



Primary Success Publications

Successful Writing Lessons Grade Three



Mini-lessons to give direction
to your class writing time....

By Jean Roberts



Successful Writing Lessons - Grade Three

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Index

Page 5 Introduction

Page 19 Why do we write?

1. Writing is communication
2. Writing for a purpose,
3. Writing for others to read

Page 23 Journal writing

4. The journal format
5. Spelling Strategies
6. Brainstorming
7. What will I write in my journal
8. Writing on one topic
9. Self-editing the journal,
10. Rules for self-editing,
11. Teacher editing,

Page 33 Writing good sentences

12. What is a sentence?
13. Punctuation and capitalization
14. Combining short sentences
15. Run-on sentences
16. The naked sentence
17. Visualization
18. Super sentences

Page 41 Writing paragraphs

19. What is a paragraph?
20. Using paragraphs - indenting
21. Writing a narrative paragraph
22. The hamburger narrative paragraph
23. Writing a descriptive paragraph (1)
24. The descriptive paragraph (2)
25. Writing an expository paragraph
26. New P = new paragraph

Page 55 Punctuation and capital letters

27. The 'full stop'
28. Commas
29. Quotation marks
30. Apostrophes
31. Upper case letters

Page 63 Common errors in grammar, homonyms

32. Using 'I' and 'me' (subject)
33. Using 'I' and 'me' (object)
34. Using 'its' and 'it's'
35. Using 'your' and 'you're'
36. Using 'there', 'their' and 'they're'
37. Using 'to', 'too' and 'two'

Page 73 Editing, revising and publishing

38. Self-editing ideas
39. A check list for self-editing
40. Revising the writing
41. Improving words and sentences
42. Getting ready for publishing
43. Re-writing and publishing

Page 83 Writing for other purposes

44. Notes and lists
45. Writing letters
46. Thank you notes
47. Keyboarding
48. Writing e-mail
49. Texting

Page 91 Research Writing

50. Research, and choosing a topic
51. KWL
52. Library research
53. Plagiarism, and making notes
54. Sharing the research

Page 99 Writing Fiction

55. What is fiction?
56. Planning a fictional story
57. The characters
58. The setting
59. The plot (1)
60. The plot (2)
61. What will I write about?
62. Writing the story

Page 109

Publishing Books

- 63. Writing a class book
- 64. Other class books
- 65. Choosing a title
- 66. The book cover
- 67. Illustrations
- 68. An author's autobiography

Page 117

Words, Words, Words

- 69. Similes and metaphors
- 70. Alliteration and onomatopoeia
- 71. Sensory words
- 72. Said is dead

Page 125

Writing Poetry

- 73. What is poetry?
- 74. Syllables and rhythm
- 75. A colour poem
- 76. Cinquain poems
- 77. Diamante poems
- 78. Haiku poems
- 79. Clerihew poems
- 80. The limerick

Page 135

Helpful Things

- Word wall words
- Writing prompts
- Lined paper sheets
- Book blanks
- Personal dictionary



Lesson 6

Brainstorming



Brainstorming should be done frequently in class. The ability to think of many ideas in a short period of time extends thinking skills and is a very useful tool for the students to have when writing, whether in the journal or in other forms of written expression.

Talk about 'brainstorming'. What does it mean? Why do you think it is called that? You are making your brain cells and the brain connections work very hard. You are making a real storm! Synapses are the connectors between cells and there are trillions of them in our brains - and when you are thinking hard these synapses are very busy..... The students can think of it as little lights going on and off in the brain.

What interests do you, the teacher, have? You could model brainstorming for the students. Let's make a list of things that you could write about. What are your interests? Brainstorm the list, writing it down. Your interests might include members of your family, friends, pets, hobbies, reading choices, shopping, favourite things, favourite TV or music, places you like to go, foods, on and on! Quickly print at least 20 things that interest you in a list.

Give the students a few minutes to think about their lists, and then give them paper and have them write down all their interests. How many can they brainstorm? You may find a few students who are slow printers and who do not have very many ideas. Have the other students share their brainstorming lists, and have these slower students pick up ideas from others and continue to add to the lists.

Correct spelling errors, as we want the students to use these lists frequently. Then the list can be placed in the back of the journal or in the writing folder.

Lesson 18

Super sentences



What do your students think a 'super sentence' might be? Discuss sentences that are interesting, and what makes them that way.

Some words we use do not help us to visualize well. Fun, nice, good, bad, funny are some words that tell us a feeling, but do not help us accurately visualize what is happening.

Have the students give you short sentences using these words. It was fun.... It was a nice day..... This is a good book..... The dog was bad..... That is funny..... etc.

