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ABSTRACT

This curriculum guide for the teaching of composition at the sixth grade level includes lessons in six categories: Observing, Recallin Experiences, Making Words Work, Causes and Effects, Using Imagination, and Considering Audience. The lessons include a statement of purpose, a description of primary and/or secondary skills that are objectives of the lesson, a resume of the lesson and directions for preparing and teaching the lesson. Supplemental lessons for sixth grade students are also included. Some lessons also contain a suggested dramatic activity. A demonstration tape to accompany one of the lessons in the section entitled "Making Words Work" is included. (See related documents CS 200 511 and CS 200 512.) (DI)

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Oregon Elementary English Project
University of Oregon
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Composition VI

LIST OF MATERIALS

OBSERVING

THE VIEW FROM HERE
No materials needed

THE WAY I SEE IT
*Copies of Agree-Disagree Statements (one for each student)

CALL FOR ACTION
Two pieces of incense
Receptacle for burning incense

WEIGHING EVIDENCE
No materials needed

RECALLING EXPERIENCES

KID CAPERS
Comic strips (Dennis the Menace, Peanuts, The Family Circus, etc.)
Unlined paper (a piece for each student)
Rulers (one for each student)

PETS TO REMEMBER
Pictures or snapshots of pets (optional)

THE WORM TURNED
*Illustration (may be made into overhead projection)
Tape recorder (optional)

"I" WITNESS
Newspaper clippings of heroism (optional)

A FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE
No materials needed

MAKING WORDS WORK

TO LIVE AGAIN
No materials needed

FOR THE RECORD
*Tape of sounds
Tape recorder and an extra roll of tape
Copies of "Sunning" and "Rodeo" (in A Gift of Watermelon Pickle)

*Copies included in curriculum materials.

USING CONNOTATIONS
*Story worksheet (one copy for each student)

A CAMP AND YOU
No materials needed

CAUSES AND EFFECTS

LIGHTNING IS. . .
No materials needed

CAN YOU CONVINCE?
*Copies of superstition quiz (one for each student)

IF SUMMER, THEN SWIMMIN'
No materials needed

RIP VAN SKELETON
Story Skeleton (A copy for each student)

USING IMAGINATION

I CAN FLY!
Coloring materials--chalk, crayons, paints, etc. (optional)
Paper for drawing (optional)

FEATHERY FROLIC
No new materials needed

WHAT WILL I BE?
No materials needed

ME ON A SPREE
No materials needed

CONSIDERING AUDIENCE

I REMEMBER
No materials needed

A PLAYGROUND PEEK
Questionnaires (optional)

ONCE UPON A TIME. . .
Materials for making books: paper, cover material and fasteners, and art supplies

HERE IT IS; YOU LIKE IT?
No new materials needed

*Copies included in curriculum materials.

Observing: Lesson 1 Composition VI
Teacher

THE VIEW FROM HERE

PURPOSE: To recognize possible physical limitations to observation.

SECONDARY SKILLS: Taking notes.

RESUMÉ: Students observe and describe a book arrangement. They discuss the different observations from different places in the room. To further develop an understanding of physical limitations, students are assigned to various positions on the playground and asked to describe their observations from that point of view.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: None

Teaching considerations: You will need to collect books of various sizes and plan the arrangement some time before presenting this lesson. You will also need to plan the playground observation points to assure variation.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Without the students being aware of what you are doing, arrange a few brightly colored books of assorted sizes between book ends at the front of the room. Use one book much smaller than the others and place it at one end and slightly farther back so that it is only visible to someone looking right at it. (You may need to make the arrangement while students are out of the room and cover it until you wish to begin the lesson.) With students seated in their usual positions, ask them to describe what they see. Some students will be able to tell the titles of the books and describe cover designs while others will only be able to give general descriptions of color and size. Some will disagree on the number of books between the bookends because they can't see the small book. (Variations of this idea include a book marker that is only visible from above, ragged pages visible from above and behind, or something inside a book that can only be seen when the book is open.)

Point out that we don't always see the same thing because we are looking from different points of view. Further explore the idea by considering that most things in our society are geared for adults and discuss what it would be like to be a small child. Have students squat down or get on their knees to get a more realistic idea of how things would look to a small child. Discuss the feeling of size, objects at eye level, objects that obstruct a clear view, etc. Have students tell how they think a small child might describe a German shepherd, a table, the trunk of a big tree, a street, or riding in a crowded elevator.

Ask students if they have ever been in one of the following situations and if so, to briefly describe what they were able to see:

looking through a knot hole
looking through a crack in a door
looking down from an airplane
looking up from a big hole in the ground
looking through a tunnel
looking through thick brush

Assign students to various positions on the playground and have them take notes on their observations from each point of view. If possible, have students observe from several levels (the top of the slide, jungle gym, or other high equipment), from obstructed views (around a corner, behind a large tree, etc.), and from a distance (the far end of the playground). Suggest that students consider sensory impressions other than visual: what they smell, hear, and feel.

After a specified observation time, take your class back to the classroom to describe and compare what they were able to observe from the various points. To help them synthesize their experiences and the points discussed, ask them if they think it would be possible for two or more people to observe the same traffic accident and present different but honest testimony in court. If so, why?

Observing: Lesson 2 Composition VI
Teacher

THE WAY I SEE IT

PURPOSE: To recognize the existence of, and the reasons for, a personal point of view.

RESUME: Students react to statements and then try to analyze why they feel as they do about them. They try to empathize with another person and write a monologue to express his thoughts and feelings.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: Dittoed copies of Agree-Disagree Statements

Teaching considerations: This lesson assumes that students have some knowledge and understanding of lawn care problems and typical feelings about them. If you think your students will have difficulty relating to such a situation, substitute a more meaningful one, to develop the concept of personal point of view.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Pass out dittoed copies of Agree-Disagree Statements and ask students to follow the directions without talking to each other. When they are finished, share and compare their reactions and reasons. Then ask students to look at all the reasons they gave and try to decide what caused them to have these opinions and feelings. If they are unable to analyze how they formed their opinions, discuss experiences and sources of information (other people, reading, television/radio) that led to their opinions and feelings about these things.

Point out that their responses indicate their personal point of view --how they interpret things. Explain that their personal poirt of view is how they see something, how they feel about something, as a result of their experiences, interests, and information. Because people have different experiences, interests, and information they are apt to feel differently -- to have different points of view -- from someone else.

To illustrate, ask students to imagine a beautiful bright green lawn in the springtime--well-sprinkled with daisies and dandelions. Then ask them to tell what each of the following members of the family might think as he looks at the yard:

a) the sixth-grade boy (It will take me hours to dig those out; there goes my ball game!)

b) the mother (I hope he gets those weeds out before my bridge luncheon.)

c) the three year old girl (What lovely flowers! I'll pick some for Mother.)

d) the father (I wish they'd make a weed killer that worked!)

After students have discussed possible reactions to the weedy lawn, ask them to choose one of the family members and write a monologue in which the person expresses his thoughts as he looks at the lawn. How does he describe it? How does it look to him? (disgusting, beautiful, etc.) What does it remind him of? How does it make him feel? What does he want to do about it? Explain that they are to pretend they actually are that person and are to tell his thoughts as if he were talking to himself out loud. To temporarily assume that person's character, they will need to carefully consider his personal point of view and portray it consistently in their writing.

If someone in your class likes to draw cartoon characters you could make an interesting bulletin board. Have the artist make a large drawing of each member of the family and then cluster the appropriate monologues about each character. Pin a narrow strip of simulated lawn across the bottom of the bulletin board for a finishing touch.

AGREE-DISAGREE STATEMENTS

Directions: Below are five statements. If you agree with the statement write an A in the blank for agree; if you disagree with the statement write a D for disagree in the blank. Then tell briefly why you agree or disagree with the statement.

_____ 1. Fishing is fun.

Why?

_____ 2. Every boy should learn to cook and do simple sewing.

Why?

_____ 3. Travel is educational.

Why?

_____ 4. Riding a bicycle is dangerous.

Why?

_____ 5. Collecting matchbook covers is an interesting hobby.

Why?

Observing: Lesson 3 Composition VI
Teacher

CALL FOR ACTION

PURPOSE: To recognize natural action responses to sensory stimuli.

SECONDARY SKILLS: Writing a group composition.

RESUMÉ: Unknown to students, a piece of incense is burned in the classroom. Students describe their observations and give their reactions to the incident. They discuss other situations in which their observations would cause them to take action. One incident is chosen for writing a class composition.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: Two pieces of incense
Receptacle for burning incense

Teaching considerations: Keep in mind that the purpose of the incense is to provide an opportunity for observation and reaction. Although it has a rather unusual and exotic aroma, the point is not, "What is it?" but "What is it like?" and "What effect does it have on me?"

A group composition is an interesting and enjoyable way to develop a story. Less able students, in particular, may be stimulated by the exchange of ideas and may gain a better understanding of the mechanics of writing through a cooperatively developed model.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

While students are working (or are out of the room) light a piece of incense and allow its odor to permeate the room. Before long someone will become aware of it and begin calling attention to it. When everyone seems aware of it, begin a discussion using such questions as:

How would you describe it?
Have you ever smelled it before? Where?
Does it affect any of your other senses?
What does it remind you of?
How does it make you feel?

Bring out the burned incense so students can see the remains and also show them a piece that has not been burned. Light the new piece of incense and let students observe the active process of burning. Their original descriptions were probably limited to the sense of smell. Now as they observe, ask them to report other sensory perceptions (visual - smoke, flame, ash; touch - heat, watery eyes, etc.)

Point out that the perfume of incense is given off as it burns, causing the smoke, or fumes, to have a particular odor which many people enjoy. Fire, however, is not always a pleasant experience. Since early times man has both enjoyed and feared fire. Ask students to think about their own reactions when they first noticed the incense odor in the classroom. Did they feel uneasy? Did they want to look for the source of the odor? Did they think they should report it? Tell them that people often feel the urge to do something as a result of their observations. For example, ask them what they would feel like doing if they observed

an animal caught in some bushes
an automobile accident
a fire burning out of control
a boat capsize
a lost child.

Their responses to each situation will likely vary, showing a range of possible actions related to their sense of need and their recognized capabilities.

Have the students choose one situation that would make them want to do something (perhaps one of those previously discussed) and write a class composition about it. Before they begin they will need to plan the story and agree on basic details. To help them, adapt the following questions to the situation they have chosen for the story and make brief notes of their decisions on one side of the chalk board.

