage, and mechanics worksheets corresponding to the lessons
- Culminating lesson
- Student writing samples
- Answer keys for the grammar, usage, and mechanics worksheets

Lesson Organization

Each four-page lesson in the *Teacher's Guides* is organized in the following sequence:

Page A

The heart of the lesson is the **skill focus**. It is the title of the lesson. It is also the skill featured in "From the Writer" on the back of the corresponding article card.

The skill focus is fleshed out in each lesson's **objective**, which includes a list of key standards, benchmarks, and skills from the Scope-and-Sequence Matrix of Writing Standards found in this book. These are universal standards that are critical to any writing program.

The beginning of each lesson also provides the **lesson/card number**, the genre **category**, and an image of the **card** itself. Next to that image is a list of all key **materials** that are necessary for the lesson's completion.

Along the lefthand column of the first page of each lesson, there is a list of the **vocabulary** featured in the article card as well as a page reference for the provided definitions. There is also a page reference for the "Reader's Response" and "Writer's Response" **suggested answers**.

Finally, the lesson **procedure** begins on this page. For easy scanning of the lesson, key steps and ideas have been bolded.

Teacher's Guides and Lessons

(cont.)

Lesson Organization (cont.)

Page B

The lesson **procedure** continues on the second page of each lesson with occasional reduced-size copies of featured **graphic organizers** and **student writing samples**. The organizers and samples may also include callout lines for the teacher with suggestions for best utilizing or featuring the relevant page. (It is important to note that all of the student writing samples come from real students at the same developmental level as the focus of the kit.)

If there is a **fiction, poetry, or nonfiction counterpart** for the lesson, it is listed on this page with a suggestion for making the most of the connection.

This page also includes **assessment** notes specific to the lesson, with a reference to the corresponding assessment checklists and rubrics found in the front of the *Teacher's Guide*.

Finally, there is a **cross-reference box** that highlights the connection between the theme of this lesson's article card with the theme of other cards in this program. Cross-references are also provided for other programs such as *Exploring Nonfiction* and *Time For Kids Nonfiction Readers*. Also, relevant pages from the *Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics* book and *Writer's Notebook* are listed here.

Page C

The third page of each lesson provides a brief list of suggested **class discussion questions** for use with the article card. Also provided are **suggested answers to the "Reader's Response" and "Writer's Response"** questions found on the back of the card. Additionally, the article's **vocabulary words with definitions** are listed here.

Along the lefthand column, there is a bonus **grammar, usage, and mechanics activity** that can be incorporated into the overall lesson. The activity leads into the worksheet that can be found on the next page, and it also refers to relevant pages within the *Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics* workbook that can be utilized here as well.

Page D

This page provides a **grammar, usage, and mechanics worksheet** that may or may not be done in conjunction with the lesson, at the teacher's discretion.

Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics and Writer’s Notebook

There are three supporting books included in this kit. They are the following:

- *Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics*
- *Writer’s Notebook*
- *Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics Teacher’s Guide and Answer Key*

One copy of each of these books is provided in the kit. Additional copies (for individual student use) of the *Writer’s Notebook* and the *Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics* workbook may also be purchased in class sets.

Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics

This workbook has been created specifically for this grade level. It covers key grammar, usage, and mechanics skills, offering both pertinent information and useful practice. The book is also interspersed with special TFK Tips for Writers—useful nuggets of information that support the lessons. All of the pages are in full color with engaging illustrations and photographs, adding to student interest.

Each kit includes a different *Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics* workbook, geared to its specific level. If you wish to provide either more or less intensive support, contact the publisher to learn about workbooks at other grade levels.

Also included with the workbook is a *Grammar, Usage and Mechanics Teacher’s Guide and Answer Key*. This book includes an overview of pertinent teacher information and all of the necessary answer keys for the *Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics* workbook.

Writer’s Notebook

This *Writer’s Handbook* has been created for mid-primary grades. (Other levels are included in various other kits.) It is an excellent resource providing a variety of writing tips, guidelines, examples, and more, with a Traits of Good Writing Index for easy reference. There are even prompts that allow students to take information from the page and expand it for their own use and better understanding.

The *Writer’s Notebook* is organized according to aspects of the writing process with such topics as “Strong Opening and Closings,” “Do You Need an Adjective?,” and “Writing Great Sentences.” The book does exactly what the title suggests: it provides a notebook of materials that serves as a writer’s first and best resource.

Scope-and-Sequence Matrix of Writing

Table of Contents

Standard I: *The student uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.* page 32

Standard II: *The student uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing.* page 43

Standard III: *The student uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions.* page 45

Standard IV: *The student gathers and uses information for research purposes.* page 51

How to Use the Scope-and-Sequence Matrix

The scope-and-sequence matrix of writing standards is organized in a standard/benchmark format, adapted from *Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education*. Look to the standard first and you will find a listing of benchmarks with their corresponding grade levels for introduction (I), mastery (M), and extension (E). You will also find these and related benchmarks (skills) throughout the lessons in the individual teacher’s guides, *Nonfiction Narrative, Expository, Persuasive, and Fiction and Poetry*.

Writing Standards

Although writing standards vary by location, there are those standards which are part of the universal norm. The following pages attempt to solidify such standards and to indicate where they should be introduced, mastered, and extended in the writing curriculum, grades K through 6. The mastery level, in particular, identifies the benchmarks for grade level achievement.

The chart is marked with the following designations:

I = Introduce **M** = Master **E** = Extend

Kendall, John S., Marzano, Robert J. *Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education*, 4th edition. Aurora, CO: MeREL. Used by permission of MeREL.

Grade	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	I	M	E					
2	I	M	E					
3	I	M	E					
4	I	M	E					
5	I	M	E					
6	I	M	E					
7	I	M	E					
8	I	M	E					

I. The student uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

A. The student uses prewriting strategies to plan written work.

1. The student discusses ideas with peers.
2. The student draws pictures to generate ideas.
3. The student writes key thoughts and questions.
4. The student rereads ideas.
5. The student records reactions and observations.
6. The student uses graphic organizers, story maps, and webs.
7. The student groups related ideas.
8. The student takes notes.
9. The student brainstorm ideas.
10. The student organizes information according to type and purpose of writing.
11. The student makes outlines.
12. The student uses published pieces as writing models.
13. The student constructs critical standards.
14. The student builds background knowledge.

Correlations of the Lessons to the Standards

Table of Contents

Standard I: The student demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies of the writing process. page 54

Standard II: The student demonstrates competence in the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing. page 57

Standard III: The student uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in writing. page 58

Standard IV: The student gathers and uses information for research purposes. page 59

How to Use the Correlations Chart

The correlations chart is organized according to the same standards and benchmarks utilized in the scope-and-sequence matrix. However, the chart provides a section in which lessons that teach each benchmark (and its corresponding skills) can be found. The teacher can use this chart to find all lessons that support a specific writing benchmark and its skills.

Standard	Benchmarks and Skills	Exploring Writing
I. The student uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.	<p>A. <i>The student uses prewriting strategies to plan written work.</i></p> <p>B. <i>The student uses strategies to draft and revise written work.</i></p> <p>C. <i>The student uses strategies to edit and publish written work.</i></p>	<p>All of the cards in the kit can be used for teaching this standard.</p> <p>Fiction and Poetry Lesson: 4, 5, 6, 7</p>
		<p>Expository Lesson: 7, 9, 12</p> <p>Fiction and Poetry Lesson: 4, 5, 6</p>
		<p>Narrative Nonfiction Lesson: 5, 6, 12</p> <p>Expository Lesson: 7</p>

Standard	Benchmarks and Skills	Exploring Wri
	E. <i>The student uses strategies to organize written work.</i>	Persuasive Lesson: 7 Fiction and Poetry Lesson: 9, 10, 11, 12
	G. <i>The student writes in a variety of forms or genres.</i>	Persuasive Lesson: 2, 3 Fiction and Poetry Lesson: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
	H. <i>The student writes for different purposes.</i>	Fiction and Poetry Lesson: 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
	K. <i>The student writes expository compositions.</i>	Expository Lesson: 1, 3, 4, 5
	L. <i>The student writes narrative accounts.</i>	Narrative Nonfiction Lesson: 1, 8, 10 Persuasive Lesson: 4, 9 Fiction and Poetry Lesson: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

Standard	Benchmarks and Skills	Exploring Wri
	<p>M. <i>The student writes autobiographical compositions.</i></p>	<p>Narrative Nonfiction Lesson: 2, 9</p>
	<p>N. <i>The student writes expressive compositions.</i></p>	<p>Persuasive Lesson: 4 Fiction and Poetry Lesson: 8, 9, 10, 11, 12</p>
	<p>S. <i>The student writes persuasive compositions.</i></p>	<p>Expository Lesson: 3 Persuasive Lesson: 2, 6, 11</p>

About Narrative Nonfiction Writing

What is Narrative Nonfiction Writing?

