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ABSTRACT

Representing fresh, useful ideas for teaching English gathered at several annual conventions of the National Council of Teachers of English, the 11 chapters of this book contain 200 activities in the following categories: (1) getting ready to write; (2) expressive writing, including autobiographical and journal writing; (3) informative writing, including writing for readers other than the teacher, and research and the research paper; (4) tricks of the writing teacher's trade; (5) revision, review, and evaluation; (6) word study, vocabulary development, and spelling; (7) punctuation and grammar; (8) speaking and listening; (9) newspapers, magazines, and the visual arts; (10) talking and writing about literature; and (11) classroom management, including organizing the classroom--the students, bulletin boards, and the first five minutes as well as the last. (JL)

Idea Exchange for English Teachers

National Council of Teachers of English
1111 Kenyon Road; Urbana, Illinois 61801

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Contents

Foreword

Teachers are course designers and curriculum builders, but teachers are also strategists who recognize that successful courses and curricula ultimately stand on six challenging and stimulating classroom hours every day. Ideas that deliver content in a lively fashion, however, are consumed at an astonishing rate, and teachers are perennially alert for new ones to adapt to their own teaching styles and goals.

The Idea Exchange at the annual convention of the National Council of Teachers of English is one place where teachers have found such ideas. For the past seven years, hundreds of teachers have queued up at the Exchange, turning in teaching tips that work for them and receiving in return copies of the ideas submitted by their colleagues. Thus have fresh and useful ideas made their way from classroom to classroom and from coast to coast.

The Idea Exchange has been so popular that the NCTE Executive Committee decided some of this material should be available to a wider audience, in a more permanent form. This collection, assembled at headquarters, provides a sampling of ideas from recent conventions. Although some of the activities are labeled middle school, junior high, or senior high, the majority can be adapted for students at all three secondary levels. Not all of the ideas submitted at recent exchanges could be included, but the book does suggest the range and variety of contributions.

As teachers would have predicted, the largest number of ideas are concerned with the teaching of writing, followed closely by the teaching of literature. But there are also activities that deal with speaking and listening, with propaganda, with punctuation and grammar, with word study and spelling. Frequently, these categories overlap, and a single activity teaches more than one skill. Some teachers were concerned with rationale and behavioral objectives; others responded with a no-fail writing assignment or a surefire activity for achieving attention during the first five minutes of class—or the last. All of this we have tried to represent through some two hundred activities arranged in eleven chapters.

Inclusive we could not be, but we hope we have captured the character and spirit of the Idea Exchange—its camaraderie and good-natured pragmatism and its unselfish professionalism.

In a book like this one, it is appropriate to conclude the opening remarks with a word from one of its many contributors, Belinda Ann Bair of Bohemia Manor High School, Chesapeake City, Maryland:

> On my desk in an unobtrusive metal file box is the rescuer of the late-afternoon, just-before-holiday, harried teacher. In it are the little games as well as the more complex activities I have gleaned from NCTE Idea Exchanges through the years, from professional journals, and from the occasional wild inspiration that strikes. Some take only five or ten minutes but all are fun and practical. Begin your own collection now, a box you or your substitute can turn to when time is longer than lessons.

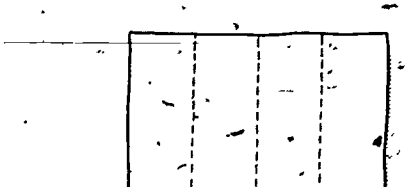
We have, then, taken Ms. Bair's idea and in the same spirit of sharing offer this book from our members to our members. We hope it will get new teachers off to a start on their idea collections while adding to the contents of well-worn boxes on the desks of old hands.

1 Getting Ready to Write

Prewriting, freewriting, and the "me" writing of journals have extended the dimensions of the writing process in ways of special importance to beginning writers. The activities here represent only a few of the getting-ready strategies suggested by teachers. Others are found in the chapter Expressive Writing, especially the section on autobiographical and journal writing, and in Informative Writing. Many of the Tricks of the Writing Teacher's Trade can be adapted to prewriting activities as can some of the suggestions in Newspapers, Magazines, and the Visual Arts and in Talking and Writing about Literature. These cross references suggest the difficulty of classifying prewriting activities; perhaps their ubiquitous nature indicates their unique importance.

How a Theme Unfolds

Ask each student to fold a sheet of theme paper in half, in half again, and in half again. When unfolded, their papers should look like this:



Assign a topic like "If I Ran the School" and ask the class for ideas. No suggestion is too wild unless it's completely outrageous.

Write all ideas on the chalkboard—from a school ski hill to desks on wheels and lockers big as garages. Be enthusiastic and encourage everyone to contribute at least one idea. When brainstorming is completed, ask each student to use the top half of the folded sheet to jot down everyone's suggestions.

Now steer students into sorting these ideas into four logical categories—one category in each of the bottom four boxes. Facilities, Faculty, Curriculum, and Extracurricular are the four I rely on since most ideas seem to fit one of them, but you and your students may come up with a better scheme.

On the reverse side of the paper ask each student to build an outline using information from the four categories. I encourage them to follow this skeleton.

I. Introduction (one paragraph)
II. Body (number of paragraphs depends on the number and kind of examples in each of the four categories)
  A. Facilities
  B. Faculty
  C. Curriculum
  D. Extracurricular
III. Conclusion (one paragraph)

Students are now ready to begin rough copies following their outlines. I ask each student to correct this draft, discuss it with me, and then put it in a folder for several days as the class works on something else. When we come back to these papers, students have fresh ideas, discover mistakes, and work on further revision. The final copy is turned in along with the original idea sheet and the initial draft.

Margaret Rasmussen, Cook County High School, Grand Marais, Minnesota

Beginning with Dialogue

I use this assignment with eighth-graders before they begin writing stories, but it is appropriate for a wide range of grade levels. As a result of this assignment, I think students include more and better dialogue and more accurately punctuated dialogue than did classes in previous years.

Have each student choose a person he or she wants to be—living or dead, real or imaginary, perhaps a character from a story or television show. Pair these "characters" in any way you choose.

Each pair then carries on a written conversation, passing a sheet of paper back and forth, each student writing his or her line in the conversation instead of speaking it. Students get to play out a role as well as to practice writing and punctuating dialogue. Some of these conversations are later developed into stories; some merely serve as practice.

Anne M. Topp, LeSueur High School, LeSueur, Minnesota

That Old Bugbear "I Don't Know How to Begin"

I use these devices to counter complaints of "how to begin" when the assignment is to write a two-to-four page story.

Characterization. I spend a few minutes paging through old magazines, cutting out faces or full-body shots of people in advertisements and stories. I generally collect about twice as many pictures as I have students. Each student selects one to become the main character of a yet-unwritten story. Students who in the past had been unable to conceptualize a character or had offered only incomplete descriptions seem better able to deal with characterization. The pictures also provide a starting point for class discussion in the beginning stages of story development.

Setting. I make a large poster that shows several diverse settings: a deserted city street, a suburban setting, a quiet country lane. I ask each student to choose one of these as the main setting.

Opening Line. I provide ten sentences, each a potential opening line for a story: "The phone rang for the seventh time, the sound filling the dark, empty hall." Although these are nothing more than open-ended sentences, I continue to be surprised that each student somehow finds the line that works—whether the story deals with sports, mystery, parental conflict, or peer problems.

Douglas E. Clark, Blaine High School, Blaine, Minnesota

Recasting Horoscopes: From the General to the Specific

This activity can be used as a preliminary exercise in moving from the general to the specific or as part of a larger unit of writing or literature. You will need a horoscope cut from the local newspaper for each student. A paperback zodiac guide is useful but optional since most students are already aware of and interested in their horoscopes.

Initiate the discussion by reading from the zodiac guide, emphasizing the general language that is used so effectively in this kind of writing: "Some of you may rank with the leaders of the world"; "You usually enjoy good health." Go on to establish that if writing is not general, it is specific, and that in many kinds of writing, it is necessary to be specific. I then show the following progression from general to specific on the overhead projector or by using a mimeographed handout.

> *General:* AQUARIUS (Jan. 20–Feb. 18). Creativity leads you in new directions. Review entertainment expenditures. Short trip may produce favorable results. Family member makes reasonable demand; try to meet it.
>
> *More Specific:* Your talent for drawing leads to a new job. Review your expenditures on movies and dining. A two-day trip may make you feel better. Your sister makes a reasonable demand on your time; try to meet it.
>
> *Very Specific:* Your talent for drawing clothes leads to a new job as a fashion designer at Starlight Enterprises. Review your $150.00 expenditures on dining at the curling club and attending three movies every week at the Plaza. A two-day trip by car to your cottage on Lake Tahoe will help you recover from your cold. Your younger sister, Joan, will ask you to give up two hours each Thursday evening to help with her Cub Pack. You should say yes.

Students then go on to use their horoscopes to complete the following assignment:

1. Attach the horoscope clipping to the page and label it *General.*
2. Under the heading *More Specific,* rewrite each sentence, replacing general words and phrases with specific information.
3. Under the heading *Very Specific,* rewrite each sentence written in step two, adding details that eliminate all generalizations.

Nancy Reynolds, George Street Junior High School, Fredericton, New Brunswick

Two in Tandem

Below are two writing assignments that go hand in hand. I begin the prewriting step by putting the following topic sentence on the board: "It was October and my favorite beach was deserted." Under it I list the five senses: taste, touch, smell, sight, hearing. The class now tries to come up with as many relevant sensory

images as possible, all of which are recorded on the chalkboard. If responses are too general, I prod for specific detail and more vivid imagery. It's better to work on only one sense at a time, and I begin with sight followed by hearing. I also ask five students (one for each sense) to record the information from the board. I put it, divided into five categories, on a ditto master and hand out copies to students the following day.

On the next day students write in class, with the stipulation that they use images from at least four of the senses in their paragraphs or compositions. Students edit each other's work before final copies are written.

A week or two later I give the second assignment, which begins, "It was July and my favorite beach was crowded with people."

Michèle M. Meagher, Brennan Middle School, Attleboro, Massachusetts

Don't Fence Them In

Take to the outdooors to help students refine skills of observation and descriptive writing. I've had success with these on-the-spot assignments.

1. Can you hear a scene? Visit a place in your neighborhood and jot down as many words as you can that will help us hear that place.
2. Can you feel a place? Fit yourself into a nook or cranny, indoors or out. Tell us in at least three sentences what it feels like to be there.
3. Find a totem, a natural object that speaks to you with beauty. Write a description that makes clear this object's significance to you.
4. Find two items outdoors and compare/contrast them: a stone and a leaf, a thistle and a bird, a candy wrapper and an acorn, a cat and a car, a telephone pole and a matchstick. How are they alike? How are they different? Choose a partner and decide on two objects together. One of you then writes the comparison—how the objects are alike; the other writes the contrast—how they differ.

Lois Schoeneck, Damon Runyon School, Littleton, Colorado

One Painting, Many Stories

I have used a reproduction of *The Cry* by Norwegian artist Edvard Munch as a writing stimulus for students from junior high through

college—and always with intriguing results. I bring in a large reproduction of this painting and post it for all to see. I make no introductory comments about the picture or the artist. I then distribute the following questions and ask each student to respond in writing.

1. Where does this take place? Name the country and city. What is the year, the time of day?
2. Who is the main character? What is that person doing? Where did this person come from? What kind of person is this?
3. Who are the other people? What are they doing? Why?
4. What happened immediately before this?
5. What will happen next?
6. How does this picture make you feel?
7. Name the picture.
8. What do you think the artist is saying about life?

After students have recorded their responses, we compare answers. The painting serves as a kind of Rorschach test, and students are always surprised at the range of answers.

Students then write short stories based on their responses to the painting. Since the questions focused on setting, character, and plot, their answers provide an outline. Even students who view themselves as uncreative are surprised at their ability to write an absorbing story. These questions can, of course, be used with other pictures, but I have found that pictures must be dramatic if they are to yield interesting stories.

Joan Dunfey, Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts

Story Beginnings

The story beginning most frequently used by junior high students is "It was a . . ." This activity helps to break the habit.

First Day

1. Read aloud this passage from James Trager's *The People's Chronology* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979): "1966—An 8-year-old North Miami schoolboy introduces the giant African snail *Achatina fulica* from Hawaii into Florida. The snail reaches a length of 8 inches and a weight of 1

pound, it has 80,000 teeth, it can devour a head of lettuce overnight, and it will begin to menace Florida crops by 1969."

Directions to students: "During the next ten minutes write the beginning for a story based on this fact. Do not begin with 'It was a . . .'"

2. Read aloud the following passage from the October 1981 issue of *Learning:* "October 30, 1888, the ball-point pen was patented. When John Loud patented the ball-point pen, it was not an immediate success; people were more interested in the development of the fountain pen. It wasn't until the middle of the 1940s that ball-point pens were mass-produced for the public. John Loud never did realize the impact of his invention."

   Directions to students: "Write in the next ten minutes a beginning for a story based on this fact. Remember, no 'it was a' beginnings."

3. Play a few minutes of a tape-recorded recollection. I use the personal reminiscence of a woman who grew up in London during World War II. Again, ask students to write story beginnings based on this information.

4. Assignment for the next day: "Bring to class a book or story you particularly like."

Second Day

1. Divide the class into small groups.

2. Directions to students: "Analyze the beginnings of the professional stories you brought as well as the beginnings you wrote yesterday. Categorize the beginnings in ways that seem appropriate to the collection your group has (questions, description, short dramatic statement, dialogue). What is the tone of each beginning (uncertainty, matter of fact, cheerful, sad)? Choose the three most effective kinds of beginnings for stories examined by your group. List them on a poster and give examples from the student and professional writing your group examined."

3. Assignment for the following day: "Finish one of the stories you began on the first day—you may do further work on the beginning to be sure it's effective."

Dorothy C. Young, Pound Junior High School, Lincoln, Nebraska

Recipe for a Mystery

Mysteries and middle-schoolers are a natural, and my classes always seem to have fun with this writing assignment. Of course, you and your students may create weird and wonderful characters, settings, and clues of your own.

1. Choose a detective: Suzie Simpson, a resourceful seventh-grader with a large vocabulary; Detective Oscar Oliver, a sloppy but observant detective; Captain Sherlock Hobart, an English detective who thinks he's Sherlock Holmes; Elizabeth Smith, an extremely well-organized police detective; Arthur Ames, a suspicious, nosy person who thinks he is the neighborhood detective; Mrs. Amanda Bizzbe, a grandmother who is addicted to television detective shows; Howard Hoopster, a ninth-grade basketball star who never loses an opportunity to practice dribbling and shooting.
2. Combine with a setting: gym locker room, abandoned barn, school cafeteria, tennis court, sailboat, island, supermarket, dude ranch.
3. Add a clue or two: half-eaten sandwich, sneaker with a hole in it, broken chair, torn rug, dead cactus plant, deflated basketball, broken necklace, puddle, lost glove, piece of soap, some seashells, jacket with missing button.
4. Mix well with vivid adjectives, specific nouns, action verbs, complete sentences, and effective punctuation.

I use the completed minimysteries in several ways. Sometimes the class decides to compile an anthology so that students may read and try to solve each other's mysteries. Sometimes we read aloud a mystery a day or one a week and come up with solutions—and sometimes heated discussion—as a class. The best mysteries can be submitted to national publications for middle-school students.

Jacqueline M. Farrell, Schaghticoke Middle School, New Milford, Connecticut

Horrors

My junior high students enjoy writing and sharing horror stories. We sometimes start off with this idea sheet.

> A good horror story produces a chilling response in the reader. You can create an atmosphere of horror with eerie settings, bizarre characters, and baffling situations. Look over the suggested characters, situations, settings, and first lines below. Use one or several in a horror story of your own.

Characters

1. a mangy dog with one brown and one blue eye
2. a well-dressed gentleman who is seen only after sunset
3. a young woman in a bridal veil who appears at the window of a deserted house
4. an old woman who sits in a rocking chair in the vacant lot where her house once stood
5. a ghostly pilot who appears to passengers on planes of a particular airline
6. a cat that barks like a dog
7. a girl who insists she is living a second lifetime
8. a teenager who keeps rats as pets

Situations

1. a mysterious light hovers over an abandoned section of railroad track
2. a solitary playground swing moves back and forth from time to time for no apparent reason
3. obituaries appear in the newspaper a day before people actually die
4. a beam of light with no apparent source guides boats to safety on foggy nights
5. the subject of a portrait seems to move its eyes
6. an unidentified voice on a CB radio warns drivers of accidents that happen seconds later
7. names of recently deceased people suddenly disappear from the telephone directory
8. individuals receive formal invitations to a party at a remote country estate that no longer exists.

Settings

1. an elevator that stops at unmarked floors
2. a room that grows smaller at night
3. a zoo where animals come to look at people in cages
4. a town where there are no adults (children)
5. a movie house where a human shadow appears over the screen during murder movies
6. a newly discovered secret burial chamber in an Egyptian pyramid
7. an unused auditorium where voices are heard reciting *Macbeth*

First Lines

1. A musty smell hung in the room like a cloud.
2. Panting and the sound of footsteps followed, closer and closer.

3. No one could be certain if the moving figure was a solid shape, a shadow, or simply the product of one's imagination.
4. I set out that afternoon on an ordinary errand.
5. Everything was normal—the sunshine, the garden, the picket fence, the little white cottage.
6. Sandy kept repeating, "I don't believe in ghosts, I don't believe in ghosts."
7. The shrouded figures chanted their summer solstice hymns deep in the forest.

Nancy D. Vick, Rocori Junior High School, Cold Spring, Minnesota

Looping with Freewriting

The purpose of this exercise is to teach students to infer or discover an idea or a point inherent in their freewriting. The term "looping" refers to the process of reading back over a piece of freewriting to discover a point and then using that point to continue writing. After several loops, students should be ready to move into a draft.

Begin by asking students to write nonstop for ten minutes. They are not to worry about complex sentences, punctuation, spelling—just to keep going for ten minutes. You should participate in this activity, writing on a transparency at your desk.

When ten minutes are up, ask students to look back over their writing to discover a point. Demonstrate the process by putting your transparency on the overhead, inferring and discovering ideas in what you have written.

Now ask students to write down the idea or point they have discovered in their own writing and to use that idea as a springboard for another ten minutes of nonstop writing. You follow suit.

After the second freewriting session is completed, ask students to infer or discover a point in the second piece of writing. Once again, demonstrate the process using your own writing.

Ask students to complete a final ten minutes of freewriting on the newly inferred point or to meet in small groups to talk over how they discovered the ideas inherent in their writing.

Jan Thomas, student at the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota

2 Expressive Writing

We write to communicate with others but in discovering what we have to say we often learn much about ourselves. The activities to foster expressive writing are divided into two categories—autobiographical and journal writing and poetry.

Autobiographical and Journal Writing

Treasured objects that once made the show-and-tell scene, self-designed coats of arms, and silhouettes all become bases for autobiographical writing. The section ends with journal writing for all seasons. A related activity, **Simile, Metaphor, and Psychoanalysis,** is found on page 185.

Show and Tell—and Write

As part of an autobiography unit, ask students to revert to the good old days of Show and Tell. Each student brings an object that he or she valued as a young child. After sharing stories about these objects in class, students begin to write. We distribute the prewriting guide that follows to middle-schoolers, but it can be adapted for older students.

> Here are questions about your special object for you to answer in writing. Thinking about these questions and answering them as completely as you can will help you to write about your object in a special and vivid way.
>
> 1. Write at least three phrases to describe it.
> 2. Does it have a name? If so, why/how was its name selected?
> 3. Was it something you had wanted? Explain.
> 4. How does it make you feel?
> 5. What did you do with it when you first got it?
> 6. Do you use it now? How?
> 7. Where do you keep it now? Why do you keep it there?
> 8. Is it different now from when you first got it? If so, how is it different or why is it different?