Put the sentence "It looks funny." on the chart. Brainstorm adding one word at a time or changing a word to make it a super sentence. It could be..... The elephant looks funny. to... The elephant in the book looks funny. to..... The huge grey elephant in the book by Dr. Seuss has a funny hat and a big grin. Etc. This can be done orally or you can print the new sentences as they are given.

Talk about adjectives - words that tell about people or things. Hold up a ball, for example. Collect words that describe it. When we make super sentences we want to use adjectives so we can visualize the ball. Then discuss adverbs - words that help us visualize what is happening - running quickly, printing neatly, eating slowly, etc.

Super sentences use words that give us a good mental picture of what is happening.

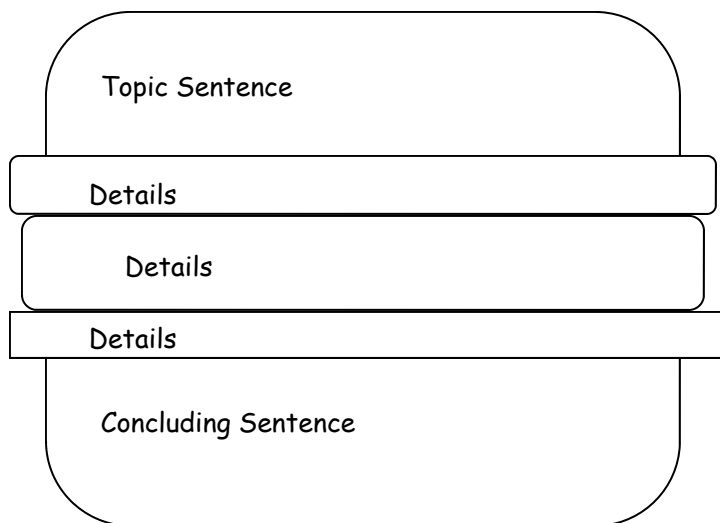
Do the journal entries. Ask the students to try to make some super sentences in their writing. Self-edit and teacher-edit and correct. As you mark, copy perhaps two sentences from the writing that are super sentences. Come together for a few minutes at the end of the lesson and discuss these sentences and visualize the subject and action. If any of your students used words like fun, good, nice, bad, etc., print those sentences on a chart and ask what could be done to improve it.

Lesson 22

The hamburger narrative paragraph



Review the parts of a paragraph from yesterday's lesson. Some teachers use the hamburger approach when discussing the parts of a paragraph - and find that this works well.



The top bun is the topic sentence and the bottom bun the concluding sentence. The sentences in between are the juicy hamburger, the cheese, lettuce, tomato - the yummy parts - and if there are more sentences you can have bacon, mayonnaise, ketchup. etc. Each section is a sentence.

This graphic organizer helps the students understand and remember the parts of a paragraph. The bun (the topic and concluding sentences) hold the paragraph together. The really tasty parts are the sentences in between.

Demonstrate writing a narrative paragraph using the hamburger layers, and then have the students write a Journal entry of something that they did the previous day using the graphic organizer on the following page. Have four middle sentences: **first**, **next**, **then** and **finally**. Talk about graphic organizers. The student can simply put notes rather than sentences on the hamburger - and fill out the sentences when actually writing the paragraph. Show this when you demonstrate.

On the following pages are graphic organizers the students can use.

Lesson 32



Using 'I' and 'me' (subject)

Saying 'me and my friend' may be the most invasive error that children today make. Hopefully you will have a few students who say it correctly in common speech!

Draw two stick figures on a chart or whiteboard and give them names (Mike and Chris, for example), printing the names under the figures. Where might these two boys be going? Draw a large speech bubble over one figure and print in it, "I am going to play hockey (the mall, a movie, etc.)."

Print what Mike might say - "Me and Chris are going to play hockey." - below the figures. Is there something wrong with this sentence? What if Chris wasn't there? You can cover or erase 'and Chris'. What would you say then? Your students will tell you "I am" If you were alone, would you begin the sentence with 'me'? Try it! 'Me am going to the movie.' 'Me is walking to school.' It sounds like baby talk! Whether there is one or two people shouldn't make a difference!

Then talk about manners, and people who always have to be first, butting in on others. How do you feel about that? Polite people let the other person go first and do not push in! So when we talk or write, the correct way to talk about yourself and a friend is to say the other person's name first. Now what should Mike say? "Chris and I are going to play hockey", of course.

Do some role play. Ask a student to stand and pick a friend to also stand. What would you like to do together? Elicit the two sentences - "I am going to _____" and "_____ and I are going to _____." or "I like to read books" and "_____ and I like to read books", etc.

