

GRADE 4 English Language Arts Writing Lesson 1

Read aloud to the students the material that is printed in **boldface type** inside the boxes. Information in regular type inside the boxes and all information outside the boxes should **not** be read to students. Possible student responses are included in parentheses after the questions.

Any directions that ask you to do something, such as to turn to a page or to hand out materials to students, will have an arrow symbol (\Rightarrow) by them.

Purpose of Lesson 1:

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- examine the instruction page of the Writing test,
- find key words in the instructions, and
- practice prewriting strategies.

Equipment/Materials Needed:

- Student Worksheet Writing Lesson 1 – 1
- Pencils

LESSON 1: Writing

After your introductory remarks to students, say:

On the first day of testing, you will write a composition. Your test booklet will give you a prompt, the idea, for this composition. Today we will work on how you decide what kind of composition to write and how you get started writing.

You have to plan, write, and check what you write. I will show you some clues or tricks to use so you can do a good job on this part of the test.

It is very important that you understand the instructions your teacher gives you. Also, you have to understand some of the words or vocabulary used on this part of the test. Today we will work on helping you do a better job on the writing part.

Say:

Let's begin by just thinking and talking about test day! On the day of the test, your teacher will read directions to you from the test manual. When your teacher is reading these directions, what should you be doing? Pause to allow students to answer.

(Response: looking at the teacher)

Yes, look at the teacher. This strategy will help you to focus and to concentrate.

Suppose the teacher says, "Follow along while I read aloud." What should you do? Pause to allow students to answer.

(Response: look at what he/she is reading and read along silently.)

Why should you look at what he or she is reading and read along silently? Pause.

(Responses: helps me to see and hear the directions at the same time; to keep me focused; the directions are important.)

Yes, all those ideas are important things to do on test day.

We are now going to study a sample page from the writing part of an old test. We'll begin at the top of the page and just talk about what to do!

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Writing Lesson 1 – 1. Be sure all students have pencils.

Then say:

Begin at the top of the page. Follow along as I read aloud. “Read the topic in the box below and write a well-organized composition of at least 100 – 150 words. Be sure to follow the suggestions under the box.”

The information in the box is the Writing Topic. That information is what you are supposed to write about. Reading everything in the box is very important. Because the information is so important is probably why they put it in a box!

Follow along as I read the information in the box aloud.

“Suppose you visited a friend who just moved into a big, old house. In the house you found a secret room, and you decided to go inside the room. Write a story for your classmates about what happened next.

Before you begin to write, think about the secret room. Imagine what could happen after you and your friend go inside.

Now write a story for your classmates about what happened when you and your friend went inside a secret room in the big, old house.”

There it is, the writing prompt. This prompt tells you what to write about. Did you notice that part of it was in boldface type? Why do you think that last sentence is in boldface type? Pause.
(Response: because it is important)

Say:

Now, you have read the topic. Let's talk about what you are to do.

What are you supposed to write? Pause.

(Response: a story)

If students are struggling, remind them to look in the box for the answer.

Yes, a story. Circle the word *story*. Pause.

Now, this story just isn't any old story. What's this story about?

Pause.

(Response: It's about finding a secret room and going inside it with a friend.)

Good. The story is about finding this secret room and exploring it with my friend. Circle *secret room* and *friend*. Pause.

Those words appear several times, but students need to circle them only once.

Who is the audience for this story? Pause.

(Response: my classmates)

It's very important to know who your audience is. You need to know for whom you are writing. Circle *classmates*. Pause.

Say:

Great! You are finding all the clues that will help you write a good story later. Circling the clues just helps you remember the most important things.

Look under the box at those statements. How do I know these sentences are important? Pause.

(Response: they have those dots in front of them.)

Read the first sentence to yourself. Circle the key word, or the most important word, in that sentence. Pause.

(Response: two paragraphs)

Some students may only circle *two*. Others may circle the whole phrase *at least two paragraphs*. Either way is fine.

“Your story should have at least two paragraphs.” What’s the key word or words? Pause to allow students to answer.

If a student did not circle the word *two*, encourage him/her to do so.

Look at the next sentence. “Be sure your story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.” I see three key words in that one. Circle them. Pause.

Call on a volunteer. If no one volunteers, just tell them the answer: *beginning, middle, end*.

“Give specific details and enough information so that your classmates will understand what happened.” What are the key words in that sentence? Pause.

(Response: specific details and enough information.)

Students should circle *specific details* and *enough information*. Students may circle the whole phrase or each word.

That part about specific details is really important. In fact, you might put an extra circle around it! When you tell this story, be sure to include the details. Tell what you saw, what you heard, what you smelled, what you touched, and maybe even what you tasted. That information will help your classmates to understand your story!

The next sentence reminds you to write clearly. What will you circle there? Pause. Yes, write clearly. You want to be sure that the reader can read your handwriting. Take your time forming those letters!

You may write the most wonderfully exciting story in the world; but if nobody can read your handwriting, they won’t ever appreciate your good writing.

Then look at the last statement. “Check your writing for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.” Wow! That’s a biggie! Circle *spelling, punctuation, and grammar*. Pause.

Put in those punctuation marks and those capital letters!

