



Oakland Unified School District
Writing Proficiency Project

Process Writing Assessment
(PWA)

Third Grade

Winter

**Narrative Fiction:
What If...**

Third Grade Winter Prompt Narrative Fiction: What If...

Overview of week*:

Suggested time:

Day One	<i>Generating Story Ideas:</i> --Read aloud --Quick-write	30 minutes
Day Two	<i>Mini-Lesson—Elements of Fiction:</i> --Analyze mentor text	10-30 minutes
Day Three	<i>Planning Story using a Graphic Organizer</i>	40 - 50 minutes
Day Four	<i>Mini-lesson—Sensory Description:</i> --Study mentor text --Practice new writing skill	10-40 minutes
Day Five	<i>Assessment Day—Write!:</i> --First draft for assessment	60 minutes

* You may distribute the time allotted to each activity differently across the days, combine or split lessons as seems appropriate, taking up to two weeks to complete them all. You may also wish to pause a lesson at a natural break, and then resume the lesson after a recess.

Summary of Activities:

The teacher ***generates interest*** in the writing project with the ***read aloud*** *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*, by Chris Van Allsburg (or other selection from the Suggested Books). Students have a little time to practice ***generating ideas*** for a fiction story through a ***quick-write***.

A mini-lesson introduces the important parts of a good fiction story, and invites students to consider the ***elements of fiction*** that make a strong beginning to a story. The teacher models the use of a **graphic organizer**. The teacher may opt to develop this lesson more fully by analyzing a familiar fiction story from this perspective.

In another optional lesson, students use the **graphic organizer** introduced in the previous lesson to plan their own story they began with the **quick write** on day one.

Next, students participate in a ***craft mini-lesson*** using a ***mentor text*** to discuss and possibly practice the skill of ***descriptive writing***. Students will add descriptive words to their graphic organizer.

Finally, students are invited to begin ***writing*** a first draft of their stories using the **graphic organizer**. Students also make an initial effort to ***revise*** and ***edit*** their first drafts, within the parameters of their own capacity and experience with the writing process. These drafts are collected for assessment.

CA Standards Addressed by the 3rd Grade Winter PWA

1.0 Writing Strategies

Organization and Focus

1.1 Create a single paragraph

2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

2.1 Write narratives:

- a. Provide a context within which an action takes place.
- b. Include well-chosen details to develop the plot.
- c. Provide insight into why the selected incident is memorable.

2.2 Write descriptions that use concrete sensory details to present and support unified impressions of people, places, things, or experiences.

1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions

Sentence Structure

1.1 Understand and be able to use complete and correct declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences in writing and speaking.

Grammar

1.2 Identify subjects and verbs that are in agreement and identify and use pronouns, adjectives, compound words, and articles correctly in writing and speaking.

1.3 Identify and use past, present, and future verb tenses properly in writing and speaking.

1.4 Identify and use subjects and verbs correctly in speaking and writing simple sentences.

Punctuation

1.5 Punctuate dates, city and state, and titles of books correctly.

1.6 Use commas in dates, locations, and addresses and for items in a series.

Capitalization

1.7 Capitalize geographical names, holidays, historical periods, and special events correctly.

Spelling

1.8 Spell correctly one-syllable words that have blends, contractions, compounds, orthographic patterns (e.g., *qu*, consonant doubling, changing the ending of a word from *-y* to *-ies* when forming the plural), and common homophones.

Pre-Teaching: SUGGESTED MINI-LESSONS

If your writing program has not already included these mini-lessons so far this school year, you may want to take some time in the weeks preceding Assessment Day to teach any of the following lessons you think would be most beneficial to your students' success as writers.

Mini-Lessons on Management of Writers' Workshop

- How to use writing materials (including a Writing Folder)
- Think-pair-share
- Silent writing time

Mini-Lessons on Conventions of Print

- Ending punctuation for sentences: . ? !
- Capitalization: geographical names, holidays, historical periods, special events
- Using quotation marks to enclose speech
- Using commas: dates, locations, addresses and items in a series
- Indentation of paragraphs
- Sight words
- How to use a Word Wall
- How to use spelling resources: Word Wall, dictionary
- Spelling demons
- Word Study: blends, contractions, compounds, homophones, consonant doubling, orthographic patterns (e.g. -y to -ies, qu-), etc.

Mini-Lessons on the Writer's Craft

- Notetaking to record ideas in brief form
- Using a graphic organizer to analyze literature
- Description: Show (not tell), sensory description, adjectives, adverbs, precise nouns, lively verbs
- Hook: Writing (or finding) a great first sentence
- Transitions: Using time/place words to orient your reader
- Character development: Descriptive details
- Setting: Descriptive details
- Plot development: Beginning, middle and end of stories
- Plot development: Every story has a problem to be solved
- Plot development: Adding detail
- Revision: Does my writing make sense?
- Revision: Crossing out to delete text
- Revision: Using carats to add text
- How to proofread your writing
- Editing: How to correct spelling or capitalization errors on a draft

Teacher Instructions: GETTING READY

1) Review all introductory material and instructions in this manual, and prepare materials for the lessons prior to beginning assessment. For all PWA lessons preceding Assessment Day, feel free to make any modifications that seem appropriate to the needs and abilities of your current class. This might mean adding, skipping or changing lessons/materials, according to your expert judgment as classroom teacher. See page 5 for some suggested mini-lessons you may wish to teach prior to beginning the assessment.