9. What do you especially like or enjoy about it?
10. Can you tell a story in which your object is important?

And here is a sample paragraph written by one of our students:

> My teddy bear was very important to me because he was my real friend. Since I had always wanted a real animal, I treated him like one. I respected him. I never threw him around. I always played gently with him. When I slept in my crib, he slept next to me. However, since I tossed and turned during the night, he was never there in the morning. When I realized that he was gone, I cried because I had lost my best friend. Then my mother picked him up. Ahhh! Happiness was finding my friend again.

Eileen M. Morris and Carol Seldin, University of Chicago Lab Schools, Chicago, Illinois

Silhouette Stimulus

You will need large (18" × 24") sheets of black construction paper, masking tape, scissors, and a bright light source such as a film or overhead projector. Depending on the manual dexterity of students, you may want to use scrap paper for some trial-and-error experimentation.

Process

1. Divide the class into groups of three—one student to pose, one to hold, and one to trace. While every student will be positive that he or she can sit still for the few moments it takes to trace the outline of his or her head, in fact, the silhouettes will be better if a student stands behind the poser and holds the head.
2. Have the poser sit close to the wall and about two or three feet from the light source. Position the paper and tape it to the wall. You'll discover that it's easier to move the paper than the student.
3. Have the tracer outline the shadow in pencil so that the shiny line shows later on the black construction paper. Hair is especially important in making a silhouette look like the poser. Be sure students do not cut off the necks of their silhouettes or they won't be happy with the results.

4. After three students have posed, held, and drawn, they turn the light over to the next group while they carefully cut out their silhouettes.

Product

These silhouettes can be used as backgrounds, covers, or poster art for a number of autobiographical writing assignments. Here are several that my students have enjoyed.

1. Parts of speech: Students choose adjectives (nouns or verbs) that describe them and their interests.
2. Poems of wishes and dreams.
3. Point of view: In one column students list words they would choose to decribe themselves; in another, words that parents, teachers, brothers and sisters, friends would choose.
4. Appearance and reality: Students use one side of the silhouette to describe the way they seem to be; the other to describe how they really are. (I seem to be a frightened tiger kitten. In reality, I'm a raging tiger.)
5. Summary of important events of a week, month, year.

Marj Montgomery, Day Junior High School, Newtonville, Massachusetts

The "I" Notebook

Near the beginning of the school year, I ask students to find ten pictures in magazines and newspapers that illustrate or suggest their "real" selves. The pictures may reflect the outer self (hobbies, interests) or the inner self (feelings, thoughts, wishes). The pictures are pasted on typing paper or construction paper and students write a paragraph for each picture explaining why it is a personal reflection. Finally, students design covers, using fabric, construction paper, glitter, or whatever materials they feel represent their interests and personalities. (If students keep journals, the pictures and paragraphs may be incorporated into their journals.)

Later in the year, the "I" notebooks are used as springboards for longer, more complex personal writing assignments.

Kathryn L. Ekstrom, Milby High School, Houston, Texas

Heraldic Beginnings

This project—designing a personal coat of arms—is particularly successful in breaking the ice at the beginning of the school year. First, we discuss what a coat of arms represents and examine several examples. Then I give students an outline of a shield similar to the smaller version shown below. I have written in the cues for the sake of brevity, but the student's copy, of course, is blank.

Each section of the shield expresses an aspect of the student's personality, and only pictures—no words—can be used. The exception is the motto. Some students provide their own illustrations, others cut pictures from magazines to complete the four sections of the shield.

Finally, we sit in a circle and each student briefly interprets his or her coat of arms to the rest of the class. I always begin the

group presentation by introducing my own coat of arms—which has changed several times over the years. (The idea for this project came from an article in the September 14, 1974, issue of *Voice*, a Scholastic publication.)

Maureen F. Logan, Ward Senior High School, Westerly, Rhode Island

Focus on Reading

When I meet my students at the beginning of each school year, I ask them to answer the following questions that help me to understand their reading interests and attitudes.

1. Of all the books you have ever read or that have been read to you, which is your favorite? Why?
2. Of all the books you have ever read or that have been read to you, which did you like least? Why?
3. Of the books you read last year in school, which was your favorite? Why?
4. Name the books you read this summer. Do you remember any of the authors?
5. Who is your favorite author? Why?
6. Of all the books you have heard about from teachers and friends, which one do you want most to read?

Later, as a composition exercise, I ask students to write their reading autobiographies, answering some of the following questions:

1. Tell about your first pleasant (unpleasant) memory of reading or of being read to. What caused your reaction and made you remember it all these years?
2. When you first began buying books for yourself or getting them from the library, did you look for a particular kind or series? Do you still?
3. Was there someone who gave you encouragement in your reading or in your choice of books? In what way?
4. Tell anything else that you consider significant in your reading development.

Mary W. Sucher, Baltimore County Reading Services, Towson, Maryland

The Child Is Father of the Man

Though this assignment can be adapted to many levels, I have found it particularly successful with eighth-graders. In their

rapid approach to adulthood they seem to enjoy pausing to record the events of a childhood that is still vivid in their minds.

> Your major writing assignment this semester is an autobiography or the story of your life. I would like you to follow the general chronological outline below, but keep in mind that these suggestions are merely a guide. Feel free to add material of your own and to develop some areas more than others.
>
> *Babyhood.* Describe the situation and circumstances of your birth. What were you like as a baby? You will have to rely on parents, other relatives, baby books and photo albums for this information. If you decide to include pictures or other memorabilia, be sure to attach them securely so they can be returned intact.
>
> *Preschool Days.* Record your earliest memories. Describe friends, neighborhood, home, first interests, childhood fears, etc. Relate amusing anecdotes.
>
> *Elementary School.* Tell what schools you attended and what your teachers were like. What experiences can you recall from this period in your life?
>
> *The Present.* Take a good look at the person you presently are. Describe yourself and the activities you are involved in at school, at home, and elsewhere. Are you generally satisfied with your life? What changes would you like to make?
>
> *The Future.* What are your future plans? Picture what you see yourself doing as you grow older. Where and in what manner do you intend to live? Make your projections as realistic as you can in the light of what you presently know about yourself.

William Durbin, Cook High School, Cook, Minnesota

All in the Family

This activity takes about thirty minutes and requires two index cards per student and the classified section of a newspaper. I use it to introduce a literature unit on the family to high school juniors, but it could be used as a journal writing assignment or in other contexts with students at other levels. Through this assignment students consider the qualities of family members orally and in writing, and the results are humorous, serious, and sometimes poignant.

A one-minute, silent, free-association with the word *family* begins the activity. Students jot down their responses, which we then share. I react to their word associations—words like *reunion, children, house, suppertime*—with such questions as "How many

children are in your family? How many of you have an older sister? Do you see yourself being a parent someday?" The discussion is usually a lively one with many varied points of view.

I then introduce the question of whether or not students might like to change their families in some way—add or change a member—merely by advertising in the newspaper. Rules for writing the ads are simple. Students are to use the language of classified ads to produce two ads; a want ad for a new family member and an "available" ad that pictures themselves as a family member. Most important, the ads should reflect qualities students believe are important for family members to possess and strengths they themselves have to offer as a member of a family. No names are allowed on the cards.

The completed ads are displayed on a bulletin board covered with pages from the classified section of the newspaper. Several classes generate over a hundred ads, an eye-catching display that brings comments from students, faculty, and parents. I've included a sample ad below.

> **WANTED**: One mother who does not like operas or classical music. Must have nice clothes that also fit me and cook things other than TV dinners. Call after "General Hospital" and not on weekends. 123-4567.

Kathleen Strawser, Berea High School, Berea, Ohio

Back-to-School Assessment

I read the following poem, which appeared in *Campus Life*, to my high school juniors during the first week of school each fall. It seems to strike a responsive chord: "You mean someone else feels this way, too?"

> The Sun Goes Down on Summer
>
> I come to the water one last time as the sun goes down on summer.
> It's going; I can feel it slip away, and it leaves a cold, empty spot,
> a hole in my warm memories of endless golden days
> and dreams as ripe as watermelons.
> I'd give the world to make the summer stay.
>
> The water is calm around me.
> It's a warm, silent sea of thought dyed in the rich blues of night
> and memory.
> Why can't things just stay the way they are?
> Instead, the days rush headlong into change
> and I feel like nothing's ever going to be the same.

Soon school will start again. And all the things I thought I'd left behind will come back, and it won't be gentle water. I'll be swimming in—
It'll be noise and people and schedules and passes and teachers telling everyone what to do.
One more year of homework, tests and grades. Of daily popularity contests and pressure-cooker competition and heaps of frustration.

The first day is the worst. Not knowing who your friends are, or what's changed since last year. Trying to pick it up where you left off.
I'll look real hard for a last-year's friend to get me from one scrambled class to another, through halls crawling with people.

I wonder if I'll fit in.

Football practice started last week. It started without me.
I had to make a choice and football lost.
Two years on the team and it struck me—who am I doing this for?
It's just another thing people expect you to do, so you do it.
School is full of those kinds of things—things that sap your freedom, and keep you from being yourself.
That's what I want most, to be myself. But that's hard.

Here's what I dread most: when summer goes, I go with it.
I go back to school and I change as soon as I walk through those doors.
I have to be someone everyone will like—that's a law of survival.

What would happen if I just stayed the real me?
Would they turn me off? Label me "weird"?
Would I ever get another date?
It seems like so much to risk.
But growing is a risk. Change is a risk.

And who knows, I might discover something of myself in the coming year.
I might get closer to the person I am—what a discovery that would be!

When the doors open on Monday morning, I'll have a fresh start, a fresh opportunity to find myself.
I want to be ready.

Steve Lawhead

After reading the poem aloud, without breaking the mood, I ask students to write their reactions. I tell them the papers will be read only by me and should be approximately 100-150 words in length. If a few students can't get started, I encourage them to tell me how they feel on these opening days of school. What will they miss most about summer? These first papers often reveal whether or not a student feels okay about himself or herself in school—an important first fact for me to know.

Rose Trigg, Cheyenne Mountain Junior High School, Colorado Springs, Colorado

The Emersonian I

Although this writing assignment is fairly traditional, I find it gains new life if used after students have studied Emerson and read one or two of his essays.

> Prepare a paper (500-700 words) of an autobiographical nature. Present yourself as an individual—a "thinking" (as Emerson would say) individual. Consider major moments, incidents, individuals, books, scenes (in nature or in human actions) that you consider to have shaped your thoughts or beliefs or that characterize you as the unique person you are. The experience may be pleasant or unpleasant; the main requirement is that it be vivid, memorable, and basic to your thinking.
>
> Remember that Emerson felt a "scholar" learned from nature, books, and life. What, from your experience of these three, has made you? You may use one or two or all three of Emerson's touchstones; however, if you decide on three, be sure that you chose three that can be combined into a thesis sentence that will introduce your paper and help you to achieve coherence in the illustrative paragraphs that follow. A thesis sentence might go something like this: While no single experience has impressed me to the point that I feel my life has been significantly changed by it, one (book, incident, individual) has left a lasting impression. That _____ was _____. Or this: Life is full of experiences, but the most influential one(s) in developing my attitude toward _____ was (were) _____ (and _____).
>
> Sincerity is important, but equally important are specific details that convey the feeling or attitude you have about a book, an individual, or an experience. Consider your readers to be intelligent, alert, discriminating people who want to know you as the kind of person you truly are.
>
> Here are some ideas to consider:
>
> 1. A memorable book or short story or essay and why it is memorable (Thoreau's "Where I Lived and Why I Lived There").
> 2. A scene that left an impression and why you remember it (standing on the dock of a small town in Norway at two o'clock in the morning).
> 3. A series of episodes that influenced your thinking (having to move thirteen times in ten years). Don't try to describe each episode in detail. Center on the single or cumulative effect the episodes had on you.

4. An experience that truly reflects the kind of person you are (reactions you had in observing something especially beautiful or horrible).
5. An experience that made you consider the plans you have for the future (working as a volunteer in a community center or nursing home).

Ernest Mae Seaholm, Alamo Heights High School, San Antonio, Texas

Journal Variations

Asking students to keep a journal is certainly not innovative, but I am pleased with the way I have adapted this assignment. I ask each student to divide a medium-sized notebook into a front and back section. The front section is their section, and they make at least two dated entries in it each week. Diary entries are not permitted unless the event is unusually significant. This section is a statement about them, what is important to them, what fascinates them. I also make suggestions for entries in this section, suggestions such as these:

1. Clip articles and react to them.
2. Include poems, yours or someone else's, and your comments.
3. Record dreams and why you might have dreamed them.
4. Note favorite sayings and why they appeal to you.
5. Paste together collages—of the year, of your likes, dislikes, concerns—and interpret them.
6. Save words to favorite songs and record your reactions.
7. Set goals, make plans for the future.
8. Add pictures of people and places and written descriptions of them from your perspective.
9. Ask questions and speculate about answers.
10. Jot down insights, advice, knowledge that makes sense to you.
11. Record memories, special moments, significant events.
12. Discuss issues, fears, wants, needs.
13. List pet peeves, traits you want in a future partner.
14. Write your own definitions of words.

I reserve the right to pick up journals on Mondays, so entries must be up to date. If students want me to read and respond to a given entry, they place a check next to the date; otherwise, I skim but do not read front entries in total. I must admit, however, that I

read more entries in this section of the journals than I originally plan to because I find them so interesting. When students have an opportunity to write about their own special interests, ones often uncalled for by teachers, they sometimes show unusual perception and depth. I find myself gaining new respect for my students as the semester goes on. Because I have been so impressed with some of their entries, I reserve a portion of the bulletin board for students to share entries or topics with each other. I grade this section of the journals on effort and variety.

The back section of the journal, on the other hand, is under my direction. It is my way of giving students more writing experience than I could possibly grade, opportunities to experiment without the fear of a low grade, and practice at in-class writing within a limited amount of time. I make assignments to be completed in the first fifteen to twenty minutes of class about twice a week. Often I have the assignment on the board so that students can get started immediately. These assignments are usually related to units on which we are currently working, although occasionally I ask for a response to a current event—national, local, school. For a unit on character description, for example, I might ask for a description of the perfect teacher. After a school assembly on science fiction, I might ask students to select an area such as transportation and fantasize about the future. At the end of each grading period, students choose a specific number of entries from this section for me to evaluate, although I check that all assignments have been completed. While students are not asked to rewrite the entries I have evaluated, I expect them to read back through them and react to my comments.

Jackie Schmitt, Castle High School, Newburgh, Indiana

Rate a Day

As part of our writing curriculum, eighth-graders write journal entries. Some of my students had recently read Judy Blume's *It's Not the End of the World*, in which the main character Karen keeps a journal of sorts in which she rates each day with a letter grade according to what happened to her on that day. I thought Karen's story would be a good way to introduce the idea of keeping a journal and devised the assignment shown below. In addition, I asked students to write a paragraph before beginning the assignment in which they expressed their feelings about having to do it.

At the end of the month, they wrote a second paragraph in which they stated their feelings toward having completed the task. The assignment itself follows.

> Using a spiral notebook purchased expressly for this assignment, rate the next thirty-one days, beginning on Monday. Rate each day, including weekends and days on which you do not come to school, with a letter grade—A, B, C, D, or F—depending on what happened to you that day. Journal entries should be written before you go to bed each night in order for you best to remember and to evaluate what happened that day. Even if you must write in pencil and in a rough form and copy the entry later into your journal—do it!
>
> Write only one entry on each page in your journal and do not write on the back of that page. Each entry must fill at least two-thirds of a page and be written in ink. Be sure to put the *day* as well as the *date* on each page.
>
> Specifically point out why you rated a particular day as you did. Entries may be personal, but before passing your notebook in, star at least three entries that I may read for grading purposes. Although entries may be as personal as you wish them to be, do not use profane language, which will automatically result in a failing grade if I spot it.
>
> Your journal will be graded according to the number of entries you completed, their length, neatness, and the composition skills you demonstrate.

Alfreda Wright, Kilmer Intermediate School, Vienna, Virginia

Writing Poetry

Invention often rivals or usurps information as the message in transactions between poet and reader, and brainstorming techniques are the basis for many of the activities in this section. Group-authored poems like **Word Pool Poetry** and **Found Poetry** pave the way for more personal expression.

Other activities related to the writing of poetry include **Sound Familiar?**, page 88; **Grammarwocky**, page 103; **Jabberjabberjabber**, page 110; **A Vacuum Cleaner Is like an Anteater**, page 139; **Character Study**, page 152; and **Simile, Metaphor, and Psychoanalysis**, page 185.

Twelve Days of Halloween

I use this activity just before Halloween, but it can be adapted to other occasions. I begin by playing a record of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" and showing an overhead transparency. Of course

an oral reading can suffice and a nicely illustrated text can be substituted for the transparency. We then talk about alliteration and repetition, noting the pattern of nouns and the verb endings. We also list together at the chalkboard some of the words commonly—and not so commmonly—associated with Halloween. Students then write their own poems following the "Twelve Days" model. Here is an excerpt from the kind of poem your students will produce.

On the twelfth day of Halloween,
An old witch gave to me
Twelve cats a-clawing,
Eleven fairies floating,
Ten goblins ghouling,
Nine spiders spinning,
Eight phantoms prowling,
Seven skeletons shaking,
Six Draculas drooling,
Five glowing ghosts,
Four calling kids,
Three mean men,
Two big "Boo's,"
And a bagful of candy for me!

Eleanor McLaughlin, George Street Junior High School, Fredericton, New Brunswick

Word Pool Poetry

Choose a subject and write it on the chalkboard—Thanksgiving, school, apple-picking. Students then contribute single words that come to mind as they think about the subject; try for a variety of vivid verbs, sparkling adjectives, definitive nouns, even adverbs. List these words on the board and, of course, contribute some yourself. Students will be amazed at how many words seem appropriate. I usually ask them to copy our final list into their notebooks for reference the following day.

Students now consider carefully the class-generated list of words, looking especially for words that seem to go together as well as for words that provide obvious contrast. The contrasts are useful later on and can sometimes be turned into striking similes or metaphors.

Now students write freely about the subject, using words from the board, especially ones that seem to convey their perception of the subject. After about ten minutes of experimentation, I ask them to select their best phrase and use it as the first line of a

poem. I encourage them *not* to state the subject in this line. The object, of course, is to let readers discover the subject for themselves. Many poems never state the subject, yet it is clear through the writing. "Show, don't tell," I caution.

The assignment, finally, is to compose a poem of at least ten lines, and many students write more. The piece doesn't have to tell a story, but a feeling or insight should emerge. If students look carefully at the word list and at their free writing, this does happen.

Inevitably someone asks about rhyme and meter—after all, that's poetry. My response is, " If it occurs, good; if it doesn't, don't worry. Instead, try to create images, word pictures, surprising but meaningful combinations of words, and a message of sorts."

I allow the rest of the class period for writing and ask students to complete a draft before the next class. Students share their drafts in small groups, asking for constructive criticism for revision. Revised poems are submitted on the third day for my evaluation and publication in a class anthology. By the way, students like to see their teacher's poem, too.

Joanne P. Chambers, Shenendehowa High School, Clifton Park, New York

Raising a Little Cane in the Classroom

To help students understand the sensory appeal of poetry, give each one a candy stick, wrapped in cellophane. Use assorted flavors and colors. Ask the student to look at it, feel it, smell it, imagine what it will taste like—and to think about images and word pictures. Then ask students to unwrap the candy slowly (listen!) and savor its sweetness. When they've had a few minutes to taste and dream, ask them to write a poem about this experience.

Here are a few lines from two of my students' poems:

Yellow and white stripes
on a candy cane,
Taste the lemon
As it disappears.

Crunch, crunch, there goes
the wrapper.
Swirled, side by side,
vanilla, dark red,
mixed strawberry, pink and white.
Lick it, suck it, pull it slowly
out of your mouth.
It's the sweetness of life.

Florence L. Healy, Pius XI High School, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Loverly

A story in the *Minneapolis Tribune* was the inspiration for this activity.

> She [Mrs. Jo Culnane] wanted people to know that eighth-graders have beautiful thoughts. So she asked them to write down the things they love. . . . Mrs. Culnane asked them to list up to fifty things they love in this world. Then she had them narrow it to ten. "The result was almost like a photo of each child," she said. "You could almost identify them by what they wrote."