Then say:

Remember I told you this selection came from an old test. Don't worry about those page numbers you see in the next part. However, I do see two words in boldface type. Boldface type signals something important.

Look at the next sentence. "Use page 19 for notes, brainstorming, or writing an outline." Through these strategies, you get your ideas together. You may call this strategy prewriting: what you do before you write.

Some students like to make lists; others like to make clusters; still others like to outline. It really doesn't matter which technique you use. What matters is that you do something to get your ideas together and get ready to write.

"Write your rough draft on pages 20 and 21."

Let's circle *rough draft*. Pause.

The rough draft is your first attempt at telling the story. This activity is when you first start telling the story on paper. You may call prewriting something else: some people call it first draft or sloppy copy.

"Write your final draft on page 23. Use page 24 if you need additional space." Circle *final draft*. Pause.

After you have finished writing your rough draft, read over it and make sure you really wrote what you were thinking. Sometimes our brain thinks faster than our hand writes, so words get left out. Check over your story to be sure you spelled words correctly and that you used capital letters correctly. Make any changes that you think need to be made and then write your final draft.

The very last sentence at the bottom of the page must be important because the entire sentence is printed in boldface type.

"Remember: The prewriting activities on page 19 and the rough draft on pages 20 and 21 will not be scored. Only your final draft will be scored."

Therefore, you want to be sure your final draft is really good!

Then say:

We just spent some really important time going over the directions from a test that has already been given. Now you know exactly how the instructions will be written. You just don't know what the prompt on your LEAP test will be.

You want to be sure you know what to do for the writing part of the test. This practice can help you be more successful!

Read the prompt carefully so you will know what to write. Pay attention because the prompt also will tell you who your audience is. Then, you need to think up lots of ideas. Thinking of many ideas is called brainstorming.

Today we are going to practice thinking up ideas. We aren't actually going to write a story; I just want you to think and think and think of ideas. The more ideas you have, the better you will be able to write!

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet Writing Lesson 1 – 2.

Then say:

We are going to practice prewriting. There are several ways to prewrite; today we are going to use one called clustering. Look at your handout to see an example of clustering. This student was going to write a story about his or her family.

This student wrote *Family* in the center. Family is the topic of his writing. Other words related to family are written down and circled. Then lines connect those words to the topic.

If you did a cluster on the same topic, Family, yours probably would not look like this one. There's really not a right or wrong way to draw a cluster. The reason we draw a cluster is to get lots of ideas to use in our writing.

Then say:

Now, let's practice brainstorming. Let's say you are going to write about finding the secret room in your friend's new house. Think about that secret room and imagine what happened after you and your friend went inside.

Do your cluster on the back of worksheet 1-2.

Write *Secret Room* and draw a circle around it. Pause to allow students time to complete the task.

Now write words or phrases that come to mind when you think about this secret room. What did you see? What sounds did you hear? What did you and your friend do?

Pause to allow students time to complete the task.

Allow four minutes for this prewriting activity.

If students are struggling, give a hint. You might say: What does this room look like? Is it large or small? Is there any furniture in it? Are there any pictures on the walls? What did you and your friend do?

Prewriting, the first step in the writing process, is considered the most important step in writing. There are no rules that say exactly how prewriting should look. Students need to write down all the thoughts, words, phrases that pop into their heads. Students do not talk; they write.

Then say:

Let's share some things from the clusters. Remember that the purpose of this activity is to gather lots of ideas, so you should add any words or phrases to your cluster at this time.

Ask for a volunteer or call on a few students to share.

(Possible responses: sight words like cold, dark, dusty; sound words like creaky, squeaky. Some students will list things that might have been found in the room like an old map, secret door, a treasure.)

Again, there are no right or wrong answers. The purpose is to come up with lots of ideas, lots of possibilities.

Then say:

Thanks for sharing. Because you have so many ideas, writing the story won't be so difficult.

I want you to think about how you would start your story about what happened when you and your friend went inside the secret room. What would your first sentence be?

Pause to allow time for students to think.

Then ask for volunteers to share their opening sentences.

If students are struggling, give them a hint. You might say:

What's your friend's name? or What did you see when you first stepped into the room?

Thank you for sharing your ideas. It is hard work getting ready to write. You have done a good job of getting ready to write.

Session 3: Writing

Read the topic in the box below and write a well-organized composition of at least 100–150 words. Be sure to follow the suggestions listed under the box.

Writing Topic

32. Suppose you visited a friend who just moved into a big, old house. You found a secret room, and you decided to go inside the room. Write a story for your classmates about what happened next.

Before you begin to write, think about the secret room. Imagine what would happen after you and your friend went inside.

Now write a story for your classmates about what happened when you and your friend went inside a secret room in the big, old house.

- Your story should have at least two paragraphs.
- Be sure your story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.
- Give specific details and enough information so that your classmates will understand what happened.
- Be sure to write clearly.
- Check your writing for correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar

Use page 19 for notes, brainstorming, or writing an outline, write a *rough* draft on pages 20 and 21. Write your *final* draft on page 23. Use page 24 if you need additional space.

Remember: the prewriting activities on page 19 and the rough draft on pages 20 and 21 will not be scored. Only your final draft will be scored.

Student Worksheet Writing Lesson 1 – 2