Narrative nonfiction writing tells a story or recounts an event that is true. Students are most likely to write narratives if left to their own devices. They come to the classroom with worlds of narrative experience, and they are generally eager to tell their own.

The difference between the narratives that students often write and the narratives they will write in these lessons is the element of nonfiction. The students will learn that real, personal and biographical experiences are, in fact, nonfiction narratives. These stories may use imagination in order to describe settings, characters, and so forth, but it is important that they rely on accuracy for all content.

Narrative Nonfiction Structure and Function

The structure and function of narrative writing is fairly straightforward. The structure must be organized to tell a story in some logical sequence. For example, a good narrative might begin just before the climax in order to draw the reader's attention, relating the beginning and the rest of the story in sequence after that. As for the function of narrative, it is simple: narrative tells a story. Of course, many narratives also include a message, moral, or lesson as part of their functions.

Narrative Nonfiction Content

The content of narrative nonfiction is the same as in fictional narrative: the elements of story. These include characters, setting, plot, conflict, climax, conclusion, and sometimes theme. It is important to remind students that all of these elements must be true when writing nonfiction narrative. Students should also know that such things as detailed descriptions, dialogue, and commentary from the author regarding the events and outcomes of the story may also be a part of nonfiction narrative.

Categories of Narrative Writing

Expository writing falls within two primary categories: personal and biographical. Personal narratives tell about the experiences (and related feelings and thoughts) of the author. Biographical narratives tell the stories of people other than the author, whether they are individuals the author knows personally, from observation, or from history (famous or not). Narrative can also be included as part of other writing (such as persuasive or expository) in order to help that writing serve its function.

The primary things to remember when creating a narrative piece are the elements of story and authenticity. If these are carefully considered, the writing is sure to meet its goal.

Narrative Nonfiction Writing Rubric

Use this three-part rubric as a guide when assessing narrative nonfiction writing as a whole.

Level 3—Competent

- The student can effectively establish a situation, plot, point of view, setting, and conflict.
- The student creates a clear theme for a chosen topic.
- The student consistently creates an organizational structure that is appropriate for the text.
- The student always selects important details and excludes extraneous details.
- The student always presents details in a logical manner.
- The student always sets the mood of a piece of writing.
- The student always establishes his or her tone.

Level 2—Emergent

- The student attempts to establish a situation, plot, point of view, setting, and conflict.
- The student attempts to create a clear theme for a chosen topic.
- The student can usually create an organizational structure that is appropriate for the text.
- The student occasionally selects important details and excludes extraneous details and inconsistencies.
- The student occasionally presents details in a logical manner.
- The student occasionally sets the mood of a piece of writing.
- The student occasionally establishes his or her tone.

Level 1—Beginner

- The student requires assistance to establish a situation, plot, point of view, setting, and conflict.
- The student requires assistance to create an organizational structure.
- The student requires assistance to exclude extraneous details and inconsistencies.
- The student requires assistance to present details in a logical manner.
- The student requires assistance to set the mood of a piece of writing.
- The student requires assistance to establish his or her tone.

Parent Letter: Introduction to Narrative Nonfiction Writing

Dear Parent,

As you know, reading and writing are important components of your child's education. Children typically spend most of their time reading and writing fiction, but in the real world, the majority of the reading and writing we do throughout our lives is nonfiction. For this reason, we will spend time focusing on nonfiction genres, including nonfiction narrative. I encourage you to support this nonfiction focus at home in the following ways:

Reading Nonfiction

Try some of the following ideas to incorporate nonfiction reading in your home.

- Take trips to the library to find and check out nonfiction books of interest to your child.
- Encourage your child to read nonfiction magazines and newspapers.
- Have a family game night and ask your child to read the game instructions aloud.
- Have your child follow a recipe and help prepare a meal for the family.

Writing Nonfiction

Try some of the following ideas to incorporate nonfiction writing in your home.

- Encourage your child to write letters to out-of-town family members or friends.
- Provide your child with a journal (or notebook and paper) and encourage him or her to write daily entries.
- Before going on errands, ask your child to list the stops that need to be made and tasks that need to be accomplished in the most logical order.
- Make use of maps when discussing vacations, political issues, and world events.

Nonfiction Reference Materials

Try some of the following ideas to use nonfiction reading materials in your home.

- Make use of dictionaries and encyclopedias. You can purchase reference software, find reference books at your local library, or access online reference materials. (Simply do a search for "online dictionary" or "online encyclopedia.")
- Spend time with your child reading online nonfiction Web sites related to topics of interest to both you and your child.
- View nonfiction videos or DVDs with your child. Your local library most likely will have many of these that are of interest to your child.

By participating in the activities above, you will model to your child that nonfiction reading and writing is important and has a place in everyday life. Your support will ensure your child's increased reading and writing success!

Sincerely,

Graphic Organizer: Gathering Information Chart

Name _____

Story Title _____

	Source #1 _____	Source #2 _____
Fact #1		
Fact #2		
Fact #3		
Fact #4		
Fact #5		

Using Pictures to Help Tell a Story

Objective

The student will write a personal narrative and create a visual to help tell the story.

(Standard 1, Benchmark C, Skill 3)

- transparency of Narrative Nonfiction card 5, “Safe Harbor”
- overhead projector
- writing paper and pencils
- drawing paper
- crayons, colored pencils, or markers



Vocabulary

n stunning
n toxic

For definitions,
see page 40.



Reader's
&
Writer's
Response
Suggested



Procedure

1. **Display Narrative Nonfiction card 5, “Safe Harbor.” Read the story aloud** as students follow along.
2. When you are finished reading, **discuss the story as a whole group.** Direct your students’ attention to the pictures that accompany the text. Ask students to consider how these pictures help to tell the story of the Boston Harbor. How would their reading experience have changed if they did not have a visual of what the text was describing?
3. **Explain to the class that this card emphasizes the importance of using picture clues to understand what a text is about.** It helps readers who have little or no experience or knowledge of harbors or Boston feel as if they are right there. This helps them better understand what the author is trying to say.

Procedure *(cont.)*

4. **Talk with students about the importance of including only those pictures that help tell the story.** Having too many visuals on the page can be distracting and overwhelming for the reader. By choosing just the right amount, an author’s point can be supported by accompanying pictures.
5. **Tell students that they are going to write a personal narrative.** They are also going to create a picture to go with the story. They may decide where the picture is placed within the story. Perhaps it goes at the top of the first page of the story so that it helps the reader understand what the story is going to be about. Or, the picture might go at the end of the story to help enhance a reader’s understanding of the story. The students may decide.
6. If possible, you may **show students examples where art is used to help tell a story.**
7. Help students **decide on a story topic.** You may want to integrate this writing activity into your existing program.
8. **Give students time to write a personal narrative and illustrate the story.**
9. **Students can present their picture and story in whatever way they choose.**
10. As students share their work with the class, **discuss how each author chose to use art to help tell the story.**



Nonfiction/Fiction and Poetry

This card can be used with Fiction and Poetry card 2, “*No Harbor.*” Both cards were written about the same topic. However, the styles of writing are very different. Have students compare and contrast these two distinct ways of getting a point across.

Assessment

Review students’ work to assess whether they included a picture that helps tell the story. Is the picture distracting or overwhelming, or does it enhance the reader’s understanding of the story? You may also refer to pages 9–13 for rubrics and other assessment assistance.

Cross References

For additional thematic support, you may use these resources:

Writer’s Notebook: Choose a Topic, pages 18–19

Exploring Nonfiction: *Level 5:* Language Arts card 3, “Saving Our National Parks”

Exploring Writing: *Level 6:* Expository card 2, “Water Troubles”; Fiction and Poetry card 2, “No Harbor”

Class Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think it is so important to keep our water clean?
2. What are some of the positive changes at Boston Harbor?
3. Does this story remind you of anything that has happened in your own community?



Reader's and Writer's Response Suggested Answers

Reader's Response

1. The goal of the Boston Harbor Clean-Up was to make the water in Boston Harbor clean and safe by the year 2000.
2. Because the federal government had stopped paying for sewage treatment, people were worried that the cost for building better facilities would be too high.
3. Today, the water in Boston Harbor is safe for swimmers and pleasant for boaters, and wildlife has returned.

