



Oakland Unified School District  
Writing Proficiency Project

**Process Writing Assessment**  
**(PWA)**

**Fourth Grade**

**Winter**

**Response to Literature:  
“Who’s the Cleverest?”**

Teacher Instructions

## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Winter Prompt Response to Literature

This Process Writing Assessment consists of five lessons that prepare students to write a descriptive essay. Ideally it should take place on consecutive days during your regular writing period. Due to scheduling constraints, you may have to “chunk” lessons into more/fewer days. If this occurs please do the lessons in order. Many activities are designed to be

done with a partner. Look for the partner icon and plan accordingly. Note that shaded boxes are from the student booklet.



- 1) Review all instructions in this manual and prepare materials.
- 2) Use these lessons over the course of one week during your regular Writer’s Workshop or Language Arts time. Adapt lessons to meet the needs of your students. *However, the final writing prompt is to be presented without modifications.*
- 3) Collect student writing and score them in teams, using the rubric and anchor papers.
- 4) OPTIONAL - Continue the writing process with the students, helping them take their writing through revision to publication.

### ***Overview of week:***

### ***Suggested time:***

<b>Day One</b>	<i>Project introduction</i> Access prior knowledge Introduce Packet	30 - 45 minutes
<b>Day Two</b>	<i>Elements in a Response to Literature:</i> Analyze Response to Literature	45 minutes
<b>Day Three</b>	<i>Listen, Visualize and Read</i> Vocabulary Sketch Read	40 - 50 minutes
<b>Day Four</b>	<i>Thinking and Planning:</i> Summary and Main Idea	40 - 50 minutes
<b>Day Five</b>	<i>Assessment Day - Write!</i>	50 - 60 minutes

\* You may distribute the time allotted to each activity differently across the days, combining or splitting lessons as seems appropriate, taking up to four weeks to complete them all.



## Day One: PROJECT INTRODUCTION (30 - 40 minutes)

**Goal:** The goal of this lesson is for students to activate and build background knowledge about folk tales and their important ideas or lessons.

- Hand out the Student Packets and tell student to write their name at the top of the first page and silently skim through the packet.
- Generate interest by reading the letter on page one to students.

Writers do their best writing when they have time to read, think, and plan. During the next few days you will:

1. Read an example of a response to literature essay.
2. Listen to a folktale and then draw and read.
3. Identify the main idea of the folktale and support this main idea with evidence from the story.
4. Plan your essay in response to the prompt at the end of this packet.
5. Write your essay.

Teachers hope you will learn more about writing, enjoy these activities and your best work. When you finish, your teacher will read your essay, score it and then plan lessons to help you become a better writer.

- Discuss folktales with students. Ask children for a show of hands in response to the following questions: *Have you ever read or heard a folktale before? Have you ever heard of **The Story of the Three Little Pigs**? (Or any other folktale that you and your students are familiar with.)*
- Tell students that folktales are popular traditional stories that were originally told orally.
- Brainstorm some important ideas or lessons that students might find in *The Three Little Pigs*. Ask students what evidence from the story supports the important ideas.

☞ Examples:

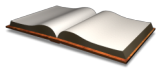
“Hard work pays off because the pig who took the most time and energy to build his house of bricks survives the wolf’s attack.”

“The lazy way leads to trouble down the road because the only pig who made it out alive worked the hardest.”

“Being bigger and tougher doesn’t always mean that you win because in the end the wolf died.” Encourage a few important ideas with evidence.

Optional: You can frontload the brainstorming by using this cause and effect sentence frame:

\_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.  
(moral/lesson/main idea) (evidence)



### Day Two: Analyze a Student Essay (30 - 40 minutes)

☞ **Goal:** The goal of this lesson is to identify four features of a good Response to Literature essay using a mentor text.

☞ Read aloud *Little by Little, Piece by Piece* and then ask students “What do you think are the important ideas in the story? Is there evidence in the story?”

#### Little by Little, Piece by Piece By Marilyn Helmer

Once there was a farmer who had three sons. Every year after they harvested their crops and stored their winter supply, the farmer sold what was left and divided the money equally among himself and his sons.