IMPORTANT: *On Assessment Day, be sure to follow instructions exactly, with NO modification of materials or procedure. See page 7 for details.*


2) During your regular Writers' Workshop or Language Arts time, introduce the lessons over the course of one to four weeks.

3) After Assessment Day, collect assessments and evaluate in grade level teams, using the included rubric and anchor papers to guide scoring.

4) **SUGGESTED**-Continue the writing process with the students, helping them revise, edit and publish or present their work.

NOTE: Throughout the week, you may find that your students need more or less time than indicated to complete the included activities. Please use your judgment in ending or extending lessons. You may schedule lessons in two parts, complete them over a couple of days, or overlap lessons.

 **Teaching Tip:** Throughout the instructions, look for teaching tips marked with this symbol.

 **Say:** Throughout the instructions, look for the words you will say aloud to students marked with this symbol. Except on assessment day, feel free to modify the language you use with your students to suit their vocabulary, interest and understanding.


Teacher Instructions: ASSESSMENT DAY


1. *The writing assessment must be completed in one sitting.* You may wish to schedule the assessment before recess or lunch to accommodate students who need more time to finish the prompt (whether because they write slowly, want to complete very detailed drawings, have a lot to write, or have an IEP indicating extended time for assessments). Students who have not finished may get up, get their food, then return to their table to finish drawing and writing. Midway through the writing time, reassure students who are worried about running out of time about the plan to give them more time.


2. *It is essential that you transcribe all emergent student writing for later assessment.* Students who are not yet writing phonetically to create decipherable text should be asked to read their work aloud to you. Record what the student says below the text, even if it does not match. Use both the student writing and the transcription for assessment.


3. *This assessment may be conducted entirely in students' primary language.* Student writing in the primary language may be assessed using the grade level rubric by a teacher literate in that language.


Teaching Tips for Assessment Day

 Have the children complete the assessment at a time when they normally write.

 If guidelines for a silent writing time have not already been established, be sure to establish them before beginning. Talk about how to get help and materials without disturbing other writers.

 Be sure children know what to do when they finish writing. It should be an independent, silent activity that is commonly available (so as not to provoke undue motivation to finish writing quickly in order to get to the second activity). Suggestions: silent reading or coloring a take-home book.

 Some students may need regular reminders about time elapsed or a time deadline in order to finish their writing. A timer may be helpful.

 You may wish to allow time for students to share their writing with each other or the class at the end of the activity or later in the day.

Materials and Photocopies:

Day One: GENERATING STORY IDEAS

The Mysteries of Harris Burdick, by Chris Van Allsburg, or other selection of imaginatively illustrated books on page 35

Overhead transparencies of the illustrations from *The Mysteries...*, or other literature/art selection chosen to inspire student thinking (*optional*)

Overhead projector (*optional*)

Class supply of “Titles and captions from *The Mysteries...*”, if using that text (make 2-sided copies from pages 12-13) (*optional*)

Class supply of lined writing paper (photocopy from pages 36 and 38 or use first draft paper from classroom)

Class supply of “Permission!” cards, (photocopied and cut from page 14)

Pencils

Day Two: MINI-LESSON—ELEMENTS OF FICTION

Chart-sized copy of “Elements of Good Fiction” on page 19.

Copies of “Elements of Good Fiction” chart and checklist (photocopied from pages 19 -20) for students’ writing folders (*optional*)

Teacher-selected familiar fiction mentor text with a strong beginning

Pencils

Day Three GRAPHIC ORGANIZER—STORY STRUCTURE

Teacher-selected familiar fiction mentor text with a strong beginning

Class supply and overhead transparencies of 2-sided Graphic Organizer—Story Structure (photocopy from pages -22-23)

Day Four: MINI-LESSON—SENSORY DESCRIPTION

Student anthologies

Enough photocopies of the excerpts from *Through Grandpa’s Eyes* for each partnership in the class to have an excerpt to share (see page 28-29 for excerpt page numbers and further explanation)

Overhead transparencies of excerpts from *Through Grandpa’s Eyes*, by Patricia MacLachlan (*optional*)

Overhead projector and markers

Lined writing paper (photocopy from pages 36 and 38 or use classroom paper)

Graphic Organizers from Day Three

Pencils, (*highlighters optional*)

Day Five: ASSESSMENT DAY—WRITE!

Five copies of each illustration from *Mysteries...*, if using that text (*optional*)

Class supply of prompt paper (2-sided copies of pages 36 - 37 and 38 - 39)

Copies of Elements of Good Fiction Checklist (photocopied from page 19)

For Scoring: 6 copies each of rubric and completed half-page Cover Sheet (page 40)


Day One: GENERATING STORY IDEAS (30 minutes)

Academic language that students may need to know for this lesson: *fiction, mystery, fantasy, title, caption, publisher, editor,* _____

NOTE: If your school follows the Open Court pacing guide, the topic and timing of this prompt coincide with the current teaching unit—Grade 3, Unit 3: Imagination.


