

Lesson 8

Language Skills Development

Listening/Speaking/Writing/Underlining, Quotation Marks and Italics in Titles

Time Required: 15 minutes

Materials Required: An example of italics

The title of a book needs to be underlined when you write it. What do you need to do when you write the title of a book? (Signal.) *Underline it.*

(Write on the chalkboard: **The Mystery Train, Myrtle and the Dancing Shoes.**) Read the first title aloud. (Signal.) *The Mystery Train.* *The Mystery Train* is the title of a book, so it needs to be underlined. (Underline **The Mystery Train.**) Why is *The Mystery Train* underlined? (Signal.) *Because it's the title of a book.*

Read the second title aloud. (Signal.) *Myrtle and the Dancing Shoes.* **Myrtle and the Dancing Shoes** is the title of a book, so it needs to be underlined. (Underline **Myrtle and the Dancing Shoes.**) Why is *Myrtle and the Dancing Shoes* underlined? (Signal.) *Because it's the title of a book.*

The title of a poem needs quotation marks around it when you write it. What do you need to put around the title of a poem? (Signal.) *Quotation marks.*

(Write on the chalkboard: **A Poem for Sam McGee.**) Read the title aloud. (Signal.) *A Poem for Sam McGee.* **A Poem for Sam McGee** is the title of a poem, so it needs quotation marks around it. (Put quotation marks around **A Poem for Sam McGee.**) Why does "A Poem for Sam McGee" need quotation marks around it? (Signal.) *Because it's the title of a poem.*

The title of a chapter in a book also needs quotation marks around it when you write it. What do you need to put around the title of a chapter in a book? (Signal.) *Quotation marks.*

(Write on the chalkboard: **Different Horse Breeds.**) Read the title aloud. (Signal.) *Different Horse Breeds.* **Different Horse Breeds** is the title of a chapter in a book about horses, so it needs quotation marks around it. (Put quotation marks around *Different Horse Breeds.*) Why does "Different Horse Breeds" need quotation marks around it? (Signal.) *Because it is the title of a chapter in a book.*

(Show students an example of italics.) The title of a newspaper or a magazine needs to be written in italics when you write it. What do you need to do when you write the title of a newspaper or a magazine? (Signal.) *Write it in italics.* Italics are easy to write when you type them with a computer. To show that a title needs italics when you type it, underline the title and write **i-t-a-l** in the margin. What do you do to show that a title needs to be written in italics? (Signal.) *Underline the title and write i-t-a-l in the margin.*

(Write on the chalkboard: **The Chicago News The California Inquirer.**) Read the first title aloud. (Signal.) *The Chicago News.* **The Chicago News** is the title of a newspaper, so it needs to be written in italics. (Underline **The Chicago News** and write **ital** beside

it.) Why does *The Chicago News* need to be written in italics? (Signal.) *Because it's the title of a newspaper.*

Read the second title aloud. (Signal.) *The California Inquirer.* **The California Inquirer** is the title of a magazine, so it needs to be written in italics. (Underline **The California Inquirer** and write **ital** beside it.) Why does *The California Inquirer* need to be written in italics? (Signal.) *Because it's the title of a newspaper.*

Literature

Postcards from Pluto

by Loreen Leedy

Note: The reading of *Postcards from Pluto* sets the stage for Dweebs from Zog. In Dweebs from Zog, students (Out-Dweebs) will be expected to conduct research about a planet, record the research on a postcard, and return the postcard to the Head Dweeb on the planet Zog. The information will be shared with the Head Dweeb through the Zog High Council. The Zog High Council is composed of other Dweebs who will record information pertinent to each planet in the solar system. The research books prepared in this way will be used at the end of the lesson sequence to decide the best planet for Dweebs' relocation.

Prereading

Today I am going to read a story about our solar system to you. This story is called *Postcards from Pluto*. What is today's story called? (Signal.) *Postcards from Pluto.* *Postcards from Pluto* is a fictional story but it contains facts about the solar system. *Postcards from Pluto* is written by Loreen Leedy. Who is the author of *Postcards from Pluto*? (Signal.) *Loreen Leedy.* The pictures in *Postcards from Pluto* were made by Loreen Leedy. Who is the illustrator of *Postcards from Pluto*? (Signal.) *Loreen Leedy.* After I have finished reading *Postcards from Pluto*, we will begin a research project about the planets in our solar system.