What were you (the story teller) doing when you first noticed it?

What caused you to notice it? How would you describe it?

What happened?

Where did it happen?

What thoughts went through your mind?

What did you do?

What were the results of your action?

Then ask the class to decide on the story teller's physical and personal point of view. How much is he able to observe? (Is it dark? Is his vision limited in any way?) How will his experiences, abilities, and interest influence his actions?

Write the story on the board as students dictate it, encouraging contributions from all students. Try to elicit vivid descriptions of the setting, actions, and feeling so the reader will be able to relate the story-teller's observations to the action.

Observing: Lesson 4 Composition VI
Teacher

WEIGHING EVIDENCE

PURPOSE: To develop a story illustrating inference from observed details.

RESUMÉ: Students are asked to explain a hypothetical observation in which a man is seen hurriedly leaving through the back door of a store. They discuss possible explanations and observable clues that would lead to each theory. Students then develop and write a story based on a possible explanation.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: None

Teaching considerations: This lesson is planned to give students an opportunity to use the concepts about point of view from previous lessons in this unit in a story situation. In addition, they will consider making inferences from observed details. To get students involved in the task and prepare them for the writing activity, you will need to pace the lesson carefully, providing stimulation and input as needed.

Study the development of the lesson below carefully and plan the class discussion to prepare students for the writing assignment. Some students may need individual help to get started or to develop their idea. Try to think of questions to stimulate their thinking as you work with them, rather than making direct suggestions to them.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Ask students to imagine observing the following situation: A man comes out the back door of a store, gets into a waiting car and drives away quickly. Then ask students to think of possible explanations for such a situation and write their ideas on the board (robbery, going home for lunch, working late at night, delivering something, etc.). Call attention to the fact that their list illustrates various ways an observed incident might be interpreted. However, if they were actually observing the scene they would be able to observe additional clues to help them explain the man's action. Choose an idea from the students' list and have them suggest clues they might observe that would lead to such a conclusion. For example, if their list includes "robbery" they might notice that the man opened the store door cautiously and looked in all directions before approaching the car, that he pulled his hat low over his eyes, that he carried a bag, etc. Follow the same procedure in thinking about clues that would lead to some of the other explanations. Encourage students to think of possible clues other than visual -- to use all their senses.

To help students narrow their thinking to a more specific setting and situation, discuss a possible location for the episode to take place. Perhaps there is a store in your neighborhood with which they are all familiar. If not, they have probably seen an appropriate scene on television. Discuss what the back door of a store looks like, what the surroundings are like, where the street or alley might lead, etc. What sounds and smells might there be? Try to produce a definite mental image through description.

Continue the discussion by focusing students' attention on the observer. Where might he be as he watched? What limitations would he have in that particular position? Would he be able to hear conversation or noises? Would he have a clear view of the street in both directions? Consider the differences between night and day observations. At night, would the street lights be bright enough to see clearly? Would there be any shadows or corner to hinder vision?

Finally, ask the students to think about the attitude of the observer. Would he approve, disapprove, or not care about what he saw happening? Might it give him a pleasant feeling? Might he be concerned for someone's safety? What action, if any, would his feelings lead to? Would he be frightened? Brave? Cowardly?

When students have had opportunity to explore various possibilities, accompanying clues, and possible reactions, ask them to work their ideas into a story. First, have them plan the story -- the man's reason for hurriedly leaving the store by way of the back door, the setting, the sequence of events and at what point they will include clues to fill the reader in on necessary details. Perhaps they will want to jot down a few notes to help them keep the story in mind.

Have students choose partners and tell their stories to each other as a trial run. Some criteria will help them evaluate the effectiveness of a story, such as:

Can you visualize the scene?

Can you imagine yourself there, seeing and feeling as the author does?

Are enough clues given to suggest the man's purpose?

Do you feel you are seeing the scene and action through one person's eyes? Is the point of view consistent?

After students have told their stories and have got feedback from their partners, have them write their stories incorporating any additional ideas they may have as well as those suggested by their partners.

KID CAPERS

PURPOSE: To recognize the experiences of young children as interesting subject matter and to develop a story based on such an experience.

SECONDARY SKILLS: Developing a story through conversation.

RESUMÉ: A bulletin board display of comic strips featuring young children is used to focus students' attention. They discuss their own early childhood experiences, choose one experience, and develop it in a comic strip story.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: Comic strips (Dennis the Menace, Peanuts, The Family Circus, etc.)
Unlined paper
Rulers

Teaching considerations: Begin collecting comic strips well in advance of teaching the lesson. Find a variety of comics that focus on young children. Display them a day or two before the lesson so students have a chance to read and discuss them in their free time.

A regular lead pencil will probably be best for making the comic strips. Encourage students to plan their pictures carefully to avoid unnecessary erasing and unattractive smudges on their papers.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Have students name and discuss various comic strips that feature young children, describing the main characters in each and the kinds of things they do. Ask students to tell why these comic strips are popular--who enjoys reading them, etc. Bring out the point that the world of young children--their imagination, limited knowledge, creative impulses, and constant activity--provides interesting and entertaining story material. When we are around young children we notice them doing silly, funny, or odd things and they frequently give a refreshing observation about the world as they see it.

Ask students to think about their own early childhood. Discuss the following questions and record the responses briefly on the board:

1. What interesting discovery do you remember making?
2. What crazy thing did you do?
3. What ideas did you have that you later discovered weren't correct?
4. Did you ever figure out an interesting explanation for something?
5. What do you remember especially liking to do?
6. What did you especially dislike?

Have students choose one childhood incident to develop into a comic strip story. Plan the story carefully. They need not limit their story to four picture-squares but may think of it as a selection in a comic book covering a page or more.

Discuss the fact that a comic strip story is carried along through pictures and conversation. Students will need to include enough background scenery to show their readers where and when the story takes place. They will need to plan the conversation to fill the reader in on necessary details and to tell the story. Have students plan the sequence they will use and how much will be in each square. Have them plan the number of squares they will need and then divide their paper neatly into squares, using rulers.

When students have completed their comic strip story, ask them to choose a good name for it. To share their stories they might remove the bulletin board display of published comic strips and put up their own "originals."

PETS TO REMEMBER

PURPOSE: To recall favorite pets and to write an intimate, interesting story about a pet the student has known.

SECONDARY SKILLS: Proofreading.

RESUME: Students discuss the various animals that are used for pets, recall characteristics of favorite pets, and write stories about them. The stories are illustrated with snapshots, magazine pictures, or original drawings and made into a book.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: Pictures of pets from magazines (optional)
Snapshots of pets (optional)

Teaching considerations: Most children have a very special feeling for animals. Although every student in your class may not currently have a pet of his own, it is likely that he has memories of one. It may be a fierce dog he had to go past in the first grade, a canary in the house next door, or a bouncy, face-licking friend on grandfather's farm. Encourage students to enjoy the fond memories of their own pets and to look for redeeming qualities in pets of others, perhaps less attractive to them personally.

Students get tired of having to copy every composition over until it is perfect. They may even ignore errors simply because they don't want to make another copy. Having them proofread before publication gives them a good reason for finding errors; and if they know that they will not have to make a laborious perfect copy when they complete the task, they may develop a more positive attitude toward correctness.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

To begin this lesson ask students, "How many different animals can you name that are used for pets?" Write the names of the animals on the board as students name them.

Then ask students to think of a pet they have been particularly fond of, either one of their own or one belonging to someone else. With this pet in mind, continue the discussion of pets, focusing on why people enjoy and choose certain animals for pets. Ask the following sequence of questions, allowing time for students to share their memories of pets:

What physical features make pets interesting and lovable? (droopy ears, baggy eyes, wagging stub of a tail, silky fur, unusual coloring, etc.)

What kind of disposition did your favorite pet have? (mild and gentle, fiery and ready to fight, loving and cuddly, etc.)

What kind of things did you and the pet do when you were together?

Was there another animal that irritated the pet? How?

Did the pet ever get into a fight with another animal? What happened?

When students have thought about and discussed their favorite pet enough to feel involved in the topic, ask them to choose one incident about the pet and write an entertaining story about it. Suggest they not only tell what happened but that they tell the reader what the pet was like--what it looked like, how it acted and why it was funny, irresistable, or lovable.

Some students may have snapshots of their pets that they would like to bring to illustrate their stories. Perhaps others could find pictures in magazines of animals resembling their pets. Some students may prefer making their own drawings of their pets.

To share stories and illustrations, students could make a book. To do this, have students carefully proofread their stories, clearly marking corrections. (It would be a good idea to agree on a simplified set of proofreading marks. Many dictionaries include a chart of proofreader's marks if you would like a reference.) To help students recognize errors, have them read their stories to another student, following the written punctuation and reading only what is written. To catch more errors, have them ask another student to read their stories and watch for omissions and needed corrections.

When stories are in best possible form, have them typed on half sheets of paper, paste in the snapshots or other illustrations, and fasten them together into a book. Make a cover and decide on an appropriate title and cover design. After students in your room have read all the stories, place the book in the school library for other classes to enjoy.

THE WORM TURNED

PURPOSE: To think of amusing self-caused predicaments and to relate the incidents orally in an entertaining way.

SECONDARY SKILLS: Preparing an oral presentation.

RESUME: Students are shown a drawing of a worm about to eat part of himself as he is in the process of devouring his prey. Following a discussion of the picture, students probe their own experiences for an amusing incident that they brought upon themselves. They plan and present the incident orally to the class.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: Illustration (may be made into an overhead projection)
Tape recorder (optional)

Teaching considerations: Probably most students will enjoy telling funny things that have happened to them. However, some children may not be able to laugh at themselves, much less share such an experience with others. Be careful that no child feels threatened by this assignment. Don't force him to reveal something painfully. It may be easier for him to tell an observed incident; he may actually tell a story about himself but present it in the third person, thus affording anonymity.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Show students the accompanying picture (the worm turning on itself) and let them interpret and describe what is happening. If they don't offer an explanation, ask them how this could happen, why might the worm think his other end was something else, etc.

Ask students if they have ever unknowingly created a strange or funny situation for themselves--have they ever been the victim of their own doing? To help them get started thinking and reminiscing, pose questions such as the following:

Have you ever dug a hole that you forgot about and later fell into?

Have you ever rigged up a booby trap for someone else that went off at an unexpected moment and got you?

Have you ever spilled jam on the floor for your mother to clean up and then slipped and fell in it?

Have you ever stuffed so many dirty socks under your bed that you ran out of clean ones and had to pull out a dirty pair to wear?