Generate Interest in Project

1) Getting ideas

 *Say: Authors get their story ideas from all kinds of places: from their own lives, from art, from other authors, and especially from their imaginations. J.K. Rowling says that the idea for her Harry Potter series just “popped into her head” as she was taking a train ride one day, and imagined that the train might be taking students to a school of magic.*


Share Read Aloud


2) Introduce project

 *Say: Many of you have story ideas that you’re already working on in your heads and on paper. This week you’re going to start work on a new fiction story. Right here I have a book that might interest you, especially when you’re trying to think of a new story idea.*

3) With great drama, read all or some of *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*, by Chris Van Allsburg (or other book from page 35). Allow the students’ questions about the truth of the text to stand in their imaginations.


Students listen and watch attentively.

 **Teaching Tip:** Use the overhead projector or a document reader to present this read aloud in a very exciting way. Make transparency copies of each illustration and project them on a screen as you read the captions aloud.

 **Teaching Tip:** Any of the Suggested Books on page 35 can be used in place of *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. The “Time Transfixed” painting on p. 238 of the OCR


Student Anthology may be used in place of the Harris Burdick mysteries. Simply make adjustments in the subsequent lessons to suit the text or illustration you use.

Students may need some time at this point to discuss what they've just seen with you and with each other. Allow questions and conversations to emerge naturally, but limit the duration of this discussion.


 *Say: You may have a lot to say about this book right now, but instead of spending time just talking about it, we're going to get our ideas and questions down on paper instead.*


Quick-Write

4) Give directions

 *Say: Now I want you to pick ONE of these illustrations and write just the beginning of a story about it. We're doing a **quick-write**, which means you'll have just a few minutes to write. As soon as you get to your table, begin writing and try to keep your pencil moving for the entire time.*


After setting expectations for the activity (time, noise level, materials, getting help), distribute writing paper (photocopy from pages 36 and 38, or use first draft paper from the classroom supply), and give students *just 5-10 minutes* to begin a new story inspired by the read-aloud. If using *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*, distribute copies of the "Titles and captions..." (photocopy from pages 12-13) that correspond to the pages you read from the book.


 **Teaching Tip:** Use established systems for the distribution of papers, involving students in the set-up, clean-up, and care of writing/drawing materials. Lucy Calkins suggests having materials helpers distribute materials to work spaces before gathering the class for the introductory lesson, so that students can get straight to work once you have given the final instructions for the writing activity.


 **Teaching Tip:** "Can I?"—At the start of writing time, you may be deluged with questions from students such as: "Can I use the caption as the first sentence? Do I have to use the caption as the first sentence? Can I use the title from the read-aloud as the title for my story? Do I have to write a story about these pictures or can I write my own story?" etc. etc. Respond generously to such inquiries by saying, "This is fiction—you can do whatever you want!" You may want to emphasize your point by handing out "Permission!" coupons (copy from page 14) for students to keep in their writing folders.


Students work silently for 5-10 minutes to begin writing a new story inspired by the read aloud.
--

5) Conclusion

 *Say: It looks like you have some great ideas! I'm going to save the rest of this read-aloud for later this week, when we'll use it again to start even more new stories. In the meantime we'll talk about what makes a great fiction story. Collect the writing students have done to store separately from their Writing Folders. Direct them to store the illustrations and captions in their Writing Folders.*

 **Teaching Tip:** If students are not already using writing folders, you may want to introduce them for this project. Teach them to keep works-in-progress in the left hand pocket of a dual-pocket folder with center prongs. Tools such as the list of “Titles and captions...” on pages 12-13 can be three-hole punched and stored in the center section of the folder. When a project is completed, all prewriting and drafts can be stapled together, and the entire project stored in the right hand pocket to make room for the next writing endeavor.

 **Teaching Tip:** Make a collection of books that inspire writing ideas available to students during sustained silent reading, center/choice time, Workshop, or to check out and take home (see Suggested Books on page 34 for ideas).

 **Teaching Tip:** You may spend time practicing the “Quick-Write” technique for generating new story ideas, using many of the Suggested Books on page 35. Students can store all of these beginnings in the left-hand side of their writing folders, and work on them at will during writing time. *Be sure to reserve most of The Mysteries of Harris Burdick or an equally inspiring read-aloud for Assessment Day, as students will have to begin a new story on that day.*

Titles and captions from The Mysteries of Harris Burdick, by Chris Van Allsburg (1984)

ARCHIE SMITH, BOY WONDER
A tiny voice asked, "Is he the one?"

UNDER THE RUG
Two weeks passed and it happened again.

A STRANGE DAY IN JULY
He threw with all his might, but the third stone came skipping back.

MISSING IN VENICE
Even with her mighty engines in reverse, the ocean liner was pulled further and further into the canal.

ANOTHER PLACE, ANOTHER TIME
If there was an answer, he'd find it there.

UNINVITED GUESTS
His heart was pounding. He was sure he had seen the doorknob turn.

THE HARP
So it's true he thought, it's really true.

MR. LINDEN'S LIBRARY

He had warned her about the book. Now it was too late.

THE SEVEN CHAIRS

The fifth one ended up in France.

THE THIRD FLOOR BEDROOM

It all began when someone left the window open.

JUST DESSERT

She lowered the knife and it grew even brighter.

CAPTAIN TORY

He swung his lantern three times and slowly the schooner appeared.

OSCAR AND ALPHONSE

She knew it was time to send them back. The caterpillars softly wiggled in her hand, spelling out "goodbye."

THE HOUSE ON MAPLE STREET

It was a perfect lift-off.