Reading the Selection

(Read the selections with as few interruptions as possible. Stop briefly to discuss unfamiliar terminology or to prepare a glossary of terms.)

Discussing the Selection

The students in *Postcards from Pluto* travel across the solar system in a space ship. Despite the fact that they travel by space-age means, they still communicate with Earth in a way with which we are quite familiar. Tell how the students communicate with Earth. (Call on a student. Idea: *They communicate by writing postcards.*) The postcards are often humorous and entertaining but they always tell facts. What do they tell facts about? (Call on a student. Idea: *They always tell facts about a planet or a moon or a star.*) (Show students the research books you have brought to class for Activity 1.) *These books are nonfiction books about the solar system. Nonfiction books tell about true facts. What do nonfiction books tell about?* (Signal.) *True facts. I will explain in a few minutes how you will use these books to do research about the solar system.* (Begin Activity 1.)

Activity 1 Dweebs from Zog, Day 1

Research/Writing a Postcard/Drama

Title: *Town Hall Meeting*

Materials Required: Books that tell about individual planets, one book for each pair of students

One postcard, from BLM 8A, for each student copied to card stock, if possible

One Assignment Sheet 1 from BLM 8B for each student

Pencils, erasers, pencil crayons or crayons for each student

A chart paper list of student partners

A large, suitably decorated “Planetary Mailbox” where students can deposit completed postcards

Note: Students will need to be paired for the duration of this research project. Some groups of three are acceptable. Prepare a chart listing student pairs or trios in advance. With consideration of class dynamics, students may choose their own partners.

(You will need to come prepared with one removable article of apparel or jewelry to set yourself apart as Head Dweeb. You will act as the leader of the Dweebs. Your manner and carriage should reflect this dominant role. You may wish to reorganize the seating in the classroom to suggest a town hall meeting.)

Procedure

1. (Read the following introductory speech while in character.) This meeting of the Zog Council will now come to order. Good day. I am pleased to see so many of us have come to discuss the fate of our planet, Zog. As you know, our researchers have determined that an asteroid will collide with and destroy our planet within the year. We Dweebs must act immediately to seek a new home. Our astronomers have located a star system containing nine planets, which is within reasonable traveling distance. It is our mission to conduct research on those nine planets and decide which will best serve our needs. Time is short! Dweebs must act!
2. Today you will receive your research assignments. You will travel in pairs to your assigned planet. Once you are there, you will conduct research according to my instructions. Record your findings on the Planetary Postcards I will provide you and ensure that they are mailed to me via Planetary Post at the end of each research period. (Remove the article of clothing or jewelry, end your dramatic presentation, and become the teacher again.)
3. It seems as though the Dweebs from the planet Zog are in a bit of a spot. Tell what is going to happen to their planet. (Call on a student. Idea: *Zog is going to be destroyed by an asteroid.*) Tell what the Head Dweeb has decided to do. (Call on several students. Ideas: *The Head Dweeb is going to send out research parties. Research parties will collect information about other planets. The Dweebs will search out a new home.*) The Head Dweeb says that Dweeb researchers have discovered a star system with nine planets. Tell where you think the Dweebs will look for their new home. (Call on a child. Idea: *The Dweebs will look in our solar system.*)
4. (Assign partners, planets to be researched, and books. Provide each student with Assignment Sheet 1. Provide each student with a blank postcard.)
5. Your assignment sheet tells you what information you will have to find to complete today's research assignment. Use your books to find the information. When you have found the information, print or handwrite it neatly in sentence form on your postcard. When you have finished printing your research information, turn your postcard over and decorate the blank side with an illustration of your planet as seen from space. If you have time, design a decorative stamp in the space provided on the postcard. Then drop your postcard in the Planetary Mailbox so that the Head Dweeb will receive it.