Writer's Response

1. The author uses the boating outing and his accidental swim as a set-up for talking about the condition of the harbor. The narrative is used at the beginning, middle, and end for continuity and interest.
2. Words used include *filthiest*; *deadly combination of sewage*, *chemicals*, and *fuel*; *toxic brew*; *poisoned*; *strange and unpleasant*; and *danger*.

Grammar, Usage, & Mechanics

Draw students' attention to the commas used in Narrative Nonfiction card 5. Find an example of a comma used in a series. Have students practice this skill on the worksheet on page 41, "Commas." For additional practice of this skill, see pages 49–50 of the book *Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics*.



Vocabulary Definitions

1. **stunning**—lovely or beautiful
2. **toxic**—poisonous

Commas

A **comma** is used in a sentence in many different ways. One way is in a series. A **series** is a list of three or more items. A comma is used to separate each item from the next one. A comma is not included after the last item in the series.

.....

Directions: Practice using a comma in a series by responding to the questions or directions below. Be sure to use complete sentences!

1. What are the names of three friends?

2. What are three colors you like?

3. What are three foods you eat for breakfast?

4. Name four sports you can play.

5. Name four states in the United States.

6. What are four topics you have studied in math this year?

Safe Harbor

“Coming about!” Someone screamed a warning, but it was too late.

Distracted by the beauty of the summer day and the **stunning** Boston skyline, I didn’t notice the danger. The captain was turning the vessel. That meant the mainsail, weighted down with a heavy beam, or boom, would switch to the other side of the sailboat.

Normally, I simply duck beneath the swinging boom. But today, because my head was in the clouds, my body would soon be in the water.

As the boom swept over the deck it caught me squarely in the chest. Luckily, my life vest softened the blow, and I wasn’t hurt. As I flew over the rail, I had one comforting thought: “At least the water’s clean.”

Just a few years ago, I wouldn’t have been so confident about that. In 1985, Boston Harbor was the filthiest in the United States. A deadly combination of sewage, chemicals, and fuel had transformed the waters into a **toxic** brew that poisoned wildlife, drove away boaters, and left swimmers with strange and unpleasant rashes.

Back then, I might have been in more danger from the water than from getting hit by the boom.

For decades, people had been treating the harbor like a giant toilet. Fortunately, that began to change in 1986 with the formation of an organization called Boston Harbor Clean-Up. The group turned the water from deadly to delightful. Its goal was simple: By the year 2000, the organization wanted swimmers, even accidental ones like me, to be able to go into the harbor waters without fear.

There was a lot of controversy over how that would be done or if it could be done at all. The federal government had stopped paying for sewage treatment. Many people feared the cost to taxpayers would be too high.

Yet, in spite of the odds, the cleanup happened on schedule. Today, I can see schools of fish, seals, and harbor porpoises swimming in the clean waters. The harbor has passed the strictest water-safety tests. Not only that, the cost of the new sewage plants was actually lower than predicted, although it was still a whopping \$3.9 billion. From my soggy point of view, as I waited for my friends to turn around and pick me up, the new, clean harbor was well worth it.

Before cities started cleaning up their harbors, the water was filled with trash.



STEVE ALLEN/GETTY IMAGES



Boston Harbor’s water is clean enough that swimmers can take a dip.

AP/WIDE WORLD

Reader's Response

- 1 What was the goal of Boston Harbor Clean-Up?
- 2 What was one controversy related to cleaning up Boston Harbor?
- 3 How is Boston Harbor different today than it was in 1985?

Writer's Response

- 1 How does the author use the narrative portion of this article as a theme to get across the main idea?
- 2 What descriptive words are used to convey the condition of Boston Harbor before it was cleaned up?

Be the Writer

Think of an important way that you have changed in the last few years. Did you improve your skills at a sport? Did you learn a lesson that has caused you to see the world differently? Write a narrative about the change. Be sure to give attention to both the “before” and the “after.” If possible, include pictures or illustrations to demonstrate the change.

Words to Know

stunning

toxic

From the Writer

When a writer has the space and resources, including visuals can turn a good article into a great one. When writing “Safe Harbor,” the author tried to use as much descriptive language as he could. He wanted the reader to really get a sense of how bad the harbor was before and how clean it has become. Could you see the “toxic brew” in your mind’s eye?

Colorful, detailed imagery is great to read (and it’s great fun to write), but including real photos to tell part of the story can be a big boost to your article.

Photos don’t exaggerate. Readers of the article can look at the “before and after” shots and understand much more than the writer could have gotten across with words.

Unless you are doing a photo essay (which doesn’t require much text), you don’t want to overwhelm your reader with pictures. Choose one or two that have the most impact and that are closely tied to your big ideas. Without detracting from your article, those pictures can add to, and enhance, your writing. Pictures can be powerful; use them wisely.

About Expository Writing

What Is Expository Writing?

While narrative text is perhaps the most comfortable and familiar for student writers, expository text is the most commonly required writing in schools. In its simplest form, expository writing serves to explain. It is, in fact, the backbone of nonfiction writing as seen in the real world. The outlining of directions, the retelling of events, or the description of processes are all examples of expository text. It is found everywhere we look, from recipe directions to the recapping of the world's events in the newspaper.

Expository writing differs from narrative text in its structure, content, and function. One must approach expository writing with a structural plan. This requires careful planning and conscious organizational thought.

Types of Expository Writing

Expository writing generally falls into two categories: informative and descriptive.

Informative: Informative expository writing provides the reader with information and news. Journalists write articles to inform the reader of new developments in the world.

Descriptive: Descriptive expository writing uses some of the skills common to fiction writing (sensory description, figures of speech, vignettes) in order to create a picture with words. Journalists employ descriptive writing in order to help the reader see what is being described.

The Components of Expository Writing

Most expository writing follows a formula. First, the main idea must be clearly and directly stated, or if implied, it must be clearly identifiable. The main idea must be thoroughly supported by relevant facts that are verifiable. These facts must be presented in a logical, organized, and clear structure. When the students carefully consider the structure, purpose, and supports used in their expository pieces, their written work is sure to be a success.

Successful expository writing pieces are well organized. They include an introduction with a strong lead and a clear thesis. Each paragraph has a topic sentence, well-structured paragraphs, and an effective conclusion. Good expository writers use effective word choice and appropriate sentence structures to support their ideas. Well-written vignettes enable writers to capture a scene.

Expository writing is generally accompanied by such visuals as maps, diagrams, charts, tables, illustrations, and photos. Writers must not only decide what visuals will best complement their information, they must also strike a balance between the words and pictures.

All good expository writing has one thing in common: research. Your students will learn to gather data from books and magazines, on the Internet, and personal interviews.

Expository Writing Rubric

Use this three-level rubric to assess each student's overall performance in expository writing. The rubrics on pages 14 and 15 are designed specifically for informative or descriptive expository pieces.

Competent

- The writer creates an interesting lead that hooks the reader.
- The body paragraphs are well organized and include topic and concluding sentences with supporting sensory details.
- The writer includes researched facts.
- The writer uses words and figurative language carefully and effectively.
- The writer uses an interesting and effective variety of sentence structures.
- The writer effectively incorporates visuals by striking a balance between the words and pictures.
- The writer includes an effective conclusion explaining why the subject is important.

Emergent

- The writer attempts to create an interesting lead that hooks the reader.
- The body paragraphs are somewhat organized, and most include topic and concluding sentences with supporting details.
- The writer includes a conclusion that attempts to explain why the subject is important.
- The writer includes a few researched facts.
- The writer attempts to use words and figurative language effectively.
- The writer uses a few different sentence structures.
- The writer incorporates visuals and attempts to strike a balance between the words and pictures.
- The writer includes a conclusion that attempts to explain why the subject is important.

Beginner

- The writer needs help to create an interesting lead that hooks the reader.
- The writer needs help to organize the body paragraphs and to include topic and concluding sentences with supporting details.
- The writer needs help to incorporate researched facts.
- The writer needs help to choose words and use figurative language.
- The writer needs help to write a variety of sentence structures.
- The writer needs help to incorporate visuals and strike a balance between the words and pictures.
- The writer needs help to craft a conclusion that explains why the subject is important.

Introductory Parent Letter

Dear Parents,

Since a high percentage of all the reading material printed today is nonfiction, more emphasis is being placed on nonfiction writing. This term, your child will be writing informative and descriptive nonfiction pieces. These skills are important in today's competitive world, and you can help in your child's writing development.