Have you ever arranged something so you would get the best deal and had it fall to someone else?

Have you ever hidden something so well that even you forgot where it was hidden?

If students seem to have difficulty thinking of something or seem reluctant to participate, suggest they might be able to think of an incident that happened to someone else. They may even make up names for the characters if they wish, "to protect the innocent."

Give students a few minutes to think through and plan how they will tell their story. Some may find it helpful to jot down a few notes. Remind them to make their story interesting by including descriptive words and vivid details.

Having everyone tell an incident may take too long for continued attentive listening. If you sense students are becoming tired, have those who haven't shared tape record their stories while the rest of the class goes on to another activity. Then these stories can be played back whenever convenient; two or three could be fitted into a time fragment just before physical education or some other scheduled activity.

Students might like to draw illustrations of their experiences and display them on the bulletin board with appropriate captions to help other students recall the story.

"I" WITNESS

PURPOSE: To probe past experiences for interesting content material about daring or dangerous things students have observed and to develop one such experience into an interesting composition.

RESUME: Students are given a situation to discuss in which a puppy is seen stranded on a small island. The discussion continues by considering similar rescue attempts they have witnessed and other exciting situations that they might be asked to relate or testify about.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: Newspaper clippings of heroism (optional)

Teaching considerations: Students are usually interested in tales of daring and courage. The beginning discussion is planned to stimulate their thinking along these lines through a problem situation. As they discuss possible solutions they will likely recall other experiences and how similar problems were solved.

Just in case some students haven't observed (or can't recall) observing an exciting or dangerous situation, you might like to have a folder handy of newspaper clippings telling of some such feats that they could look through and choose a story topic to elaborate by adding details. These, of course, should be recognized as "supposed," and a distinction should be made between actual observations and invented details.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Ask students to imagine the following situation:

> Riding along the highway in a car, you observe a half-grown puppy stranded on an island in the nearby river. The island is about 50 yards from shore and covered with dense brush. You can see the puppy nervously running back and forth along a narrow ledge of grass and small weeds. The river appears to be only about 5 to 10 feet deep but the current is swift and the water very cold. Is there any way to save the puppy? How?

Encourage students to think of as many possible rescue plans as they can. Pose questions to bring out dangers and possible problems they might encounter in attempting to carry out each suggested rescue

plan (for example, Could you steer a boat in such a strong current? Would even a strong swimmer be able to swim to the island across such a strong current? Where would the helicopter land? How would you get the puppy back to shore? What might the puppy do to his rescuer when he is so frightened? etc.).

Tell students that there are frequent heroic rescue attempts and they may have been an eyewitness to one. Sometimes people risk their lives to save someone or something. Ask them to tell of any such incidents they have observed.

Continue the discussion about exciting, dangerous, and dramatic events they have witnessed. They may tell about

an accident (swimming, boating, automobile, bicycle)

a fall

someone or something at a dangerous height

a race

someone or something stranded or caught

etc.

Continue the discussion until students seem to have an experience in mind and then ask them to write down a complete account of the event exactly as they saw it. Remind them to use vivid descriptions and to tell the action in the exact sequence in which it happened. They should also include where it happened, who or what was involved, the conditions (weather, road, etc.), what was happening just before, and the cause if it was known. Suggest that their account might be used as testimony either in court or to establish merit for a special award.

A FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE

PURPOSE: To think about frightening experiences and to develop one such experience into an interesting story.

SECONDARY SKILLS: Building suspense.

RESUMÉ: Students explore and discuss the emotion fear. They recall frightening experiences and write one experience as a story.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: List of experiences (on the chalkboard)

Teaching considerations: Although students enjoy hearing and reading frightening tales, they may be hesitant to expose their own feelings. To help them feel comfortable about admitting to being frightened, maintain a very positive attitude toward fear. Strive to create a feeling of acceptance of fear as a normal, healthy emotion and the recognition that although some fears are groundless they seem real and produce the same emotional excitement.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Begin this lesson with a positive comment about being frightened. You might say something like "Fear is one of man's basic emotions. It is something everyone experiences at one time or another. Fear is a safety device; without fear we might cause great harm to ourselves or to others. We fear an uncontrolled fire because it could burn us or our possessions. We fear a certain noise because we have learned to associate some danger with it."

Lead students in a discussion of the nature of fear, posing such questions as:

What does it mean to be frightened?

Why do we become frightened? What causes fright?

How do you feel when you are frightened? What physical reactions accompany fright?

When you are frightened what do you want most to do?

Continue with the idea that we may be afraid of something real with good cause, or we may be afraid of something that isn't really dangerous, or of something wholly imagined--something that doesn't even exist. We may be terribly frightened about something and later find out there was no reason to be afraid at all. Point out that these kinds of situations are the ones we later joke about. But at the time, fears are real and anything but funny.

Either way, real or imagined, our fears make interesting story material. Some of the highest moments of suspense in favorite stories are built around a character's fear of something or someone.

Call your students' attention to the list of things you have written on the board. (See associated meaning list below.) Ask them to read through the list slowly and try to recall associated frightening experiences. Then ask them to choose one experience to write about. Have them try to remember what caused them to become frightened, how they felt, what they did, and exactly what happened. Suggest they try to add details in such a way as to build suspense--to make the reader feel their own tension, with heart pounding louder and louder.

Some students may have difficulty getting started. Give special encouragement to these--asking questions and suggesting some common frightening situations for children. If a student seems hesitant to reveal his fears, it may be helpful to suggest incidents from early childhood. When he is trying hard to prove that he is brave and self sufficient, admitting to current fears may be threatening. Experiences one has had as a small child can be looked at more objectively.

Knowing the ability of your students, you may want to suggest that some of them dictate their stories to you or tape record them. The desire to compose may be blocked by limited interest or ability in writing.

Plan some way to share and enjoy each other's stories. Students may want to take turns reading them aloud or dramatizing them.

(associated meaning list)

being lost. . .
being locked in. . .
a close call. . .
a tight squeeze. . .
an injury. . .
a prowler. . .
a barking dog. . .
deep, swift water. . .
a loud or strange noise. . .
being in a high place. . .

Making Words Work: Composition VI
Lesson 1
Teacher

TO LIVE AGAIN

PURPOSE: To recognize that word associations contribute to feeling and mood; to use words to express enjoyment.

ADDITIONAL SKILL: Proofreading.

RESUME: Students play a word association game and then write about an enjoyable experience they have had. Attention is directed to writing to express feeling about the experience.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: None

Teaching considerations: The concept of mood is rather difficult for students this age to understand. Do not be discouraged if their compositions are not all that you hope for. Instead, consider this a lesson in awareness of mood--perhaps the first of many explorations and discoveries that will heighten their sense of mood in reading and writing.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Have students take out paper and pencil and tell them that they are going to play a word association game. They are to follow the directions given, writing the first word that comes to mind. Then read the following directions allowing only a few moments for them to write each word.

1. Write a noisy word.
2. Write a happy word.
3. Write a smooth word.
4. Write an angry word.
5. Write a light word.

Have students share the noisy words they wrote and make a composite list on the board. Then ask, "What do these words make you think of?" allowing time for students to think of specific associations the words cause them to recall, and to share the associations. Continue with, "How do they make you feel?" and discuss the mood(s) the words arouse.

Follow the same procedure for each category of words.

To summarize this discussion, point out that good writers can use word associations to create a mood. In describing something, they not only use words that will create a picture in the mind of the reader but they develop a feeling of the picture as well. We can do this too by choosing words that our readers will associate with a certain feeling.

Ask students to think of an experience they have had that they would like to relive. (Pause long enough to allow contemplation.) When students have chosen an experience have them write about it. Before they begin writing, however, talk about the need to paint a clear picture. Stress giving details that will enable the reader to see a picture in his mind and to sense the feeling of enjoyment the writer felt.

When students have finished, ask them to reread their compositions to see whether they have chosen the best words to express their feeling of enjoyment. Then have them work with a partner reading each other's compositions and discussing the words that effectively convey feeling.

Bring the class back together to share their ideas and discoveries. Discuss:

1. What kinds of things have we enjoyed?
2. What different moods were expressed? (quiet, peaceful, happy, etc.)
3. Give some examples of words that helped create a feeling of mood.

You might suggest that students watch for examples of mood in stories and poems they read.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Have students bring to class illustrations of the way mood is expressed in art and music.

Making Words Work: Composition VI
Lesson 2
Teacher

FOR THE RECORD

PURPOSE: To recognize that sound and rhythm help create mood; to use words to create tension.

ADDITIONAL SKILL: Critical thinking.

RESUMÉ: Students listen to a tape of sounds and try to record the specific sounds heard. They read and discuss poems of contrasting moods and evaluate the use of sound and rhythm to create mood. Then they write the script for an on-the-spot radio broadcast of a dramatic situation.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: Tape of sounds
Tape recorder and an extra roll of tape
Copies of "Sunning" and "Rodeo" (in A Gift of Watermelon Pickle)

Teaching considerations: This lesson is planned to help students become aware that mood is expressed not only in words but by sound and rhythm as well. This lesson can only be thought of as a beginning--a thought-provoking experience for further exploration. However, it is hoped that through this lesson students will recognize a difference in smooth-flowing language and terse, choppy utterances, that they will recognize the effect of lighter, sustained sounds (m, n, s, z, l) and heavier, staccato sounds (d, t, g, b, k) in creating mood.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Play the first part of the tape* (pleasure-producing sounds) and ask students to tell how listening to these sounds makes them feel. Keep in mind that not all students will respond to all the sounds in the same way; there is no right or wrong answer. Replay the same section of the tape, this time asking students to write an approximation of the sounds they hear. Ask them to avoid writing whole words if possible--just write the sounds (e.g., shshshshsh, hmmmmmm, sssssss, etc.) Have volunteers write their lists of sounds on the board. Look for similarities and differences among the lists. Discuss which sounds seem to produce a pleasant sensation.

Play the second part of the tape* (tension-producing sounds), followin the same procedure: discuss general feelings and reactions to the sounds, replay the tape and attempt to write down the sounds, share and compare graphic representations, and discuss which sounds seem harsh.

Read the poem "Sunning" aloud and discuss it.

1. What is the poem about?
2. What one word might be used to summarize the poem?
   Why did you choose this word?
   Find phrases that caused you to think of the word.
3. Can you find a phrase that might be found in a lullaby?
   Which one(s)?
   Why do you say this?
4. Is there a feeling of anticipation or suspense? Explain.