From the Portolio Edition (1996):

MISSING IN VENICE

This time she'd gone too far.

PERMISSION!

PERMISSION!

PERMISSION!

PERMISSION!

PERMISSION!

PERMISSION!

PERMISSION!

PERMISSION!

PERMISSION!

PERMISSION!

PERMISSION!

PERMISSION!

PERMISSION!


PERMISSION!

Day Two: MINI-LESSON—ELEMENTS OF FICTION (10-30 minutes)


Academic language that students may need to know for this lesson: *fiction, elements, suspending disbelief, reality, imagination, reader, author, problem, hook, character, setting, analyze, checklist,* _____

Story Structure


1) Connection

 *Say: Yesterday we practiced getting started on a fiction story. Today we're going to talk about what makes a good fiction story.*


2) Teach: Elements of Fiction

 *Say: The best fiction stories really pull us in and make us forget the world around us. It's as if we're part of the story. Have you ever read a book that did that for you?*


Students briefly share out loud with each other or the class the titles of some fiction books that have really pulled them into the story.

 *Say: When you have fallen into a story like that, we call it “suspending disbelief.” That means, even though you know the story you are reading is fiction and couldn't really happen, while you're reading you decide to forget reality and just trust the author. When you do this, your imagination and the author's imagination join together to create another world for you—a world where anything can happen, like time travel, or dragonflight, or magic.*

Pause dramatically before continuing.


 *Say: Now, I'm about to tell you one of the greatest secrets of writing—how to help your readers suspend disbelief and fall into your stories... **The trick is to answer your reader's questions before they have to ask them.** What I mean is, your reader should never have to wonder things like, “Where is this happening?” or “Who's talking now?” or “Why does this matter?” Now, sometimes authors decide to let their readers wonder about a thing or two, but good authors never let their readers get confused about what is happening in the story. Good authors pay attention to the important parts of their story structure to answer their readers' questions.*

Post and read aloud an enlargement of the chart, “Elements of a Good Fiction Story” on page 18, or a similar chart of your own design. Your students may already be familiar with some of the concepts presented, or not. DO NOT FEEL LIKE YOU NEED TO EXPLAIN THE WHOLE CHART TO THEM.

 *Say: This tool reminds us of some of the important parts of a good story. We talk about these things a lot when we discuss the stories we read. As authors, we’re going to learn how to write stories with all these elements by the end of the year. For the stories we’re going to write later this week, we’re going to focus on writing a really strong beginning. As you speak, highlight the corresponding story elements on the chart.*


 **Teaching Tip:**

You may want to use a chart-maker to make the charts in this unit.

 **Teaching Tip:** A *hook* is a sentence early in a work of fiction that acts to fully engage a reader. It could be the first sentence of the piece, a description of character or setting that grabs the reader’s attention, or cliffhanger at the end of the first chapter.

3) Active Engagement: Analyze mentor text

Post a copy of the Elements of Good Fiction Checklist (photocopy from page 19) next to the “Elements...” chart and read the checklist aloud. Hold up a copy of a recent, popular read-aloud or reading selection from the Student Anthology (it must be a work of fiction with a strong beginning).

 *Say: We really enjoyed this fiction story quite a lot. Let’s look again at the beginning of this story and see how this author paid attention to her readers’ questions. I’m going to read the beginning to you now. As I read, see if you can identify the hook, problem, characters or setting. Give a “thumbs up” when you think you hear one of these elements of a good beginning.*
Read the beginning of the book aloud.

Elements of a Good Fiction Story

A well-written story answers a reader’s questions...

Beginning:

Problem—What is the story about?

Hook—Why should I read this story?

Characters—Who is this story about?

Setting—Where is this story happening?

Middle:


Obstacles and action—What happens in the story?

End:

Resolution—How does the problem get solved?

So what?—And why should I care?


Students listen attentively, putting their thumbs up quietly in their laps when they think they identify an element of fiction during the read-aloud.

 **Teaching Tip:** Students should keep their hands in their laps for the thumbs-up strategy. The purpose is to engage students and give the teacher feedback without intimidating students who are still figuring things out.


4) Partner share (*optional*)


Quickly pair students quickly with each other. Invite them to share their ideas about the way this author included the elements of fiction in the beginning of her story.

Students talk with their partners to identify the elements of fiction in the beginning of the mentor text.

 **Teaching Tip:** If your students are unfamiliar with doing a partner share during class discussions, be sure to establish clear guidelines before beginning. These include: taking turns, listening, staying on topic, and responding to the signal for teacher attention. ELL students may be partnered with English-speaking students for partner sharing to provide them with language models.

5) Conclusion: Link

 **Say:** *Whenever you're writing a fiction story, you can use this chart and/or this checklist to help you remember to include all the important elements of a good fiction story.*

 **Teaching Tip:** You may wish to provide students with copies of “Elements of a Good Fiction Story” on page 18 or copies of the Elements of Good Fiction Checklist on page 19 to keep in the center section of their writing folders.

ELEMENTS OF A GOOD FICTION STORY

A well-written story answers a reader's questions...

Beginning:

Hook—What gets the reader's attention?

Characters—Who is this story about?

Setting—Where is this story happening?

Problem—What is this story about?

Middle:

Obstacles and action—What happens in the story?

End:

Resolution—How does the problem get solved?

So what?—And why should I care?

Elements of Good Fiction Checklist

A good author answers a reader's questions to help suspend disbelief.