Activity 2 Dweebs from Zog, Day 2

Speaking/Listening/Drama/Informational Speech/Research

Title: *Zog High Council Meeting*

Time Required: 60 minutes

Preparation: Place classroom desks or tables in a circle so that all students are facing the middle.

Materials Required: Postcards produced in the last lesson

Nine Planetary Assessment Notes pages in a report folder or small three ring binder for each student

One new postcard from BLM 8A for each student

Assignment Sheet 2 for each student

Pencils, erasers, crayons or pencil crayons for each student

Chart paper that lists the names of the planets in order starting with Mercury

One copy of BLM 8C for each student

Note: The Zog High Council meeting allows for students to interview their fellow students and respond with information about the planetary research they have conducted. All students will take brief notes on BLM 8C as the interviews progress. At the end of the process, each student will have his or her own research book containing information about all nine planets. Students will use the collected information in this research book along with information given by the Head Dweeb to determine the best planet for Dweebs' relocation.

Procedure

1. Today you will take on two roles. First you will be members of the High Council of Zog. It is to them that you have sent your research and it is they who will decide, on the basis of your research, where Dweebs should relocate.
2. Each pair of you will be given postcards but they will not be your own. When I ask to hear the research about Earth, I will first ask who has the postcards about Earth. Then I will ask another planet to ask questions about Earth. As we go around the circle, you will take notes on your Planetary Assessment Notes pages. The four questions you will ask are the questions from your first assignment. They are the first four questions on your Planetary Assessment Notes pages.
3. Let's begin by writing the names of the planets in order at the tops of our Planetary Assessment Notes pages. (Point to the chart.) The names of the planets are listed on the chart. (While students are writing, hand out the first set of postcards, from the last lesson, to pairs of students. Ensure that students get postcards about different planets than those they researched.)
4. (Continue the lesson in character as the Head Dweeb. Wear the defining article that sets the Head Dweeb apart from the others.) High Councillors of Zog, we are gathered here to share the first results of our research labors. We will meet twice more in this manner. The format of our discussion shall be thus: You will each call upon fellow Councillors to read the research reports forwarded by our Out-Dweebs. As they respond, all of us will record the findings on our Planetary Assessment Notes pages. For example, Councillors assigned Earth research may ask Councillors assigned Pluto research about the composition of Pluto. As Pluto Councillors respond, record their answers, briefly, on your Planetary Assessment Notes page for Pluto.
5. Let us begin. (Call upon students who have the Earth postcards, for example, to ask questions of the Pluto cardholders. Go around the circle in this way, until everyone has had a chance to ask and respond. The teacher may make notes on the chalkboard or chart paper as this lesson progresses so that a master file is created.)
6. (When the Zog High Council Meeting is over, become the Head Dweeb again.) Well done, High Councillors of Zog! We will consider more such information at the next Council Meeting. Good day to you all and remember—our survival depends upon the careful analysis of the research done by our Out-Dweebs. (Become the teacher again.)
7. You are now Out-Dweebs again. I will hand out copies of the next assignment sheet and postcards to you. Work with your partner as you did yesterday to complete your work. When you have finished your writing work, decorate your postcard with a picture of what you think the surface of your planet looks like. If you still have time, design a stamp for your postcard and draw it in the space provided. Then drop your postcards into the Planetary Postbox.

Activity 3 Dweebs from Zog, Day 3

Speaking/Listening/Drama/Informational Speech/Research

Title: *Zog High Council Meeting II*

Time Required: 60 minutes

Materials Required: As in Activity 2 but supply a copy of Assignment Sheet 3 from BLM 8B for each student

Procedure

1. Follow the procedure from Activity 2. Hold a Zog High Council Meeting and share information. Then send the Out-Dweebs back for more information as assigned on Assignment Sheet 3.

Activity 4 Dweebs from Zog, Day 4

Speaking/Listening/Drama/Informational Speech/Research

Title: *Zog High Council Meeting III*

Time Required: 60 minutes

Materials Required: Completed Assignment Sheet 3
Planetary Assessment Notes

Procedure

1. Follow steps 1–6 of the procedure from Activity 2. Hold a Zog High Council Meeting and share information.

Activity 5

Speaking/Listening/Drama/Informational Speech/Decision Making

Title: *Where Shall We Go?*

Materials Required: a Zog Description Sheet (BLM 8D) for each student

Each student should have his or her own Planetary Assessment Notes for each planet.