In summary, point out that a writer can use various techniques to create a desired response or reaction. When we talk or write we probably use some of these same techniques without being aware that we are using them. We unconsciously use words, sounds, and rhythms because they sound "right" to us.

Tell your students that you want them to use all their knowledge and skill to create a feeling of tension in today's writing assignment. They are to pretend they are "on-the-spot" reporters covering some dramatic event for a radio station. It might be a race, a fight, a rescue or some other feat of strength and endurance. Have them think of the situation they want to cover, then plan and write the script for their play-by-play broadcast.

After they have written their script, let them read it to someone else and together evaluate its effectiveness in creating a feeling of tension. This will give them an opportunity to make any changes they may wish to make before tape recording it.

As students finish, let them take turns at the tape recorder. This activity could be continued at odd moments during the day, once their script is ready.

Listening to the tapes may be done in a total group, in small groups, or as an individual activity. No doubt students will enjoy listening to each other, and their spontaneous appraisals will provide informal feedback to the reporters.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY:

Look for examples of tension in prose and poetry and analyze the techniques used by the writer. For example, look at "Cat" in Poems to Enjoy.

*Tape recorded sounds

Pleasure-producing sounds	Tension-producing sounds
soft humming	alarm clock
waves lapping on the beach	marching feet
squeaky rocking chair	wailing siren
swimming (or rowing a boat)	wind howling
melodic laugh or chuckle	dog growling and barking
airplane	urgent knocking at the door
cat purring	horn honking

Making Words Work:
Lesson 3
Teacher

Composition VI

USING CONNOTATIONS

PURPOSE: To become aware that personal feelings are expressed through word choices; that words with similar meaning convey different feelings and shades of meaning.

ADDITIONAL SKILL: Vocabulary building.

RESUME: Students are given situations and are asked to think of all the possible ways to describe each situation. Then students decide which words or phrases create the most positive feelings and which create the most negative feelings. A story worksheet is distributed. Half the students are asked to fill in the blanks using words with favorable connotations and the other half is asked to fill in the blanks using words with unfavorable connotations. Stories are shared and compared.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: Story worksheet (one copy for each student)

Teaching considerations: Most students already use words that express their positive and negative feelings about people and things, but for the most part they do it unconsciously. The purpose of this lesson is to help students think of the many choices of words to use in describing and the connotations associated with the various word choices. It is hoped that students will become more selective in their choice of words, consciously considering the effect they wish to give.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Choose several of the situations suggested below (or make up others of your own) and, considering one at a time, ask students to think of all the possible ways to describe each situation. Do not rush. Give students time to really think about each situation and ask them questions as needed to help them think of other possibilities. Write the words and phrases they suggest on the board to describe each situation.

1. a day when the temperature is high
   (scorching, hot, sweltering, miserable, a day of sunburn, a good day for swimming, etc.)

2. a day when the temperature is low
   (cold, chilly, miserable, invigorating, pulse stirring, etc.)

3. a big city
   (impersonal, crowded, bustling, smoggy, place of crime, exciting, etc.)

4. an uninhabited area
(lonely, serene, peaceful, deserted, forsaken, land of opportunity, etc.)

5. a mountainous area
(awe-inspiring, rugged, steep, challenging, impassable, etc.)

6. someone who wants to do things his way
(uncooperative, independent, stubborn, opinionated, pig-headed, self-centered, selfish, etc.)

7. someone who isn't very ambitious
(lazy, a slow starter, inactive, cautious about getting involved, preoccupied, etc.)

8. someone who talks a lot
(chatty, chatterbox, windy, talkative, a good conversationalist, rattle-brained, contributes much to a conversation, etc.)

9. someone who frequently gets in fights
(bully, aggressive, touchy, hot-headed, spirited, sticks up for his rights, etc.)

10. something a person has made
(hand made, home made, hand crafted, crude, unique, original, etc.)

Go through each list, asking students to decide which words or phrases have a favorable connotation (give a favorable impression) and mark those with a plus. Look through the lists again looking for words and phrases that have unfavorable connotations (give an unfavorable impression) and mark them with a minus. Point out that when we speak or write we tell how we feel about something through our choice of words. By our choice of words we can create a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward something or someone in the minds of our audience. Advertisers deliberately do this by wording their ads to give people a favorable impression of their product and create a desire for it.

Pass out the story worksheets and have the class read the whole story through silently to get the idea of the story. Then assign half the class to fill in the blanks with words or phrases that will make the person in the story a charming, delightful storybook character. Have the other half of the class make the person seem unloved and ugly.

When students have finished, ask for volunteers to read their versions of the story and compare the differences in impressions of the main character that result from different word choices.

Making Words Work:
Lesson 3
Supplementary Material

Composition VI

Not far from the village in a _____ house there lived a young _____ named _____. Every morning she would _____ out of bed, _____ dress herself, comb her _____ _____ hair and then _____ to the nearby stream to wash her _____ face and brush her _____ teeth.

The animals of the forest all knew her. She would sing and call out to them, holding out her _____ hand to offer them _____ things to eat she had gathered. When the animals heard her _____ voice they would _____ and run to _____. Walking _____-ly and _____-ly, she would go through the forest calling and singing in her _____ voice to the animals and wearing a _____ look on her _____ face. Her footsteps were as _____ as _____, and her singing was like the sound of a _____. Even the birds _____ when they heard her. All the creatures of the forest felt _____ when she went back to the village.

Making Words Work: Composition VI
Lesson 4
Teacher

A CAMP AND YOU

PURPOSE: To recognize that people may have different feelings about the same situation; to express feelings from a specific point of view.

SECONDARY SKILL: To role play.

RESUMÉ: Students are given a situation and are asked to assume a role related to that situation and to perform a specific writing task. Efforts are shared and evaluated.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Materials: None

Teaching considerations: In this lesson students have an opportunity to express and compare a variety of feelings related to a single situation. To do this assignment students will need to use imagination and empathy in interpreting the reactions of various people to a given situation. Some students may be able to do this rather easily; others may need some help. If students have difficulty getting started or their work shows lack of understanding, work with them individually or in small groups, talking about the role they are asked to assume and possible reactions.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Explain to the students that they are going to role play a number of different people today. Say that you are going to read them a description of a setting and that the setting will be very important to each of their roles. They should listen carefully to get the facts and try to imagine the place.

The Situation

Camp Crystal is a primitive forest camp on the shores of Crystal Lake. The camp is 58 miles east of Highway 91 and approximately 250 miles from Landport, the nearest town. Because of heavy undergrowth, camp sites are very secluded. Wild life is abundant and fishing is good. There is no electricity, and water is available from a small spring about a half mile higher up the mountain.

Then divide students into five groups and give each group one of the following assignments to complete individually:

1. You are an advertising agent and are trying to lure more people to Camp Crystal. Write a TV commercial that will make people want to spend their vacation at Camp Crystal.

2. You are the camp manager. You wonder how so many problems can develop all at once. Complaints from campers all day long, and then that horrible noise last night! Write a letter to your boss explaining how difficult this job is. Try to make him feel your frustration.

3. You are Father and this vacation is the most fun you've had for a long time. Write a note to your friends who work where you do telling them about something funny that happened the other day. Tell it in an entertaining way so they will get a chuckle out of it too.

4. You are Mother and you find this kind of vacation full of hard work and mosquitoes. You have to carry all the water for cooking and washing, cook all the meals over an open fire and try to keep things clean. Animals have carried off part of your dwindling food supply. You are writing a letter to your sister. Let her know what troubles you are having, but tell about them in an amusing way so she will think them funny.

5. You are a twelve year old boy or girl enjoying a vacation at Camp Crystal. All day long you and your dad hike, fish, swim, or just laze around. Write a letter to your friend at home telling about your wonderful vacation. Try to make him wish he were here too.

When students have finished, let them share their work by groups. Read their assignment first and then share what they have written. Evaluate whether students achieved their purposes.

Causes and Effects: Lesson 1 Composition VI
Teacher

LIGHTNING IS. . . . .

PURPOSE: To discuss different kinds of causes.

SECONDARY SKILL: Classifying.

RESUME: Students listen to different cultures' explanations of lightning, suggest reasons a small child might invent, discuss moderns' ideas of what lightning is, classify the kinds of causes discussed, and then write an explanation for another familiar natural phenomenon, using one kind of reasoning.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Teaching considerations: When you choose to organize your thinking according to causes and effects, there are many things to consider. First, you can proceed either way: from causes to effects or from effects to causes. If you state an effect first and then look for its causes, you will be delving into the past. For example, if you say that our society is going through a troubled period and you wonder why this is so, you search in the past for causes. If you state a cause first and look for the possible effects, you will be trying to look into the future. For example, what will be the effects of baking a cake too long?

Second, there is usually more than one cause of an event or more than one probable effect, given a situation.

Third, when a person thinks in terms of causes and effects he needs to be careful to select only those causes or effects relevant to his purposes. He also needs to be alert to subtle causes and effects not readily apparent and to beware of apparent causes and effects that are either not real (for example, event two happens right after event one, and may appear to be an effect of event one but may not be) or not important for his purposes.

When selecting causes it is important to choose those close to the event. For example, you wouldn't cite the ultimate evolution of man from the lower animals as a direct cause of World War II.

Cause-effect thinking tries to establish and make a convincing case for the relationship between causes and effects.

Your students will need careful guidance in their thinking at first. But by keeping the above ideas in mind, it should be possible to help develop the conscious use of this kind of thinking in fifth and sixth graders.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Explain to your students that man has always been curious about why things are the way they are, and why things happen the way they do. Little children are bursting with "why" questions (why is the sky blue, why is grass green, why does water come out of a faucet when you turn it on?). Scientists perform experiment after experiment to find out why things are the way they are.

Tell your students that primitive cultures also asked and still ask why. Why lightning occurs has had a number of explanations. Give your students the following examples of reasons various peoples have given for lightning, and as you talk write a brief statement of the reason on the board.

(1) The Indians of Peru believed that lightning was a god who causes rain.
(2) Another culture believed that lightning was a flashing bird.
(3) Another culture believed that the great sky-god, whose voice was the booming thunder, loved oak trees and that he descended from a cloud into the oak trees in a flash of lightning.
(4) The ancient Greeks believed that the chief of the gods, Zeus, hurled thunder bolts (lightning) as weapons down to Earth when he was angry.