Naturally we had to try this, too, and here is an example of the results.

> The Things I Love
>
> Brand new puppies frolicking around,
> The smell of baby powder,
> The perfume Helen wears almost every day,
> Going to the Y-deals knowing I probably won't get asked to dance,
> But going anyway,
> Playing with small kids when they get a big kick out of a piggyback ride,
> The pen names when you can write a story and no one knows who wrote,
> Almost.
>
> Squimp—8th grade

Susan Rietz, substitute teacher, St. Peter, Minnesota

Book Report Poems

I like to encourage out-of-class reading and in-class sharing of this reading. To accomplish this, I ask every student to read at least one book per quarter. As the student reads, he or she keeps a note card tucked in the book and jots down page numbers on which there is especially pertinent action, particularly apt description of character or setting—or any passage that appeals to the student for whatever reason. When the student finishes the book, he or she selects one of the marked passages (or a combination of them) and copies it. The next step is to capture this idea in poetry form. (The class has worked on images, active verbs, and descriptive writing prior to this assignment.) Poems are polished, edited in small groups, and revised. Here is an example, based on Patricia Dizenzo's *Phoebe*.

Feelings

Feelings of despair fell over her,
Quiet and desperate,
As she walked.
The air turned still
As before a storm
And dark fell early.
She passed a playground.
Swings,
Seesaws,
A jungle gym,
All stood still.
Her despair was deepened,
Phoebe was pregnant.

Chris Ruzicka, Backus Public School, Backus, Minnesota

When You Care Enough to Send the Best

Introduce this activity by observing that we seem to have greeting cards for every occasion—from birthdays to babies to bachelor degrees—and for every type of person—grandmothers, secret friends, bosses, nurses, new homeowners. Encourage students to try their hands at writing School Greeting Cards—a new product for a large market. Discuss some of the possibilities: teachers, principals, superintendent, coaches, secretaries, custodians, best friends, the person who has the locker next to yours (or shares yours), people at your lunch table, "wish you were here" cards for someone who is sick or truant or who has moved away, special cards for boyfriends and girlfriends.

We discuss simple rhyme schemes—the "roses are red, violets are blue" sort of thing, and then each student designs at least one card with an original four-line (minimum) verse.

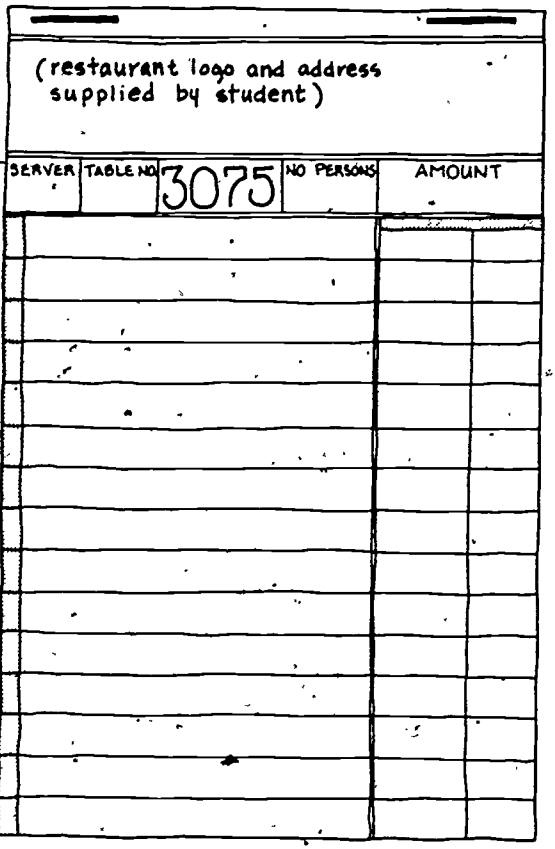
The activity produces a highly creative and amusing set of greeting cards—and an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the emotional outlet that writing affords.

Katherine W. Knighten, Burris Laboratory School, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana

Food for Thought

This assignment is very popular with middle-schoolers, and both slow- and regular-track kids seem to love it. Reproduce on a larger

scale the page from a restaurant order pad shown below. Encourage students to come up with original names for their restaurants. Make several copies for each student so you will be prepared for the variations that follow.



Instructions: You may order any food you wish, for any meal of the day. The only requirement is that every food you order must be the same color. Now, turn your monochromatic meal into a poem.

Variations: List only foods beginning with the same letter; list only foods you *hate*. Now turn these lists into poems.

Susan Ohanian, W. K. Doyle Middle School, Troy, New York

Found Poetry

Here is an exercise in locating, isolating, and ordering language. It's actually a reduction activity, transforming a prose piece into poetic form. From some already extant prose writing, students select words and phrases that they then put into another form: a poem, found among already written prose. An assortment of magazines and newspapers is all you need. (Students can also create found poems from their own writing, from the Sears catalog, from a page in the dictionary.) Students choose an item that appeals to them, sift through the material, and pull the strongest words or most dramatic word combinations. They then order and juxtapose these words and word combinations to make a poem. I give the option of copying the words or of cutting them out and "pasting" a poem. The latter option is popular because students often get involved with the visual impact of the type as well as the meaning carried in the phrases.

This exercise is successful with youngsters who are intimidated by poetry and those who have never attempted to write it. In a sense, students become instant poets. It is also an eye-opener for those who believe that poetry must rhyme. I find it a useful warm-up before a unit on poetry.

Bob Doyle, Parish Hill High School, Chaplin, Connecticut, and T. K. Cellar, Delaware Hayes High School, Delaware, Ohio

New Views of the News

Clip a newspaper article for each student in the class or ask each student to bring in several. Take care to find articles that focus on the unusual and that lend themselves to imaginative exploration. Distribute the articles or let students choose. Each student then writes a poem based in some way on that article. The only requirement is that the poem be relatively short and not copy the article directly. Here are two examples; the second poem is not reproduced in its entirety.

The press:

Candidate Wins on Toss of Coin

Durant, Okla.(AP)—A toss of a coin decided the school board election held here this week.

Two candidates, incumbent John Keithly and William Perkins, tied—149 votes each.

So instead of going through all the trouble of holding another campaign, the two candidates agreed to let the toss of a coin decide the issue.

To make it all proper, they held the coin toss in front of the election board secretary.

The poem:

Father of our country,
even now is called on for advice.

The small silver coin
lies on the palm;
George stares at the ceiling.

Groans of disappointment
and cries of joy
rumble through the crowd.

The newly elected official
steps forward, smiling.
After all, Father knows best.

Kim Smith

The press:

Chinese Peasants Finding Gold in Those Ancient Hills

Peking (UPI)—Peasants in the rugged northwest Chinese province of Shansi are finding that "there's gold in them hills," and the race is on, the official Xinhua news agency said Monday.

In a report bearing the headline "Peasant Prospectors Strike It Rich," the news agency said farmers in Ankang county sold 172 ounces of gold to the government this year, five times as much as last year.

Another county produced 251 ounces, and several small mines in the province expect to yield 1,300 ounces, it said.

Earlier this year, the government paid two workmen a total of $877 for 392 ancient gold coins they had found. The coins weighed a total of 12.71 pounds.

The poem:

Rough calloused hands
shake a small boy awake.
He shivers,
stretches,
shrugs
off the small warmth
of a threadbare blanket
to greet the cold gray dawn
so much like yesterday's.

.....

long hours stretched ahead . . .
tunnels of dampness,
suffocation,
dungeons made by imprisoned dreamers
in the hopes of finding riches
to set them free.

Christy Olsen

I keep in mind the poetic devices that the class has studied when I evaluate these poems.

Judith C. Gilbert, Yuma High School, Yuma, Colorado

3 Informative Writing

Audience and content govern informative writing, and the activities in this chapter are divided according to those two emphases. Readers other than the teacher are the focus of the first group of assignments; research, formal and informal, is addressed by the second.

Writing for Readers Other Than the Teacher

No element in the communication process has received more attention recently than audience, and teachers at every grade level recognize the need for students to write for eyes and ears other than those of the teacher. Peers and principals and parents, kindergartners and first-graders and oldsters by two generations are among the audiences addressed by the activities in this section.

Other assignments written primarily for peer readers include **Pictures *and* a Thousand Words**, page 122; **Photo Essay**, page 123; and **Magazine Board**, page 181.

The Popcorn Sale

If the teacher fails to provide opportunities for writing that result in purposeful communication, students tend to find writing a hollow experience and remain uninvolved. Many classroom activities, however, can be organized to include purposive writing. Here is how a popcorn sale provided opportunities for meaningful written communication.

1. A class discussion on how to raise money for a particular class project led to the decision to hold a popcorn sale. Our first writing task was to compose a letter to the principal requesting permission to hold the sale, outlining the reasons for the sale, and detailing how the sale would be organized.
2. Then we needed to develop forms to be completed by class members with information indicating the contributions they would make to the sale.

3. Next we wrote up the results of an experiment conducted to determine the quantity of unpopped corn needed to produce a given quantity of popped corn.
4. A report outlining materials needed and estimates of quantities, expenses, and proposed selling prices was next.
5. Clear and accurate records of expenses and receipts were ongoing.
6. Advertisements, announcements, and notices to be displayed in school were another major writing project.
7. Finally, we produced a class book, *The Popcorn Sale.*
8. And a creative follow-up: Look for an opportunity to discuss the sensory impressions students have of popcorn. This could occur shortly after students have popped corn in the classroom to determine quantities. Discuss sensory appeals: hearing (the sound popcorn makes popping and being chewed), smell, touch (the way it feels in mouth and hand), taste, sight. List at the chalkboard words suggested by students that evoke the sensory aspects of popcorn. Ask students to provide a sensory description of popcorn, but give them freedom to choose the form their writing will take. For example, haiku:

   The sound of popcorn
   Rattles, crackles, spits with heat
   Edible battle

Diane Bewell, Child Guidance Clinic of Greater Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Generation Link

This assignment involves students in the oral history tradition and provides an opportunity for them to talk seriously with an older person, but I also use it to teach point of view and narration. A special bonus—the writing will be read—and treasured—by an audience outside the classroom.

Prewriting

1. Read and discuss "A Christmas Memory" by Truman Capote or another story about family tradition.
2. Discuss oral storytelling and interviewing techniques.
3. Each student selects a friend or relative at least as old as parents and preferably as old as grandparents and asks that

person to tell about a memorable Christmas or other experience concerned with family traditions. The student listens carefully and takes notes *after the story has been told.*

Composing

Students write the stories they were told as if the events had happened to them or as if they were there as a third person. Emphasize the importance of dialogue and description.

Editing and Revising

Each student reads the original draft to a writing group and takes notes on their reactions. During class time students make changes and produce final copies.

Publication

Students design covers and give their stories to the adults who told them.

Cynthia A. Rudrud, Tolleson Union High School, Tolleson, Arizona

Getting to Know You

This exercise develops interviewing and writing skills, and I try to use it with seventh-graders soon after the opening of school. Since several elementary schools feed into our junior high, this assignment helps students get to know one another.

I begin by discussing with students what biography is and how it differs from autobiography. I read sample passages from anthologies and magazines. Then the class compiles questions students might ask if they were to write a biography of another student.

I assign partners (boy and girl work well) and have them interview one another for the purpose of writing a biography. I try to pair students who don't know one another well. I reserve about twenty minutes from three or four class periods so most of the interviewing can be done in class. If more information is needed, students phone each other.

We share the biographies in class. Sometimes I read them, leaving out the names, and have students try to guess whose biography is being read. After the biographies are graded, students rewrite them on ditto masters. Later, we assemble booklets so that each student has a copy.

Gloria Heisler, South Kingstown Junior High School, Wakefield, Rhode Island

Middle-School Mail Call

This ongoing classroom project helps students master correct letter forms and provides a variety of experiences in writing and evaluating friendly and business letters.

Decorate a large cardboard box to resemble a U. S. mailbox. Introduce correct letter forms and post models of both friendly and business letters near the "mailbox."

Each student writes a letter, folds it, and correctly addresses the folded letter, which is then dropped into the mailbox. On stipulated days I appoint a letter carrier, who removes the letters and delivers one to each student who has mailed one. The receiver reads and evaluates content and letter form. The reader may also make comments to the writer—or write a letter in return—and the most interesting letters are often shared with the class.

Sometimes I use this assignment weekly; sometimes less frequently. Letters may also be assigned as homework, as may responses. Only the instruction by the teacher, the delivery of the letters, and the sharing of comments and contents need take place in class.

Lots of practice is necessary if students are to master letter forms, but I have also found that students write more interesting letters when they know their readers will be other students rather than a teacher. Letters also involve descriptive, narrative, expository, and persuasive writing—all forms of writing that middle-school students need to begin using.

Finally, here are suggestions for letters that have proved successful in my classes. You and your students will, I know, come up with many others.

Write a letter

1. to your teacher, suggesting that students be allowed to celebrate "Labor Day" each month
2. to a friend, describing what you saw (or how you felt or what happened to you) on a five-mile bike ride
3. from one character in a novel or short story to another, discussing a problem related to the story
4. to a friend in the East, telling about striking it rich in the California Gold Rush
5. to Christopher Columbus, asking to sail with him to India
6. to the Walt Disney Studios, describing a cartoon character you have created and want them to buy
7. to a witch, inviting her to your Halloween party

8. from Big Foot, ordering a new pair of shoes
9. to a publishing company from Rodin's statue *The Thinker*, who wants to publish a book of his thoughts
10. to Smokey the Bear, congratulating him for his good forestry work
11. to Jack Frost, complaining about the trouble his last visit caused
12. to Santa Claus, asking him to visit an old person who needs many things
13. from the Old Year, bragging about how he or she handled problems during his or her term in office
14. from a prophet, telling what will happen during the coming year
15. to a space hero, asking to go along on the next mission
16. to a parent or relative, describing the view from a balloon
17. to Ben Franklin, telling him how one of his wise sayings helped you
18. to Cinderella's stepmother, applying for Cinderella's job after the wedding
19. from the tiger in one cage to the tigers in another cage
20. from a fish, requesting the mayor to clean up the lake water
21. to a former United States president, commenting on an action that he took during his term
22. to a scientist, asking for help on a problem you are having with your new invention
23. from an English knight traveling on a crusade
24. from a leprechaun in America, telling his Irish cousin about the unlucky things Americans do
25. to a museum curator, asking for an identification of a bone you have found
26. to the manager of a department store, asking for a summer job
27. to the author, telling how his or her book might have been improved (should have ended)
28. from your pet (or younger brother or sister), asking for better treatment
29. to Peter Pan, requesting permission to live in Never-Never Land
30. to Mr. Webster, telling of a word you have made up to go in the dictionary
31. from an artist, describing a picture he or she has painted
32. to your teacher, describing a perfect summer vacation

Polly Duncan, Tanglewood Middle School, Greenville, South Carolina

Instructive Instructions

Either of these lively assignments illustrates the importance of careful sequencing and word choice in the writing of instructions—and the importance of adopting a reader's point of view.

1. Each class member (teacher, too) creates a simple geometric design on lined paper. Then each designer writes out the steps that will accurately reproduce this design without specialized tools on a separate sheet of paper. Assign identical numbers to both efforts. Collect the drawings and set them aside. Now exchange written directions and supply sheets of lined paper. Each student follows the writer's directions and attempts to reproduce the design. Later, each student checks his or her effort with the corresponding design and discusses the experience as instruction giver and instruction receiver.
2. This assignment has been nicknamed Odyssey. Each student (and the teacher) writes out the specific directions to an *unstated* location within the school building. (You may want to declare certain areas, such as restrooms, off limits.) These directions should be written for a reader who is not familiar with the school; therefore, location names (west wing, main office) are not permitted. Students exchange papers, follow or attempt to follow the directions, and meet back in the classroom after an agreed-upon number of minutes to discuss their experiences. I can guarantee that this is one peer evaluation session in which students will have definite suggestions for improvements.

William Speiser, Rumson-Fair Haven School, Rumson, New Jersey

When You Really Mean Business

This ten-step, 3-R approach to business letters is successful with junior high, senior high, and adult education students. It provides an opportunity for students to read analytically to cull information, to write in a highly structured form, and to perform arithmetic calculations.

1. Bring to class the many catalogs that clutter up your mailbox. Each student is given a catalog and asked to select three items, noting page numbers.

2. On lined paper, each student completes a heading and inside address based on information in his or her catalog. Just learning where to find this information is a revelation to many. Discuss business greeting and opening sentence.
3. Each student then completes that part of the body of the letter that requires catalog numbers, names of items, sizes, colors, and unit prices. At least one item must be a multiple order so students use the @ sign. Each student then adds prices for a subtotal.
4. Sales tax computation brings wails. Math in English class? Yes, and correctly.
5. Delivery or shipping charges are added. This step requires careful reading. Weights may need to be computed, a map checked for distances, a chart read, depending upon the catalog.
6. Subtotal, tax, and delivery charges are added for the final total. Discuss the disadvantages of mailing cash and the advantages of checks and money orders before determining a method of payment.
7. Students add the complimentary close and the written and printed signature.
8. Each student prepares a "cheat sheet," a sheet of lined paper the lines of which are darkened so that they are visible when placed under a sheet of plain white paper. Ink is best for darkening lines because it does not smudge. Students should also line margins.
9. Give each student two pieces of unlined paper and a sheet of carbon paper. The student makes a "sandwich," beginning with a white sheet of paper and followed by the carbon, the cheat sheet, and the second white sheet. The student clips these together and copies the rough draft in ink on the top sheet.
10. Distribute a mimeographed form showing the outlines of large and small business envelopes. Students address one envelope in block style, the other in indented style. The original of the letter is folded to fit one size, the carbon to fit the other.

After students have completed these ten steps, I distribute the following mimeographed letter. They select the information needed

to write an order letter based on the model we have just completed. Students enjoy this assignment and some have later inquired, "Any new Aunt Agathas?"

Dear Scholars,

Here you are enjoying a few days away from me while I am at a convention of English teachers. (Whaddya mean it serves me right?) That does it. Just so you don't enjoy the sub too much, cull the necessary details so that you can (and *do*) compose a modified block business letter. Use ink and keep a carbon copy.

Since this is your first exposure to this format, I'll give you some tips. First of all, there is a lot of unnecessary information here. Underline or box what little is important. Secondly, you will be ordering three different items. Finally, all the information you need is somewhere in this letter. Why am I being so nice to you? I guess I am a little sad at leaving you.

It is a sad time for Aunt Agatha, too. Tom Turkey, her favorite pet, has gobbled his last and gone to that great banquet table in the sky. Although she craved the feast, the incident has carved a big hole in her budget. Expense has been no object. The carvers, a real cut-up group, will be in charge of the reception. Nor have they cut the price for her. They are demanding $783.19 for the day. No wonder Pilgrim's Progress, the catering company, gives them CUT-U1 as their catalog number. With so many elements to consider, Auntie A has been dithering for days. According to Uncle Aloysius, she has been in a daze for years.

Dressing, you know, is terribly important for such an occasion. This catering outfit on 2 Big Belly Boulevard has turkey dressing for 89¢ a bag or two for $1.60. That sure isn't gravy! I do believe, though, that one bag will do. No, Scholars, Aunt Agatha is not the bag—the dressing (WUWU-2U) is.

Aunt Agatha firmly believes that one should feed the mind, too. Hence, she has asked her favorite acting group to present a play by her favorite author, Agatha Crispy. It's a "crumby" play about the disappearance of a mint spy. It is a rather gooey piece actually. The butler did it. He was such a messy eater that he left all sorts of telltale evidence on his waste—er, waist-coat—er, vest.

Just thinking of messes and pies has made her recall that she needs bibs for the grandchildren. What luck! Pilgrim's has lovely starched ones (YUKY-1) that will cover their fronts and ears and hair. The bibs are $1.38 apiece and Agatha will want a dozen of them.

O, Scholars, hasten. Time's a'wastin'. Sleigh service between here and Overfed, Massachusetts, can't be fast enough for this occasion. Naturally, you will pay Pilgrim's with a money order. Only residents have to pay 7¼% sales tax. Shipping is 4½% of the subtotal and there is a handling charge of $4.00.