Beginning:

- Hook**—*What gets the reader's attention?*
- Characters**—*Who is this story about?*
- Setting**—*Where is this story happening?*
- Problem**—*What is this story about?*

Middle:

- Obstacles and action**—
What happens in the story?

End:


- Resolution**—
How does the problem get solved?
- So what?**—*And why should I care?*

Day Three: GRAPHIC ORGANIZER— STORY STRUCTURE (20-30 minutes)


Academic language that students may need to know for this lesson: *graphic organizer, protagonist, antagonist, main character, minor character, action, event, obstacle, resolution, structure,* _____

Introduce Graphic Organizer

1. Guided Practice

 *Say: Here is a Graphic Organizer that can help us understand the important parts of a good fiction story. We can also use it when planning our own stories to be sure we include all those parts.*

Show students a transparency of the Graphic Organizer—Story Structure, photocopied from page 22. Together, read the words on the first side.

 *Say: Yesterday we re-read the beginning of one of our favorite fiction stories. Today we're going to use this Graphic Organizer to identify and record the elements of fiction that the author included in that story. We'll look at the beginning of the story, but we'll also think about the middle and end of the story.*


(If students have questions about the “Descriptive Language” column, tell them you will go over that with them in the next lesson.)

Show students the transparency of the Graphic Organizer, photocopied from page 23, and read it aloud. Explain the words “obstacle” and “action” and give 1-2 examples from the mentor text. Define the word “resolution.” Point out that the Graphic Organizer is just another way of looking at the Elements of Fiction defined on the “Important Parts of a Good Fiction Story” chart or the checklist you distributed yesterday.


Getting answers from students, fill out the graphic organizer for an appropriate story they have read recently.

- *Teaching Tip:* Students with limited comprehension of the text will need assistance with this step. Be sure to select a mentor text that is in the reading range of most students in the class. You can pair students carefully to give extra support to struggling readers, or complete this activity as a whole class. Be sure students have copies of the mentor text to look at if working independently.

Story Planning

 Say: Remember the quick writes you did on Day One? We will take those ideas and plan out a story.

Pass out quick writes from Day 1. Have students read them to themselves or to a partner.

 Say: Now, think about how you could make your idea even better by including all the elements of good fiction we have been learning about. Fill out the graphic organizer.

Give students time to work independently, with partners, or in groups to complete the Graphic Organizer for their own story.

NOTE: Many students may need more than one session to complete their Storyboards. You may want to plan for an additional session.

.Author's Name: _____ **Title:** _____

Graphic Organizer

Story Structure:

Descriptive Language:

1. BEGINNING	Problem:	
	Main characters:	
	Protagonist—	
	Antagonist—	
	Minor characters:	
	Setting:	
	Hook:	

	Action or Obstacle	Action or Obstacle	Action or Obstacle	Action or Obstacle	Action or Obstacle	Action or Obstacle	Action or Obstacle
--	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

8. END	Resolution of the Problem:	So What?
---------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------

Day Four: CRAFT MINI-LESSON—SENSORY DESCRIPTION
(10-40 minutes)

NOTE TO TEACHERS—

Based on your assessment of your students’ talents, needs, experience and prior writing instruction, you can adapt the following mini-lesson to help them produce the good descriptive fiction. The mini-lesson can be easily incorporated into your regular Writers’ Workshop time and students can use other writing projects to practice the new skill.

This Craft Mini-Lesson on Sensory Description addresses the rubric standard: “Concrete sensory details and descriptive language support unified impression of people, places, things or experiences” (Level 3, Language and Audience) by encouraging students to use “lively and interesting descriptive language, including vivid verbs, precise nouns, adjectives and adverbs” and by introducing the idea of “effective use of simile and metaphor” (Level 4, Language and Audience).

About Craft Mini-Lessons

According to Fountas and Pinell (Guiding Readers and Writers, 2001, 66), the content of a mini-lesson can focus on: ***management*** (writers’ workshop routines and procedures), ***strategy and skill*** (conventions), or ***craft***. “*Craft* mini-lessons help students improve the quality of their writing over time by learning what makes good writing” (Fountas and Pinell, 69) and include the study of writing genre.

Characteristics of a Good Mini-Lesson:

- Takes place at the beginning of Writers' Workshop
- Brief, focused and inspiring
- Explicit
- Ten minutes or less!
- Avoids questions to elicit content from the children
- Multiple points of entry
- Responsive to the work the children are doing in their writing
- Includes careful, catchy language which becomes part of the class lexicon

The preceding recommendations and the following structure are paraphrased from *The Nuts and Bolts of Teaching Writing*, by Lucy Calkins (p. 46), using her names for the parts of a mini-lesson.

Structure of a Good Mini-Lesson

Part 1: Connection

You say:

- What you are going to teach
- How it's connected to what the children are learning and doing
- Why it's important

Part 2: Teach

Then use one of the following methods to teach your content:

- Demonstration
- Explicitly tell and show an example
- Inquiry

Part 3: Active Engagement

Children then do one of the following:

- Discuss what they've just seen and heard
- Guided practice

Part 4: Link

You say:

- How you'd like the children to use/practice the new strategy
"Today and every day..."