Give students an opportunity to share explanations of lightning that they have heard or read about. Then ask them what explanations or reason a small child might think of to explain lightning. A short discussion of the imaginative nature of small children might help get students thinking along imaginative rather than scientific lines. Add each of their possible explanations to the list on the board.

Next ask students how <u>they</u> would explain lightning. (The dictionary says lightning is "the flashing of light produced by a discharge of atmospheric electricity from one cloud to another or from a cloud to the earth; <u>also:</u> the discharge itself." Continue to add their explanations to the list on the board.

Direct students' attention to the list. Have them think of ways to group the various explanations and decide on a classification for each grouping. Ask, "Which of the explanations go together? What could this group be called?" They will likely come up with categories such as:

(1) magical or mythological
(2) fantasy-like
(3) scientific or factual

Ask students to think about the various ways of explaining another familiar, natural occurrence, the surge in plant growth in the springtime. For example, why does a flower push its head through the ground when snow may have barely melted? Why do fir trees send forth new shoots of lighter green in the spring? Why does the grass grow so fast in the spring that you must mow your lawn nearly every week?

Have students choose one aspect of plant growth in the spring--a flower, grass, a tree--and one kind of explanation from the classifications on the board. (For example, a thoughtful sort might try to give a scientific explanation of why grass that has been dormant all winter suddenly begins to grow. Some more imaginative children may work out a fantastic explanation that links worm movement underground with the appearance of flowers; etc.)

To share their work, students might like to edit their stories, recopy them neatly, and fasten them together to make a WHY? book.

CAN YOU CONVINCE ?

PURPOSE: To explore how to make a causal relationship convincing.

SECONDARY SKILL: Group work.

RESUMÉ: Students take a superstition quiz, discuss the fallacy of this kind of thinking, and explore possible real causes for a given situation.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: Dittoed copies of Superstition Quiz (one for each child; see Supplementary Material)

Teaching considerations: Not all students will be familiar with each of the superstitions included in the quiz and some quiz items may have multiple correct answers. The important thing is to recognize that this kind of explanation for phenomena is inadequate. People are not convinced that something is a cause unless they can see a relationship. The basic purpose of this lesson, then, is to make students aware of the need to show how one thing or event relates to another in cause and effect thinking.

When you have later discussions about stories the class had read or problems that have arisen in school, you might take the opportunity to review cause and effect thinking--why did a particular character do something, or what effect did a particular event have, etc.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Pass out the superstition quiz and tell students that this is an exercise to test their knowledge of superstitions. It is just for fun but they should try to get as many right as they can without talking to anyone else. When students have finished discuss the answers, letting students check their own papers. Ask students if they think the real reasons why the situations existed were accounted for by the superstition. Why or why not?

Remind students of the various explanations for lightning that were discussed in the last lesson and point out that superstitions evolved through man's efforts to explain the cause of something he didn't understand. When two things happened coincidentally, he tended to relate them in terms of cause and effect.

Choose one of the situations from the superstition quiz (the most likely ones are marked with an *) and divide students into groups of two or three to explore possible real causes. Ask each group to write down every possible cause they can think of that might explain why Dick didn't want breakfast (or why the Tigers won, or why Martin's guppy died).

When students seem to be slowing down a bit, urge them on by asking them to try to think of less obvious reasons. After a total of five minutes or so, let students share their lists with the class. Evaluate which ones could be a cause of the situation, and allow students to discuss why they think a given cause might or might not contribute to the situation. Continue the discussion with:

> Do you think there is just one cause? Why or why not?
> Does one explanation seem more likely than another? If so, which one(s)?
> Would you say that the cause is obvious? Why or why not?

To summarize, point out that the cause and effect relationship expressed in superstitions isn't convincing because we can't see a necessary relationship between the two events. Then ask students how we can explain why something happened but do it in a way that will really be convincing. List their general replies on the board. Hopefully the list will include the ideas of giving multiple causes and relevant ones.

Causes and Effects: Lesson 2 Composition VI
Teacher

SUPERSTITION QUIZ

1. On the way to school Jack stepped on a nail. He knew at once that it was because he had walked under (a ladder).

2. Mother put the ingredients for her cake into the mixer bowl and turned on the mixer. Nothing happened; the mixer wouldn't start. "I might have known," she said. "Next time I'll be sure to throw some (salt) over my left shoulder when I spill it."

*3. Dick clomped down the stairs, his hair tousled and a scowl on his face. "I don't want any breakfast," he muttered as he came into the kitchen. "It looks like you got up (on the wrong side of the bed)," said his father.

4. "Well," said Jane as she surveyed the empty dishes on the table, "we cleaned up all the food, so (tomorrow should be a good day)."

5. As Helen tried to remove the ink stain from her skirt, she sighed knowing that she could expect such problems for seven years to come. "If only I hadn't broken that (mirror)," she thought.

6. Aunt Martha couldn't understand why her unannounced visit failed to surprise the Carter family. "It's simple," said Mother, "When I dropped (a piece of silverware) this morning, I told the family that company was coming." (Dropping a knife is supposed to indicate a man, a fork a woman, and a spoon a child. The direction the piece points is the direction from which they will come.)

7. Tom knew why he'd run his bicycle over that tack and got a flat tire. He wished the people down the street would keep their (black cat) in the house so it wouldn't cross his path again.

*8. The scoreboard showed a 20 point lead for the Tigers as the final horn sounded. "I knew they'd win," confided Marsha. "I (crossed my fingers) to bring them good luck."

9. As Linda retraced her steps searching for her lost purse, she kept thinking, "Why did I have to open Jill's new (umbrella) in the house this morning!"

*10. Martin couldn't understand why his guppy had died. Only yesterday he had remarked to Bill that he had never lost a guppy and he had even (knocked on wood) to keep his luck from changing.

IF SUMMER, THEN SWIMMIN'

PURPOSE: To predict possible effects, given a particular cause.

SECONDARY SKILLS: Group work.

RESUME: Students consider differences between thinking about causes and thinking about effects; think of likely effects of a given cause; thinking up causes in groups; and playing a game in which two teams are given causes (or think up their own causes) and think of likely effects.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: None

Teaching considerations: Make sure the effects offered by each team are reasonable ones. If not, ask questions to get the class to see why they aren't reasonable.

In later classroom discussions of current events, you might ask students to predict likely effects of such news items as watching the newest TV shows, latest election results, latest developments in foreign policy or urban unrest or medicine,. etc.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Remind students of what they have been considering in the two previous lessons of this unit: causes. Tell the students they are going to be thinking about effects today. Ask students such questions as:

1. What would happen if a fire started in the school? (Wait for a number of suggestions.)

2. What would happen if all the people on earth lost their voices? (List the students' ideas.)

Divide the class into three teams. Ask each team to think up five or six "What would happen if . . ." questions and write them down on a sheet of paper, keeping them secret from the other two teams, or give each team two or three of the following questions:

1. What would happen if everyone could be as large or small as he wanted to be?

2. What would happen if dogs could talk?

3. What would happen if everything in the world turned yellow?

4. What would happen if all car tires suddenly went flat?

5. What would happen if all grocery stores closed up?

6. What would happen if trees could walk?

7. What would happen if all traffic lights stopped working?

8. What would happen if people could jump as high as they wanted to?

9. What would happen if the oceans suddenly dried up?

10. What would happen if one strange day everyone in the world found himself ten years younger?

Then ask Team 1 to read off its first question. The other two teams will have three minutes (or whatever time you decide on) to write down as many reasonable and probable effects or answers as they can At the end of the time, a captain for each team reads off the answers. Team 1 will decide whether or not each effect is a logical and probable one, given the event. You will probably want to ask questions to guide their thinking. For each acceptable answer, a team receives one point.

Team 2 then reads its first situation, Teams 1 and 3 responding. Repeat the process until interest and/or time runs out. You may want to play this game at later times in the year, if the students take to it.

RIP VAN SKELETON

PURPOSE: To use cause-effect thinking in writing a story.

SECONDARY SKILLS: Filling in an outline; synthesizing parts into a whole.

RESUME: Students fill in details of a story skeleton. They flesh out the details, incorporate the details into stories, share stories with classmates.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: Dittoes of Story Skeleton

Teaching Considerations: Be sure to proceed slowly, step by step. Whenever necessary, give examples of the kind of responses expected from students.

If students find it difficult to incorporate all their ideas into the final story, suggest that they leave out the hard ones.

Throughout the year help students look at possible causes of classroom and playground incidents. (Why did the fight break out?) Also ask them to think about possible effects of things they either intend to do or would like to do. (What might happen if you go to your friend's house without asking permission?)

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Tell your students that today they will be presented with a skeleton. It will be their job to help identify the parts, then to add the flesh to the skeleton.

Give students copies of the Story Skeleton and as you go over it with them, ask them to follow these directions:

1. MAIN CHARACTER: Write one of these: man, woman, boy, girl, or animal. Name it.

2. SETTING:
   Place - Write city, town, or country.
   Time - Write past, present, or future.

3. CHARACTER'S SITUATION:
   - Family - List members of character's family and their ages.
   - Responsibilities - List what character has to do (go to school, job, or chores).
   - Recreation - List what character does for fun.
   - Wishes - List character's wishes (what he wants to be, what he wishes would happen to him, what he wants to have that he doesn't have.)

4. CHARACTER LEAVES:
   - Why - List reasons for his leaving (suggest a spell might be cast upon him while he is on a walk, or something unpleasant happens that he wants to get away from, or he is an astronaut and goes off in a space ship).
   - How - Tell how he leaves (magically removed, walks or drives, flies in spaceship, etc.).

5. CHARACTER RETURNS AND FINDS CHANGES:
   - Length of time away - Write how long he has been gone (choose a long enough period of time to be able to see great change).
   - Changes - List the changes that have taken place.
   - Causes of the changes - Explain why each change has taken place.

6. EFFECTS OF CHANGE ON CHARACTER:
   - Tell how character reacts to each change—what he thinks or does.

Once they have filled in the skeletal details, ask students to further flesh out the skeleton by taking a sheet of their own paper and developing the main character. (You may want to have this be one short lesson in itself.)

1. Appearance

2. Personality

Then ask them to describe in detail the time and place in which the character lives . Suggest they think about the kinds of buildings, the landscape, and the kinds of activities going on. (This can also be a separate lesson.)

As a final step to fleshing out the skeleton, ask students to write a short paper describing a typical day in the life of the character's family. While they write about this day, suggest that students plant clues as to why the character will be leaving. Example: talk of a trip he is planning to take, unhappy circumstances that would cause the character to want to

leave, the character's wishes as he does his job or jobs. (You will probably want to break the lesson at this point.)