Oh, yes, the zip there is 00000—just like the groan. Fold this letter to fit a small business envelope.

May you, too, feast until you groan with pleasure.

A happy Thanksgiving to you all,
Mrs. R.

Georgianna G. Robbins, Hillsboro High School, Hillsboro, Ohio

Young Authors Write for Younger Readers

One of the best experiences I have had with seventh-graders was the writing of stories to be shared with second-graders. This assignment was made in December and so Christmas stories were popular, but stories about other family traditions would be equally appropriate. I stipulated that stories must be original but could be written as prose or poetry. We also talked about appeals to the senses, all five of them.

Prior to writing, students brought in favorite stories from early childhood, and I secured stories recommended by a second-grade teacher. For several periods, we shared these stories, talking about the level of the writing and appeals to the senses. We also examined the illustrations. We read "Twas the Night before Christmas." To illustrate how one piece of writing can be used as a pattern for another, I read aloud two takeoffs that followed Moore's form and rhyme scheme but changed the content. Then we began writing.

I was amazed at the enthusiasm. Not one student complained "I can't think of anything to write about!" Students wrote in class during the first week. During the next, they revised and illustrated their stories. Scraps of fabric, fur, old greeting cards, magazine cutouts, and paper of all kinds appeared as students created visual and tactile images. These illustrations made some of the duller and less successful stories fun to read, and weaker writers achieved a sense of accomplishment. Finished products varied widely, with stories about lonely children who received cuddly animals for Christmas, families reunited, holiday travels to grandparents, and some very original ideas like *Big Foot Has Christmas, Too.*

A second-grade teacher read all of the stories and selected those most appropriate for her class. My young authors then went to her room and read these stories aloud. It was, indeed, a successful writing experience for my students and for me. I teach in high school now, but I remember with fondness the joy and delight of this special group of seventh-graders.

Viva Sewell, Borger High School, Borger, Texas

In addition to designing and completing their own children's books and sharing them with younger children, my junior high students come to recognize the elements of successful children's fiction: easy-to-follow plot, quick action, understandable characters, appropriate language, and colorful illustrations.

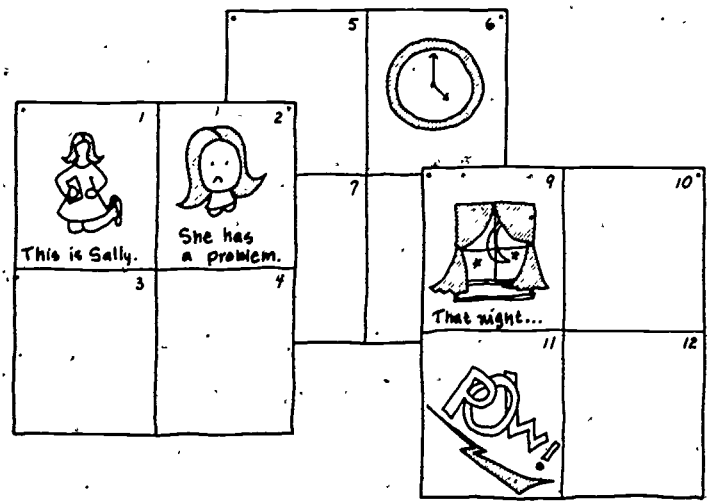
Here is a summary of how we proceed.

Day one. Discuss children's fiction; ask students to recall some of their favorite stories. Each student reads four children's books, either from the selection in class (I get about fifty books from an elementary school librarian for this purpose) or from their home libraries. Students then complete an evaluation sheet of about ten questions for each book; points covered include plot, characters, language, illustrations.

Day two. Reading and evaluating children's books continue. The four evaluations are due on day three.

Day three. Discuss what students have discovered about the books they read. Summarize the elements of good children's fiction. Collect the evaluations. Students begin writing their stories, which will be suitable for younger children. Drafts are to be completed as homework and brought to class on day four.

Day four. Demonstrate how to use a story board to organize the story and its illustrations. Emphasize that the pictures are merely sketches of what will eventually be the illustrations. The storyboard is only a rough draft. For example:



Day five. Students complete their storyboards, bringing them to me when they think they have them letter perfect. I encourage them to ask fellow students to read their work before discussing it with me.

Days six, seven (eight if they need it). Students write their stories in book form and illustrate them in color. Allow plenty of time because good pictures require it.

Day eight or nine. Discuss the information found on a title page and book cover. Students complete title pages and covers for their books. If necessary, books are completed as homework. They are to be turned in the following day.

Day nine or ten. Students read their books aloud, and the class votes for its favorites. Authors of books selected arrange with elementary teachers to share their books with younger children. A public library might also have a reading hour where students could share their books.

Additional observations. I don't require all students to do their own illustrations. They may ask another, better artist to sketch drawings for them to color. This tactic relieves students who hate to draw and encourages family and friends to participate in the project. Also, I don't allow alphabet books because they take too long to illustrate and are usually boring.

I hope this project works as well for you and your students as it does for us. After including it in my curriculum for several years, I now have parents and former students endorsing the experience.

Jill Tammen, Hudson Middle School, Hudson, Wisconsin

The Literary Magazine Is Alive and Well in Old Town

For years at our junior high school we complained that students never had an audience other than the teacher or the class. Finally, we decided to publish a literary magazine. Our magazine has been published for two years now and has three components: photographs, ink drawings, and writing.

We recruit several students to make up a basic staff. The most important group is the editorial staff. Here we try to interest some of the best academic students in the school. Editors read, evaluate, and criticize everything turned in to the magazine. They decide which items to include and which to exclude. If items need revision, they make valid suggestions. In addition, editors determine the format of the magazine.

We get items for the magazine from regular classroom assignments and from outside or extra work. Teachers refer students and their work to the magazine throughout the year. In addition, we help students who wish to go beyond normal school activities in any of the areas included in the magazine. Local artists, photographers, and the Kodak Corporation have all been willing to help our students.

Carlton J. Fitzgerald, J.A. Leonard Junior High School, Old Town, Maine

Minimags

In this two-week project, students work in small groups to design and produce a magazine for class distribution. Here is a summary of the work involved.

1. Enthusiastically present the idea of creating a magazine as a small group project. Talk about favorite magazines and share a few, especially ones brought in by students.
2. Students form groups of no more than six so that each person will have the chance to do many jobs.
3. Formulate with students general guidelines, for example:
   a. Everything needs to be in black and white.
   b. Black lead/ink that photocopies is best to use.
   c. X-rated material is a "no-no."
   d. Careful lettering (writing/typing), use of rulers, etc., is important for an attractive magazine.
   e. Only two weeks of class time will be given to the minimag.
   f. All material must be created by the members of the group.
   g. Include title page and contributors page—opt for a table of contents and other traditional forms.
4. Supplies of black pens, rulers, pencils, scissors, rubber cement, and white-out must be available.
5. Students brainstorm within groups and make initial decisions about paper size, method of folding, binding. What will be the title? Will the minimag have a theme?
6. Groups begin to gather material: wonderful writing hidden in their writing folders and fresh material created specifically for the minimag. Each group decides how to select pieces, who will proofread, who will write/print/type the final copy.

7. After the groups have begun to collect material, meet with a representative from each group and explain a few simple guidelines for layout and page design. The rough copy is assembled by cutting out the recopied writing and art work and arranging them on pages. Glue the pieces to each page with rubber cement. Use captions, bold letters, "tags."
8. During the two weeks you are a resource person. Move from group to group, encouraging all. *If* you are asked to correct or proofread, do so, but not unless your services are requested.
9. When the magazines are completed, reproduce enough copies for the class. Each group assembles its minimag and binds the pages with staples, three-hole punch and yarn, brads, or whatever.
10. "Minimag Day": Everybody reads!

Patricia Colfer, I. S. 233 (magnet school), New York, New York

Research and the Research Paper

Research with cash register tapes and grocery ads, research into the photo archives, and research through personal interviews rival traditional library research in this collection of activities that produce documented and informative writing of several varieties. Three activities focus on career planning based on research in the library and on the job.

Collecting information through interviews is a necessary first step in **Generation Link**, page 32, and **Getting to Know You**, page 33. Research-based oral activities include **Sophomore Symposium**, page 115; **Celebrities in the Classroom**, page 117; **And the Past Shall Be Present**, page 120; and **Window on the World**, page 180.

From Black Cats to Sidewalk Cracks

Around Halloween I have my students compile a dictionary of superstitions. We collect all the superstitions they have ever heard, including their meanings and origins if possible. We add to the collection through interviewing people and from books. Illustrations are the last step in producing a fascinating and attractive book.

Ruth A. Mills, C. V. T. Gilbert School, North Las Vegas, Nevada

Dictionary of Things to Do

Help students to compile a *Things to Do* dictionary that lists youth-oriented facilities within the community or immediate area. This dictionary may include a "fun for free" section as well as businesses such as video arcades, skating rinks, and theaters. Students may provide directions for each listing, a map on which all listings are located, expenses, business hours, phone numbers, and the like. The type of information included will, of course, vary with the grade level of the compilers.

Shana Turner, George E. Harris School, Las Vegas, Nevada

Survival Research

I use this interdisciplinary unit for an end-of-the-school-year project and allow three to four weeks for students to complete it. Sixth-graders enjoy it, but the project is easily adapted to interest junior high students.

Introduce the following hypothetical situation or another more appropriate to your geographical area. Students will spend three months, from June 1 to August 31, in an uninhabited region of northern Michigan. Then distribute the rules by which they will survive.

1. You may go alone or with one other person. Each person will receive $1,000 to buy supplies. Nothing may be brought "free" from home. You must purchase everything you need for the trip.
2. The following items are required purchases for each person:
   a. Two entire changes of clothing
   b. Basic first-aid equipment, including a snake-bite kit
   c. Poncho and boots
   d. Water purification tablets
   e. Storage for supplies (tarpaulins, tent, or other)
   f. One large bar of soap, one 6-ounce tube of toothpaste, one toothbrush
   g. Sufficient food for three months (details to follow)
3. Spend all your money because nothing can be purchased after you leave home.
4. Menus must follow the 4-4-3-2 nutrition plan.
   a. Four servings daily of cereal or bread (One ounce is considered a serving; ½ ounce of potato or other chips may be considered a serving.)
   b. Four servings of vegetables or fruit daily (four ounces = a serving)

c. Three servings daily of milk (eight ounces = one serving)
d. Two servings daily of meat or other high protein foods (two ounces = one serving)

5. Menus should allow for three days' variety. This means that you should plan three different breakfasts, lunches, and dinners. Use one page of your report to explain your menu rotation.
6. You will need to compute amounts carefully. You need, for example, four servings of fruit or vegetables per day. Four ounces = one serving, so that's 16 ounces for 90 days or 1,440 ounces per person. If you are camping with a friend, that will be 2 × 1,440 or 2,880 ounces. Divide by 16 to see the number of pounds needed for the three-months' stay.
7. Plan to bring only dried, canned, or powdered foods. You may hunt, fish, pick berries, or otherwise provide for some of your food, but be sure that what you plan to obtain from nature is indigenous to northern Michigan and available during June, July, and August.
8. You will need to provide proof that your plans have stayed within the budget of $1,000. Fold 18" × 24" sheets of newsprint in half crosswise, newspaper style. Proof may be a newspaper, magazine, or catalog advertisement, a box top, can top, register receipt, or a note signed by a parent verifying the price. Set up each page as shown below.
9. You will have leisure time during your three months in the wilderness. Be prepared for it.

Item	Qty.	Unit Cost	Total Cost	Proof
toothbrush	2	$1.09	$2.18	
canned peaches #303	60	69¢	$41.40	

Each student completes a survival plan for the trip, which includes the three-day menu and an inventory of all items to be taken with proof of prices. When these are completed, I evaluate with the class which plans represent the most complete assessment of needs for a three months' stay and yet remain within the $1,000 allowance per person.

Margaret Hutchingson, Henry School, Chesterfield, Missouri

For I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.

My middle-schoolers enjoy this assignment, which combines research, writing, speaking, and art work.

> Get ready for the twenty-first century! For the next several days, you will take a look at the future. All homework assignments are described on this sheet. You may work on them after you have completed in-class assignments, in study halls, in your art class (when it's okay with your teacher), or at home. You will be given a single grade on the completed folder. No section should be incomplete or missing. Do your neatest, best work. The entire packet is due _____.
>
> 1. Design a folder from tagboard or construction paper that will hold all assignments. Put your name and class on the front along with a futuristic design. To be sure that no papers get lost, clip, staple, or tie them into your folder before handing it in.
> 2. Write a *researched* report on one of the planets in our solar system, excluding Earth. Drawings may be included. Minimum length: one page.
> 3. Draw an interpretation of one of the following: a futuristic city, a robot, a UFO, an alien, futuristic transportation, a scene from another planet—or an idea of your own.
> 4. Write a well-planned paragraph or poem on one of these topics: "Rockport in the Year 2000" or "UFO Experience." The UFO experience can be one that happened to you, one that you read about in the paper or heard about on television, or one someone told you about. Include specific details.
> 5. Invent a gadget or machine that will make life easier. You may describe it in a paragraph or through a labeled illustration.
> 6. This is an especially important assignment. Write a well-organized composition that involves some serious thinking. Write a rough draft and then prepare a neat final copy on

lined paper with margins and the proper heading. The final copy should be an example of the best writing you can do. All words must be spelled correctly, so use the dictionary. I must receive both copies—the draft and the final copy. Choose one of the following topics and think about how it may affect future life:

robots	ESP
aliens	threats to the environment
computers	loss of freedom
mind control	disintegrator rays or other sophisticated weaponry
nuclear warfare	interplanetary warfare
space travel	living in space

7. Prepare a brief talk about an interesting futuristic item you have heard about or read about in the news: medical research, UFO reports, computer developments, transportation in the future. You will be asked on _____ to present your information to the class.
8. Use this checklist to be sure your folder is complete before turning it in:

_____ cover design and folder
_____ planet report
_____ drawing
_____ paragraph (Rockport in 2000 or UFO report)
_____ invention (illustration or paragraph)
_____ oral presentation (not included in the folder)

Elaine Smith, Rockport Middle School, Rockport, Massachusetts

Pizza Pizzazz

This is a "just for fun" research project. The class investigates types of pizza, types of crust, types of cheese, pizza combinations, shapes of pizza, ways to divide, ways to purchase, number of parlors in town (including why they are called parlors). They also find out about the origin of pizza. The data can be presented in a number of ways, including *The Whole Pizza Catalog*, written on piece-of-pizza pages (paper cut in triangular shapes). Conclude the project by walking to the neighborhood pizza parlor for "field research."

Shirl Anderson, Myrtle Tate School, Las Vegas, Nevada

Once upon a Name

You'll need reference books that explain name derivations; for example, Basil Cottle's *Penguin Dictionary of Surnames*, Elsdon C.

Smith's *New Dictionary of American Family Names*, or George R. Stewart's *American Given Names: Their Origin and History*. Each student studies the history of his or her name—given names and surnames when possible. Using these ideas, the student makes up a story of how that meaning came to be. This can be written as a personal tale, a myth, or other narrative form. When stories are complete, students make them into books complete with illustrations and laminated covers. These make lovely gifts for parents on a special occasion.

Jeanne Hartmans, Paul E. Culley School, Las Vegas, Nevada

Ready to Research

To prepare students for the seemingly overwhelming task of writing a research paper, I assign a single-source persuasive essay followed by a two-source comparison paper. These two tasks put students in the library, help them refine persuasive techniques, and require them to evaluate the quality of sources. After completing these two papers, high school juniors and seniors approach the research project with some degree of confidence.

Single-Source Persuasive Essay

1. Choose an article (at least three to four pages in length) on a current topic from *Newsweek, Time, Commonweal, Atlantic Monthly,* or similar magazine.
2. You must be able to find information on the topic you select in a second source in order to complete the next assignment in this sequence. I recommend finding that second source now.
3. Take a stand on the topic discussed in the first article you chose. Develop a thesis.
4. Try to find several kinds of evidence that will persuade readers: facts and figures, examples, expert testimony, eyewitness accounts, logical reasoning.
5. Include the name of the article and name and date of the magazine in the text of your paper. If the author's name is given, try to include it.
6. Schedule: two class periods in the library and two days of in-class writing.

Two-Source Comparison Paper

1. Compare the two sources you found. Judge which is better. Your thesis will not deal with the topic this time; rather, it will deal with the quality of the articles.

2. In making your comparison, consider these criteria:
   a. Author: position, experience, intention.
   b. Kinds of evidence used: facts and figures, examples, expert testimony, eyewitness accounts, logical reasoning.
   c. Intended audience: note content, style, vocabulary.
   d. Organization: chronological, problem and solution, question and answer, others.
   e. Format: words only, photographs and illustrations, charts, graphs, and diagrams.
   f. Scope: How much of the topic is covered? Are both sides of the question considered?
   g. Timeliness
3. Your paper may be organized by similarities and differences, total impression, point by point, or some other scheme.
4. Schedule: one class period in the library, one period of in-class reading and evaluation, two periods of in-class writing.

Carol J. Klema, Hillsboro High School, Hillsboro, Wisconsin

Out of the Archives

Photo archives, especially those in local museums and libraries, provide excellent springboards to composition: Main Street in 1909, the laying of the cornerstone of a building now slated for demolition, a balloon ascent at the county fair. An excellent resource available in paperback that gave me many ideas is *Images of Information: Still Photography in the Social Sciences*, edited by Jon Wagner (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1979).

Natalie White, Albuquerque Public Schools, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Two Birds with One Research Paper

About three years ago I sought the help of social studies and science teachers with the research paper traditionally taught in the English class. Briefly, I teach research techniques in English class and the subject teachers assign or approve the topics and grade the final papers.

Early in the school year, I contact teachers who require term papers and tell them that I will use two weeks of class time to teach research techniques and documentation skills if they will assign or suggest research topics to our mutual students. With this

method I have involved biology, physics, history, government, sociology, and humanities teachers. Using "real" topics from other classes seems to motivate students to do a good job and to accomplish more than the minimum required.

At the end of the two-week period of class and library instruction, which includes the use of the card catalog and the *Readers' Guide*, correct documentation, notetaking, outlining, and bibliographies, students submit to me a "mock" paper complete with cover sheet, coded note cards, footnoted outline, and bibliography. I use a twenty-five point checklist to evaluate their work. The project is then returned to the student who corrects and revises and prepares the final paper to submit to the subject-matter teacher.

An end result has been that six teachers are grateful to obtain more accurate, better organized term papers. Their appreciation is, of course, rewarding but my primary purpose has also been accomplished: students recognize that skills essential for success in other fields are taught in English class.

Anne Berardi, Hubbard High School, Hubbard, Ohio

Writing the Human Interest News Story

Just after Thanksgiving for the past few years my sophomores have embarked on a seven-week research unit. Every year I have experimented with shorter writing projects designed to give them a variety of research skills and to teach them a clear, concise style. On vacation this summer I read an early edition of Ken Macrorie's *Writing to Be Read*, and in the "Finding an Angle" chapter noted the idea of a human interest news story. This fall, when a local reporter wrote such a story about a friend of mine who quit teaching to open a restaurant, I decided to develop the assignment.

Two weeks before the writing started, I assigned the interview. A half hour in the faculty room provided me with the names of twenty interesting local subjects. I gave a lesson on interviewing, followed by a demonstration with my student teacher on what *not* to do. Students laughed but got the point. They role-played interviews with one another and then went out and set up the real ones. I selected some good human interest stories from various newspapers and ran them off for the class to analyze. They cut out others that interested them and we discussed those. Inductively, we made a list of good interviewing and writing techniques. Craig Wilson, the reporter who had written the restaurant story for *The Saratogian*, also spoke to my class about interviewing.