Note: The Out-Dweebs have completed their missions. This is the day that the Out-Dweebs return to Zog and decide which planet in the solar system will best suit their needs.

Procedure

1. (Begin the activity in character as the Head Dweeb.) Hail, dear Out-Dweebs, and welcome home to Zog! Your research has been eagerly anticipated and weighed by the Zog High Council. Now it is time to make the decision about where to make our new home. I am leaving the decision to you. (Become the teacher again.)
2. I am going to make a speech about the planet Zog. In the course of my speech, I will give clues about what Zog is like. I will also tell what things are most important to Dweebs. This will help you decide which planet would be best for the Dweebs to settle. As I speak, make notes on your Zog Description Sheet. When I have finished, you may read your description sheet and your Planetary Assessment Notes. These documents will help you make your decision.
3. (Return to character as the Head Dweeb. Read the following speech twice. Leave out the last point about moons the first time through. The second time through, stop after each paragraph and ask students which planet is being described.)

The Head Dweeb's Speech

Fellow Dweebs, we are faced with a catastrophe of epic proportions. We are soon to lose our home.

No longer will we awake to the twin sunrise. No longer will we swim in our cool blue oceans, lakes, and streams. No longer will we watch the twin suns set over the towering mountains of rock that dominate our planet's surface. But these things are not essential to Dweebs even though they are pleasing to the twelve senses. (Second time the speech is read, ask: What planet is described? These points describe some Earth characteristics and Zog characteristics.)

This is a mournful time, a tragic time, a time for deep thought and consideration.

No longer will we breathe the richness of our acid clouds. No longer will we dance and sing to the roaring thunder and lightning of our atmosphere. No longer will we enjoy

the reverse rotation that brings us sunrise in the West and sunset in the East. But these things are not essential to Dweebs even though they are pleasing to the twelve senses. (Second time the speech is read, ask: What planet is described? These points describe both Zog and Venus.)

This is a quiet time, a remembering time, a time for reflection and reiteration.

No longer will we have the company of our animal friends who brighten our lives with snorts and snuffles. No longer will we enjoy a temperate and comfortable environment with equal measures of warm and cool. No longer will we gaze upon the rings of Zog in the twilight. But these things are not essential to Dweebs even though they are pleasing to the twelve senses. (Second time the speech is read, ask: What planet is described? These points describe some Jupiter characteristics and Zog characteristics.)

This is a peaceful time, a thoughtful time, a time of bringing together and fashioning anew. (Stop here the first time through. Begin the speech again. Ask students what they have learned about Zog after each stanza. Ask students which planet would be most appropriate for Dweebs after each stanza. Give a short time, if necessary, for students to consult their Planetary Assessment Notes.)

(Read the speech again. This time, include the last stanza, given below.)

Yes, fellow Dweebs, we are a flexible species. We are adaptable to almost any climate, any atmosphere, any terrain. We may live with other life-forms or be satisfied with the company of our fellow Dweebs. There is, however, one critical factor in our lives that we may not ignore. It is this factor that will determine our new home. That factor is holidays! The more holidays, the better, for Dweebs! We will relocate to the planet which will celebrate the most holidays! Which planet will be our new home, Dweebs? Consider and respond! (Ask students leading questions until they come to the conclusion that Mercury is the best planet because it has the shortest year, with 88 days. Therefore, holidays come more often.)

This is a hopeful time, a looking-forward time, a time of opportunity and a time for action!

Activity 6

Art/Writing

Title: *Farewell to Zog*

Time Required: 40 minutes

Materials Required: Drawing paper and pencils for each student

Colored pencils, markers, or crayons for each student

Zog Description Sheet from BLM 8D

Note: If you prefer, you may make this activity a painting activity, or use any other art media that would achieve an effective illustration.

