

Introduction and Pretest

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

PREPARATION The pretest in this introduction to the unit should be used to determine if your students are working at the intermediate level of Descriptive Writing. It should be administered and scored before you introduce the content of the unit.

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 things. Sometimes authors work with others to produce one piece of writing. A group of people who work together to produce a piece of writing is called a cooperative writing group. The authors enjoy sharing ideas. Sometimes we'll work as a cooperative group to write a class paragraph. When we write a cooperative paragraph, I'll write our ideas and the paragraph on chart paper for the class. Everyone will contribute ideas to our class paragraph.*

Sometimes authors work alone. After we practice together, you'll produce 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: *Neighborhoods are interesting places to visit. You've been asked to write an article for your local newspaper that tells about your neighborhood. Write an article that describes your neighborhood.*

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 to the students. Ask them to write a descriptive passage on lined paper. Allow them time to write. Ask the students to edit, proofread, and write a final copy of the passage. Evaluate the students' writing using the rubric and scoring guide 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 . . .	Points Earned
O R G A N I Z A T I O N	Uses an opening sentence that clearly introduces the topic.	
	Develops related sentences to produce a middle.	
	Uses the final sentence to bring closure.	
	Follows a logical sequence and order.	
	Uses transition words to move the reader from one detail to the next.	
C O N T E N T	Includes descriptive details that use the sense of sight .	
	Includes descriptive details that use the sense of hearing .	
	Includes descriptive details that use the sense of smell .	
	Includes descriptive details that use the sense of taste .	
	Includes descriptive details that use the sense of touch or feeling .	
S T Y L E	Correctly uses at least five adjectives to modify and describe nouns.	
	Correctly uses at least three adverbs to modify verbs.	
	Correctly uses figurative language (onomatopoeia, similes, alliteration).	
	Uses a variety of sentence structures.	
	Presents a clear picture to the reader.	
M E C H A N I C S	Indents paragraphs.	
	Uses correct capitalization at the beginning of sentences and in proper nouns.	
	Uses appropriate end punctuation.	
	Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.	
	Employs standard English usage.	
Total Points		

If the student scores . . .	
85–100 points	Administer the pretest for the advanced level of Descriptive Writing.
20–84 points	The student is properly placed in the intermediate level of Descriptive Writing.
0–19 points	Administer the pretest for the beginning level of Descriptive Writing.