We worked on the first drafts for a couple days, then spent a period in "helping circles" (another Macrorie idea), giving suggestions for revision to each other. The next week Glen Falls' Mark Frost, owner and manager of *The Chronicle*, spoke to the class about writing and critiqued several student drafts. He said he would consider publishing one or more stories, and this sent students scurrying to their pens and typewriters for better revisions. During the work days that ended the unit, I conferred briefly with students about their papers. Two weeks after the unit began the revisions (some of them third and fourth versions) were submitted. I ran off a booklet of the stories on the copy machine, and we shared them.

Subjects for stories included a high school dropout, an art teacher who quit her job to take on a second adopted child, a ten-year-old girl who played hockey in an all-boy league, and a florist who sells natural foods to supplement his business. Many of them were pretty good, I think, and Mark Frost is considering them for publication. Craig Wilson is now critiquing the stories and returning to talk to us about them in the spring. We may work more on them then.

These were the writing guidelines I asked students to follow.

1. Use short paragraphs and short, subject-verb sentences as the norm, with occasional departures from this norm for surprise and emphasis.
2. Try to get an interesting quote in almost every paragraph.
3. Hook your reader with the opening lines. Example: "Was one of your ancestors a knight, a wealthy baron, or a pilgrim? Probably not, but John Austin, a local geneologist, may be able to discover who your ancestors really were."
4. Keep the average newspaper reader in mind and try to interest him or her with the uniqueness of your subject.
5. Make sure your story is true, both to the outer facts and the inner spirit of your subject.
6. Close your story with a surprising or memorable end.

Courtney Walsh, Hudson Falls Senior High School, Hudson Falls, New York

Career Research

This research project emphasizes the importance of career planning, introduces students to the work environment of careers in which they are interested, and involves them in several writing assignments, some of which will be read by readers other than the teacher and in settings other than the classroom.

I begin by conducting a job interview with each student, including application forms and resume preparation. Students must convince me that the jobs they have selected are worthy of on-site visits; otherwise, they will not be allowed to go.

Next, students write business letters to employers in the fields in which they are interested, requesting appointments to spend a day on the job observing a worker.

In-school research follows, and students read about the history of the career they have chosen, about current job conditions, and about the future of this type of work.

Next, each student is excused from school for one day to observe someone doing the job he or she has selected. Students are asked to put themselves in the worker's place and to prepare an oral report for the class, recounting their personal reactions during this "shadow" experience.

Students now write research reports based on their library work and on-the-job observations.

The project closes with friendly letters to employers, thanking them for the opportunity to shadow a worker.

John H. Kennedy, Randolph Union High School, Randolph, Vermont

Over the past few years Vestavia Hills High School has evolved a career research project that meets the government mandate that public schools teach career options and that introduces our sophomores to academic research.

English teachers, guidance counselor, and librarian cooperate to implement this six-week project, but each has separate responsibilities. The English teacher covers outlining, notetaking, and correct footnote and bibliographical forms and supervises the papers. The guidance counselor administers a preference or aptitude test and helps each student select a career to study based on his or her top three scores. The librarian teaches the use of the card catalog and microfiche and introduces the *Readers' Guide* and career index file.

Students are given a week to select subjects, complete preliminary investigations, and make provisional outlines. Two weeks are allowed for the actual research of materials. Students then turn in notecards, which the English teacher evaluates for content and form.

Next, the English teacher supervises students in organizing their notecards, making a permanent outline, and writing their papers. Students have three weeks to complete the career research paper.

This project has become one of the most valuable parts of our sophomore English program. Students gain a solid academic research background to rely on when they encounter more difficult materials later on in high school and college. They will be at ease in a college or public library because they hold the keys with which to unlock and use resources. Better yet, they don't have to wait for intangible future rewards. In a single semester they have progressed from "nowhere" to "somewhere" and successfully accomplished a very difficult task. Our sophomores are proud of themselves when they hand in their career research paper complete with footnotes and bibliography. I am proud of them, too!

Vivien Cummings, Vestavia Hills High School, Vestavia Hills, Alabama

I use the assignment sheet reproduced below to define the final project for a technical writing unit in an advanced composition course. Secondary students find this a rigorous but rewarding assignment. I'd be happy to send samples of their work for the cost of reprinting and postage. Write me at Shawnee High School; the ZIP is 45806.

To: Advanced Composition Students
From: M. S. Bush
Re: Final Project, Technical Writing Unit

Objective:

To assemble a pamphlet that offers an overview of a given career, a detailed description of necessary qualifications, and an assessment of opportunities. Information is to be obtained from library research, interviews, and a day on the job. This informative pamphlet should be suitable for use by our high school guidance department in counseling students about career choices.

Format:

Binding, cover with illustration
Title page, abstract, table of contents
Acknowledgements
Sections (arrangement is up to you)
- Interest-arousing introduction
- Discussion of qualifications
  1. Minimum/optimum education: levels and types of courses in secondary, technical school, junior college, college, postgraduate studies
  2. Minimum/optimum apprenticeship training
  3. Personal qualifications

Equipment and paraphernalia

- Job Description
- Interviews
  - Entry level and veteran level
  - Position, title, company
  - Job description, duties
  - Academic/institutional training
  - On-the-job training
  - Career potential
  - Feedback to your library research
  - Verbal and written communication skills
  - Sample correspondence: letterheads, memos, inventory sheets, etc..
  - Closing (suggested: your impression of a day on the job)
- Appropriate graphs, charts, photos
- Bibliography

Requirements:

- Library research of five sources published within last five years
- Permission slips from parents and teachers for interviews and day on the job
- Choices for interviews and letters of request
- Interview questions
- Objectives for day on the job
- Draft of pamphlet
- Final copy of pamphlet

Margie S. Bush, Shawnee High School, Lima, Ohio

4 Tricks of the Writing Teacher's Trade

Activities in this chapter vary widely but they share an explicit zest for writing and an implicit understanding that only students who want to write, write well. Tricks of the trade, writing stimuli, motivating devices—the term is not as important as the spirit these activities engender. Who can avoid speculating about the contents of a package that appears in every student's story, regardless of setting or characters? Who can resist having a try at a class-authored story in which each new sentence must begin with the next letter of the alphabet? And if Ms. Balsai takes off her shoes and polishes them before the class, wouldn't you be willing to write a paper describing the process, including transitional words and phrases?

Not Only the Names Have Been Changed

This activity helps students appreciate the interdependence of character, plot, and setting and also generates some highly creative story variations. Each student may write or tell a story or students may work together in small groups.

Select with the class one or more characters and a setting—these will remain constant in everyone's story. The variation will be "a package." Change the characteristics of this package for each student or small group and discover how the plots change as the package changes. Suggested packages: plain brown wrapper, crated, outer wrapping battered and torn, holes for a living creature, package marked "Return to sender" (Do not open; Open with care; Do not open until Christmas). Other changes can have to do with size, shape, method of delivery.

The activity may be repeated, keeping two other aspects constant but changing a third. For example, cut a picture from the *National Geographic* to serve as the setting for everyone's story but change the age, sex, or personality of the main character for

each writer. Or keep the characters constant and give each student a picture of a different setting.

Marilyn Lathrop, Ella Canavan School, Medina, Ohio

Scrambled Paragraph

The purpose of this exercise is to show the logic of organizing ideas and the importance of transitional words and phrases. It can be adapted to various grade levels by varying the complexity of the model paragraph, which can be taken from texts, magazines, literature, or student writing. Type a paragraph so that it can be cut into single sentences. The sentences should not be in proper sequence when students receive them. By identifying transitional devices and using logic, students are to reconstruct the paragraph by arranging and numbering the sentences, by rewriting the paragraph, or by attaching the sentences to a prepared outline. The cut-and-paste outline for a paragraph might look something like this:

Glue topic sentence here, covering this line of type.

I. Glue first major point here; do not cover the Roman numeral.
   - A. Glue specific supporting statement here; do not cover the letter.
   - B. Repeat step A.

II. Glue second major point here; do not cover the Roman numeral.
   - A. Glue specific supporting statement here; do not cover the letter.
   - B. Repeat step A.
   - C. Repeat step A.

Glue concluding sentence here so that it aligns with the topic sentence above.

Barbara Huberty, Canfield High School, Canfield, Ohio

Xenophobe, Yet, and Zigzagging

This writing challenge is fun to meet as a class with the story written sentence by sentence on the board, but the results are equally interesting when it is tackled by small groups or by individual students. The only rule is that the first sentence in the story must begin with the letter *A*, and each subsequent sentence with the next letter of the alphabet—*B*, *C*, and so on. I find this

activity invaluable in motivating students to use a variety of sentence beginnings, including inverted subjects and predicates, and a variety of words—especially when they reach the end of the alphabet and resort to the thesaurus and the dictionary!

Beverly Midthun, Rippleside Elementary School, Aitkin, Minnesota

A Sound Assignment

Records of sound effects (an individual sound effect usually lasts from ten to sixty seconds) are available at local libraries, but you can also record your own onto cassette tapes—sirens, squeaking doors, ticking clocks, tolling bells, chirping birds, an unnerving scream. Play *one* sound effect for the class. Ask students to listen carefully the first time it is played and to imagine the scene that produced that sound. In short, students should create in their minds a picture, a setting, and eventually a story. Ask them to concentrate on that scene and who is involved. Play the sound effect a second time. Now students write the story or vignette they have imagined. I usually allow about thirty minutes to complete the assignment, but you may find students begging for more time as they begin to work out their ideas.

Debbie Rub, Audubon Junior High School, Los Angeles, California

Classroom Character

The appearance of the classroom character has helped to spark many lackluster papers. The class invents a favorite character—crazy Aunt Clara or silly Uncle Slim—who does weird, wacky things. Last Christmas Aunt Clara decorated her dog instead of her tree. Students love to describe in detail the exploits of such a character. This simple device seems to free reluctant writers who claim to lack ideas. And it's surprising how easy it is for this character to wander in and out of all kinds of writing assignments.

Susan Howard, Paxon Junior High School, Jacksonville, Florida

Brown Bagging It

I use this exercise to emphasize the difference between objective and subjective description, but it's a suitable assignment for descriptive writers at almost any grade level.

Place in a brown bag for each student a variety of everyday items: an onion, a moth ball, a piece of sponge, a burnt piece of toast, a shoestring, a feather. Distribute the bags and instruct students not to remove the objects from the bags or show them to anyone. Each student then writes a brief objective description of each item in his or her brown bag, a description in which the item is not named. To see how successful students have been, we take turns reading our descriptions to the class without, of course, opening the bags until all guesses have been made.

In the second part of the exercise, students adopt the viewpoint of one of the objects in their bags and describe a typical day in its life: A Day in the Life of an Onion, Burnt Toast Biography, Shoestring Saga.

Elizabeth Pedicord, Canton South High School, Canton, Ohio

Grody to the Max

Junior high students will enjoy this disgusting activity—if you have the stomach to read their vivid comparisons and accurate adjectives.

Write the school menu on the board, choosing a day when you know from experience students will feel the lunch is especially revolting. Direct students to copy the menu on the left side of a sheet of paper, allowing plenty of space between items. On the right side, across from each item, ask them to describe each food as might be done on a menu card. What is it made of? Where did it come from? How was it prepared? What does it look like? One student example:

> Hot Dogs USDA has not approved these, but you'll be sure to enjoy them. 100% coarse ground pig ears.

Mary McClintick Miller, Central Junior High School, Alexandria, Minnesota

Add-a-Line Stories—with Qualifications

We are all familiar with that perennial favorite, add-a-line stories in which the teacher or a student provides the first sentence of a story and each student in turn adds a sentence until the story is

finished. I have devised several ways of making this activity serve more specific purposes.

1. Encourage sentence strength and variety by directing the next sentence grammatically: "In the next sentence, describe that character with an adjective clause and a prepositional phrase."
2. Draw attention to plot and climax: "Now write a sentence that shows Terry in conflict with the main character."
3. Focus on mood: "Describe Sarah's feelings at this point."
4. Have three to five stories under way at the same time, each beginning with the same sentence and based on the same set of instructions. Compare the finished stories later and discuss the effect of specific decisions on story development.
5. Lower-ability students often learn through add-a-line stories to recognize the effect that a given sentence has on the direction of a story. They can be encouraged to transfer this skill, noting such changes as they read other materials.
6. Need a first sentence? "Mary knew as soon as she saw the snow falling that this would be a day she would not forget."

Here is a variation I use in film study class. Take a scene from a film that has been shown to the class. I use *The Game* (National Film Board of Canada), the scene in which the girl tells the boy he is just as rotten as her friends had warned. I sketch the shots needed to convey that incident on the board as an example and to show that drawing skill is not essential to completing the assignment. The shots include a closeup of the girl making a phone call; the girl walking through the park, medium shot; the boy going up the stairs, shot through bars of handrail; overhead shot of both meeting on the roof; closeup of girl saying, "They told me you would be like this"; overhead of girl walking away. Students then choose a different setting for the meeting between the boy and girl and devise their own sequence of shots. A sheet of paper with six to eight "frames" is enough space.

Post the new sequences for comparison. Most students like to finish the confrontation in a more decisive way. Students also tend to have at least one person drive to the meeting or have the couple talk in a car. Comparing the shots encourages discussion of plot resolution, visual impact, and many other qualities.

Anonymous contributor

Three for Composition

1. To emphasize the importance of sequence and the use of transitions, I ask students to take notes on the steps involved in an activity I demonstrate for them. I have polished my shoes, made a pizza, and demonstrated Origami in front of the class. After students have made notes, they organize their material into a unified paragraph or short paper. We evaluate these later, concentrating on linking words, transitional ideas, and sequencing.
2. To encourage descriptive writing, I pass out lollipops. Students lick their way through while describing the sensations they experience. No biting allowed, and they have to at least taste the cardboard. For touch, blindfolded students stick their hands into anything from shaving cream to styrofoam and describe the feelings with a comparison or simile. For smell, students sit in their kitchens or go to a bakery, research the aroma, and jot down their impressions.
3. During a letter-writing unit, I ask students to write to the editor of the school paper about a pet peeve. They must not only complain but also include a reasonable solution to the problem. Many of these letters have been used by the editor, and students feel a genuine sense of accomplishment when their work is printed.

Robyn J. Balsai, Salisbury High School, Allentown, Pennsylvania

If I Could . . .

I have found that this series of three writing assignments appeals to junior high students and provides a framework for developing the basic parts of a composition: introduction, body, conclusion. In addition, the series can be used as a springboard for discussion about flashback techniques, correct use of tenses, and planning for career goals. Each assignment requires three to five class periods, depending upon how much time I allow for draft, revisions, and evaluation.

> The first assignment: "If I could relive one day or experience in my life, it would be . . ." Use one or more paragraphs to develop each of the following points:
>
> 1. Identify the day or experience.
> 2. Why was it so important to you?
> 3. What would reliving it accomplish?

The second assignment: "If I could make one contribution within my lifetime for the benefit of humankind, it would be . . ." Use one or more paragraphs to develop each of the following points:

1. Identify the contribution.
2. Why is it so important to you?
3. What do you think it would accomplish?

The third assignment: "If I could exchange places with someone else for one day, that person would be . . ." Use one or more paragraphs to develop each of the following points:

1. Identify the person.
2. Why is this person so important to you?
3. What would this exchange accomplish?

Donald E. May, Stonybrook Junior High, Indianapolis, Indiana

Decoding Decor

From a variety of magazines I cut pictures of rooms, making sure that no people appear in these pictures. I select a wide range, from ultramodern chrome-and-glass living rooms to the down-home kitchens so prevalent in current advertising. Each student selects a picture and writes a paragraph about the person or persons he or she imagines occupying that room.

The first time I made this assignment, I anticipated some fairly pedestrian responses; to my surprise, I received detailed and perceptive analyses of hypothetical inhabitants—from their occupations to their drinking habits and educational backgrounds. Students proved adept at making interesting inferences, and we have been able to transfer this perception to our discussions about literature. Students generally have a fairly easy time dealing with setting, but they frequently find the idea of atmosphere rather abstract. This writing exercise has made them more aware of the subtle details writers use to create atmospheres that are consistent with their characters and themes. I might add that students also enjoy the diversion of this assignment.

Barbara Rose, Apponequet Regional High School, East Freetown, Massachusetts

Designer Jeans, Rubik's Cube, and an ERA Button

I receive interesting responses to this exercise in description-as-discourse. On the assignment sheet I print an illumination of the

black-glazed pot that shows Achilles and Ajax playing checkers during a lull in the Trojan War. The assignment goes like this:

> You have visited museums before—art, music, costume, shipbuilding. Recall how the exhibits were set up and the explanations that went along with them. Within the explanations, details about objects were often provided in order to give viewers clearer pictures of the purpose and significance of artifacts.
>
> Now imagine a future generation visiting a particular museum and stopping to look at the exhibit labeled Late-Twentieth Century. Choose an object that might appear in that exhibit and write a paper in which you not only describe that object but also make clear its significance to its time.

Albert C. DeCiccio, Merrimack College, North Andover, Massachusetts

Reflecting on Words

A recent issue of *Psychology Today* had a brief article on loneliness. It defined *isolation*, *solitude*, *reserve*, and *anonymity* and discussed the differences among them.

During the first half of a class period, I wrote these four words on the board and asked each student to define them in writing. Students were permitted to use a dictionary since a few were completely unfamiliar with the words. Definitions, however, were to be expressed in the student's own words.

After I had read through the definitions turned in, I put students in groups of four. Each person in a group was assigned one of the four words. As a group they were to discuss each of the words and its definition and to come up with examples to illustrate each word. For example, a man in prison, according to one group, was "isolated" because he was purposely removed from society. What about a hermit? Or people in a crowded bus who refuse to meet our eyes? Or a student eating alone in a crowded cafeteria?

After this small group discussion and the sharing of definitions, ideas, and examples, each student wrote a paragraph developed by examples on his or her assigned word. Many of these paragraphs were shared with the class and their ideas led to interesting discussions. All in all, the writing generated by this assignment was unique and thought-provoking. Other word clusters might produce equally interesting results.

Dianne Robinson, Fairfield High School, Fairfield, Ohio

Developing Expository Style

Students often find the idea of style nebulous and confusing. In lower grades they are led to believe that compositions deal with the imagination. They love to tell and write stories and are encouraged to do so. Later, however, they learn that short stories are acceptable primarily as entries for contests and literary magazines. The term students hear now is *exposition*, and many are baffled.

Teachers of composition should not expect students to make an easy and painless transition from writing simple narratives to writing complex essays that are developed from a thesis and follow careful plans. We can, however, prepare students for exposition by assigning interesting and enjoyable exercises in style.

Begin with the vivid description of an event; use an article from a current news magazine or write something yourself. Discuss this material with the class, explaining limitations imposed by the topic and pointing out the clear, crisp style. Then ask students to write a similar description based on a recent observation.

After students have polished their descriptions, introduce examples of a description that has been rewritten in a variety of styles. I supplement my examples with ones from Raymond Queneau's *Exercises in Style* (New York: New Directions, 1981). Queneau offers an incident that he recorded as a simple notation and then rewrote in about a hundred different ways, ranging from dream to speech. Students enjoy seeing how the same event can be described in so many different expository styles.

Finally, ask students to rewrite their descriptions in a variety of styles:

anecdote	editorial
memorandum	commentary
letter	metaphor
lecture	journal entry
proclamation	maxim

As students experiment with style, they learn the meaning of exposition. They also learn that exposition is creative.

Robert H. Egolf, William Allen High School, Allentown, Pennsylvania

How to Stop: The Concluding Paragraph

Although these directions sound rather arbitrary when summarized, I think you will find them a help to students who sometimes struggle even more with the final paragraph than they did with the opening one.

1. Locate the following in your introductory paragraph:
   L—the *l*ead-in
   T—the primary generalization: the *t*opic
   S—sub-assertions that provide the *s*tructure of the paper
   E—sentences that *e*xplain or clarify T or S
2. Put L aside; it's not needed in the concluding paragraph because its purpose was to lead readers into the paper. The purpose of the conclusion is to sum up and lead readers out.
3. Organize the concluding paragraph according to this model: SET. Note that the order is not the same as the order in the introductory paragraph. In addition, try to vary sentence length, moving from long to short sentences. This strategy often gives a real punch to the last paragraph.