Here are some ways you can assist your child in developing good writing skills:

- Model the writing process for your child whenever you have to write something. Modeling sends a powerful message to your child, and children learn better when they have a living example.
- Support your child's writing by encouraging him or her to read. Create an environment that is rich in nonfiction and fiction reading choices. Set aside time each day to read together. Read expository pieces from newspapers and magazines together.
- Promote accuracy by engaging your child in activities that focus his or her attention on details. Encourage note taking and journal writing.
- Require your child to explain his or her way of thinking whenever the opportunity arises. Point out logical and compelling ideas to your child.
- Ask your child to verbally inform you about grocery stores, foods, restaurants, books, TV shows, and movies. Encourage your child to report information to you in an objective manner.
- Participate in your child's schoolwork by reading all of your child's writings. Nurture your child's written work by withholding criticism. Instead, look at the content and avoid proofreading. Point out what your child does well. Encourage your child to try new things.
- Provide your child with a comfortable workspace with adequate lighting.
- Structure your child's homework time into your daily routine.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

Graphic Organizer: The Components of Research

Facts	Conclusions

Source:

Making the Most of Research

Objective

The student will state a thesis or purpose.

(Standard I, Benchmark K, Skill 8; Standard IV, Benchmark H, Skill 1)

Materials

- transparency of Expository card 1, “Dinos for Dinner”
- overhead projector
- blackboard/whiteboard
- chalk or markers
- student copies of Components of Research graphic organizer, page 20 (4 copies per student)
- student access to primary and secondary sources
- blank transparency for each student
- overhead pen for each student



Vocabulary

n remnants
n vertebrates
n affect

For definitions, see page 26.



Reader's and Writer's Response Suggested

Answers:



Procedure

1. **Display the transparency** of Expository card 1 for the class to read.
2. **Copy on the board** the columns from the Components of Research graphic organizer.
3. **Ask the students to identify the facts** in the article. Record their responses in the graphic organizer on the board.
4. **Ask the students to identify the conclusions** based on the facts:
 - “Even when dinosaurs ruled the Earth, they sometimes ended up as a meal for mammals.”
 - “Some of the eaten dinosaur’s bones were connected to one another, suggesting it was swallowed in large, unchewed chunks.”
 - “Not only were mammals eating dinosaurs millions of years ago, they were also much bigger than previously thought.”

Procedure *(cont.)*

5. **Distribute four copies of the Components of Research graphic organizer** to each student.
6. **Have the students brainstorm** to determine a topic they want to research.
7. **Require each student to locate at least two resources** to use to find facts about the topic.
8. **Have the students use the graphic organizer to record the facts** they located. They should use separate graphic organizers for each source.
9. **Ask the students to work in pairs** and look at their respective research together. **Write the following questions on the board:** *Do you note any patterns? Can the information be grouped into categories? In what order will you present your information? What conclusions can you draw?*
10. **Review with the students the components of a good thesis statement.** It should include the topic and the assertion the writer is attempting to make. Have the students write a clear statement of the purpose for their writing. Remind them that a thesis statement should cover only what will be discussed in the paper.
11. **Distribute a blank transparency and overhead pen** to each student. **Ask the students to write their thesis statements** on the blank transparency. Also, have them write down the three facts that they will use to support the thesis statement.
12. **Present each transparency on the overhead projector.** **Evaluate each one as a class** and revise the thesis statements as necessary.

Graphic Organizer: The Components of Research

Topic	Conclusions

25

Assessment

Collect and assess the students' graphic organizers. Offer feedback and assess the thesis statements as they are presented to the class. Make sure the topic and the writer's assertion are stated. See pages 13–15 for rubrics and other assessment assistance.

Cross References

For additional thematic support, you may supplement the lesson with these resources:

Writer's Notebook: Choose a Topic, page 18; Narrow it Down, page 19; Finding Information, page 34

Exploring Nonfiction: *Level 4:* Science card 7, "Great Ball of Fire"; *Level 5:* Science card 3, "This Croc Really Rocks"; Science card 10, "Top 5 Heaviest Land Mammals"

Making the Most of Research *(cont.)*

Class Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the theories regarding the extinction of the dinosaurs?
2. How does the discovery named in the article affect the current theories regarding dinosaur extinction?
3. What is the difference between a theory and a fact?
4. What other theories do scientists have about our world?



Reader's and Writer's Response Suggested Answers

Reader's Response

1. The fossil contained the fossilized remains of a baby dinosaur that the *Repenomamus robustus* had eaten.
2. Scientists concluded that some mammals were meat eaters that competed with dinosaurs for food. Also, some mammals were larger than previously thought.

Writer's Response

1. Pronunciations for difficult-to-pronounce words and definitions are enclosed in parentheses. The information, provided as a reader's aid, is not essential to understanding the article.
2. The writer quoted Meng to emphasize the importance and rarity of the discovery.



Vocabulary Definitions

1. **remnants**—small parts left over; remains
2. **vertebrates**—animals with spinal cords and well-developed brains
3. **affect**—act upon or influence somebody or something

Grammar, Usage, & Mechanics

Explain to the students that run-on sentences and sentence fragments can detract from the effectiveness of a thesis statement. When readers have to struggle to understand what is being said, they are less likely to learn new information. Review how to avoid run-ons and fragments and then have your students complete page 27, Run-on Sentences and Sentence Fragments. For additional practice of this skill, see pages 57–58 of the *Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics* book.

Run-on Sentences and Sentence Fragments

Directions: Read each statement. Then write CS for complete sentence, RS for run-on sentence, and SF for sentence fragment.

1. Going camping. _____
2. Hiking up the hill. _____
3. James brought two gallons of water to drink. _____
4. My sister wants to sleep outside of the tent, I want to sleep inside. _____
5. I am not afraid of bears coming to our campsite at night. _____
6. The food in the tree. _____
7. After hiking all day, we sat down to rest, we drank a lot of water. _____
8. James also brought a headlamp, he is afraid of the dark. _____
9. When we finished hiking. _____
10. Camping with the family is fun. _____

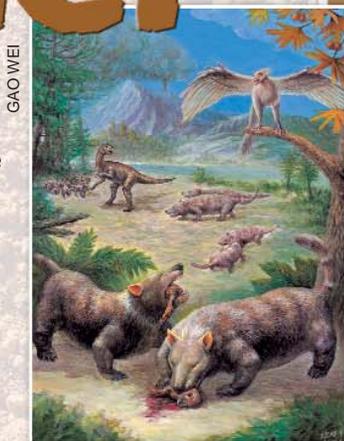
Try this! Revise the sentence run-ons and sentence fragments by rewriting them correctly on the other side of this paper.

Directions: Proofread the paragraph using proofreader's marks.

James, Kelly, and fausta went camping in the high Sierras Last week. They had to make many preparations for their long journey and excursion backpacking they had to pack large backpacks with all of the clothing, equipment, and food they needed their journey. James carried and extra water, and Kelly carried the cooking equipment. Fausta carried a lot of the food, their packs weighed over. 25 pounds each! Fausta brought an extra pair of shoes but. She decided to leave them in the car when they got to the trail. She didn't want any extra weight.

Dinos for Dinner

Even when dinosaurs ruled the earth, they sometimes ended up as a meal for mammals. That was the discovery made by Chinese and American paleontologists (scientists who study fossils) in December 2004. While studying a fossil of a 130 million-year-old mammal called *Repenomamus robustus* (rih-peh-noh-mom-us roh-bus-tus), the scientists found the fossilized remains of its last meal—a baby dinosaur. The mammal had eaten a psittacosaur (sih-tah-kuh-sore), a two-legged plant-eating dinosaur with a beaklike snout.



Scientists now believe that mammals like these competed with small dinosaurs for food.



A fossil of *Repenomamus robustus* with a bellyful of its last meal—a baby dinosaur.

The fossil was dug up by farmers in Liaoning (leeow-ning) province in China. The area is rich in dinosaur and early mammal remains. It was brought to researchers in Beijing, China. Then it was taken to the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. While studying the fossil, researchers noticed a set of bones under its rib cage, where the mammal's stomach had likely been. The bones were **remnants** of the limbs, fingers, and teeth of a six-inch-long psittacosaur.

Some of the eaten dinosaur's bones were connected to one another, suggesting it was swallowed in large, unchewed chunks. The rare fossil is the first direct sign that early mammals may have fed on small **vertebrates**, including young dinosaurs. "This discovery is the chance of a lifetime," Jin Meng says. He is a paleontologist at the American Museum of Natural History.

Mammals Were Bigger, Too

Not only were mammals eating dinosaurs, the mammals were also much bigger than previously thought. The team of scientists found another fossil in the same place in China. This animal was a bigger relative of *R. robustus*, and probably weighed about 30 pounds. It has been given the

name *Repenomamus giganticus*. *R. Robustus* was about 15 inches long, but *R. giganticus* was twice that size. It is the largest known complete skeleton of a mammal from the Mesozoic era, 280 million to 65 million years ago.