Part 5: Mid-Workshop Teaching Point

You briefly interrupt the children's independent writing to:

- Share an observation from your conferences, or
- Highlight a particular example of good work, or
- Address a widespread problem that you've noticed

Part 6: Share

Gather all students at the end of writing time to:


- Share work
- Follow up the day's workshop with additional, related teaching points

Mini-Lesson: Sensory Description

(Mentor Text: Through Grandpa's Eyes)

Academic language that students may need to know for this lesson: *imagine, sensory, description, senses, describe, technique, noun, adjective, verb, adverb, lively, precise, passage, excerpt, (teacher-selected vocabulary from reading), _____*


1. Connection

 *Say: Good writers use words that help their readers really imagine the story. These special words that writers use to pull you into their stories like that are called sensory description. We call it that because the words help us imagine what the scene looks, sounds, feels, smells and tastes like. Today we're going to look at some examples of good descriptive writing and learn how to write description ourselves.*

2. Teach (tell and show an example)

Show the students the book, *Through Grandpa's Eyes*, by Patricia MacLachlan. Read aloud to the class the first page of the story, on p. 202. of the Student Anthology.

Students listen attentively to the excerpt read aloud.

 *Teaching Tip:* The mini-lesson as written below is designed for students who have been engaged in a rich, daily writing program since the beginning of the year. If your students are not familiar with **sensory description, adjectives, adverbs, precise nouns, or lively verbs**, you should choose ONE of these strategies as the focus for the mini-lesson. Alternatively, you could take the time prior to assessment week to teach several mini-lessons on the craft of descriptive writing, focusing each mini-lesson on just one of the techniques outlined below (see page 5 for more pre-teaching ideas).

Several structures all work well for these types of mini-lessons:


A—Analyze a mentor text. This is the structure described below. You can revisit the same mentor text using each of the different techniques as a lens for study.

B—Use a student writing sample from a student volunteer “Mystery Author” to highlight good use of a particular descriptive technique.

C—After presenting/explaining the featured technique, encourage students to revise their own writing to include more sensory description.


D—Find a published example of writing that is *not* very descriptive. Invite students to revise the example using the featured technique to make the writing more descriptive.

Sensory Description:

 *Say:* Writers can do many things to add description to their stories. First, they can use their **five senses** to write about what’s going on. They tell you what things in the story look like, sound like, feel like, taste like, or smell like. This is called **sensory description**.

Think in your head of some words Patricia MacLachlan used that helped you imagine what something in the story looked like, sounded like, felt like, smelled like or tasted like. Pause to allow students time to think.


Adjectives and Adverbs:

 *Say:* Writers also use a special kinds of word called an “adjectives” and “adverbs” to add description.

Adjectives are words that tell you more about nouns. For example, Ms. MacLachlan uses the adjective “brass” to describe the doorknobs in Maggie’s house, which might help you imagine their yellowish color and cool metal feel.

Adverbs tell you more about verbs. For example, on p. 206 of this story the author writes: “But he gently takes my elbow as we walk so I can help show him the path.” The adverb “gently” gives us an idea about Grandpa’s personality and also the tenderness he feels towards his grandson, the narrator.

Precise nouns and Lively verbs:

 *Say:* But great authors don’t just sprinkle a few adjectives and adverbs around in their writing and think they’re done. Great authors also choose their nouns and verbs very carefully.


Ms. MacLachlan uses **precise nouns** that make her story more interesting, and **precise nouns** that help readers understand exactly what the author means. Instead of just saying that Grandpa remembers the flowers in his garden on p. 206. She tells us the names of those flowers—Queen Anne’s lace, and dahlias.

Great authors use **lively verbs** that really help readers imagine the action. For example, on p. 198, the sun “pushes” through the curtains, the narrator “throws” back the covers and “peeks” around the door. This is much more interesting than writing something like “The sun came in the windows. I got out of bed and looked out the door.”

3. Active Engagement (discuss what they’ve just seen and heard)


Quickly pair students (see page 17 for teaching tips on partner work). Give each partnership a copy of ONE of the prepared excerpts from the text (from pages 198,

200, or 205 of the OCR Student Anthology, depending on which descriptive techniques are the focus of your mini-lesson) and a highlighter.

 *Say: I want you and your partner to read through this page together, and highlight any descriptive words or phrases that you notice.*

Students read, highlight and discuss examples of descriptions with their partners.

As students are talking with each other, circulate to eavesdrop on their conversations and identify partnerships whose ideas will move thinking forward for the entire class. Quickly, call on 3-5 students to share ONE example of descriptive language with the class. Identify each example by name (i.e. as sensory description, an adjective, a lively verb, etc.) if discussing more than one descriptive technique.

 **Teaching Tip:** Students may work with the text in their Anthologies and simply skip the step of highlighting.

4. Link and Conclusion

Today and every day, I want you to use descriptive language to pull your readers into your stories. As you're writing your stories, see if you can add some sensory description, adjectives, adverbs, lively verbs or precise nouns.

5. Practice (Optional)


Give students independent writing time, encouraging them to practice adding sensory description to their current writing projects.

TEACHER NOTES: Examples of Descriptive Writing from *Through Grandpa's Eyes*

Prepare the following excerpts for students to analyze: p. 198, p. 200, p. 205. Make enough copies so that there is one excerpt for every partnership. You may choose to give the same excerpt to all partnerships if you think your class needs more guidance with this activity. Use the graphic organizer below to guide students as they analyze the excerpts.