Here is a final formula that may help:

S—Express each sub-assertion as a noun or noun phrase and write a predicate for that double (triple or multiple) subject.
E—Clarify, substantiate, or explain S.
T—Write a pithy, concise restatement of the primary generalization.

Now go back over the paragraph and make sure that all the sentences are linked to one another.

Sr. Hilda Carey, Convent of the Sacred Heart, New York, New York

5 Revision, Review, and Evaluation

Although editing, revising, and evaluation techniques are integral to a number of the writing activities in previous chapters, some teachers discussed only these processes in the activities they submitted. These are included here along with several that suggest ways to make reviewing an active part of the learning process. Teachers have always known that important learning goes on during review—synthesis and generalization as well as mastery, and these activities—many of them group games—capitalize on the heightened motivation of the pretest situation.

Roughing It

One of the immediate problems for my students is learning to evaluate and revise their writings. They are often too insecure to begin with their own rough drafts—or suffer from the once-written-can't-be-changed syndrome. And they do not know me well enough to presume to evaluate and revise my drafts. I keep an anonymous file of student rough drafts that we use to learn the process of revision. I have found that revision principles taught this way transfer nicely to the student's own work later on in the semester.

Stacey Sanders, Round Rock School, Round Rock, Texas

Rather Than Grading Every Paper

These options to grading every paper reduce the paper load but expand the writing experiences of students.

1. Provide opportunities for students to read their writing to classmates in large or small group settings.
2. Find audiences for student writing. Letters should be sent. Editorials should be submitted to school or local newspapers.

Display student writing everywhere. Book students as guest authors to give readings of their work in other English classes. Arrange for them to go in pairs to reduce intimidation.

3. Use journals as a place for students to explore experiences; later, relate them to more formal written assignments. For example:

Expository Topic:	Escaping from civilization as a theme in literature
Novels:	*Huck Finn, Tom Sawyer, My Side of the Mountain*
Journal Entry:	Everyone needs time alone, away from the pressures of society. How do you deal with the need to be alone? Respond in a letter, poem, personal narrative, or other form you find appropriate.

4. Intervene in the composing stage of student writing. It is then that the comments you ordinarily write at the end of a finished paper can influence the product you will receive.
5. Write with your students. Complete the assignments you give them. Among other benefits, you will discover unforeseen problems with assignments while there is still time to help students work through them.
6. Give the student the final choice of papers to be graded. Ask students to keep their work in writing folders. After they have written several descriptive paragraphs, for example, allow each student to choose the one that will be graded.

Leslie A. Kent, Longfellow Intermediate School, Falls Church, Virginia

Peer Evaluation

Peer evaluation works when we prepare students for the experience. Here is a handout I use to explain the responsibilities and tactics of authors and readers working in small groups.

Directions for Small Groups

1. All members must bring a paper (draft) to read.
2. All members must sit so that each paper being read can be seen as well as heard.
3. Decide quickly who will read first and then begin reading papers.

Directions for Authors

1. Don't apologize for your writing.
2. Read your draft while the others follow along.
3. Wait silently as your group members reread your draft.
4. Begin the discussion by saying, "What I like best about my paper is . . ."
5. Listen to the comments of group members and accept all of them, even if you don't like them or agree with them.
6. Write down these comments and suggestions and make corrections on the draft.
7. Ask to have anything you don't understand explained more clearly.
8. Don't be too sensitive. Remember, it's your work that's being commented on—not you. When it comes right down to it, you control your writing and how you choose to change it.
9. Thank your members.

Directions for Group Members

1. Listen carefully as the draft is being read and follow along on the written page because you may see something you don't hear.
2. Read the paper again silently, making no comments.
3. After the author has said what he or she likes about the paper, it's your turn to make comments. Remember to be kind and helpful—you'll be next!
4. Start by saying what you liked about the way the paper was written (not that you have had a similar experience).
5. Then give helpful comments, suggestions, and corrections. Try starting out with phrases like these:
   I would feel more like I was there in your writing if you would . . .
   I would better understand what you feel if you would . . .
   Your paper would be easier to read if you would . . .
6. Go on to the next person and repeat the process.

Joan Schulz, Edina High School, Edina, Minnesota

Class Critique

This method for revision and evaluation of writing encourages students to read critically. In the process, they discover that mistakes are visible not only to teachers. It can be adapted to various levels and for longer or shorter writing assignments. I have found it to be very successful in making revision less onerous.

1. Each student writes a paragraph on an assigned topic for homework. Either the student writes the paragraph on a ditto master or the teacher types the paragraphs verbatim, including every mistake.
2. A copy of each paragraph is given to each student and a class period or two is spent analyzing all or selected pieces.
3. For homework, students "correct" their copies of their classmates' paragraphs: grammar, spelling, punctuation, style—depending on what has been taught and the level of the students. They then evaluate each paragraph on the following points, using a scale of 1 to 5.
   a. Did the writer answer the question or address the topic?
   b. Did the writer use correct grammar?
   c. Did the writer punctuate correctly?
   d. Did the writer use precise and varied words?
   e. Did the writer maintain the reader's interest?
4. Each student is given all the critiques of his or her paragraph and asked to rewrite the paragraph, incorporating valid suggestions for improvement made by classmates.
5. The teacher evaluates the revised paragraph, using the same criteria and scale, and adds a sixth point: Did the writer use class suggestions in revision?

Elizabeth Williams, Chapel Hill-Chauncy Hall School, Waltham, Massachusetts

Grade the Writer, Grade the Grader

I critique with great care the first writing assignment in each eleventh- and twelfth-grade composition class and assign a letter grade. Each succeeding written assignment is then read and graded by a classmate of the writer. The grader must compliment the writer on one or two good points about the paper and offer constructive criticism about its weaknesses. The grader makes no corrections.

The writer then revises the paper and takes it back to the grader for approval. When approval is given, the paper is handed in. I then go over the essay very quickly and if the grade issued by the grader is fair, I concur. I reserve the right, however, to be the final arbiter in differences of opinion, and I reserve the right to adjust the grade if I think the grader has been too generous or too

harsh. As I look over the paper, I also check the grader's suggestions. Then I grade the grader. Each student gets a grade for writing and a grade for grading. Each student grades a different writer's work each time.

This plan allows students to see how others handle the same assignment. If the paper graded is superior to that of the grader, he or she can judge why. If it is inferior, the grader may feel encouraged by his or her own efforts. Each student has an opportunity in the nine weeks to examine writing of different levels of maturity. As a result, students take more seriously their own writing.

Eleanor Kee, Field Kindley Memorial High School, Coffeyville, Kansas

The Writing Folder: Evaluation over Time

At the beginning of the school year, each student receives a folder. On the inside cover is stapled an assignment sheet. Each writing assignment is kept in this folder and recorded on the assignment sheet.

The first page in the folder is a correction sheet or list of common errors the class has discussed. For example, if a number of students mispell *their*, *there*, and *they're*, we review these spellings in class, do some exercises or drills, and write helpful notes on the correction sheet in the folder. Each time a student writes a composition, he or she relies on this correction sheet as a last step in proofreading. After every assignment, we discuss common errors in spelling or usage and add those to the correction sheet.

I have found that writing folders cut down on the time I spend grading papers. Not every paper needs to be graded, and a final grade can be assigned to the folder at the end of the grading period. Peer evaluation and self-evaluation techniques can be used frequently. Folders also help students to be accountable for corrections and revisions. Instead of marking every error in red, I often make a notation in pencil that can later be erased when the correction is made. When the papers are returned, students revise them and file the corrected papers in their folders. I can check at any time to see whether corrections are being made.

The final, and I think the most valuable, use of the writing folder is to keep compositions together for self-evaluation. At the end of the grading period, I ask students to reread all their writing.

They then answer a number of questions about their writing: What is your best paper? Draw a wavy line under your best passage. Circle several new words you have used. What paper did you enjoy writing the most? What seems to be your most frequent punctuation error? What writing goals will you set for next quarter? Later, I have a conference with each student during which we discuss the self-evaluation, the student's writing strengths and weaknesses, and future writing goals.

Mary M. Harris, Winona Junior High School, Winona, Minnesota

Edit the Teacher

Because I think it is important for a writing teacher to write—and for students to know that their writing teacher writes—I sometimes share my work with my students. When I came across a piece of descriptive writing I had done in college, it occurred to me that here was a chance for my students to have a different kind of editing experience and to realize that the writing of teachers, too, needs more than one draft. I made a ditto with the passage typed three times. The first students were to use as reference, the second they were to edit, and the third we edited as my instructor had done.

It worked. First, I suspect, because the kids got a kick out of editing the teacher; second, because they were not emotionally involved with the piece of writing since it wasn't theirs; third, because they worked as a class; finally, because I used drafts of professional writing as a follow-up.

Here is the exercise, as I wrote it and as edited by my instructor.

> The summer air was hot and humid, and from the window the night scene was a blurred mass of light and shadows. In the distance the ~~flickering~~ red lights of a radio tower ~~were silhouetted~~ flickered against scraggly ~~grey~~ clouds and ~~sparsely~~ scattered stars. Leafy trees partially blotted out The grotesque outlines of the apartment buildings ~~were blotted out by the covering darkness of leafy trees.~~ Down below, the fluorescent lights of a garage flashed ~~into view, gleaming~~ on the glinty steel of ~~the~~ parked automobiles guarded by the watchman.

A ~~blaring~~ radio and the ~~insistent~~ ring of a distant telephone ~~reverberated against~~ cut the stillness of the air. Hollow footsteps on the pavement, ~~echoing the passing of a man in the night,~~ grew louder and then abruptly ceased. ~~Now the only sounds were the squeak of a metal chair~~ as the watchman sat down ~~to a long and silent vigil~~ the metal chair squeaked and the ~~rustling of the~~ leaves ~~rhythmically brushing~~ rustled against my window pane, blotting out the light as they formed shapeless black patterns.

Now the reasons for correction seem obvious to me. The excessive use of adjectives and prepositional phrases, the passive voice, the almost uniformly long sentences come up and hit me from the printed page. I had learned editing, of course, in my journalism classes but that was for factual material, wasn't it? Many of my students have similar problems with overwriting, but I hope at least a few of them won't have to wait till college to learn editing.

Marilyn Kahl, West Covina High School, West Covina, California

Testing with Tic-Tac-Toe

I use this activity to help students master the use of *to, too,* and *two,* but the game can be used with *there, their,* and *they're; its* and *it's; your* and *you're,* and with many other kinds of content. There's no need for answers to come in sets of two or three.

Draw tic-tac-toe grids on the chalkboard and divide the class into pairs or small teams. One player or team uses the X; the other, the O. Decide which player or team will begin the game. Read a sentence that uses *to, too,* or *two.* The first player chooses the appropriate word. The correct answer gives that student the opportunity to place an X or O in a square on the game grid. If the answer was incorrect, the sentence goes to the other player or team. The winner is determined by the traditional rules of tic-tac-toe.

Diane Ng, Helen Marie Smith School, Las Vegas, Nevada

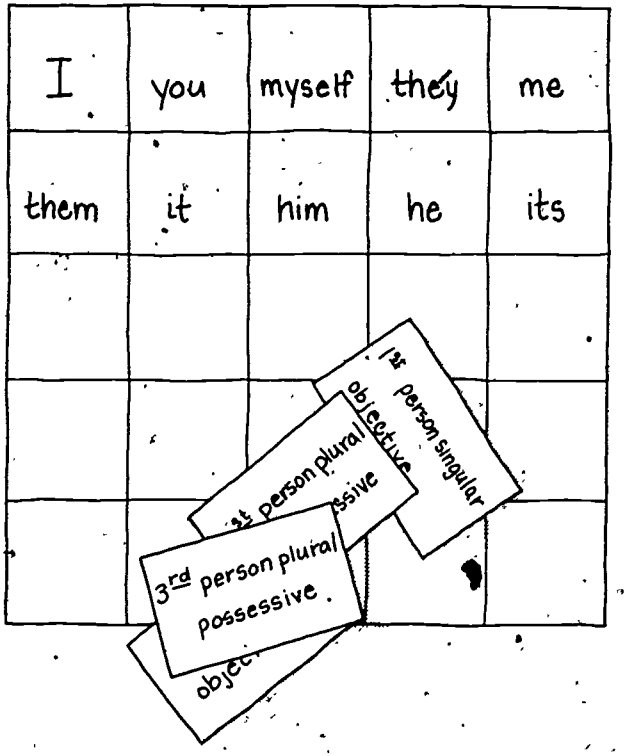
Bingo Review

I often use bingo games to review because the game can be adapted to any content area for which you can devise a list of at least

twenty-five items to be put on the playing cards: authors and titles, literary devices with definitions or examples, character recognition, mythology gods and goddesses, vocabulary and definitions, and many elements of grammar.

My freshmen enjoy playing Bonus Bingo, so named because I give bonus points on test day for "bingos" earned on review day. (I keep a tally during the game.) Here is how I use the game. For the sake of brevity, I've chosen to review personal pronouns.

To prepare for the game, fill the squares on each bingo card with twenty-five pronouns: I, my/mine, myself, me, we, us, you, your/yours, etc. I've included a sample playing card below. Since cards take time to make, ask students to fill their cards from a list of pronouns on the board. Be sure the cards are filled randomly. You'll also need to prepare a set of call cards that contain descriptions of each pronoun.



When everyone has a playing card, distribute a handful of markers to each student—cardboard squares or paper clips will serve. Call out a description of one of the pronouns from a call card chosen at random. Students who have the corresponding pronoun on their cards, cover that square—if they recognize the match.

When a student calls "bingo," others are asked if they qualify. Students must make this claim before I check the cards, and each bingo must include the *last* pronoun I described. These precautions prevent students from cashing in on someone else's bingo. Of course, students may go ahead and cover pronouns missed earlier as I check the cards. We usually go on for several bingo calls before clearing the cards and beginning again.

Patricia Bjerstedt, Lincoln High School, Gahanna, Ohio

I Have, Who Has

I have borrowed this activity from a math teacher. It can be used to reinforce skills in any subject. Its greatest value lies in the fact that although each student holds only one card, he or she must listen carefully and think through every problem in order to be able to respond at the correct time. I have used the game successfully for grammar, vocabulary, and story content reviews.

The basic card design is shown below. For the sake of brevity, I have used verb forms as an illustration. Notice that the "Who has" question on one card is answered by the "I have" statement of the next card.

I have Who has	I have *sat*. Who has *the past tense of tear?*	I have *tore*. Who has *the past participle of run?*

To make the cards, set up the design sheet shown below. Decide on the size of the deck. Beginning with the "Who has" column, write your first question after number 1. Write the answer in the "I have" column after number 2. Write the next question in the "Who has" column after number 2 and its answer in the "I have" column after number 3. Continue in this manner until you have enough questions for the size deck you need. The "Who has" question on the last line is answered in the "I have" column by number 1. Now copy the number 1 "I have" statement and the number 1 "Who has" statement onto the same card. Repeat for each card until the deck is complete.

Game Design Sheet

I have...	Who has...
1.	1. *the past tense of tear?*
2. *tore.*	2. *the past participle of run?*
3. *had run.*	3.
4.	4.
24.	24.
25.	25.

To play the game, shuffle the cards and deal them out, one to each student until the deck is exhausted. (Two cards per student is sometimes more effective.) Choose a student to begin. That student reads the "I have" statement on his or her card, pauses, and reads the "Who has" question. The student holding the answer responds by reading his or her entire card in the same manner. The game continues until the first student answers.

Karen Kutiper, Alief Independent School District, Alief, Texas

Subject Kickball

When warm weather and wiggling students make classroom instruction difficult, I take students outdoors for Subject Kickball—a

great way to review any subject and to burn off excess energy. It can be played with one class or expanded by having one class challenge another. Prepare the list of questions in advance.

Set up the outfield and kicking order as in any kickball game. The first kicker moves up to the plate, and you ask a question concerned with the material to be reviewed. The kicker answers the question. If the answer is correct, the pitcher pitches the ball and the game begins. If the answer is incorrect, the next kicker is up. Play continues until the team makes three outs through plays in the kickball game. After three outs, teams switch and the game goes on.

Patricia G. Houle, Andover Elementary School, Andover, New Hampshire

Team Testing

Students enjoy reviewing when they are permitted to develop and ask subject-matter questions in a game-show format that pits student-selected, four-to-five-member teams against one another. As the host, be sure to set rules that ensure a lively, orderly pace (time limits, penalties for poor sportsmanship). Ascending point values from round to round add to the excitement. When time runs out, each member of the leading team earns an A or other bonus.

After students have taken a particularly difficult objective test, ask them to work in teams of four or five to decide on a team answer to each of the questions. You'll be surprised at the learning that goes on. Ask students to evaluate this team process. You might consider permitting students to count the individual or the group score.

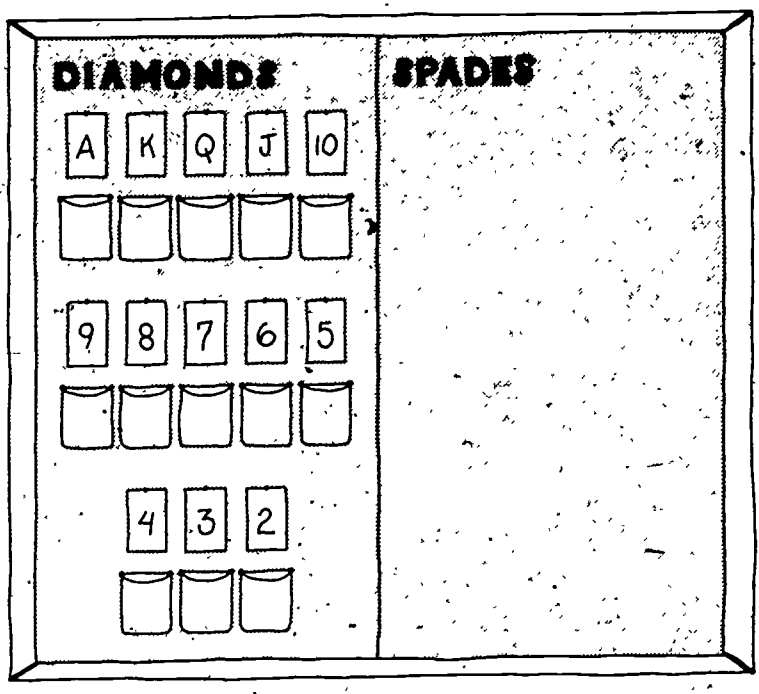
William Speiser, Rumson-Fair Haven School, Rumson, New Jersey

Baseball Review

This game can be used to review almost any kind of material from spelling to usage to literature. To begin, write at least fifty questions covering the material to be reviewed. Go through these and star the most difficult.

Next, staple or glue the diamonds and spades (in descending order) from a deck of cards to a sheet of poster board as shown

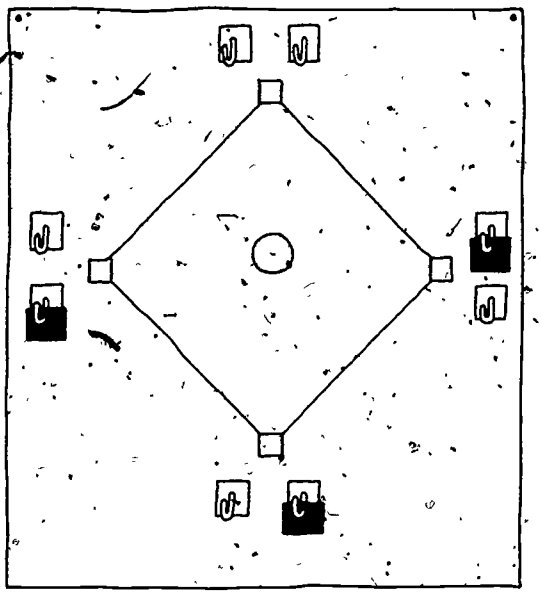
below. Glue a small envelope, (book card pockets work nicely) below each card and insert several questions in each envelope. Put the starred questions in the envelopes beneath the Ace, King, Queen, and Jack of each suit.