Together, the two discoveries give scientists a new understanding of ancient mammals. Before these finds, experts believed that Mesozoic mammals were no larger than squirrels and that they hunted mostly at night. The new finds offer evidence that some mammals were meat eaters who competed with small dinosaurs for food and territory.

It's still clear that 130 million years ago, most dinosaurs were larger, stronger, and moved faster than mammals. Still, these new finds raise many questions. How did these larger hunting mammals **affect** dinosaur evolution? The answer will have to wait for more evidence. "That's how it is with the best finds," says paleontologist Anne Weil of Duke University, in North Carolina. "They leave you with more questions than answers."

PHOTODISC/GETTY IMAGES

Words to Know

remnants affect
vertebrates

Reader's Response

- 1 Why was the fossil of the mammal so rare?
- 2 How did the two discoveries change scientists' opinions of ancient mammals?

Writer's Response

- 1 What information did the writer enclose in parentheses? Why do you think the writer set the information apart from the remainder of the sentences?
- 2 Why did the writer quote Jin Meng in the third paragraph of the article?

Be the Writer

Imagine you are one of the scientists who has studied the *Repenomamus robustus* fossil. You want to tell the public about the discovery and its impact on scientific thought. Write a press release telling about the discovery. Be sure to tell what was discovered, where and when it was discovered, and why the discovery is important.

From the Writer

Where do you get the information you need for science articles about fossils? You do research. Research may include reading journal articles about fossils or talking to the scientists examining them.

When you write a research paper for science or for any subject, you can gather information by going to the library or getting on the Internet. You can refer to a variety of sources. You might check out encyclopedias, magazines, books, and video interviews. A wealth of primary sources and secondary sources are available to you.

A primary source comes directly from an expert or another person with direct knowledge. Paleontologist Jin Meng's comment in the article "Dinos for Dinner" is an example of a primary source. This is what he had to say about the fossil discovery. You may find such printed primary sources as letters and interviews as you do research.

A secondary source contains information provided by writers who studied a subject in primary sources and have written about it. Examples include an encyclopedia entry or a journal article. Many secondary sources include primary sources, such as letters.

Remember, you have to identify all of your sources when you do a research report. You should include footnotes and a bibliography that tell where you found the information for your report. And as you do your research for your report—especially on the Internet—make sure your sources, and the information they supply, are accurate.

About Persuasive Writing

What Is Persuasive Writing?

Persuasive writing is a powerful form of communication. The intention of a persuasive piece is to influence the reader to change the way in which he or she thinks or acts. The writer attempts to convince the reader through argumentation, advice, or pure entreaty to think or act as the writer desires. This is heady business, requiring careful thought and craft.

In persuasive writing, the author states and supports an opinion and then tries to sway the reader into agreement and perhaps action. In this way, the goal of persuasive writing is active. It is also dependent upon the reader in a way that is far more concrete than with any other writing genre.

Persuasive Structures

The most common persuasive structures include the following:

Letters: Persuasive letters are usually in business form, although they can also be friendly. Their goal, as with any other persuasive writing, is to convince the reader to think or act as the writer desires. A persuasive letter might take the form of a complaint with a call for reparation or as a request for a personal favor.

Editorials: Editorials are articles that clearly express an opinion on the topic. Without the opinion (or slant), the writing is expository. The author's bias is the basis for the persuasion. It is the goal of editorials to convince the reader to think or act as the writer does.

Reviews: Reviews can be found in most newspapers and many magazines, and they do just as their name suggests: they review (examine or evaluate) a film, television show, book, play, story, concert, and so forth. Reviews state an opinion of the item being reviewed with the intention of swaying the reader to see (read) or to avoid the item.

Persuasive Components

The structure of different persuasive pieces may vary, but each has some basic components.

Topic: This is the subject of the writing. It must always be stated directly for the writing to be sensible.

Opinion: This is the author's perspective about the subject. The author may not state his or her opinion expressly, but the opinion is clear through the whole of the writing.

Reader Suggestion: This is the author's suggested course of action or thought for the reader. It is not always expressly stated, but it is, at least, implied.

The Key to Good Persuasive Writing

The most important thing to remember about persuasive writing is that the goal is to affect the reader's thoughts and/or actions. Language, structure, examples, corresponding graphics—each of these must be chosen with persuasion in mind. Of course, the writing must be accurate as well, so that the effects of the persuasion are not based on inaccuracies or worse, fabrication. The writer of a truly worthy persuasive piece must always maintain his or her integrity.

Persuasive Writing Rubric

Use this three-part rubric as a guide when assessing persuasive writing as a whole.

Competent

- The student can independently develop a controlling idea that conveys a judgment.
- The student can independently arrange details, reasons, and/or examples persuasively.
- The student can independently exclude information and arguments that are irrelevant.
- The student can independently support arguments with detailed evidence.
- The student can independently cite sources of information whenever necessary.
- The student can independently take and maintain a position.
- The student can independently use precise vocabulary.

Emergent

- The student can usually develop a controlling idea that conveys a judgment.
- The student can usually arrange details, reasons, and/or examples persuasively.
- The student can usually exclude information and arguments that are irrelevant.
- The student can usually support arguments with detailed evidence.
- The student can usually cite sources of information whenever necessary.
- The student can usually take and maintain a position.
- The student can usually use precise vocabulary.

Beginner

- The student requires assistance to develop a controlling idea that conveys a judgment.
- The student requires assistance to arrange details, reasons, and/or examples persuasively.
- The student requires assistance to exclude information and arguments that are irrelevant.
- The student requires assistance to support arguments with detailed evidence.
- The student requires assistance to cite sources of information whenever necessary.
- The student requires assistance to take and maintain a position.
- The student requires assistance to use precise vocabulary.

Parent Letter: About Persuasive Writing

Dear Parent,

As you know, reading and writing are important components of your child's education. Children typically spend most of their time reading and writing fiction, but in the real world, the majority of the reading and writing we do throughout our lives is nonfiction. For this reason, we will spend time focusing on nonfiction genres, including nonfiction narrative, expository, persuasive, and visual presentations (maps, charts, etc.). In our current unit, we will focus specifically on persuasive writing by writing letters, editorials, and reviews.

I encourage you to support this nonfiction focus at home in the following ways:

Reading Nonfiction

- Take trips to the library to find and check out nonfiction books of interest to your child.
- Encourage your child to read nonfiction magazines and newspapers.
- Encourage family members to read nonfiction books and magazines. Then, have a family discussion night and ask each member of the family to share information he or she has learned.

Writing Nonfiction

- Encourage your child to write letters to out-of-town family members or friends.
- Encourage your child to write letters to the editor of a local newspaper to express opinions about issues of interest.
- Provide your child with a journal (or notebook and paper) and encourage him or her to write daily entries.
- Make use of maps when discussing vacations, political issues, and world events.

Using Nonfiction Reference Materials

Make use of dictionaries and encyclopedias. You can purchase reference software, make use of those at your local library, or access online reference materials. (Simply do a search for "online dictionary" or "online encyclopedia".)

Spend time with your child reading online nonfiction Web sites related to topics of interest to both you and your child.

View nonfiction videos or DVDs with your child. Your local library most likely will have many of these that are of interest to your child.

By participating in the activities above, you will model to your child that nonfiction reading and writing is important and has a place in everyday life. Your support will ensure your child's increased reading and writing success!

Sincerely,

Graphic Organizer: Letter of Recommendation

Use this organizer to plan what you will write in a letter of recommendation for someone you know.

Person's Name

How you know this person

Positive Traits

Examples of Traits

Write a brief draft of your letter using the information above.

Letters

Writing a Letter of Recommendation

Objectives

The student will write an effective letter of recommendation.

(Standard I, Benchmark G, Skill 17; Standard I, Benchmark S, Skill 1)

Materials

- overhead transparency of Persuasive card 2, “You Couldn’t Do Better”
- overhead projector
- chalkboard and chalk
- student copies of the Letter of Recommendation graphic organizer (page 18)



Procedure

1. **Explain to the students that some things in life require a positive recommendation.** For example, before being hired as a babysitter, a parent might ask someone else about you to find out if you are responsible. Explain, also, that when applying for a job, it is often necessary to submit one or more letters of recommendation.
2. **Display** the overhead transparency of **Persuasive card 2**.
3. **Read** the letter aloud as the students read along silently.
4. Ask the **Class Discussion Questions** on page 28 and discuss unfamiliar vocabulary.
5. Point out to the students the format used in the letter.
 - Paragraph 1: General statement about the person and how the writer knows her.
 - Paragraphs 2–4: Detailed information about the person’s qualities and specific evidence of responsible behavior.
 - Paragraph 5: Summary of the letter, final comments recommending the person, and expression of willingness to answer future questions.
6. **Read the letter again** and instruct the students to pay close attention to the format discussed.
7. Explain that they will each have the opportunity to **write a letter of recommendation** for someone. List the name of a job on the chalkboard and have the students think about whom they know who would be a good candidate for that job.