As he gave each boy his share, the father always said, “Remember, my sons: little by little, piece by piece.”

Oldest Brother and Middle Brother paid no attention to their father’s words. They cared only for the luxuries that their share of the money would buy.

Youngest Brother, however, listened to his father. He saw how each year his father used his share to buy more land. And he noticed that each year there was more money to be divided among them all.

Time passed, and the father grew old and died. He left the land to be divided equally among his three sons.

“I will sell my share,” said Oldest Brother. “I’m going to the Great City to seek my fortune.”

"I will sell my share, too, and come with you," said Middle Brother.

"Wait," Youngest Brother pleaded. "Our wealth is here in the land. If we work together and buy more land, little by little, piece by piece, our fortune will grow."

"You sound like our father," sneered Oldest Brother. "I'm tired of making my fortune little by little."

"Piece by piece is not for me," Middle Brother agreed. "I want my fortune right now."

So Oldest Brother and Middle Brother sold their shares, leaving Youngest Brother with only one small piece of land. They headed for the Great City, promising to return for a visit at the end of the year.

Youngest Brother worked the land as he always had. "Little by little, piece by piece," he would say with satisfaction as he watched the seedlings push their way up through the rich soil. When the crops were harvested, Youngest Brother used the extra money from the sale of his crops to buy back some of the land his brothers had sold.

Meanwhile the two oldest brothers had reached the Great City. There they found all the luxuries they had dreamed of.

Little by little was not for Oldest Brother or Middle Brother. They spent their money quickly and freely. Piece by piece, it tumbled through their fingers like pebbles in a landslide.

At the end of the year, the brothers dressed in their finest clothes and went to visit Youngest Brother. They came on horseback, laden with gifts, and told Youngest Brother tale after tale of their wonderful life in the Great City.

"Now tell us your news," said Oldest Brother when he paused to catch his breath.

"Yes," said Middle Brother. "What interesting things have you been doing?"

"I had a good harvest this year," said Youngest Brother. "I even managed to buy back some of the land you sold."

Oldest Brother and Middle Brother exchanged smiles. At the end of the visit, they hurried back to their fine life in the Great City.

Another year passed, Oldest Brother and Middle Brother again came to visit Younger Brother. This time they arrived on foot and brought only a few simple gifts.

"Little by little, life in the Great City is becoming more expensive," Oldest Brother explained.

"Piece by piece, our things are wearing out," said Middle Brother.

The older brothers noticed that Youngest Brother had even more land than he'd had the year before. They were surprised to see that he had built a new wing onto the house and hired two farm hands and a cook. Youngest Brother prepared a feast in their honor.

"This is a fine feast indeed," said Middle Brother.

"Finer than the year before," said Oldest Brother.

"I had a good year," Youngest Brother replied again.

When they came back for their visit the third year, the older brothers arrived with only the clothes on their backs.

"Little by little, life in the Great City is becoming ever more expensive," said Middle Brother.

"Piece by piece, we have had to sell our jewels, baubles, and trinkets just to

live,” said Oldest Brother. They noticed that Youngest Brother’s farm was now almost as large as it had been when their father was alive. The table groaned under the feast he had prepared for them.

“You seem to prosper,” said Middle Brother.

“I have had a good year,” Youngest Brother replied modestly.

The next year Youngest Brother waited and watched for his brothers, but they did not come. Finally Youngest Brother set out for the Great City to look for them. He found them living in a shack at the edge of the city.

Oldest Brother looked away in shame. “We could not afford to make a trip home this year,” he said. “Little by little, our fortune has disappeared.”

“Piece by piece, we have lost everything,” Middle brother added.

“Come back to the farm with me,” said Youngest Brother.

So Oldest Brother and Middle Brother returned to the farm where they had grown up. Youngest Brother hired them to work for him.

At the end of the year, Middle Brother and Oldest Brother used their wages to buy shares in the farm. From then on, each year as their father before them had done, the three brothers bought more land. Little by little, their farm grew until it stretched as far as the eye could see. And piece by piece, the fortune of the three brothers grew with it.