Now outline a baseball diamond on a sheet of poster board. You might decorate it with pictures of baseball players. At each base and at home plate paste two adhesive-backed picture hooks as shown below. Finally, cut about twenty two-inch squares of red and black construction paper and punch a hole in each.

To play the game, divide players into two teams—red and black. Place the other half of the deck of cards, divided into hearts and clubs, facedown on the table. Turn up a card from the pile that matches the color of the team at bat (for example, the seven of hearts). Pull a question from the envelope of the corresponding red card on the poster (seven of diamonds). If the student at bat answers the question correctly, his or her team records a base hit

By placing a red square on the first base hook. All cards from two through ten score base hits. If you turn a Jack, Queen, King, or Ace, and the student at bat answers correctly, the team scores a home run. A team remains at bat until three students strike out by answering incorrectly. All players on base move when a student scores. For example, if there is a player on first, a player on second, and a player on third, and the batter answers a one-base question correctly, all players advance one base and the player on third comes home. If a student answers a question from the Jack through the Ace correctly, all players on base come home, including the batter.



Two sets of alternate rules change the pace of the game. In one, teams may alternate in answering instead of switching when the team at bat has struck out three times. In the other, shuffle the hearts and clubs together. The team whose color comes up gets the question. Teams change at bat as the color changes.

Joan Fleischmann, Perkiomen Valley High School, Schwenksville, Pennsylvania

Problem-solving Day

With a firm belief that meeting the needs of the gifted improves the curriculum for all students, I organized a Problem-solving Day. I asked social studies, math, and science teachers to come up with problems for students to solve. These could be brain teasers or problems more directly related to subject matter. We designated one day as Problem-solving Day and awarded prizes in such areas as most problems solved, best problem solver in each subject, most persistent problem solver. The interdisciplinary crosscurrents were refreshing, and students certainly learned the steps of problem solving.

Materials such as the following were useful: *Mind Benders* edited by Rob Nelson and Robin Smith (Midwest Publications), *Think Tank* by Dianne Draze (Dandy Lion Publications), *Scratching the Surface of Creative Problem Solving* by Ruth B. Noller and Ernest Mauthe (DOK Publishers), and *Making Waves with Creative Problem Solving* by Vaune Ainsworth-Land and Norma Fletcher (DOK Publishers).

Betty Schwermann, Chaska Middle School, Chaska, Minnesota

6 Word Study, Vocabulary Development, and Spelling

In 1750 Lord Chesterfield wrote to his son that orthography is absolutely necessary for a gentleman. "One false spelling," he warned, "may fix a ridicule upon him for the rest of his life; and I know a man of quality who never recovered the ridicule of having spelled *wholesome* without the *w*."

We are unlikely to convince our students that their futures hang by a consonant, but we can do much to interest them in words—the power of accurate and accumulated meaning, the fascination of word derivations—and the impact of correct spelling. Teaching suggestions in this chapter encourage students to handle words in active ways like building word chains and playing spelling baseball, in social ways like **First Name/Last Name Crossword Puzzle**, and in ways that are structured to the individual such as a spelling program that generates weekly word lists from the student's own writing and from weekly dictation.

Word Scramble Ramble Amble

Students enjoy finding words in words, and this game can be adapted to almost any level. It's certain to spark a new interest in words.

Write a word on the board from which students can make a new word by moving the letters around. All letters may be used or some may be left over. Then give a definition orally for the word to be discovered. I have students write the new word on a piece of paper because we play the game as a contest, but students can respond orally or you can play the game as a team relay. For younger students use words like *team* (meat, tea, eat, mat, tam). For older students try words like *members* (embers, serf), *learn* (near, lean, real), *example* (peel, peal, lax, ample).

Sherry Wilkie, Madison School, Las Vegas, Nevada

Grid Game

Here's a game that emphasizes vocabulary brainstorming. Write a word or phrase vertically on the left side of a grid. The size of the grid will be determined by the word or phrase you choose. The word can be seasonal, as shown below, but it does not have to be. Across the top of the grid write category labels: nouns, verbs, prepositions, foods, automobiles, ice-cream flavors, characters from literature. Students try to fill in each box with a word that begins with the letter on the left and also conforms to the category label at the top of the column.

	noun	boy's name	TV show	plant	verb
S	ship		Sesame Street		
p					praise
r				radish	
i		Irving			
n					
g				geranium	

The grid game can be played by individuals for extra credit or just for fun, but we usually play with teams earning moves on a Chutes and Ladders board for filling the spaces correctly. Grids can be put on the chalkboard, on dittos, or on an overhead projector. Here are suggestions for the school year, but you'll come up with others that have special meaning for your students.

September —Welcome back, school daze
October —Halloween, pumpkin, ghoulish
November —Thanksgiving, turkey
December —Hanukkah, Christmas, mistletoe
January —New Year, resolution
February —Valentine, Washington, Lincoln
March —Leprechaun

April —Springtime, April showers
May —Vacation

Hope Goffstein, Laura Dearing School, Las Vegas, Nevada

Dictionary Builders

Instead of using standard vocabulary lists, I sometimes ask students to create their own dictionaries. Each student chooses a book from his or her independent reading and selects an agreed-upon number of words from it. After I've checked their lists, students look up the words in the dictionary and copy syllabication, definition, and part of speech. They also write sentences using each word.

Now they are ready to make dictionaries. With the usual supply of fabric, wallpaper, and cardboard, we make books and copy the dictionary work into them. Students copy their work onto the pages before binding them to avoid dismantling the books when mistakes are made. Many students make dictionaries in sizes and shapes that suggest the books from which they took the words. I have had books shaped like baseballs and haunted houses. Most youngsters enjoy illustrating their dictionaries, but those shy about drawing may cut pictures from magazines and paste them into their dictionaries.

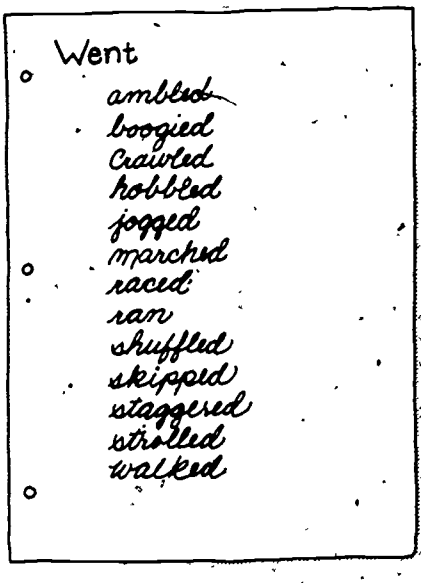
I have found that when students are allowed to pick a book with which they are comfortable, they take considerable pride in their work. This project provides practice in using the dictionary, expands vocabularies, and is a pleasant experience for those who enjoy making books but are not particularly strong in creative writing.

Susanne Whitbeck, Andover Elementary School, Andover, New Hampshire

The Tired Word Dictionary

Youngsters enjoy making books. When we are beginning creative writing, we make a dictionary of "tired" words. I write an overused word on the board, and students contribute words they could use instead. For example, *went* in "Mike went down the road." When we have run out of ideas, we create the "went" page for our

tired-word dictionary by listing the fresh, new words in alphabetical order. A sample page is shown below. We keep these pages, arranged alphabetically, in a notebook and when we discover another tired word, we create a fresh page. In effect, we are making our own thesaurus. This activity helps in creative writing, but it also expands vocabulary.



Nancy Hest, Lois Craig School, North Las Vegas, Nevada

Homonym Helper

Some youngsters have difficulty using and spelling homonyms correctly, but almost all of them enjoy collecting and considering them. So I came up with the idea of a homonym dictionary. I pass out unlined, three-hole notebook paper and use brads to hold the booklets together. Students design covers for their dictionaries appropriate to the contents and to their own personalities. I explain that the dictionaries must be brought to class daily for the next few weeks because they will be used daily.

Every day when students come into my room they find on the chalkboard that day's set of homonyms, for example, *great* and *grate*. These are the words that they enter into their booklets that day, providing an interesting sentence and illustration for each. Dictionaries are available for verifying meanings about which students are uncertain. I have noticed that many students are curious to see what each day's homonyms will be and look for them almost immediately as they enter the room. They especially enjoy relatively unfamiliar pairs. Of course they know *plum* but many do not know *plumb*; *done* is familiar but *dun* will send them to the dictionary.

Besides enjoying the challenge of compiling interesting entries for each homonym, students are creating a personal resource for tricky words. I encourage them to take care with the spelling and punctuation by making the booklets a project that we share with a local grade school. When the semester is over, students make a trip to the grade school and personally deliver their homonym helpers. Young children, I explain, need a resource that is accurate as well as interesting.

Judy Cromett, Lewiston High School, Lewiston, Minnesota

Pronunciation Propaedeutic

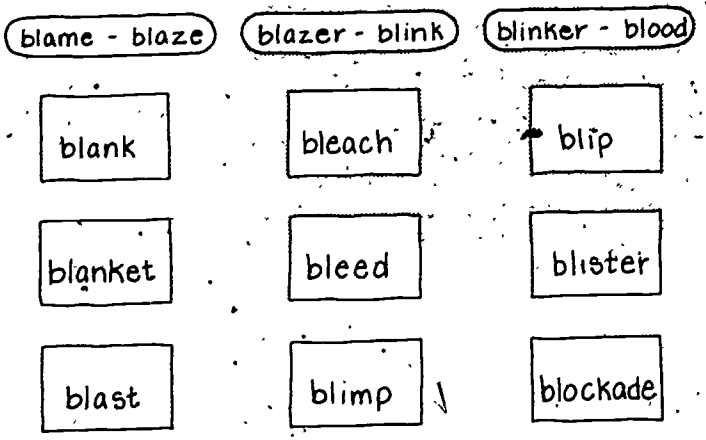
Each student needs a dictionary; paperbacks will do if they are written for general, not classroom, use and include hard-to-spell, specialized, and relatively obscure words. Before class, prepare a long list of hard-to-spell (unphonetic) words that students are not likely to know. Seventh-graders, for example, will be stumped with *imbroglio, ptarmigan, uvula, boudoir, lieu, hara-kiri,* and *ungulate.*

Students sit with dictionaries before them and must be silent unless called on. Write one word from the list on the board. All students look up the word, study the pronunciation symbols, and then raise their hands to take turns trying for perfect pronunciation. One turn is allowed per student, all others meanwhile listening carefully (they do, too!) until a "winner" is declared. Write the name of the winner on the board. Henceforth, not-yet-winners are given first try at words to be pronounced, and the name of each new winner is added to the list. Students enjoy this game and you will discover it's a good way to learn who needs help with reading skills, dictionary mastery, social listening, and risk-taking.

Susan L. Rump, Thetford Academy, Thetford, Vermont

Guide Words Were Made to Be Used

Students so often ignore the time-saving guide words in the dictionary. Here is an activity that helps them understand how to use them. You'll need tongue depressors, index cards, and a dictionary. Write pairs of guide words on three or four depressors. Then use the index cards to make a set of a dozen or so words that can be sorted according to the guide words and later alphabetized. If you code the answers on the back of the cards, the exercise is self-correcting. For example:



Diane Ng, Helen Marie Smith School, Las Vegas, Nevada

Diacritical Diagnoses

Many students have genuine difficulty decoding diacritical marks. I have found this nonthreatening activity to be a help to many. You need several dictionaries, preferably a class set, with a pronunciation key that is easy to interpret.

Begin by reviewing the use of the pronunciation key, giving examples of words that contain the sounds represented by the diacritical marks. Introduce the activity by writing a sentence on the chalkboard, spelling the words according to the pronunciation key given in the dictionary the class is using. Now ask each student

to write a sentence, spelling each word in the manner of the pronunciation key. Students should write the words first with only the help of the key; then they may check them against the individual entries in the dictionary.

After students have worked out their sentences, they copy them neatly on strips of paper. Sometimes I make a quiz game from the sentences by numbering them and posting them on the bulletin board. Students try to transcribe each sentence, this time spelling all words correctly. Sometimes I ask each student in turn to hold up a sentence and call for volunteers to read it correctly.

Students seem to have fun working out the pronunciation of words they may not have known prior to decoding their classmates' sentences, and they discover that dictionaries really are useful tools. Perhaps the biggest benefit is that the fear of mispronouncing words is reduced as students learn to make accurate diacritical diagnoses.

Kim S. McLaughlin, St. Austin's Grade School, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Hyperbole—More Fun Than a Barrel of Barracudas

I use this assignment during a unit on humor, but it can also be used in word study or creative writing units. The worksheet I distribute is reproduced below.

> *Hyperbole* is a deliberate exaggeration used as a figure of speech. You are surely quite skilled in its use already. As you carry a ten-pound bag of potatoes from the car to the kitchen, you complain, "This sack weighs a ton!" As you carry a much-wanted and heavy stereo set from the car to your bedroom, you insist, "It's as light as a feather!"
>
> Hyperbole never attempts to deceive; it is meant to startle, to emphasize, or to amuse. Many examples of hyperbole, like the two above, have been used so often that they are trite.
>
> Complete each of the following statements with a trite, hyperbolic phrase—usually the first phrase that comes to mind.
>
> 1. I'm so tired I could sleep for _____.
> 2. You're two hours late! I've been waiting _____.
> 3. You see—you broke your arm. I've told you _____ not to wear those sandals with the flapping soles!
> 4. I'll love you till the seas _____.
> 5. He's such a rotten shot he couldn't hit the _____.

Now do something you've probably never done before. Think carefully about each of those five examples of hyperbole. What does each mean? Imagine being so tired that you actually need *years* of sleep! The first time these phrases were used they were powerful and perhaps amusing, but overuse has left them threadbare and thin. If you want to startle your readers, you must seek new examples of hyperbole that will shake them from head to foot with amazement. Not "I'm so tired I could sleep for years (or a century)" but "I'm so tired I could sleep at a jet airport during the Christmas holidays!" or "I'm so tired I could sleep at the handle of a jackhammer!"

Try it. Create original hyperbolic phrases and use them in sentences to describe each of the following:

1. an extremely hungry person
2. a very fast runner
3. someone who is a hundred and four years old
4. a person promising unending love to another person
5. someone digging ditches in the sun when the temperature registers 104 degrees

Lani Tierney, Stevens Point High School, Stevens Point, Wisconsin

Have You Heard This One?

Familiar phrases aren't always familiar to everyone. My students enjoy this activity, and each of us usually acquires a new "familiar" phrase or two.

Match the phrases on the left with the definitions on the right.

1. no skin off my nose	a. to establish friendly relations
2. to break the ice	b. to give something greater importance than is justified
3. in seventh heaven	c. of no concern to me
4. in hot water	d. leaving no impression
5. to hit the nail on the head	e. having great pleasure
6. in one ear and out the other	f. to approach or treat a delicate subject without giving offense
7. touch and go	g. uncertain or risky
8. to skate on thin ice	h. to annoy
9. to make a mountain out of a molehill	i. in trouble
10. to get someone's goat	j. to say or do the right thing

Now try your hand at writing a definition for each of these "familiar" phrases.

1. at sixes and sevens
2. to fall between two stools

Can you contribute a "familiar" phrase—or more than one?

Mary Ann Goodrich, Ralston High School, Ralston, Nebraska

Forget-Me-Nots

Most students rely on associative learning almost unconsciously, matching a humorous or surprising image with an idea to be remembered, devising mnemonic aids with rhymes or letter patterns, and so on. Why not encourage students to share these study aids and to devise others together in class? Here are a few ideas from our classes to get you started.

1. For memorizing the names of the continents: My *Aunt Arctica* went on a safari in *Africa*. Lost in the jungle, she went *North (America)* and *South (America)*. Finally she found *a rope (Europe)*, gave a Tarzan yell—"*Asiaiaiaiaia*," and blazed *a trail (Australia)* home.
2. Problem: spelling *February* correctly. It's cold in Febr*u*ary—brrrrr!
3. Problem: doubling letters in *accommodate*. Think of a mother hen large enough to accommodate all her baby chicks; she needs all the letters she can get.
4. Problem in mythology: distinguishing between oreads, nymphs of the mountains, and dryads, nymphs of the forests. Picture an Oreo cookie on top of a mountain for the first and clothes drying in the forest for the second.
5. Problem: *lie, rise,* and *sit* are intransitive and do not take objects. *Lay, raise,* and *set* are transitive and do take objects. How to keep them categorized? Intransitive l*i*e, r*i*se, and s*i*t have *i* for the main vowel.
6. This year the Future Teachers' Association at our high school made BIONIC buttons for teachers to wear during National Education Week. BIONIC: Believe It Or Not I Care!

Edna Ellison and Martha Franklin, Clinton High School, Clinton, South Carolina

Concentration: Direction of Attention to a Single Object

Compile a vocabulary list appropriate to the level of your students, especially one that is related to a unit of work underway. If your list is long enough, you can have several games of Concentration underway at the same time.

Divide the class into groups of three or four students and divide the vocabulary list equally among groups. Give each group two 3" ×5" cards for each vocabulary word it has. On one card a member of the group neatly writes a vocabulary word. On another, a member neatly copies the pronunciation respelling and the definition of that word.

When all groups are finished, collect and shuffle the cards. Place them facedown on the table in rows and columns as for Concentration. Each student in turn picks up two cards, hoping to make a match between word and definition. The dictionary can resolve disputes. If the cards match, the student keeps both cards but must first use the word correctly in a sentence. If the cards do not match, the student returns them to their original positions on the table. The winner is the student with the most cards.

Linda Gregg, William E. Ferron School, Las Vegas, Nevada

Sound Familiar?

After a few practice sessions with the thesaurus, I ask my eighth-graders to choose a familiar nursery rhyme and to rewrite it, substituting as many advanced-level words from the thesaurus as they can for familiar words and phrases in the rhyme. Old King Cole, for example, became "a jocund senile personage." Students copy their new version of the rhyme on drawing paper and illustrate or decorate it.

This activity is successful with small groups or as an individual assignment. It's fun to see what everyone does with the same rhyme, but it's also fun to put together a collection: *The New Mother Goose.*

Patricia A. Craghan, Wall Intermediate School, Wall, New Jersey

¿Habla Usted Español?

This activity helps students to become aware of the many Spanish words used in English. Students may complete it individually or

in small groups. If there are students who are studying Spanish or who are native speakers, ask them to serve as group leaders.

You know more Spanish than you think you do. Try matching these.

_____ 1. mosquito	a. bullfighter
_____ 2. matador	b. great enthusiasm, enjoyment
_____ 3. suave	c. fighter of underground group
_____ 4. simpatico	d. understanding, responsive
_____ 5. poncho	e. first, best, most important
_____ 6. machete	f. person of Central or South American descent
_____ 7. cucaracha	g. fast game, like handball
_____ 8. guerilla	h. space for dining or recreation next to the house
_____ 9. guacamole	i. cloaklike garment slipped over the head
_____ 10. Anglo	j. section inhabited mostly by Spanish speakers
_____ 11. jai alai	k. devoted fan
_____ 12. junta	l. broad, heavy knife used as tool and weapon
_____ 13. salsa	m. small fly that bites
_____ 14. gusto	n. Caribbean music
_____ 15. Numero Uno	o. white American
_____ 16. aficionado	p. foreigner, especially American
_____ 17. bonanza	q. coffee shop
_____ 18. guayabera	r. group that rules after a revolution
_____ 19. cafeteria	s. avocado mashed with tomato, onion, spices
_____ 20. marijuana	t. smooth, sophisticated
_____ 21. patio	u. hemp plant
_____ 22. barrio	v. cockroach
_____ 23. Latino	w. man's shirt with four pockets, worn outside trousers
_____ 24. Chicano	x. source of great profit or wealth

Ruth D. Hern, Curundu Junior High School, Panama

The First Name/Last Name Crossword Puzzle

This assignment asks each student to develop an "empty" puzzle, an answer key, and clues for a crossword puzzle based on his or her name. Ask students to follow these five steps. Caution: Use pencils!