Vocabulary

- n asset
 - n conscientious
 - n initiative
 - n aspect
 - n inventory
- For definitions, see page 28.



Reader's & Writer's Response Suggested

Procedure *(cont.)*

8. Distribute copies of the Letter of Recommendation graphic organizer on page 18. **Instruct** each student first to identify how he or she knows the person. Then, have the student list the qualities that would make this person a great fit for the job. Finally, have each student list responsible behavior he or she has witnessed from this person.

The graphic organizer is titled "Graphic Organizer: Letter of Recommendation". It includes the instruction: "Use this organizer to plan what you will write in a letter of recommendation for someone you know." The form has a box for "Person's Name" at the top. Below it are three columns: "How you know this person", "Positive Traits", and "Examples of Traits". At the bottom, there are several horizontal lines for writing a "Final draft of your letter using the information above." The footer contains the text: "©2017 Persuasive Teacher's Guide 18 ©Blackboard Classrooms".

Draw attention, not only to the character traits, but also to how these traits have been observed.

9. If necessary, **model** this procedure on the chalkboard using an example from your own experience.
10. When the students have created their lists, have them write their letters of recommendation. You may want to post the letter format from step 5 for student reference.
11. Ask the students to **exchange papers** with classmates for editing. The editors should read the paragraphs to determine whether they include the necessary components of a recommendation letter.
12. When the letters have been edited, have the students **write final drafts**.
13. Encourage the students to **share** their letters with others for ideas for future letter writing.

Assessment

Review each student's letter of recommendation, looking for appropriate format and inclusion of necessary components.

Also, see pages 8–13 for rubrics and other assessment assistance.

Cross References

For additional thematic support, you may supplement the lesson with the following resources:

Exploring Writing: *Level 6:* Narrative card 3, "She's a Regular Cheese Whiz!"

Writer's Notebook: Time to Write Nonfiction, pages 32–33; Time to Persuade, pages 45–47

Writing a Letter of Recommendation *(cont.)*

Class Discussion Questions

1. What is the purpose of the letter on Persuasive card 2?
2. Does the author like this person?
3. What are some of Carol's good qualities?
4. Why is Carol leaving her current job?



Reader's and Writer's Response Suggested Answers:

Readers Response

1. big or small; closed or opened
2. reliable
3. Carol worked part-time because she was a student.

Writers Response

1. The letter is to be given to unknown prospective employers, so the letter writer gives a nonspecific, general greeting.
2. The writer states that Carol Molton has initiative but also gives an

Grammar, Usage, & Mechanics

Have the students complete page 29 entitled "Vivid Adjectives." For additional practice of this skill, see pages 25–26 of the book *Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics*.



Vocabulary Definitions

1. **asset**—benefit
2. **conscientious**—thoughtful or careful
3. **initiative**—m otivation
4. **aspect**—part
5. **inventory**—list or record

Vivid Adjectives

Adjectives describe nouns, but some adjectives are better than others in helping a reader create visual images. See the example below.

The food was *good*.

The food was *mouth-watering*.

The article on Persuasive card 2 uses both generic and vivid adjectives.

Generic

wonderful
important
good
positive
dependable
resourceful

Vivid

reliable
conscientious
cheerful

Directions: For each underlined adjective below, write another adjective on the line that is more descriptive.

1. The girl was nice to everyone. _____
2. That was a good movie. _____
3. The carnival ride was fun. _____
4. This is important information. _____
5. He has a good attitude. _____
6. We had a wonderful time. _____
7. This is a nice day. _____
8. That frog is neat. _____
9. That game is so cool. _____
10. The field day was awesome. _____

You Couldn't Do Better

To Whom It May Concern,

Carol Molton has worked as a part-time sales clerk for the Knit Wits Knitting Store for more than three years. During that time, I have found her to be an important **asset** to our business. She is hardworking, reliable, **conscientious**, and has a wonderful relationship with our customers and staff. She brings intelligence and creativity to any problem, big or small.

Carol began working for us part-time after school when she was 15. From the beginning, she has proven to be an important part of our team. She brings a cheerful, positive outlook to her work. Our business depends on good customer

relations. Carol is especially good at listening to customers and understanding their needs. She always finds the right wool for their projects.

When she started, Carol didn't know how to knit. Although we did not require her to learn, she happily took it up and quickly became quite good. Now she teaches beginners classes in the store. This is a good example of her **initiative** and enthusiasm. Because of her new knitting skills, Carol has been able to suggest projects to our customers or help them with problems.

Several times a week, Carol is alone in the store. We have complete confidence in her ability to manage every aspect of our business. On many occasions, she has closed the store or opened it alone on a weekend morning. She understands our pricing policy, stock management, and our **inventory** control.

We are very sorry to lose Carol as she moves on to college. It will be hard to replace her. I am sure that she will succeed in anything she does. If you are looking for a dependable, intelligent, and resourceful worker, you couldn't do better than to hire Carol. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about her.

Sincerely,

Susan Toback, Owner
The Knit Wits Knitting Store

MARTYN VICKER/ALAMY

Reader's Response

- 1 Find two examples of opposites in the letter.
- 2 Which word lets you know that Carol Molton is trustworthy and dependable?
- 3 Why has Carol worked part-time rather than full-time?

Writer's Response

- 1 Why doesn't the letter writer address a specific individual in the greeting?
- 2 How does the writer establish that Carol Molton has initiative?

Be the Writer

Imagine you are the principal of your school. One of the teachers is moving to a new town and has asked you for a letter of recommendation. Write the letter, telling about the teacher. Remember to tell what subject or subjects the teacher teaches and how long he or she has taught at your school. Use standard business-letter format.

Words to Know

asset **initiative**
conscientious **inventory**

From the Writer

To hire or not to hire? This letter can help the reader answer that question about Carol Molton. Business owners and bosses are often asked to write letters of recommendation. This task requires them to evaluate an employee's qualities and his or her contribution to the company.

Before beginning to write a letter of recommendation, brainstorm a list of the person's good qualities. Once you have the list, try to think of examples that show how the worker exhibits these qualities.

When you are ready to write the letter, begin by naming the person you are writing about, identify the position he or she holds, and tell how long he or she has worked there. It's a good idea to trace the person's work history with the company, showing how responsibilities grew or changed over time. Try to emphasize his or her importance as a valued member of the staff. Close the letter with the recommendation and an invitation to contact you for answers to any questions.

Of course, it's important to carefully format every letter, with greeting, body, closing, and signature. The letter writer should also give his or her title or job position at the company. Make sure that all your sentences are complete. Check your spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation. A well-constructed letter may help the person you are writing about get a job—and a well-written letter reflects well on you!

About Fiction and Poetry

What Is Fiction and Poetry?

Fiction and poetry is creative writing. The intention of fiction and poetry writing is to express the thoughts, ideas, and feelings of the author. It is also meant to inspire and/or entertain the reader.

Fiction and poetry is often left up to the creativity and imagination of the author.

Types of Fiction and Poetry

The most common forms of poetry and fiction include the following:

Poetry: There are many different types of poetry. The poetry included in this book is free verse and story or epic poetry. Students will receive instruction about how to write each type of poem.

Historical Fiction Stories: Historical fiction stories are much like adventure stories. They need to be written well in order to entertain and draw in the reader. Historical fiction stories also have specific responsibilities to certain time periods. For a story to be plausible, events and actions need to be accurate within the time period the story is written. Special care and attention to researching the time period should be provided before writing the story. This will ensure that the setting and events are accurate to that time in history.

Myths: All myths are written with a purpose. A myth is written to explain why things are the way they are. The explanation is stated throughout the story or at the end of the story. Characters are usually animals or people with unusual characteristics.

Science Fiction Stories: Science fiction stories are written to entertain and captivate readers. Writing a science fiction story requires the combination of imagination and science. These types of stories also require the use of figurative language and literary devices to weave them together.

Fiction and Poetry Components

The structure of different fiction and poetry pieces may vary, but each will have some basic components.

Topic: This is the subject of the writing. The purpose of writing fiction and poetry will change. Keeping the message clear and focused will make fiction and poetry easier and more interesting to read.