Page number	Type of Description	Example
p. 198	sensory description	carved, brass, pebble-path, sun, light, warming
p. 198	adjectives	glass, pebble-path, wooden, carved, brass, morning
p. 198	vivid verbs	pushes, burrow, throw, run, touches, warming, peek, bending, stretching

p. 198	precise nouns	doorknobs, curtains,
p. 200	sensory description	thumps, buttered toast
p. 200	adjective	buttered, wooden, smooth
p. 200	adverb	sideways
p. 200	vivid verbs	frying, running
p. 200	precise nouns	carpet, banister, stairway, fingers
p. 205	sensory description, simile/metaphor	“my fingers begin a river”, “wood will winter”, “soft and quick like butterflies” “my waterfall fingers...”
p. 205	adjectives	short, rain, soft, quick, middle, clay

 Teaching Tip: A mini-lesson needs to move quickly in order to keep children’s attention. Aim for ten minutes and make sure you’re done before twenty! Involve children periodically by asking for their opinions or advice, but don’t get bogged down asking them to guess what it is that you’re trying to say. This is an opportunity for direct teaching. You may periodically say something like: *I bet a lot of you know about this already...* to acknowledge their expertise without feeling you must invite them to expound upon it. This helps keep the lesson moving quickly.

Best Practices in the Teaching of Writing:

Mini-Lessons

(Tips from Lucy Calkins and others)

- When introducing a mini-lesson, avoid using questions to elicit guesses from children about the content. Simply state what you are going to teach straight out and save your questions for true inquiry.
- Avoid repeating yesterday's mini-lesson as an introduction to today's.
- Make sure that lesson content offers multiple points of entry for writers at different places along the learning continuum.
- Show writers explicitly when and why they might use the strategy or skill you're teaching. Remind children that the lesson is for "Today, and every day you write..."
- Avoid the temptation to highlight every step you take as a writer when modeling in a mini-lesson: just focus on the featured skill.
- Choose the teaching method best suited to showcase the chosen strategy: Demonstration; Explicitly Tell/Show an Example; Inquiry; or Guided Practice.
- Use the Think-Aloud strategy to highlight the skill you are demonstrating.
- With young children, use a shared text or partner talk to invite children to practice the new skill in the context of the mini-lesson.
- Use careful and inspiring language to talk about writing and writing strategies. This helps make the skills you teach memorable and creates a class lexicon for talking about writing.
- To conclude, crystallize the lesson into a clear, catchy phrase.
- Strictly limit the mini-lesson to 10-15 minutes; save the rest of writing time for practice and sharing!


Day Five: ASSESSMENT DAY—WRITE! (60 minutes)

Academic language that students may need to know for this lesson: *approximated spelling, sound it out, penmanship, capitalize, upper-case letters, lower-case letters, Word Wall, sight words, period, question mark, exclamation point, quotation marks, dialogue, apostrophe, comma, indent, character, setting, _____*

NOTE: Make sure students have access to their Writing Folders (including the Elements of Fiction Checklist) on Assessment Day. Be sure that the classroom charts (including “Important Parts of a Good Fiction Story”), alphabet strip and sight word bank are visually accessible to all students from where they write, especially visually impaired students or ELL students.


Generate Interest

1) Introduce activity

 *Say: This week I read you just a little bit of this book, and you practiced doing a quick-write to generate story ideas. Then we talked about the important parts of a good fiction story and how to include description in your writing. Then we used a graphic organizer to plan our story. Today you will use your graphic organizers to write a draft of the story.*

Introduce Materials


2) Introduce prompt paper

 *Say: Before you write, I want to tell you a few things about today’s writing.* Show samples of the prompt paper (photocopied from pages 36 - 37 and 38 - 39) to the class. Indicate where to write first and last names and where to begin writing the story (some students may comment about the need to indent the beginning of a paragraph). Review expectations about use of drawing and writing materials.

Give Directions


3) Give prompt

Read the prompt aloud to the students:

 ***Prompt:*** Write a fiction story that is inspired by one of the pictures in “Harry Burdick.” Be sure the beginning of your story includes all the elements of good fiction, such as: a problem, a hook, characters, setting and sensory description. Use the graphic organizer and your quick write to get you started.

Clarify that the students have PERMISSION to do whatever they want with their fiction stories, including: using the Harris Burdick title and caption to get started, combining more than one Harris Burdick illustration to inspire a story, writing a fiction story about something completely different, etc.

4) Give guidelines


 *Say: This is a first draft. The most important thing is to get your ideas down on paper. But you will be publishing this eventually, so it's important that you and other people be able to read your writing. Do your best work on spelling, punctuation and handwriting, without erasing. If you don't know how to spell a word try sounding it out. You can also use the Word Wall as a spelling resource!*


Write!


5) After setting expectations for the activity (time, noise level, materials, getting help), let students begin work. Make sure they know how to get copies of the illustration and caption that they wish to use, copies of prompt paper and pencils. Be sure students know that although you intend to give them plenty of writing time, that some of them may be planning to write long stories and may not finish them today.


Students work independently and silently on their first drafts of a fiction story.
--

As students write, circulate through the classroom to assist and encourage. Do not correct children's errors or prompt them to remember punctuation as they work. Do not provide spelling but encourage children to sound out words.