Make sure students keep their skeletons and all writing up to this point.

Now that their skeleton is fleshed out, they are ready to take the final step and write a story.

You might want to turn them loose to incorporate the various parts of the skeleton as they see fit. Or you might want to specify the structure somewhat as follows:

Step One: The main character, for some reason, walks around in the place he lives, looking and thinking.

Step Two: The main character comes home, talks with his family, and prepares to leave.

Step Three: The main character leaves. A long time passes, and he returns.

Step Four: Character walks around and sees how place has changed; character discovers that family has changed; character reacts to all the changes.

Step Five: Character does something to end the story.

Once students have revised and recopied their stories, ask them to share stories in small groups, each group selecting an especially interesting one to share with the whole class.

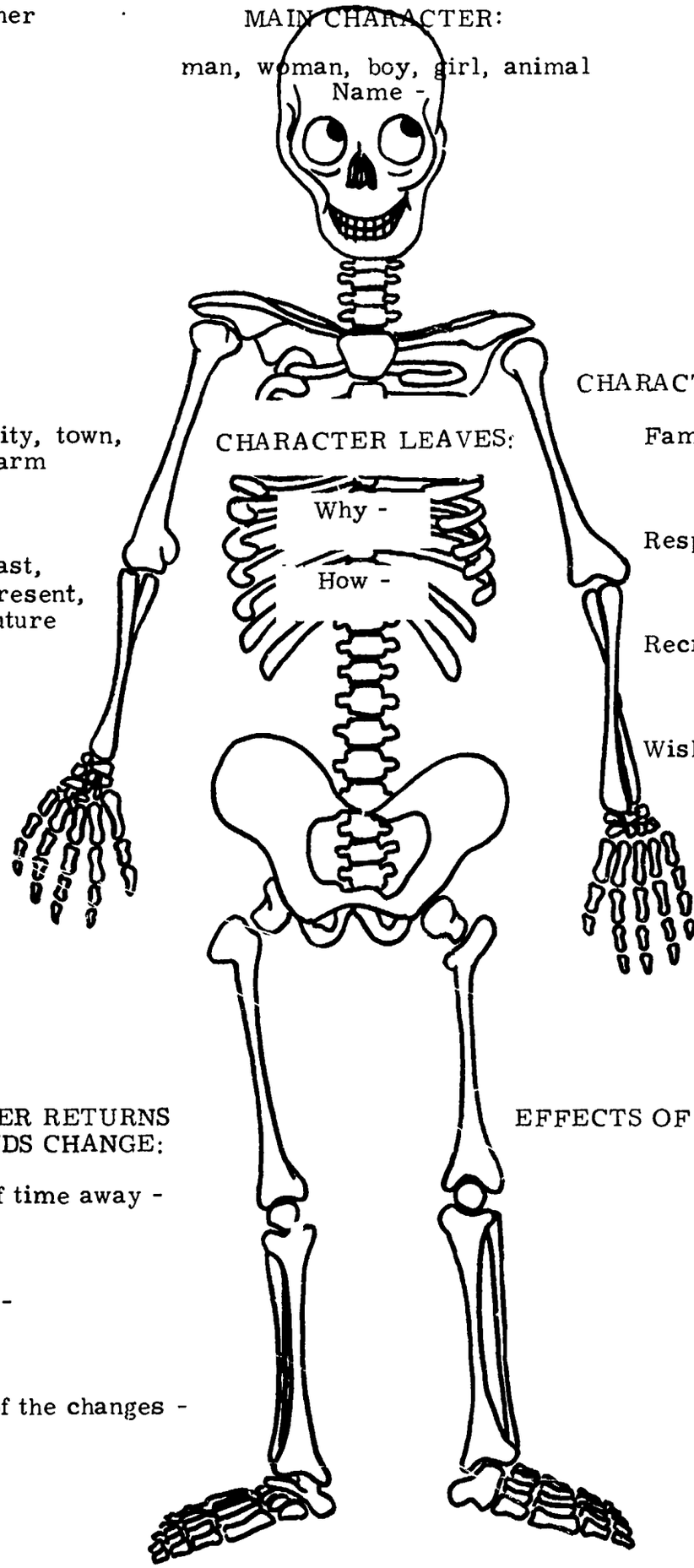
Or you could bind all the stories into a class book that students could look at in their spare time.

STORY SKELETON

MAIN CHARACTER:

man, woman, boy, girl, animal

Name -



SETTING:

Place - city, town, farm

Time - past, present, future

CHARACTER LEAVES:

Why -

How -

CHARACTER'S SITUATION:

Family -

Responsibilities -

Recreation -

Wishes -

CHARACTER RETURNS AND FINDS CHANGE:

Length of time away -

Changes -

Causes of the changes -

EFFECTS OF CHANGE ON CHARACTER:

I CAN FLY!

PURPOSE: To imagine oneself as something else and to describe it.

SECONDARY SKILLS: Trying on a new point of view; creating vivid description.

RESUMÉ: Through class discussion of selected questions, students begin to discover what it would be like to be some kind of bird. Students choose what they will look like and either draw or describe themselves. They share their new appearances with their classmates.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: coloring materials (colored chalk, crayons, paints, etc.) (optional)
paper for drawing (optional)

Teaching considerations: The discussion should be exciting if your questions allow students to further imagine themselves as this new creature, and if you pick up and show appreciation for interesting remarks of students.

Some students may want to be imaginary birds, which would be fine. Some may want to be strange birds like kiwis. Encourage students to be any rare bird they manage to dream up. If some have trouble, they might thumb through bird books.

TEACHING THE LESSON: Ask students to imagine themselves in the following situation:

One morning before anyone else in their family is awake, they open their eyes and realize that they have turned into a bird.

Ask students to think about and discuss any or all of the following questions. Perhaps they will think of additional points to discuss.

1. In what position would they be?
2. What would the bed feel like?
3. What would the bed look like to them now?
4. What would other things in the room look like?
5. What would happen if they couldn't believe their eyes and tried to rub them?

6. What is the next thing they would do?

7. What would they feel like after they realized this was no dream, that this was true - they really were a bird?

8. What would they do in order to fly? How would it feel?

9. If they flew over and looked at themselves in the mirror, what would they see? (Discuss different possibilities here.)

When you feel your students have succeeded in imagining that they are birds, ask them to draw a picture of what they look like as they view themselves in the mirror. Or if you prefer, ask them to describe their appearance in writing. When they have finished you might want them to show their pictures or read their descriptions to each other.

FEATHERY FROLIC

PURPOSE: To imagine being something else and to develop an experience as if the student is that thing.

SECONDARY SKILLS: Developing a new point of view; writing narrative.

RESUMÉ: Students discuss implications of being a bird, suggest possible bird experiences and problems, and pick one of these to develop into a TV show "script."

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: descriptions from Lesson 1
paper
pencil

Teaching considerations: You will need to focus students' attention back on being a bird and discuss the consequences of becoming one.

Perhaps a discussion of how TV shows use both pictures and words and how a written TV show would use word-pictures in place of actual pictures would be helpful.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Ask students to look over their descriptions from the previous lesson. Remind them that, for the moment at least, they are these birds, looking at themselves in the mirror.

Ask students what they would do if they knew that they were to remain in this form for 24 hours and no longer. Tell them that they could still think as humans do, but that they could not speak or write.

The following questions might be helpful to get them going:

1. How do you feel about this 24 hour situation you are in?
2. How did you get to be a bird? What could have happened to cause the change?
3. Usually an animal is hungry when he wakes up. You feel hungry now. What will you do about easing your hunger?
4. These next 24 hours are bound to be full of unexpected happenings. What crazy things could happen? (List the students' ideas on the board.)
5. What problems could come up? (List these also.)

Ask students to pretend they are film makers. They want to pick one happening or problem and develop it into a movie. Have them write the episode in script form. Remind them that plays have each character's speech written out. Directions and explanations are given in parentheses.

Once they have proofread, revised, and recopied their episodes, ask students to share them with their classmates. Ask classmates to close their eyes and picture each episode as it is read to them.

Discuss the especially vivid parts of each student's episode.

Using Imagination: Lesson 3 Composition VI
Teacher

WHAT WILL I BE?

PURPOSE: To consider and choose another form to turn into for one hour, and to develop the characteristics of that form.

RESUMÉ: Students discuss advantages and disadvantages of being a bird, and then consider what other form they would be if they could choose. They list the appearance, abilities, limitations, and likely activities of such a form.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: none

Teaching considerations: You might want to set some limitations on forms students can pick: not human, must be animate. You may want to extend or shrink the one hour. You may want to reword, add, or subtract questions.

TEACHING THE LESSON: Tell the students that their 24 hours of being a bird has ended and (twang!) they are humans again. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being a bird that they discovered.

Now tell them that, in a very few minutes, they will be given a wonderful, once-in-a-lifetime power: to become any form they choose, but for only an hour this time.

Suggest that such an important decision needs some thinking over. Discuss, for example:

1. Would it be better to be larger or smaller? Why?

2. What advantages would they like to have? Are there any disadvantages that would have to come along with these advantages?

3. How could they make the most of that hour?

You and the students will probably think of other questions as the discussion progresses.

Ask each student to choose what his form will be and to list the details of his appearance, his abilities, his limitations, and his ideas of what to do during the hour.

After the students are done, ask them to either tell about what they look like and what they can and can't do, or ask them to act out the form they are, along with some of their capabilities and limitations.

ME ON A SPREE

PURPOSE: To develop an episode from the point of view of a chosen form.

RESUMÉ: Students choose at least one item from their list the day before and write a story about it. They share these stories with their classmates.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: lists from the previous lesson

Teaching considerations: You may want to circulate among students as they write, asking them questions about how they would feel or move (because of their new form) as they spin out their stories. To aid you in asking such questions, have each student write what he has decided to be at the top of his paper in big letters.

TEACHING THE LESSON: Ask students to remember the form they chose and possible things they might do which they thought of in the previous lesson. Ask them to pick at least one of these possibilities and write a vivid account of what happens, including what it feels like because of their new form.

To get them going, you can suggest that when they hear a signal (bell, boom, twang, anything) they will begin gradually to change into their chosen form. Give the signal and ask a few students to describe what changes they notice taking place. (Example—my body is lengthening; I'm growing scales; my nose is getting longer.) Then direct them to write about their experience—how it feels to be something else and what happens.