Story Elements: The elements of a story include the characters, setting, plot, conflict, and resolution.

Creativity: This type of writing is the author's opportunity to be creative and expressive. A story or a poem written with thought and depth entertains and inspires.

The Key to Writing Good Fiction and Poetry

It's important to remember when writing a poem or story that the goal is to inspire and entertain the reader's thoughts and/or emotions. Figurative language, structure, examples, and plot all play roles in keeping the attention of the reader. Of course, the writing must be easy to read as well as interesting. A good hook at the beginning with a well-thought out middle and end can be just the thing an author needs to keep the reader's attention throughout the whole piece.

Fiction and Poetry Writing Rubric

Competent

- The student can independently establish a situation, plot, point of view, setting, and conflict.
- The student can independently engage the reader by establishing context.
- The student can independently create an organizational structure.
- The student can independently exclude extraneous details and inconsistencies.
- The student can independently present details in a logical manner.
- The student can independently use a wide range of strategies such as dialogue, figurative language, and suspense.
- The student can independently develop complex characters.
- The student can independently provide a context within which the incident occurs.
- The student can independently use an individual, authentic voice.
- The student can independently provide insight into why an incident is significant.

Emergent

- The student can usually establish a situation, plot, point of view, setting, and conflict.
- The student can usually engage the reader by establishing context.
- The student can usually create an organizational structure.
- The student can usually exclude extraneous details and inconsistencies.
- The student can usually present details in a logical manner.
- The student can usually use a wide range of strategies such as dialogue, figurative language, and suspense.
- The student can usually develop complex characters.
- The student can usually provide a context within which the incident occurs.
- The student can usually use an individual, authentic voice.
- The student can usually provide insight into why an incident is significant.

Beginner

- The student needs help to establish a situation, plot, point of view, setting, and conflict.
- The student needs help to engage the reader by establishing context.
- The student needs help to create an organizational structure.
- The student needs help to exclude extraneous details and inconsistencies.
- The student needs help to present details in a logical manner.
- The student needs help to use a wide range of strategies such as dialogue, figurative language, and suspense.
- The student needs help to develop complex characters.
- The student needs help to provide a context within which the incident occurs.
- The student needs help to use an individual, authentic voice.
- The student needs help to provide insight into why an incident is significant.

Parent Letter—Introductory

Dear Parents,

Reading and writing are vital skills for anyone in this day and age. While our schools are working hard to provide a good foundation for our children, a strong language arts emphasis in the home is a great way to ensure your child's success. It has been proven repeatedly how teamwork between school and home creates the most lasting success for children, both academically and in society.

There are many things that you can do in your home. Below is a list of suggestions and writing activities that will enhance what we are learning in school. These activities will reinforce the poetry and fiction activities and lessons we are exploring. Remember to alter the suggestions or ideas in a way that would best meet the needs of you and your child. Not only do these activities provide a nice opportunity for your child, but it also sends an important message that you value these skills as well.

Make frequent trips to the school or public library. Encourage your child to read both fiction and nonfiction books. Can you find poetry books? Read and enjoy these books together.

Write a story or poem together with your child. Both of you begin a story. Write the first line and then switch papers. Add a line to the story. Continue switching and adding lines to each story, taking turns writing on each other's story. This can be a humorous and entertaining activity. When you have finished, read the two stories. Did they turn out as you expected? Now try doing this with a poem.

Learn about authors. What are some famous authors you know? Who are the authors of some of your favorite children's literature? Look up information about these authors on the Internet. Many authors have their own Web sites.

Create a character and write a story together about this character. You can add another chapter to the story with your child at bedtime.

As a family, hold a poetry reading of some of your favorite poems. Turn the lights down and do it by candlelight to add some atmosphere.

Write a new ending or a new chapter to a favorite family story or book.

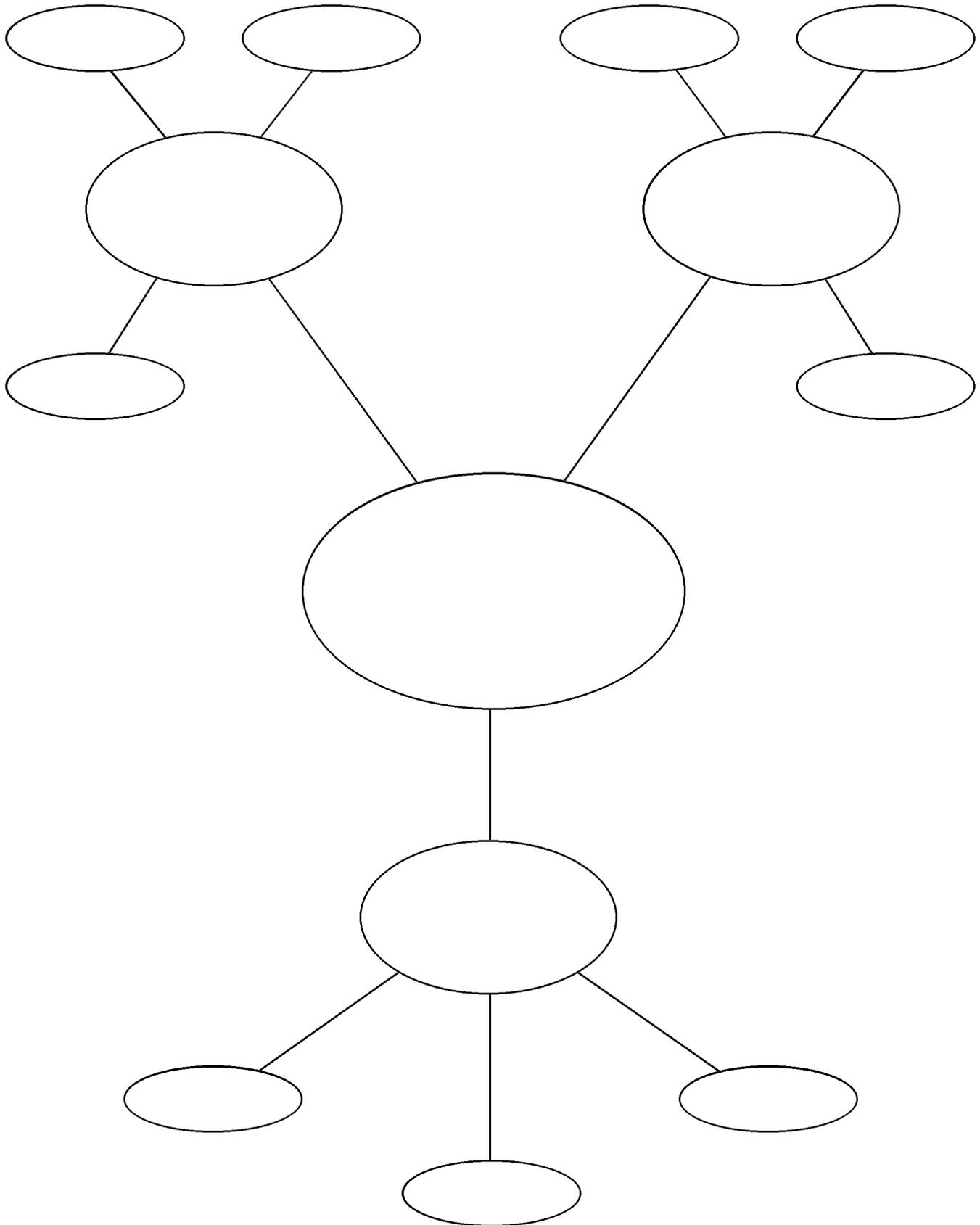
Share your favorite books from when you were a child and explain why you liked them. Discuss your child's favorite books as well. Is there a certain type of genre you are drawn to? Why do you think this is so?

Create a reading log as a family and record all of the books you have read for pleasure over the course of a month.

Your support will help your child become a competent writer of fiction and poetry. Thank you for your assistance. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Poetry Web Organizer



Poetry

Writing Free Verse

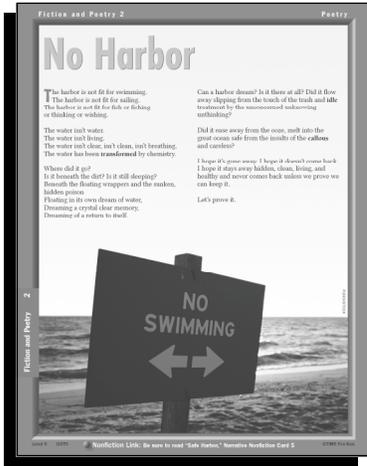
Objective

The student will write a free verse poem.

