

# 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 should be used to determine whether your students are working at the intermediate level of Expository Writing. It should be administered and scored before you introduce the content of the unit.

Each student will need a copy of "Levi's Business Decision" (page 5), lined paper, and a folder to use as a writing portfolio in which to keep writing assignments.

## Introduction

Introduce the students to the unit with an explanation like the following: *We're going to have fun learning to be authors who can write many different kinds of things. Sometimes authors work with other authors to produce one piece of writing. Authors who write together work in a cooperative group. 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 cooperatively to write. When we work cooperatively, I'll write our ideas on a chart for the whole class. Everyone will contribute ideas.*

*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 expository writing. Expository writing informs the reader about something or explains something to the reader. There are many ways to write expository paragraphs. Some expository paragraphs compare and contrast ideas or topics. Expository writing can also be a summary or a set of instructions.*

## Beginning Writing Sample

Explain to the students that before they learn more about expository writing, you'd like 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 the article "Levi's Business Decision" to the students. Ask them to follow along on their copies as you read. Tell the students to listen carefully so they'll remember the most important points in the article.

After you read "Levi's Business Decision," tell the students you'd like them to write a summary of the article in their own words. Allow them time to write. Ask them to edit, proofread, and write a final copy of the summary. Evaluate each student's writing using the rubric and scoring guide on page 6. Keep the writing sample and scoring sheet for comparison at the end of the unit.

## Levi's Business Decision

The California gold rush in 1849 attracted thousands of prospectors from all over the world. Not one to miss an opportunity, Levi Strauss knew that all the people arriving in San Francisco would need supplies for their tents and covers for their wagons. Levi decided to head west with his dream of becoming a successful businessman.

Once there, Levi settled into the business of making tents. After talking to some prospectors, he realized they needed tough pants that could stand heavy wear. Levi began using brown tent canvas to make sturdy pants. Word spread quickly that Levi's pants were the best for work in the goldfields.

The prospectors loved the sturdiness of Levi's pants but found them uncomfortable. Levi switched to another sturdy material made in France. It was called *serge de Nimes*, now known as denim. Levi improved his design by changing the color of his pants to denim blue. Levi's business partner, Jacob Davis, gave him the idea of using double stitching, with rivets around the pockets to prevent the weight of the gold nuggets from tearing them. The two men's ideas paid off. Most of the prospectors wore Levi's pants while working in the goldfields.

Today Levi Strauss's pants are worn by men, women, and children throughout the world.

**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 summary . . .  | Points Earned |
|--|---|---------------|
| O<br>R<br>G<br>A<br>N<br>I<br>Z<br>A<br>T<br>I<br>O<br>N | States the main idea of the passage.  |               |
|  | Places details related to the main idea in the middle of the summary.                               |               |
|  | Restates the main idea in the conclusion.   |               |
|  | Groups related ideas.   |               |
|  | Uses a logical sequence.  |               |
| C<br>O<br>N<br>T<br>E<br>N<br>T                          | Maintains consistent focus on the source.   |               |
|  | Concisely states the main idea of the passage.  |               |
|  | Uses judgment to select significant details.  |               |
|  | Combines ideas to condense information.   |               |
|  | Clarifies in simple terms the content of the original passage.                                      |               |
| S<br>T<br>Y<br>L<br>E                                    | Uses own words to write the summary.  |               |
|  | Maintains the intent of the original writer.  |               |
|  | Maintains the accuracy of the original writer.  |               |
|  | Is brief and concise.   |               |
|  | Uses a variety of sentence structures, both simple and complex.                                     |               |
| M<br>E<br>C<br>H<br>A<br>N<br>I<br>C<br>S                | Indents paragraphs.   |               |
|  | Uses the conventions of capitalization for titles and proper nouns.                                 |               |
|  | Uses conjunctions to combine information in sentences. Uses commas correctly in combined sentences. |               |
|  | Uses conventional spelling at a developmentally appropriate level.                                  |               |
|  | Uses appropriate end punctuation.   |               |
| <b>Total Points</b>                                      |   |               |

**If the student scores . . .**

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