☞ Tell students, “A student read the folktale ‘Little by Little, Piece by Piece’ and did some thinking. The student wrote an essay about the important ideas he or she thought the author wanted the reader to know. We are going to check and see if the student included all the important elements of a Response to Literature in the essay. Here are the things we are looking for:”

- The main idea(s). What is this story *really* about?
- Evidence from the story that supports the main idea.
- A brief summary of the main events of the story
- Student’s prior knowledge (from personal life or other text) that supports the main idea.

☞ Record these elements on a chart and leave it up throughout the assessment week

☞ Read aloud the essay A Lesson in Patience as student’s follow in their packets.

1. This is an example of a *response to literature essay* that a student wrote after reading the folktale, Little by Little, Piece by Piece.

### A Lesson in Patience

The story Little by Little, Piece by Piece is about three brothers who learn the importance of patience and hard work. When their old father dies,

the brothers inherit the family land. Middle Brother and Older Brother wanted to go to the Great City, so they sold their portion of the land and left thinking they would quickly find fortune in the city. Younger Brother was wise and said “our wealth is here in the land.” He decided to stay on the family farm while his brothers moved away. While the younger brother prospers, the other two lose everything in the city. The main idea of the story is that you should patiently keep working until you reach your goal - riches are not earned overnight.

While Middle and Older Brother were in the city discovering luxuries and spending their money, Younger Brother was back on the farm enjoying the small progress that he made growing crops. "Little by little, piece by piece" he would say as he watched the new plants coming up with satisfaction. Like his father before him, Younger Brother used extra money from the crops to improve the farm. Though he didn't have luxuries like his brothers, he was learning and slowly making a better future for himself.

As Younger Brother patiently made the farm and house bigger, his brothers became poorer. Time passed, and Older Brother and Middle Brother arrived to visit on foot and with few gifts. “The Great City is getting more expensive,” said older brother. Younger Brother explained how he had had a good year and bought some more land back. The third year Middle Brother and Older Brother returned with only the clothes on their body. Again they explained how the city had become more expensive. Meanwhile Younger Brother had made the farm and house bigger through hard work.


I once had an experience like Younger Brother. Each week my sister and I got an allowance. My sister always ran out and spent it right away on candy while I saved mine. One day after two months of saving I was able to buy a new CD. In the end she had nothing to show for her allowance, but I had music to keep forever.

Older and Middle Brother eventually spent all of their money. Younger brother went to the city and brought them back to the farm and gave them jobs. After working for a while, Middle and Older Brother had enough money to buy their land back. This story shows us the author's idea that if you work patiently at something, little by little you will reach your goal.

- ☞ **Guide** students to find the four elements in the essay (or see if an element is missing). Doing this as a whole class works best with transparencies of the story and student packet page.



## 2. Analyzing the Response to Literature Essay

- ❖ **Circle** the student's statement of the **main idea** of the story in the first paragraph. The main idea answers the question, "What is this story *Little by Little, Piece by Piece* really about?"
- ❖ **Underline** the topic sentence of one paragraph. Each topic sentence includes details or ideas from the folktale that supports the main idea. In that same paragraph find the **evidence** that supports the topic sentence. ✓ Put a check mark by each supporting piece of evidence.
- ❖  Think of 3 reasons why the **summary** is in the first paragraph.
- ❖ \* Put a "star" next to where the student essay connects the folktale to the student's **prior knowledge** (from experience or another story).



- ☞ Give students time to **share** their work with a partner.



## 3. Sharing with Classmates

Good readers and writers are always thinking and talking about stories and writing.



### Day Three: Listen, Visualize, Read (45 - 50 minutes)

**Goal:** The goal in this lesson is to listen to a folktale, visualize and sketch details from the beginning, middle and end. The second goal of this lesson is for students to read the folktale independently.

☞ **Tell students** that today they will be listening to and reading the folktale from Ethiopia, *Who is the Cleverest?* While they listen to this story they will be making quick sketches of the mental images that pop up in their mind. **Remind students** that a sketch is just a quick drawing and not an art project or an illustration.

☞ **Tell students** to open their packets to Day Three. **Read** the directions at the top of students while they follow along.

As you listen to this folktale from Ethiopia, “*Who is the Cleverest?*” visualize images from the story in your mind. Make a few small sketches of what you want to remember from the beginning, middle and end of the story. Your teacher will tell you when to begin and end each section.

