

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 should be used to determine whether your students are working at the intermediate level of Practical 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 letters and directions. When we write letters and directions, I'll write our ideas and our letter or directions on a chart for the class. Everyone will contribute ideas to our class letter or directions.*

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 practical writing. Friendly letters, letters of concern, and directions are all examples of practical writing.

Beginning Writing Sample

PREPARATION Write the following starter on the board: You've noticed an increase in the amount of trash in the local park. Write a letter to the Parks Department expressing your concern. When you express concern, you explain why you're worried about a problem. Ask the Parks Department to solve the problem. Include your own suggestions.

Explain to the students that before they learn about writing a letter of concern, they'll give you 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 about practical writing. Remind them that when they write a letter of concern, they tell the person to whom they're writing why they're worried about a problem.

Read the starter aloud. Ask the students to write a letter of concern on lined paper. Allow them time to draft, edit, proofread, and write a final copy of the letter. Evaluate the students' writing using the rubric on the following page. Keep the writing sample and the scoring rubric for comparison at the end of the unit.

RUBRIC**Pretest****Posttest****Scoring the Samples**

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

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

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

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

Evaluating the Elements of a Piece of Practical Writing

	The author of this letter of concern . . .	Points Earned
O R G A N I Z A T I O N	Includes the writer's complete address and the date.	
	Includes an inside address.	
	Uses an appropriate salutation.	
	Uses an appropriate closing.	
	Concludes the letter of concern with a signature.	
C O N T E N T	Opens the letter with a positive comment.	
	Expresses the concern clearly.	
	Makes suggestions to address the concern.	
	Presents logical and well-supported reasons, facts, and examples.	
	Expresses appreciation for considering the author's point of view.	
S T Y L E	Identifies and defines the concern in an appropriate way.	
	Uses precise vocabulary.	
	Uses a variety of sentence structures.	
	Uses language that compels the reader to act.	
	Establishes a clear focus with little or no irrelevant or repetitious information.	
M E C H A N I C S	Uses correct capitalization for proper nouns.	
	Uses commas in dates and addresses.	
	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 Practical Writing.
20–84 points	The student is properly placed in the intermediate level of Practical Writing.
0–19 points	Administer the pretest for the beginning level of Practical Writing.