(Standard I, Benchmark G, Skill 4; Standard I, Benchmark H, Skill 6; Standard II, Benchmark A, Skill 2)

Materials

- transparency of Fiction and Poetry card 2, “No Harbor”
- overhead projector
- transparency of Poetry Web Organizer (page 20)
- student copies of Poetry Web Organizer (page 20)
- student copies of Fiction and Poetry card 2, “No Harbor”
- chalkboard or whiteboard
- chalk or whiteboard marker



Vocabulary

n transformed
n idle
n callous

For definitions,
see page 30.



Reader's & Writer's Response Suggested



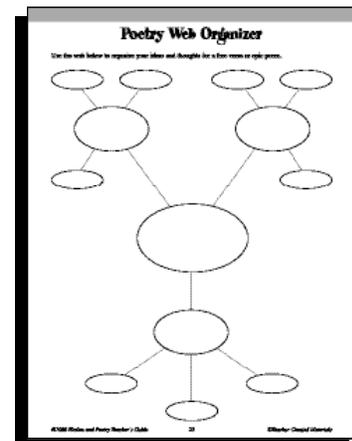
Procedure

1. **Display the transparency** of Fiction and Poetry card 2.
2. **Read the poetry aloud** while students follow along silently.
3. **Discuss the content of the poem with students. Conduct a discussion such as,** “This is a poem. Does it rhyme like most poems? What do you notice about this poem? What makes this poem unique? How is this poem written?” Explain to the students that this is a free verse poem. A free verse poem is different than typical poetry.
4. **Discuss the definition of free verse poetry.** Write the following on the board:

Free verse is a form of modern poetry. It is not written in any special form and does not require rhyme or rhythm.
5. **Point out the title of this piece, “No Harbor.”** Ask the students if this is an interesting title. Does the title hint at what the free verse poem is about?
6. **Analyze with the students each paragraph or stanza from Fiction and Poetry card 2.** Each paragraph or stanza is a group of sentences in a poem that are centered on one main idea.

Procedure *(cont.)*

7. **Now place the transparency of the Poetry Web Organizer on the overhead projector.** Distribute copies of Fiction and Poetry card 2 to each student or pair of students.
8. **Have students identify the groups of ideas or stanzas that the poem is about. Write these main ideas in the circles on the web.** Write each corresponding thought or related idea in one of the outer circles.
9. **Explain that a free verse poem does not have a specific format to follow, but it needs to be about one central theme or idea to flow smoothly and to make sense.**
10. **Ask students to write their own free verse poems.** Distribute student copies of the Poetry Web Organizer. The students must select the topics of their poems. Once they have jotted down their ideas, they can begin writing the poems.
11. **Divide students into pairs and have them share their poems with their partners.** Students can create their poetry graphic organizer webs to dissect the parts of paragraphs. Circulate the room to give feedback to the students.



Nonfiction/Fiction and Poetry

This card can be used in conjunction with Narrative Nonfiction card 5, “Safe Harbor.” Discuss the issues of cleaning up the ocean and the environment and its priority in today’s society. Compare the differences between the two harbors—one is filthy and the other has been cleaned.

Assessment

Allow time for students to complete their free verse poems and fill in the graphic organizers. Review these with each student individually. Hold a conference with each student and work to determine the characteristics of a free verse poem. See pages 8–15 for rubrics and other assessment assistance.

Cross References

For additional thematic support, supplement this lesson with the following resources:

Exploring Writing: *Level 6:* Narrative Card 5, “Safe Harbor.”

Writer’s Notebook: Time to Write Poetry, page 50

Exploring Nonfiction: *Level 5:* Language Arts card 10, “One Person Can Make a Difference.”

Writing Free Verse *(cont.)*

Suggested Class Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think there are so many polluted waters in the United States?
2. What do you think can be done about this issue? What can we do?
3. What can we learn from the author of this free verse poem? Do you agree or disagree?
4. What advice or suggestions do you have for the government about this issue?



Suggested Answers to Reader's and Writer's Response Questions

Reader's Response

1. "Living water" is water that can support life because it is clean and unpolluted.
2. "Dreaming a crystal clear memory" refers to remembering a time in the past when the water was clean and unpolluted.

Writer's Response

1. The water has been tainted by chemicals, which have polluted it.
2. The writer does not want the life-giving waters and clean usable harbor to return unless people have learned their lesson and are willing to protect precious resources. The writer believes that there is



Vocabulary Definitions

1. **transformed** changed, altered
2. **idle** inactive, still
3. **callous** heartless, careless

Grammar, Usage, & Mechanics

When trying to hook the reader into a free verse poem, the students will need strong sentences. Strong sentences help guide the reader through the poem with focus on key points and ideas. Have the students complete page 31 entitled, "Which Sentence?" For additional practice of this skill, see pages 1–2 of the *Grammar, Usage, and Mechanics Workbook*.

Which Sentence?

There are four types of sentences that are used in writing. These sentences are called *declarative*, *interrogative*, *imperative*, and *exclamatory*. Using a variety of sentence types can improve your writing.

Declarative Sentences

A declarative sentence makes a statement.

Example: The harbor is not for swimming.

Interrogative Sentences

An interrogative sentence asks a question.

Example: Is it still sleeping?

Imperative Sentences

An imperative sentence makes a command.

Example: Clean up the harbor.

Exclamatory Sentences

An exclamatory sentence communicates a strong feeling, emotion, or surprise.

Directions: Write a *declarative*, *interrogative*, *imperative*, and *exclamatory* sentence on the lines below.

1. Declarative: _____
2. Interrogative: _____
3. Imperative: _____
4. Exclamatory: _____

Read and identify the sentences below. Write *declarative*, *interrogative*, *imperative*, and *exclamatory* in the space provided.

1. I hope the ooze has gone away! _____
2. Poison is floating in its own dream of water. _____
3. They must fix the harbor. _____
4. Is it beneath all the dirt? _____

No Harbor

The harbor is not fit for swimming.
 The harbor is not fit for sailing.
 The harbor is not fit for fish or fishing
 or thinking or wishing.

The water isn't water.
 The water isn't living.
 The water isn't clear, isn't clean, isn't breathing.
 The water has been **transformed** by chemistry.

Where did it go?
 Is it beneath the dirt? Is it still sleeping?
 Beneath the floating wrappers and the sunken,
 hidden poison
 Floating in its own dream of water,
 Dreaming a crystal clear memory,
 Dreaming of a return to itself.

Can a harbor dream? Is it there at all? Did it flow
 away slipping from the touch of the trash and **idle**
 treatment by the unconcerned unknowing
 unthinking?

Did it ease away from the ooze, melt into the
 great ocean safe from the insults of the **callous**
 and careless?

I hope it's gone away. I hope it doesn't come back.
 I hope it stays away hidden, clean, living, and
 healthy and never comes back unless we prove we
 can keep it.

Let's prove it.



PUNCHSTOCK

Reader's Response

- 1 What is meant by "living water"?
- 2 What do you think is the meaning of the line "dreaming a crystal clear memory"?

Writer's Response

- 1 According to the writer, why is the water unfit and no longer living?
- 2 What does the writer mean by saying "I hope it stays away ... and never comes back unless we prove we can keep it"? Why does the writer say this?

Be the Writer

Choose a topic. Think about what you would like to say about it. Brainstorm a list of words or phrases related to the topic. On each line of a sheet of paper, write one of the words or phrases. Use them as a framework for a poem in free verse.

Words to Know

transformed **callous**
idle

From the Writer

No rhyme or rhythm—is that free verse? Not exactly! You may find rhythm and rhyme in free verse, but you will not find a regular pattern. Free verse does not have a rhyme scheme. It does not have a metric pattern of stressed or unstressed syllables. Line length varies, and the structure of free verse is more natural than that of poetry with established meter and rhyme. For many poets, free verse gives them freedom to express their thoughts in a different way—without a fixed structure or rhyme scheme.

The poem "No Harbor" is an example of free verse. It uses repetition of phrases—"The harbor is not fit for"—to help direct the flow of the language. It uses figures of speech—"dreaming a crystal clear memory"—to create images and interest. It uses sound devices—"callous and careless"—to express mood. Its line lengths expand and contract as the story of a polluted harbor unfolds. The result is a message made clear and vividly through free verse.

How do you begin writing free verse? Choose a topic. Any topic will do. There are many appropriate topics for poetry. You might try freewriting—writing what comes to mind. Then go back and look at what you have written. Can you substitute figures of speech for less interesting language? Will sound devices add sparkle to your writing? Do your lines need to be edited for length? Should they be longer or shorter? Do some ideas need more detail? Edit your verse, and then share it freely.