Beginning

Middle

End

☞ **Read aloud** the folktale, “Who is the Cleverest?” Be sure to say aloud where each section begins and ends so that students know when to change their sketch box.

## Who is the Cleverest?

Adapted from an Ethiopian Folktale

Many years ago, a clever man lived with his three sons. As he grew old, he became ill and spent much of his time in his room. During the day, his room had light from a small window. But in the evening, the room was like walking in a forest on a moonless night.

One day, the man called his three sons to him. He said, “I wonder which of you has the gift of cleverness. I have decided that my cleverest son will inherit my money.” The sons looked at each other and waited for their father to say more.

The father continued, “I will give each of you the same amount of money. Use it to buy something to fill this room.” Each son took his share of the money.

The oldest son said, “This will not take long. I will go to the market, since it is close by. I will find something there.” At the market, the oldest son bought the first thing he saw, which was straw.

The second son wondered what would fill the room. Then he, too, went to the market. As he looked he said to himself, “This is like looking for a needle in a haystack. It is hard to find something for this amount of money that will fill the room.” But finally, he bought some feathers.

The youngest son went to a quiet place. He wanted to think through his ideas undisturbed. He carefully thought about each possibility. Finally, when he knew just what to buy, the third son also went to the market. He bought two small items. He wrapped them in a scarf and put them in his pocket.

At dusk, just as the sun was beginning to set, the father called his three sons to him. “Show me what you have found to fill my room,” he said.

The first son stepped forward and quickly spread out his straw. Sadly, everyone saw that the straw only filled one corner of the room. Then, the second son threw out his feathers. Sadly, everyone saw that the feathers only filled two corners of the room.

“Hurry,” the man said to his third and youngest son. “It is growing dark. Did you find something that will fill my room?”

The youngest son came forward. He held two items in his hand, covered with the scarf. He smiled as he slowly showed his family what he had bought—a match and a candle. Then, he used the match to light the candle. Instantly, the soft light filled the room.

This pleased the father. The man said, “That is a fine idea. You are my cleverest son! You inherit my riches. Use them wisely to take care of yourself and your brothers, and you shall be happy.”

☞ Allow a few minutes for students to modify their sketches and then **share with a partner**.

2.  **Pair Share**

- ❖ Share your sketches with a partner. Tell your partner what is in your sketch and why you drew it. Listen to your partner explain his/her sketch.

☞ **Ask the class:** Does this folktale remind you of any other stories you have heard or read? Does this folktale remind you of any events or people in your own lives? Give students time to write their responses using the sentence frames.

### 3. Discuss

- ❖ Does this folktale remind you of any other stories you have heard or read?

This folktale reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_

because \_\_\_\_\_

- ❖ Does this folktale remind you of any events or people and/or any personal experiences from your own life?

This folktale reminds me of the time \_\_\_\_\_

☞ Write the following words on the board (without definitions) and ask students to brainstorm their ideas about possible definitions with a partner. These words are important to understanding the story. Ask for volunteers, record correct definition(s) on the board.

**Clever:** (intelligent and creative)

**Amount:** (quantity)

**Undisturbed:** (not interrupted by anyone or anything)

**Inherit:** (to become the owner of something when someone dies)

**Wisely:** (to use good sense and good judgment)

### 3. Vocabulary

Read the words from the folktale and write your own definition for each word next to the word. If you are not sure, make a good guess.

clever

amount

undisturbed

inherit

wisely

☞ **Tell students** to read the folktale silently. They should underline words and phrases that they are curious about and will talk about tomorrow. You can assign partner reading if appropriate.

4. Read the folktale, "*Who is the Cleverest?*" silently or with a partner. As you read, underline words that you are curious about.



#### Day Four: Main Idea and Summary (45 - 50 minutes)

**Goal:** The goal of this lesson is for students to practice summarizing a folktale. The second goal of this lesson is for students to identify the main idea of the folktale.

☞ **Tell students** to open their packets to the folktale that they read yesterday and review words or phrases that they were curious about. With the whole class clarify any confusion. Remind students that good readers and writers are always curious and asking questions as they read and write.