When students have completed their stories, ask them to reread them, making needed revisions (suggest the possibility of making them more vivid). Then have students recopy their stories neatly and practice reading them before presenting them to the class.

After the class hears each adventure, ask for constructive comments about vivid details and thoughtfully developed points of view.

I REMEMBER

PURPOSE: To consider ways to find out about the interests of a younger audience; to use memories as one way.

ADDITIONAL SKILLS: Discussing, recalling.

RESUME: Students gather and discuss data about the interests of second graders.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON

Materials: Questionnaires (optional)

Teaching considerations: In this unit the students are asked to use their imaginations with a specific audience other than their peer group in mind. The students will probably like doing something for other children, especially younger ones. Hopefully this unit will end with the students feeling both proud of their imaginative capabilities, and pleased to be of service to someone else through the use of these capabilities.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

To help students develop ideas of second graders' interests, discuss the following questions:

1. When you write a story or tell a joke, is it easier to capture the interest of your classmates or that of adults? Why?

2. Do you think you could interest younger children in a joke or a story? How?

3. Suppose you were going to write a story for a second grader. What would be an important thing to consider first? (Second graders' interests.)

4. Think of ways to find out about second graders' interests. What experiences have you had with second graders? How could you find out what they think about and what they like to do?

List students' suggestions on the board, guiding their thinking toward the following ideas:

1. Remember when we were second graders.
2. Observe second graders on the playground.
3. Interview second graders.

The students may come up with other suggestions you will want to make use of.

Once the list of ways to gather information has been made, focus on this idea: remember when we were second graders. Ask students to write answers to the following questions:

1. What were your favorite toys?
2. What did you do for fun?
3. What kinds of objects did you like?
4. What things frightened you?
5. What were your favorite stories and TV shows? (You might analyze the content of these in a class discussion: types of reality, types of characters, types of actions, types of settings.)

It might be a good idea to write the above questions on the board, or make a ditto copy for each student. When students are finished, discuss their responses and make a class list, starring things that are common to many of your students.

Make sure the starred items are written on a permanent chart for the students to refer to when they begin to write their stories in a later lesson.

A PLAYGROUND PEEK

PURPOSE: To observe the appearance and actions of younger children; to record and discuss those observations.

ADDITIONAL SKILLS: Observing, taking notes.

RESUMÉ: Students gather more data about the interests of second graders by observing them on the playground, and discuss their findings.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON

Materials: Questionnaires (optional).

Teaching considerations: Guidance in the techniques of observation may or may not be necessary depending upon the past experiences of your students. If necessary, run through a sample situation where students as a class comment upon the actions of some individual child engaged in some activity. You could take notes on the board, showing students that you put down only key words that will later jog your memory.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Going back to the initial list the students made, point out that another way to learn about the interests of second graders is to observe them during their free time, for example during recess. In that way, you can find out what they like to do. Use the following list to begin the discussion:

1. What do the second graders do during recess?
   a. What games do they play?
   b. How many children play together in a group?
   c. How do they interact with one another?
2. What kinds of clothing do they wear?
3. What do they talk about?

Plan a time and procedure for observing second graders on the playground. You might have the previous questions dittoed to help your students take notes and organize information. After the observation, have students compare and discuss their data. Make a composite list of students' findings on the board as they report them.

Again make sure the final list is available so that your students can look at it later when they begin to compose their stories.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE?

PURPOSE: To find out about the interests of second graders through interviewing.

ADDITIONAL SKILLS: Formulating questions, taking notes.

RESUMÉ: Students formulate a set of questions to use in interviewing second graders and then carry out an interview.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: Questionnaires (optional).
Tape recorder (optional).

Teaching considerations: Going back to the list in the first lesson, point out to your students that another way they can find out about second graders is to interview them. Mention that this will give your students a chance to get answers to specific questions they have in mind.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

The following is a suggested list that you can modify or use as you like. You might instead prefer to have your students formulate their own list of questions. In either case, make sure your students have a list for their use during the interviews.

1. Would you rather read a story about older people, or children, or babies, or animals, or objects that can talk, or machines that talk, or talking plants?

2. What kinds of animals do you like?

3. What colors (or smells, flavors, foods) do you especially like?

4. What are some places you have been to that were exciting or fun? What did the place look like? What did you like best there?

5. What make-believe places would you go to if you had a magic way of getting there? Why would you go there?

6. What are some funny things that have happened to you, or that you have read about, or that you have seen on TV? What exciting things?

In preparation for the actual interview you will probably want to discuss ways your students can keep the children's replies in mind. Perhaps the easiest way would be to jot down some notes to remind them of what the children said. A role-playing session, with one of your students (or you) as the interviewer and one as a second grader, would be helpful before the actual interviewing is done. The interview may also be tape recorded. Each student could interview an assigned second grader, or a small group could interview a second grade class.

The interviewing may take another full period. If the students are not assigned to specific second graders, and probably even if they are, make sure a discussion follows the interview. Allow time for evaluating the interviewing process itself, and of course time to share some of the responses your students collected.

If each student has interviewed the second grader he will write a story for, there is little need to make a class list of the data gathered during the interviews. If each student will be writing a story for the whole second grade, a class list would probably be helpful.

ONCE UPON A TIME...

PURPOSE: To write and illustrate a story for second graders, taking the second graders' interests into account.

ADDITIONAL SKILLS: Using imagination, pre-planning.

RESUMÉ: Students write, revise, and illustrate a story, then practice presenting it.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: drawing paper
paper for making books
paper for book cover and fasteners
art supplies for illustrations
lists of data that have been collected

Teaching considerations: You may want to split this lesson into a number of smaller ones, perhaps as many as five: listing the important characteristics of the major character and of the setting; creating a class example; answering the three questions and making a first copy; revising the first copy; making the final copy with illustrations.

There are many ways to go about writing a story. This is just one of them, and may not appeal to some of your students. However, it will be good training for a number of them and will arm them with a new method of writing. Suggest that all your students give it a try, and those that find it helpful can make further use of this technique in later stories.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Briefly review the data students have collected about the interests of second graders and make sure the information is displayed so they can refer to it as needed.

Suggest that students first think up a character that a second grader would like and make a list of the important characteristics of that character; then make a list of the important elements of the setting.

Next ask your students to answer these three questions either in their minds or on paper before they begin to write their stories:

1. What funny or exciting fix will your character get into?

2. What will happen to make your character even worse off?

3. How will your character finally manage to get out of the fix?

You will probably want to create a class character, setting, problem, and solution as a class, before individual students set out to answer these questions and to write their own stories.

When they have made the first copies of their stories, have students read stories to a classmate, asking the classmate for suggestions that might make the stories clearer and funnier or more exciting. Suggest that students then use their own ideas to make some improvements too. You might want to precede the final copying with a discussion in which you plan the format of the story books: pictures, amount of writing on one page, neatness, and writing form (manuscript).

Students will want to practice reading their stories with expression. Perhaps they will want to share their stories with their own class as a whole or in groups before presenting them to second graders.

HERE IT IS; YOU LIKE IT?

PURPOSE: To present stories to second graders and to gather feedback from the second graders.

ADDITIONAL SKILLS: Reading expressively, interviewing, taking notes, discussing.

RESUMÉ: Students present their finished stories, complete with pictures, to second graders and ask them questions about how they liked the stories. Then students discuss reactions of second graders.

PREPARATION FOR THE LESSON:

Materials: finished stories
list of questions

Teaching considerations; In this lesson the students will get a chance to be rewarded by their audience for the work they have put forth. It can be a very worthwhile part of the unit, and can encourage students to want to write other things for other purposes. Hopefully the class will realize the value of writing for a specific purpose and will have other chances to develop writing projects based on different purposes that are meaningful to the students.

TEACHING THE LESSON:

Before your students present their stories to the second graders, suggest that, since they have put so much work into them, they might want to find out how the second graders like their stories. Following is a list of questions they can use to find this out, but you probably will want to have students formulate their own questions.

1. Did you like the main character? Why or why not?
2. Did you think the main character was funny? If so, what was funny about him?
3. Did you think what happened was funny? What was the funniest part?
4. Can you think of other things the character could do in other stories that might be funny? (Students could write another story based on second graders' responses to this, if they are still eager to write.)
5. What did you like about the pictures?

Suggest that your students present the second graders with these books to keep.

Your students will probably want to jot down some key words in the second graders' responses to their questions. After the presentation and the questioning, make sure your students have a chance to discuss how their stories were received.

ADDITIONAL LESSONS FOR

COMPOSITION VI

USING CONNOTATIONS

OBJECTIVES:

This activity is planned to help students

become aware that words with similar meaning can convey different feelings and shades of meaning;

become aware that personal feelings are expressed through word choices;

build a vocabulary for expressing exact meanings.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Supplementary material, pages 1 and 2

Pass out the supplementary material, page 1, and ask students to see how many different ways they can think of to describe each situation. Suggest that they not spend too long on one situation, but instead that they work through the entire list and then come back to particular ones as they have time. Possible responses are given here in parentheses.

a day when the temperature is high
(scorching, hot, sweltering, nice and warm, summery, etc.)

a day when the temperature is low
(cold, chilly, freezing, invigorating, nippy, etc.)

a big city
(crowded, bustling, smoggy, dangerous, exciting, etc.)

an uninhabited area
(lonely, calm, peaceful, deserted, forsaken, etc.)

someone who wants to do things his way
(uncooperative, independent, stubborn, opinionated, pig-headed, self-centered, selfish, etc.)

someone who isn't very ambitious
(lazy, slow-starting, inactive, cautious, etc.)

someone who talks a lot
(chatty, windy, talkative, rattle-brained, witty, etc.)

someone who often gets into fights
(aggressive, hot-headed, spirited, mean, courageous, bullying, etc.)

something a person has made
(hand-made, home-made, hand-crafted, clumsy, crude, unique, original, etc.)

Divide students into small groups or let them work with partners. Have them compare and discuss their lists, marking those expressions which are positive and favorable with a plus mark and those that give a negative or unfavorable feeling a minus mark. After a short work period, call the group back together and point out that when we speak or write we tell how we feel about something through our choice of words. We create a favorable or unfavorable attitude toward something or someone in the minds of our audience by using words with positive or negative connotations. Explain that advertisers deliberately use connotations to sell their products. They word their ads to give people a favorable impression of their product and create a desire for it.

Pass out the supplementary material, page 2, and have the class read the whole story through silently to get the idea of it. Then assign half the class to fill in the blanks with words or phrases that will make the person in the story a charming, delightful storybook character. Have the other half of the class make the person seem unloved and ugly.