Procedure

1. The Head Dweeb told many things about the planet Zog in a speech. Using the notes you took during that speech, draw and color a picture of one aspect of Zog. You may choose to draw the twin suns setting or the majestic mountains of rock. You may choose to draw the animal friends that snuffle and snort. Use your imagination to create a picture that will remind Dweebs of their former home for years to come.
2. (This activity could be a writing activity with an illustration. It could also be assigned as a comparative writing project in which students compare Zog with the planet they researched as Out-Dweebs.)



ADDITIONAL LITERATURE

Following are some

additional titles that your students may enjoy during and following this lesson.

Earth by Gregory L. Vogt (part of a series about each of the planets)

Destination Jupiter by Seymour Simon (has written many books about individual planets and space in general)

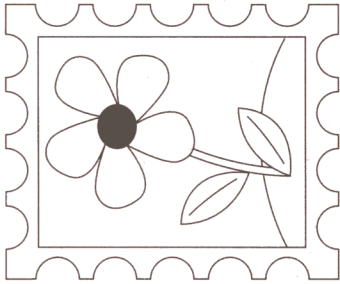
Pluto by Larry Dan Brimner (part of a series about each of the planets)

The Planets by Gail Gibbons

Mars by Dennis B. Fradin (part of a series about each of the planets)

Jupiter by Elaine Landau (part of a series about each of the planets)

From:



To: The Head Dweeb

Dweeb Academy of

Planetary Assessment

Box 1001011

Planet Zog

Assignment Sheet 1.

- 1) Start your postcard with the salutation "Dear Head Dweeb:"
- 2) The first sentence should read, "Here is the information we have found about (your planet) today."
- 3) Tell how far your assigned planet is from the sun.
- 4) Tell how large your planet is compared to Earth (the solar system standard).
- 5) Tell about your planet's atmosphere including the kinds of gases it contains, if any.
- 6) Tell about your planet's composition (what it is made of).
- 7) End your postcard with "Dweeb (your name)."

All responses should be in sentence form. Each partner should write and decorate a postcard.

Assignment Sheet 2

- 1) Start your postcard with the salutation "Dear Head Dweeb:"
- 2) The first sentence should read, "Here is the information we have found about (your planet) today."
- 3) Tell about the terrain (land forms, rivers, mountains and so on) on your planet.
- 4) Tell about life forms, real or possible (according to your research book) on your planet.
- 5) Tell about the climate on your planet (daytime and nighttime temperature, storms).
- 6) Tell if there is water or if scientists believe that water may exist on your planet.
- 7) End your postcard with "Dweeb (your name)."

All responses should be given in sentence form. Each partner should write and decorate a postcard.

Assignment Sheet 3

- 1) Start your postcard with the salutation "Dear Head Dweeb:"
- 2) The first sentence should read, "Here is the information we have found about (your planet) today."
- 3) Tell about the orbit and orbital period of your planet (How many days in one year?).
- 4) Tell about the rotational period of your planet (How long is one day?).
- 5) Tell three or more distinguishing characteristics about your planet (color? rings?).
- 6) Tell about the satellites (moons, asteroids) that orbit your planet.
- 7) End your postcard with "Dweeb (your name)."

All responses should be given in sentence form. Each partner should write and decorate a postcard.

**Planetary Assessment Notes: Zog High Council Meeting 1
for Planet**

- 1. Distance from the sun: _____
 - 2. Size compared to Earth: _____
 - 3. Atmosphere: _____
 - 4. Composition: _____
- _____
-

Planetary Assessment Notes: Zog High Council Meeting 2

- 5. Terrain: _____
 - 6. Life forms: _____
 - 7. Climate: _____
 - 8. Water: _____
-

Planetary Assessment Notes: Zog High Council Meeting 3

- 9. Orbit: _____
 - 10. Rotational period: _____
 - 11. Distinguishing characteristics: _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- 12. Satellites: _____

Zog Description Sheet

1. Distance from the sun: _____
2. Size compared to Earth: _____
3. Atmosphere: _____
4. Composition: _____
5. Terrain: _____
6. Life forms: _____
7. Climate: _____
8. Water: _____
9. Orbit: _____
10. Rotational period: _____
11. Distinguishing characteristics: _____

12. Satellites: _____