☞ **Tell students** that when you go to a movie or read a book and a friend asks you "What was it about?" you give them a quick summary. You don't retell the whole story; the friend would probably tell you to stop if you tried. **Ask students** what information they would like to know about a movie or a book if someone was giving them a summary. Connect what they say to academic language, e.g. "What happens" = **plot**, "Who's in it" = **characters**, "Kind of story" = **genre**, "Where it takes place" = **setting**, "Good/bad/exciting/boring" = **opinion**.

☞ **Tell students** to open their packets to Day Four and silently read about a summary. Students will work with a partner to both tell and listen to a summary of the folktale, *Who is the Cleverest*. These are literally **one minute summaries** with just the main idea, important events and relevant details. You might even get out a timer for this activity to make it more like a game. Once they have done their oral summaries they can move on to write a three sentence summary to share.

## 1. What is a summary of the story?



- ❖ Take a minute to tell your partner a **summary** of "Who is the Cleverest?" Include the beginning, middle and end. Remember that a summary is not a retelling. It only includes the main idea and important events and relevant details. When you are done, listen to your partner's summary.
  
- ❖ Now, see if you can write a summary of the story in just three written sentences. Share your summary with a partner.

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☞ **Read aloud** from the student packet and ask if there are questions.


## 2. Writing about the Main Idea

This story has a main idea that the author wants the reader to think about and understand. The author includes important events and relevant details that support this main idea. Remember that the main idea answers the question, "What is this story **really** about?"

 **Read aloud** from the student packet and allow time to brainstorm responses together.

Here are some questions to help you think about the main idea:

- What does the youngest son do before he goes to the market?
- How is what he does different from what the other sons do?
- How is the youngest son's purchase different from the others?

 **Tell students** to complete the sentence frames about the main idea with evidence from the text. . Guide students through the evidence part of the sentence frame by helping them use events from the folktale to answer the “because” part. Share with a partner or as a whole class. **NOTE:** Different readers may correctly identify different main ideas. **The important** part is using evidence from the text to support the identification of a main idea.

I think that the main idea of the story is \_\_\_\_\_

because (use evidence from the story) \_\_\_\_\_



**Day Five: WRITING ASSESSMENT (45-60 minutes)\***

 **Time Check**

These activities must be completed on the same day. If there is not enough remaining time for most students to write a complete first draft essay then students should not begin to write. The writing portion of the assessment must take place in one session.

☞ **Review with students** the work they have been doing throughout the week in their packets.

☞ **Read aloud** the student prompt. Ask if there are any questions.

### **Response to "Who is the Cleverest?"**

Teachers in Oakland want to know what students think are important ideas in folktales. Write an essay that explains what you think is the important idea in the folktale "Who is the Cleverest?" What is the main idea that the author is trying to communicate? As you explain your thinking, be sure to include evidence from the story that supports your idea. You can also include connections to your own life or to other stories that support your thinking. You may use the work you did in this packet to help you.

☞ **Read aloud** the "Writing Reminders" from the student packet.

#### **Writing Reminders:**

- Begin in an interesting way that leads to the main idea the author is trying to communicate or controlling idea of your essay.
- Support your main idea by including specific references to the reading selection.
- Use language and vocabulary that is precise and lively.
- Organize the main sections of your essay into paragraphs so that the reader can follow your ideas.
- End with a confident conclusion that restates your main point.

☞ After setting expectations for the activity (time, noise level, materials getting help), distribute the writing paper and a copy of "Who is the Cleverest" and let the students begin work. Students work independently and silently on their essays. As students write, circulate through the classroom to assist and encourage. Do not correct student's errors or prompt them as they work. Do not provide spelling but encourage children to sound out unknown words or use available spelling resources.

As individual students begin to signal that they are finished, **read aloud the “After You Write”** suggestions from the student packet. Collect papers as students finish.

### **After You Write (Editing)**

After you write, take time to review the items below. You may make changes right on your paper.

- Give the essay a title. (You can choose your title before or after you write the essay.)
- Check your punctuation. Use capital letters, commas, periods, and quotation marks where they belong.
- Check your spelling.