

# 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.

## Introduction

The pretest to determine whether your students are working at the beginning level of expository writing should be administered and scored before the students are introduced to the content of the unit. Students who are reading at a middle second-grade level should be able to complete this unit successfully.

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. Authors who write together work in a cooperative group. They enjoy sharing ideas. Sometimes authors work alone. At times we'll work together to make a piece of writing. At other times you'll work alone to make a piece of writing.*

Give the students an explanation of expository writing such as this: *Writing that tells about something or explains something is called expository writing. Some expository writing explains how two things are the same or how they're different. Other kinds of expository writing tell what words mean or explain what something is.*

## Beginning Writing Sample

**PREPARATION** Write the following starter on the board: Imagine your best friend has never seen an eagle or a robin. Write an explanation for your friend that tells how an eagle is different from a robin.

If your students are unfamiliar with these birds, have available colored illustrations of the birds, or choose two birds or other animals known to your students.

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

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

Read aloud the starter on the board. Ask the students to think about how the two birds are the same and how they're different. Tell the students that if they wish, they can make a plan to help them write their explanations. Remind them to tell how the birds are the same and how they're different. Tell them to leave every other line blank for editing.

Ask the students to edit, proofread, and write final copies of their explanations. If your students are unfamiliar with the terms *editing* and *proofreading*, ask them to check their work to see if there's anything they want to add to make their explanations easier for the reader to understand. Tell them to check their work for capital letters and sentence end marks. Have each student include a realistic drawing to help the reader understand the important ideas in the explanation.

**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 Expository Writing		
	The author of this explanation . . .	Points Earned
O R G A N I Z A T I O N	Writes a beginning sentence.	
	Writes a middle with at least four related sentences.	
	Includes an ending sentence.	
	Spaces words and sentences correctly.	
	Uses margins to place writing on the page.	
C O N T E N T	Writes the question he or she is trying to answer.	
	Writes details that tell facts related to the topic.	
	Omits extraneous information.	
	Writes a concluding sentence that answers the question.	
	Uses nouns to name categories.	
S T Y L E	Uses a variety of sentence beginnings.	
	Gives facts rather than opinions.	
	Uses specific vocabulary appropriate to the topic.	
	Writes in the present tense.	
	Illustrates the explanation by drawing a realistic picture.	
M E C H A N I C S	Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.	
	Capitalizes <i>I</i> , first and last names, and the first words of sentences.	
	Uses periods to end telling sentences.	
	Indents paragraphs.	
	Uses present-tense verbs correctly.	
<b>Total Points</b>		

If the student scores . . .	
85–100 points	Administer the pretest for the intermediate level of Expository Writing.
20–84 points	The student is properly placed in the beginning level of Expository 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.