When students have finished, ask for volunteers to read their versions of the story and compare the differences in impressions of the main character that result from different word choices.

How many ways can you think of to describe

a day when the temperature is high? _____

_____

a day when the temperature is low? _____

_____

a big city? _____

_____

an uninhabited area? _____

_____

someone who wants to do things his way? _____

_____

someone who isn't very ambitious? _____

_____

someone who talks a lot? _____

_____

someone who often gets into fights? _____

_____

something a person has made? _____

_____

Not far from the village in a _____ house there lived a young _____ named _____. Every morning she would _____ out of bed, _____ dress herself, comb her _____ hair and then _____ to the nearby stream to wash her _____ face and brush her _____ teeth.

The animals of the forest all knew her. She would sing and call out to them, holding out her _____ hand to offer them _____ things to eat she had gathered. When the animals heard her _____ voice they would _____ run to _____. Walking _____-ly and _____-ly, she would go through the forest calling and singing in her _____ voice to the animals and wearing a _____ look on her _____ face. Her footsteps were as _____ as _____, and her singing was like the sound of a _____. Even the birds _____ when they heard her. All the creatures of the forest felt _____ when she went back to the village.

CASTING A MAGIC SPELL

OBJECTIVES:

This lesson is planned to help students

think imaginatively;

consider cause and effect;

improve their skills in storytelling.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Supplementary material sheet

Box or basket (optional)

Ask your students if they have ever thought about being another animal. What would it be like to be a horse? a toad? a rooster? Discuss the idea for only a few moments to catch students' attention, then point out that many old fairy tales and popular television shows have built plots around someone being changed into something else.

Pass out the supplementary material sheets and explain that today they are going to play a trick on someone in the class by casting an imaginary spell on them. At the magic hour the person who is put under their spell will turn into the animal named in the spell. Ask students to think of an animal that would be interesting to use in a spell and thoughtfully and quietly fill in the blanks on the supplementary material sheet stating the conditions of the spell.

Ask students to fold their paper into fourths and gather up the spells. Mix them up and place them in a hat or box. Then let each student draw a spell from the hat or box.

Give students a few moments to read and share their spells with each other. Then have them think about the possible consequences of being under such a spell. To prod their thinking, pose situations such as the following but do not allow them to discuss them at this point.

> Suppose your mother thought she heard a noise in your room in the night and came in to check. What would she do when she found that strange thing in your bed?

How does your new body fit in your bed? Are the sheets and blankets too tight or heavy? Are there any problems in trying to sleep in a bed?

When you wake up and find yourself changed, how do you feel? Do you really believe it at first? What kind of test do you use to see if it is true?

What things do you usually do when you get up? Can you wear your same clothes? How will you brush your teeth? What happens when you try to make your bed?

Think about some of the things you normally do each day. Who do you see? Where do you go? How will people react when they see this strange animal doing those things?

When ideas seem to be flowing, turn students loose to write about one or more events that happen while they are under the spell.

Students will likely want to share these stories. There are a number of possible ways to do this. For instance, you might divide them into small groups and let them read their stories to each other, or you might suggest they recopy them neatly in book form and add original illustrations. They might also want to include their copy of the spell that was cast upon them.

Hocus Pocus!
Fiddle-dee-dee!
This is what
You're going to be.

Tonight when the clock strikes _____ you will suddenly turn into _____. You will be about the size of _____ and will _____ (describe appearance) _____.

When you try to talk you will only _____.

You will move about by _____.

You will enjoy eating _____.

Not even your best friend will know you, and you have no way to tell who you really are. But do not give up hope, no matter how dreadful a problem you face, for tomorrow at exactly _____ o'clock the spell will be broken and you will find yourself a human being once more.

A FRIGHTENING EXPERIENCE

OBJECTIVE:

This activity is planned to help students

gain skill in portraying emotion in writing.

Begin this lesson with a positive comment about being frightened. You might say something to the effect that fear is one of man's basic emotions, and that everyone experiences it at one time or another. Fear is a safety device; without fear we might cause great harm to ourselves or to others. We fear an uncontrolled fire because it could burn us or our possessions. We fear a certain noise (thunder, shots) because we have learned to associate some danger with it.

Lead students in a discussion of the nature of fear, posing such questions as:

What does it mean to be frightened?
Why do we become frightened? What causes fright?
How do you feel when you are frightened? What physical reactions accompany fright?
When you are frightened what do you want most to do? Can you always do that? Why?

Continue with the idea that we may be afraid of something real with good cause, or we may be afraid of something that isn't really dangerous, or of something wholly imagined--something that doesn't even exist. We may be terribly frightened about something and later find out there was no reason to be afraid at all. Point out that these kinds of situations are the ones we later joke about. But at the time, all fears are real and anything but funny.

Either way, real or imagined, our fears make interesting story material. Some of the highest moments of suspense in favorite stories are built around a character's fear of something or someone.

Ask students to think of a frightening experience they have had. You might suggest some typical situation to those who have difficulty thinking of an experience: a barking dog, a loud or strange noise, a high place, an injury, a tight squeeze, getting lost, getting locked in, and so on.

Have students think about their experience and try to reconstruct it before they begin to write. Ask such questions as: What causes you to become frightened? How did you feel? What did you do? What happened and in what order? Suggest they think of details to add that will build suspense; urge them to tell their story in such a way that the reader will feel their tension.

Some students may have difficulty admitting and writing about a personal fear. If a student seems hesitant to reveal his fears, work with him individually, suggesting that he tell about something that happened when he was little or to construct a story based on a frightening experience he has heard someone else tell about.

Plan some way for the children to share and enjoy each other's stories. Students may want to take turns reading them aloud or dramatizing them.

KID CAPERS

OBJECTIVES:

This activity is planned to help students

recognize interesting subject matter in their own experiences;

develop an interesting story.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Supplementary material sheet

Assorted comic strips about children (Dennis the Menace, Peanuts, The Family Circus, etc.)

Unlined paper

Rulers

Several days before you plan to teach this lesson, ask students to bring in their favorite comic strips or comic books that feature young children. Display them on the bulletin board or about the room for students to read and enjoy in their free time.

To begin the lesson, have students name and briefly discuss popular comic strips that feature young children--what the main character is like, how he looks, typical things he does, etc. Then ask students to tell why these comic strips are popular. Bring out the point that the world of young children--their imagination, limited knowledge, creative impulses, and constant activity--provides interesting and entertaining story material. When we are around young children we notice them doing silly, funny, or odd things and they frequently make a refreshing observation about the world as they see it.

Pass out the supplementary material sheets and ask students to think about and write down things they remember from their own childhood. When they are finished let them exchange papers, and have partners put a check mark by the two ideas they think would make the best comic strips.

Return papers and have each student choose one of his childhood incidents to develop into a comic strip story. Most likely they will choose one of the two their partner checked, but if another appeals to them more let them do that one. Suggest that they need not limit their story to four picture-squares but may think of it as a selection in a comic book covering a page or more.

Urge them to plan their story carefully. Discuss the fact that a comic strip story is carried along through pictures and conversation. Students will need to include enough background scenery to show their read where and when the story takes place. They will need to plan the conversation to fill the reader in on necessary details and tell the story. Have students plan the sequence they will use and how much will be in each square. Have them plan the number of pictures they will need and then divide their paper neatly into squares, using rulers.

When students have completed their comic strip story, ask them to choose a good name for it. To share their stories they might remove the display of published comic strips and put up their own "originals."

When you were a little child

What interesting discovery do you remember making? _____

_____

_____

What crazy thing did you do? _____

_____

_____

What ideas did you have that you later discovered weren't correct?

_____

_____

Did you ever figure out an interesting explanation for something?

_____

_____

What do you remember especially liking to do? _____

_____

_____

What did you especially dislike? _____

_____

_____

WEIGHING EVIDENCE

OBJECTIVES:

This lesson is planned to help students

become aware of the importance of careful observation;

become aware of how point of view affects observation;

consider observations and inference in developing a story

Ask students to imagine observing the following situation:

> A man comes out the back door of a store, gets into a waiting car, and drives away quickly.

Then ask students to think of possible explanations for such a situation and write their ideas on the board (robbery, going home for lunch, working late at night, delivering something, etc.)

Call attention to the fact that their list illustrates various ways an observed incident might be interpreted. However, if they were actually observing the scene they would be able to observe additional clues to help them explain the man's action. Choose an idea from the students' list and have them suggest clues they might observe that would lead to such a conclusion. For example, if their list includes "robbery" they might notice that the man opened the stor door cautiously and looked in all directions before approaching the car, that he pulled his hat low over his eyes, that he carried a bag, etc. Follow the same procedure in thinking about clues that would lead to some of the other explanations. Encourage students to think of possible clues other than visual--to use all their senses.

To help students narrow their thinking to a more specific setting and situation, discuss a possible location for the episode to take place. Perhaps there is a store in your neighborhood with which they are all familiar. If not, they have probably seen an appropriate scene on television. Discuss what the back door of a store looks like, what the surroundings are like, where the street or alley might lead, etc. What sounds and smells might there be? Try to produce a definite mental image through description.

Continue the discussion by focusing students' attention on the observer. Where might he be as he watched? What limitations would he have in that particular position? Would he be able to hear conversation or noises? Would he have a clear view of the street in both directions? Consider the difference between night and day observations. At night, would the street lights be bright enough to see clearly? Would there be any shadows or corners to hinder seeing?

Finally, ask students to think about the attitude of the observer. Would he approve, disapprove, or not care about what he saw happening? Might he be concerned for someone's safety? How would he feel inside? What action, if any, would his feelings lead to? Would he be frightened? Brave? Cowardly?

When students have had opportunity to explore various possibilities, accompanying clues, and possible reactions, ask them to work their ideas into a story. First, have them plan the story--the man's reason for hurriedly leaving the store by way of the back door, the setting, the sequence of events, and at what point they will include clues to fill the reader or listener in on necessary details. Perhaps they will want to jot down a few notes to help them keep the story in mind.

Have students choose partners and tell their stories to each other as a trial run. Some criteria will help them evaluate the effectiveness of a story, such as:

Can you visualize the scene?
Can you imagine yourself there, seeing and feeling as the author does?
Are enough clues given to suggest the man's purpose?
Do you feel you are seeing the scene and action through one person's eyes? Is the point of view consistent?

After students have told their stories and have got feedback from their partners, have them write their stories, incorporating any additional ideas they may have as well as those suggested by their partners.