Have the students write in their journals. In at least one place use "_____ and I" at the beginning of a sentence.

Now, every time you hear or see the incorrect version you can make a sad face, cross your fingers like an X do a 'thumbs down', make a buzz noise or make another signal - until it is corrected..... and even better, cheer or thumbs up the correct usage!

Lesson 40





Revising the writing



Revising is difficult, especially with our own writing! "Real" writers have editors who do much of this work. We become too close to writing we have done, and frequently we don't see parts that need revision. Do a number of lessons on revising.

To help our students revise their writing, again use a check list. MARC is one checklist you can use. You can print out the following page.

MARC:

- M - Move words and sentences 
- A - Add details, interesting words, descriptions, five senses 
- R - Remove words or sentences that don't fit 
- C - Change boring words to super words, little sentences to longer ones and more interesting ones 

Sometimes words or sentences work better in a different place in the paragraph. If this should happen, circle the words and use an arrow to show the place they belong.

When there needs to be more description and additional information, put the arrow point to show where this should go.

Perhaps there are words or sentences that do not belong in this paragraph and should be omitted. Draw a line through them.

You may want to skip to the lessons on super words and sentences! Change boring words to interesting words. Talk about what makes a good sentence, and add interesting words to a naked sentence. Put a box around words or sentences that should be changed to more interesting ones. (See the following lesson.)

Model revising frequently. Use the MARC formula, or other checklist.

Instead of new writing, model the revision of a journal entry. Then have the students revise and rewrite a recent entry of their own. have them read the selected paragraph, then go through it using the signals, and then rewrite it.

MARC Your Writing!



Move

- words and sentences that fit better in a different place

Add

- details
- interesting words
- descriptions
- five senses

Remove

- words or sentences that don't belong or repeat what has already been said

Change

- boring words to interesting words
- naked sentences to super sentences

Lesson 70



Alliteration and onomatopoeia

Alliteration is the repetition of the same sound at the beginning of words in a phrase or sentence or line of verse. Even two words can be alliterative. Teach the word 'alliteration'. (Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers...)

To illustrate alliteration, have each of your students put another word with his/her name beginning with the same sound - it could be a verb or an adjective: cute Cathy, Nick nodded, Patsy planned, wiggly Warren. Then he/she can print an alliterative sentence beginning with the name.

Sometimes alliteration is funny! It can be used in a story to make the reader laugh.

Sometimes it can set a mood. A repetition of sounds can make the reader feel differently. Some sounds are soft. Can your students think of soft sounds? 'S', 'a', 'f', 'h', 'm', and others are soft, and give a quiet or calm or warm mood. Some are noisy and sharp. Can the student give you noisy, sharp or cold consonant sounds? When these sounds are repeated in writing, how may it make you feel?

Your grade three students will love onomatopoeia! They will love to say the word (which sounds faintly risqué to 8/9 year olds), and they will enjoy collecting these words that sound like the word meaning. Comic book writers have used these - and put the words in excited shapes: POW! BANG! etc., to show action.

It is easy to see why these words were invented! Buzz, swoosh, slimy, splash, whisper, gurgle, groan, cough, ouch, hum - all sound just like their meaning. When these words are used in writing, they make the meaning of the words more interesting.

Put up a chart, and as the students think of onomatopoeia words, write them on the list, or have them fill in the following page as they think of words. In their writing today, can they add a word where the sound tells the meaning?

Lesson 76

Cinquain poems



There are several different ways to write cinquain poems. This is one way:

First line - The title (one word)	Clouds
2nd line - Describes the title (two words)	White, fluffy
3rd line - Express action (three 'ing' words)	Greying, darkening, raining
4th line - A feeling or thought (four words)	A storm is coming
5th line - A synonym for the title or same word	Thunderheads

Or.....

First line - The title (one word)	Pumpkin
2nd line - two words	Orange, round
3rd line - three words	Good for carving
4th line - four words	See the jack o'lantern
5th line - title repeated	Pumpkin

But a true cinquain poem has a specific number of syllables on each line. The first line has 2 syllables, the second 4, the third 6, the fourth 8 and the fifth line just 2 again. This is trickier!

Boo! Boo!	Puppy
Halloween's here.	Little, fuzzy
It is trick or treat time.	Energy on four legs
My costume is very scary!	Then falling asleep on my lap
Black witch.	Funny

Print the rule you want the students to follow on a chart. Talk about the meaning of 'cinquain' (five lines). Brainstorm a list of 'ing' action words, adjectives and super words to go with your topic and a few thoughts as well. Then, try to place the words and phrases into the five lines to fit the rule.