 *Teaching Tip:* Some students may need to check in with you about their “Can I...?” questions before they begin writing. Be sure to plan your time and availability to allow for this private clarification of the prompt parameters.


 *Teaching Tip:* Limit the assistance you give one-on-one to repeating the instructions and reminders you have already given the whole class. Express enthusiasm and confidence in each writer.

 *Teaching Tip:* Do not allow students to become obsessed with the idea of finding a title for their story at this stage of the writing process. Emphasize that many authors give their pieces a “working title” in the beginning in order to describe it to others in their writing community. They often change the title later as part of revising their story. Encourage writers stuck on choosing a title to assign a working title or simply call the work “Untitled” so they can begin writing.


 **Teaching Tip:** Prolific or experienced writers may have planned to write a very lengthy story. In this case, encourage them to try to finish the first chapter of their story in this writing period, and also reassure them that they will get more time to work on these stories another day.


6) Give prompts for writing and revision

When students first indicate they are finished writing, individually give the following prompt for initial revision.

 **Say:** *Look at the Important Parts of a Good Fiction Story and make sure that you've introduced the problem, characters and setting for your story. Reread what you've written and see what you think you should do to make the writing more descriptive. Make sure your story makes sense.*

When most students are nearly finished and have already gone back to revise or add description, give the following prompt for initial editing to the whole class. Make erasers available.


 **Say:** *Before you turn your story in, please reread it and check to make sure it will be easy for me to read. Did you use capital letters at the beginning of sentences? Did you indent paragraphs? Did you put punctuation at the end of your sentences? Did you use quotation marks around the words characters say? Did you check your spelling?*

 **Teaching Tip:** If students are unsure about how to edit their own writing (e.g. "How do I indent a paragraph I've already written?") reassure them that you think you'll be able to read what they've written and that's what is most important for a first draft.

5) Conclusion

 **Say:** *I can't wait to read these stories!*

Collect all the papers and see instructions for scoring and reporting.

 After Assessment Day, give students the opportunity to finish their first drafts, revise, edit and publish their work. In individual writing conferences, help students identify ways to improve their pieces by adding more detail or description, or correcting errors in spelling, capitalization or punctuation. With each student individually or in small groups, reread first drafts together and invite students to notice what they can do make their writing more interesting or readable. Focus on no

more than 1-2 types of error, and use a color pen to correct them on the draft. Invite students to rewrite their stories using their best printing and spacing, making the corrections indicated on the draft. Alternatively, parent volunteers can type up the finished stories for students to illustrate. Bind published stories in a book, post them outside the classroom, or include them in students' writing portfolios.

Suggested Books: Books to Inspire Writing

(All of these books have imaginative illustrations and/or themes. The goal is for the book to activate students' imaginations and enthusiasm.)

Open Court Selections from Level 3, Unit 3 (Imagination):

- **Roxaboxen, by Alice McLeran, ill. Barbara Cooney
- **The Sun is a Yellow-Tipped Porcupine, Crow Indian Poem
- **Through Grandpa's Eyes, by Patricia MaclAchlan

Selections from the Open Court Leveled Library:

- Behind the Couch, by Mordicai Gerstein
- My Life with the Wave, by Catherine Cowan and Octavio Paz

Other Suggestions:

- Flotsam, by David Weisner
- *If, by Sarah Perry
- Imagine, by Norman Messenger
- *Imagine a Day, by Sarah C. Thomson, ill. Rob Gonsalves
- *Imagine a Night, by Rob Gonsalves.
- *Imagine a Place, by Sarah C. Thomson, ill. Rob Gonsalves
- Looking Down, by Steve Jenkins
- Masters of Deception: Escher, Dali and the Artists of Optical Illusion
- Once Upon a Cool Motorcycle Dude, by Kevin O'Malley, Carol Heyer and Scott Goto
- ReZoom, by Istvan Banyai
- *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick, by Chris Van Allsburg
- The Other Side, by Istvan Banyai
- The Red Book, by Barbara Lehman
- The Secret Knowledge of Grown-Ups, by David Wisniewski
- The Secret Shortcut, by Mark Teague
- Tuesday, by David Weisner
- Voices in the Park, by Anthony Browne
- Zoom, by Istvan Banyai

*Especially good selections for Day One: Generate Story Ideas

**Especially good selections for Day Four: Craft Mini-Lesson—Sensory Description

AUTHORS: Please write your first and last name on the *back* of each page of your story, on the lines below. Do NOT write anything else on this side of the page.

Author's First Name: _____ Author's Last Name: _____

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

AUTHORS: Please write your first and last name on the *back* of each page of your story, on the lines below. Do NOT write anything else on this side of the page.

Author's First Name: _____ Author's Last Name: _____

DO NOT WRITE IN THIS SPACE

Cover Sheet
Third Grade Process Writing Assessment
Winter
Narrative Fiction: What If...

Teacher Name: _____

School Name: _____

Date administered: _____

Fill in the above information before photocopying. Fill in the score once the assessment has been completed and scored. Attach completed score sheet to each scored prompt with a staple or paperclip.

Score: _____

Cover Sheet
Third Grade Process Writing Assessment
Winter
Narrative Fiction: What If...

Teacher Name: _____

School Name: _____

Date administered: _____

Fill in the above information before photocopying. Fill in the score once the assessment has been completed and scored. Attach completed score sheet to each scored prompt with a staple or paperclip.

Score: _____