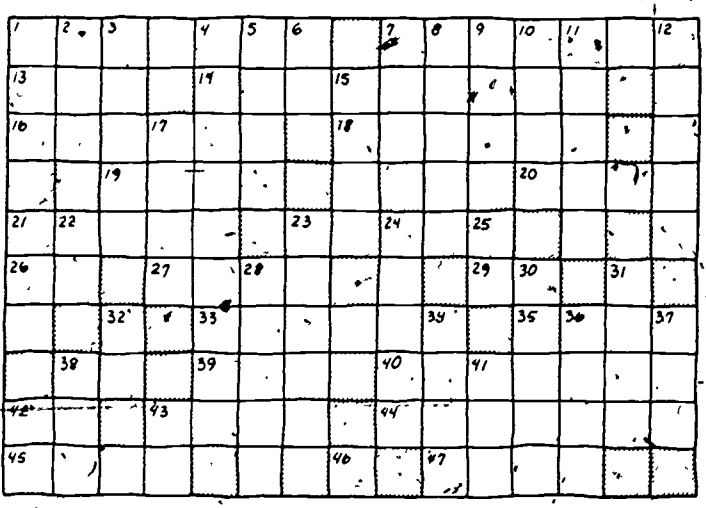
1. Make a blank puzzle (probably no larger than 20 by 20 squares). Write your first name, beginning in the upper left-hand square; darken the next blank square and write your last name. From your name, build words much as you would do playing Scrabble. Terms related to a given subject, accepted abbreviations, common words are best. Synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms are also good ideas since you will need to write definition clues later on. Avoid farfetched and overly specialized words. Be sure to darken a square at the end of each word as you enter it. When your puzzle is completed, you have the beginning of the answer key. It will resemble the example below.

J	E	S	S	I	C	A		H	O	D	G	I	N	S
E	R	A		N	U	T	R	I	T	I	O	N		L
W	A	G	O	N	S		A	T	T	E	N	D		I
E		A	L	E	S		G		E		G	I	R	D
L	O	S	E	R		L	E	A	R	N		A		E
R	H		O	V	A	L		B		O	N		P	
Y		I		A	B	A	C	U	S		A	R	I	A
	A	N		T	A	M		S	A	L	I	E	N	T
I	T		M	E	S	A		E	L	E	V	A	T	E
F	E	T	E		E		A		T	I	E	D		

2. Numbering can be a headache if you're not careful. Beginning across the first row, number each square in which a word begins, regardless of whether the word goes across or down. Move to the next row and continue numbering in sequence. Now your answer key is complete and will look like this:

1 J	2 E	3 S	S	4 I	5 C	6 A		7 H	8 O	9 D	10 G	11 I	N	12 S
13 E	R	A		14 N	U	T	15 R	I	T	I	O	N		L
16 W	A	G	17 O	N	S		18 A	T	T	E	N	D		I
E		19 A	L	E	S		G		E		20 G	I	R	D
21 L	22 O	S	E	R		23 L	E	24 A	R	25 N		A		E
26 R	H		27 O	V	28 A	L		B		29 O	30 N		31 P	
Y		32 I		33 A	B	A	C	U	34 S		35 A	36 R	I	37 A
	38 A	N		39 T	A	M		40 S	A	41 L	I	E	N	T
42 I	T		43 M	E	S	A		44 E	L	E	V	A	T	E
45 F	E	T	E		E		46 A		47 T	I	E	D		

3. Now number and darken corresponding squares on a blank puzzle. Like this:



4. Finally, devise a clue for each word in your puzzle. For example:

Across
1. name of a female character in *The Merchant of Venice*
7. two-syllable surname, beginning with H
13. division in historic or geologic time
14. process by which a plant or animal takes in and uses food
16. four-wheeled vehicles for transporting
18. to look after

Down
1. objects of precious metals and gems worn for personal adornment
2. same as 13 across
3. narratives about historic or legendary figures and events
4. to supply with nerves
5. to curse
6. preposition
7. to strike a blow
8. aquatic mammal
9. singular of dice

5. Now you're ready to exchange a puzzle blank and clue sheet with another student.

David Potter, Frisbee School, Kittery, Maine

Living Words

This activity, guaranteed to alleviate the vocabulary blues, is a once-a-semester idea, but it generates true enthusiasm for at least one list of vocabulary words. I can assure you these words will always be remembered.

I ask students to pick a word to "become" and to clear this word with me in advance. On a designated day, they come to class in costume, dressed as the word they selected. Students may use makeup, costumes, props—whatever. One student arrived in toga and sandals, bearing a bowl of fruit, to become the word *bacchanalian*. Another selected the word *pudgy* and waddled to class stuffed with pillows.

On presentation day each student introduces his or her word "charade-style," as classmates try to guess the word. Be sure to snap some of those living words for the school yearbook or newspaper or for your bulletin board. As a student poses, he or she should hold a sign with the vocabulary word printed on it.

A vocabulary activity that can be used on a regular basis is to grant extra credit to students who bring in examples of the weekly vocabulary words found in other contexts. I distribute a

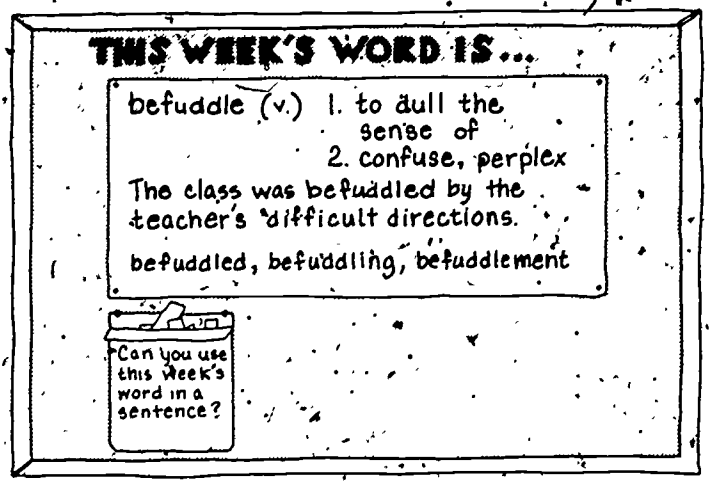
list of the words to be covered during the next several weeks and challenge students to find them in any printed source—magazines, newspapers, texts, billboards—even tea bags. They turn in their "finds" with sources, copying down and underlining each word as it is used in the out-of-school context. Each "find" adds a point to the student's vocabulary quiz score. Points can also be used in a class contest.

I use this method throughout the semester so that students become aware of how frequently the words they study in class appear in other contexts. You'll find weaker quiz students really digging the vocabulary words out of popular magazines and "redeeming" them. One boy wanted to tape Howard Cosell's "Monday Night Football," convinced that Cosell uses "*all* those words, man."

Catherine L. Challener, Williston-Northampton School, Easthampton, Massachusetts

Word of the Week

A section of my bulletin board looks like this:



1. On Monday we discuss the word and its derivatives.
2. During the week we use the word in class in various situations and students insert original sentences using the word or its derivatives in the envelope.

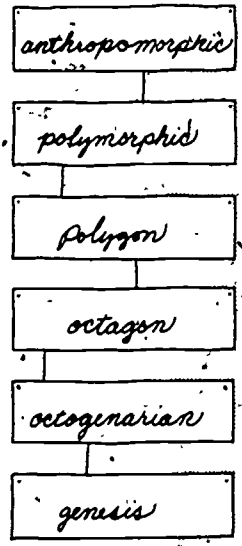
3. On Friday we share their sentences and nominate "Word-of-the-Week Winners." Selected sentences can also be used in a dictation exercise.

Kathleen Pszenny, Ralph B. O'Maley School, Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Links

This activity has improved the word analysis and etymological skills of my ninth-graders. We have christened it "Links" because one word is linked to the next by a common prefix, root, or, when necessary, suffix.

A pile of unlined paper about 4" × 11" is kept in the classroom, and I begin the chain by printing a word on one of these sheets and displaying it high on the wall, up near the ceiling. The following day a student is responsible for providing a new word that contains either the prefix or the root used in my word. The student is also responsible for an analysis of the new word, including dividing the word into its basic parts and giving the meaning of each, giving the definition of the word, and using it in a sentence. That word then becomes the second link in the word chain. The following day a new word is linked to the second, and so the chain begins to resemble the one shown below.



Since two classes work on this project, students have the opportunity to observe and discuss two new words each day. Artistic students may decorate the chain if they wish.

Mary-Sue Gardetto, Ankeney Junior High School, Beavercreek, Ohio

Vocabulary Lists from Literature

Here is a handy method of generating vocabulary lists that I learned from a student teacher several years ago. It saves time; it allows you to deal with words in the context of the literature students are reading; and it ensures that you have found words at an appropriate and useful level.

When you assign a story or novel, hand out a 3″ × 5″ card to each student. Ask each student to find five words in that story or novel with which he or she is unfamiliar, jotting down on the card the word, the page on which it is found, and a definition that fits the context. Set a due date.

When the cards come in, make a composite list of twenty or so words. I use the most commonly mentioned words and others that I think students should know. Type out these words, their page references, and their definitions. Mimeograph and distribute the list to the class. Since I make vocabulary tests cumulative, students need to keep these sheets throughout the semester.

Suzanne Kirkpatrick, Kirkwood High School, Kirkwood, Missouri

Once upon a Spelling List

Put your weekly spelling or vocabulary list to new use. Divide the class into small groups and ask each group to rewrite a children's story—"Cinderella," "Snow White," "The Three Bears"—incorporating the words (usually twenty-five in my classes) from the week's list. I generally assign no more than three students to a group; otherwise the work tends to fall on one student and the noise level climbs. This activity is also fun to do orally with the class as a whole and a scribe at the chalkboard. Little Red Riding Hood might not recognize her own grandmother, but the class has a good time and every word on the list gets used.

Dianne Robinson, Fairfield Senior High School, Fairfield, Ohio

Spill and Spell, Revised

This spelling game is appropriate for any grade level and works well near the end of a class period or when you want to work with an individual or small group.

Appoint a secretary to write at the chalkboard. Using Spill and Spell cubes, "spill" one letter and have the secretary write it on the board. Students give any word that contains that letter. "Spill" a second letter and have it recorded on the board; students now provide a different word, one that contains both letters. "Spill" a third letter, and give a third word containing all three letters. Continue in this manner until the class is stumped. High school classes are doing a good job when they come up with a word using more than eight "spilled" letters.

The only rule is that once a word has been said, it may not be repeated. This stipulation keeps students from yelling out words without being called upon since their word has then been used and may not be used again.

Just for the record, and because I think you'll need to know, the word *super-kali-fragil-istic-expi-ali-docious* contains the following letters:

a-3	f-1	l-3	s-3
c-2	g-1	o-2	t-1
d-1	i-7	p-2	u-2
e-2	k-1	r-2	x-1

Marti Swanson, Grant Community High School, Fox Lake, Illinois

Blue Books and Pens: An Individualized Spelling Program

Each week, usually on Monday, I give each student a blue book with ten words written in it. I have taken the words from the student's own writing during the previous week and from a paragraph that I dictated. I choose this weekly paragraph for its interest level and because it offers a variety of spelling challenges. The dictation emphasizes listening skills as well as spelling and handwriting.

During the week students study their own lists and write an interesting complete sentence for each word. I give a small prize each week to the student who has written the most interesting, thoughtful, or amusing sentences. The use of the word from the spelling list must, of course, be correct, and I also ask for correct capitalization and punctuation.

Near the end of the week students pair off with previously assigned partners, exchange blue books, and quiz each other. I try

to keep pairs relatively equal so students have no difficulty reading each other's lists.

This spelling program combines penmanship, sentence writing, creative thinking, peer interaction, and challenging individualized word lists for each student. Best of all, it costs no more than a set of blue books.

Rosalys B. Wilson, Dedham Junior High School, Dedham, Massachusetts

Spelling for Lower-Ability Students

I was not pleased with the results of spelling tests taken by my lower-ability juniors and seniors. Simply put, these students had been doing the same thing for years and were retaining virtually nothing from the weekly quizzes. I tried the following system, and I believe students are experiencing increased success. The weekly schedule goes something like this.

On Tuesday, students take a pretest of twenty words from a list that I gave them at the beginning of the semester. Students who score 100 percent do not take the posttest, which is given on Thursday.

On Wednesday, students complete an activity that uses the words from the spelling list. Some of the activities that I assign and that are met with acceptable degrees of enthusiasm follow.

1. Write a story or paragraph that uses the words from the spelling list.
2. Improve a paragraph or story that I have prepared in advance by substituting words from the spelling list for words in the story.
3. Complete a crossword puzzle, cryptogram, or other word puzzle that incorporates words from the spelling list.
4. Play Scrabble using words from the spelling list. The team with the highest score doesn't have to take the posttest.
5. Write four sentences using each word that was missed on Tuesday. Extra points are given for unusually creative sentences.
6. Write from dictation a paragraph that incorporates all of the spelling words.
7. Discover the spelling words "buried" in a story or list of sentences. Example: "The Hand Estate is one of the richest in the country." This sentence has the word *Andes* buried in it.
8. Work in small groups to create a word puzzle that uses the spelling words.

While this system may not be highly innovative, I have found that it works and that the various exercises may be adjusted to the "mood" of the week.

Pat Culver, Ralston High School, Ralston, Nebraska

The Old Ball Park

Divide the class into two teams and sketch a baseball diamond on the chalkboard. If space allows, students may walk bases you establish in the classroom. Choose an area or a theme from which words must come: food, automobiles, science words, words that describe people. Umpires with dictionaries are essential and may also serve as scorekeepers. It's also a good idea to keep a list on the chalkboard of the words spelled correctly so that repetition is avoided and students have an opportunity to see words that are unfamiliar.

To reach first base, a player must correctly pronounce the word he or she has in mind. Spelling the word advances the player to second and using the word in a sentence moves a player to third. A home run is achieved by saying, spelling, and using the word correctly and by providing an acceptable definition. Outs, of course, are recorded when a student attempts and fails one of the four tasks. A word that puts a player out may be used by another player.

The game can be adapted to review spelling and vocabulary lists previously studied, to master word lists from a shared novel, or to study any special list of words. In this variation, the teacher or a student "pitches" a word to each player in turn, who must spell the word correctly, define it, and use it in a sentence. Failure on any point is an out.

Pat Bolduc, Belmont High School, Belmont, New Hampshire

Occasionally Embarrassing Occurrence

Distribute a list of ten, twenty-five, a hundred commonly misspelled words: cemetery, occurrence, embarrassing, occasion, permissible. You can devise your own, but many grammar handbooks and spelling workbooks contain such lists. Give no hint that all words are correctly spelled; merely ask students to circle the words that are misspelled. You and they will be surprised at the results. And those circles tell students which words they need to study.

Anonymous contributor, Urbana, Illinois

7 Punctuation and Grammar

Grammar as process and the student as natural grammarian are the common thread that runs through these activities—from the ability of young people to punctuate conversation recorded in the school lunch room and to assign part-of-speech labels to nonsense words to student-authored individualized grammar texts. Perhaps **Moving Forward by Looking Back** makes the point most clearly; in this activity Carol Burak of Bethel, Connecticut, suggests collecting writing from first- through fifth-graders to share with high school students. The exercise helps them to perceive in concrete and dramatic ways their own growth in language. They are astonished to discover, for example, that verbals are not the demonic invention of English teachers but structures used even by first-graders. **Five-Minute Grammar Course**, page 188, is another student-centered, individualized approach to the study of grammar.

Punctuation: Prelude and Finale

Lure unsuspecting students into studying punctuation by asking them to create pictures using only punctuation marks cut from construction paper. On an 8½″ × 11″ sheet of construction paper students paste cutouts of punctuation marks of any size to make a pattern or design; person, place, or thing. Over the semesters students have turned out some very clever punctuation pictures: a Model T Ford, a pirate, Popeye, Snoopy, a girl with pigtails, Mickey Mouse, the flag, a flower garden.

I've successfully used this assignment as a contest during an open house for parents, asking them to vote to determine the winning punctuation picture. At least three things were accomplished: my room was decorated; I was spared the difficult task of choosing a winner; parents had a pleasant memory of the English classroom and a topic to talk about with their sons and daughters.

To enliven punctuation review, ask the class to collaborate in the writing of a story. Students then tape the story with punc-

tuation sound effects a la Victor Borge. You'll hear some highly imaginative sounds for periods, commas, exclamation points, dashes, apostrophes and so forth—and students won't overlook a single opportunity to punctuate.

Virginia McCormick, Allen High School, Allentown, Pennsylvania

A Few of My Favorite Things

Middle-schoolers enjoy this worksheet, and it brings up more punctuation and capitalization snags than at first seem apparent.

Here is an opportunity to apply some of what you know about punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. Indicate your personal favorite in each category and write a sentence about each of your choices. Use the first item as an example.

1. car Buick

   Our family hopes that Dad will trade in our old car on a new Buick.

2. department store
3. restaurant
4. athlete
5. beverage
6. cereal
7. newspaper
8. season
9. jeans
10. movie
11. television program
12. musical instrument
13. city
14. short story
15. animal
16. sandwich
17. television family
18. pen
19. vegetable
20. game
21. cookie
22. author
23. chewing gum
24. shampoo
25. flower
26. baseball team
27. shopping mall
28. musical group
29. candy bar
30. ice cream
31. holiday
32. school subject
33. magazine
34. poem
35. sneakers
36. cheese
37. song
38. color
39. theme amusement park
40. movie star
41. Muppet
42. comic strip
43. state
44. singer
45. bird
46. month
47. television personality
48. snack food
49. childhood toy
50. college team

Judith K. Smith, Largo Middle School, Largo, Florida

Dialogue Duo

To review punctuation, especially the use of quotation marks, send students out to record the dialogue of a peer group for five minutes—in the lunch room, at a club meeting, at a sports event, at work. Later, students transcribe their tapes, punctuating the dialogue correctly. Ask for in-class editing with a peer before you collect the papers.

Linda Jensen, Ralston High School, Ralston, Nebraska

Picture Talk

Pictures of people cut from magazines can spark ideas when students write character sketches and simple narratives. Here is a warm-up exercise that provides an opportunity for punctuation review. Ask each student to bring to class at least one picture of a person cut from a magazine. Assign partners and ask each pair to "join" pictures by creating dialogue. Each student speaks for the picture he or she supplied. Students transcribe this dialogue, using correct punctuation. Encourage partners to work together to achieve the best possible job of punctuation.

Kay Cornelius, Grissom High School, Huntsville, Alabama

Punctuation Review

After reviewing punctuation marks with which the class is familiar, have students apply them in the following practical but amusing way.

Arrange the class in groups of four, and ask each student to write the opening line or two of an informal narrative. Then give each student a card on which you have written a giant-sized punctuation mark. Include its name to avoid confusion between commas and apostrophes, ditto marks and quotation marks.

Every three or four minutes ask a student to call out the punctuation mark he or she is holding. At that point everyone adds a sentence to his or her narrative that requires that mark. Members of the group may help each other when necessary.

From time to time ask one person in each group to move on to the next group. Make these changes fun by asking students to

move for unusual reasons: the longest hair in the group, the longest middle finger, the shirt with the most colors.

The next day review the punctuation in the narratives by calling out a punctuation mark and asking several students to give examples. These stories may have some logical gaps, but you will have achieved a fast-paced punctuation review to which students respond with enthusiasm.

Irene Payan, Negaunee High School, Negaunee, Michigan.

Mark My Words: Punctuation Paragraph

This little exercise produces lively discussion. Try using it at the beginning of a punctuation unit and again at the end.

Rewrite the following paragraph, punctuating it in a meaningful way—if you can!

> I have a notebook. Full of them. I will give. You, another? One, the word. Temper, what! A baffling word. That is, you must admit it, the Lord. Tempers, the wind to a shorn (lamb) he softens. The wind, n'est-ce pas; but to temper means to harden, does it? Not when you harden. Steel your idiom! Says (that) you, temper it?
>
> Now! do you? Have a little more respect for; punctuation (marks)?

Joan Nordenstrom, North Branch High School, North Branch, Minnesota

Punctuate with the Famous

Type in the form of a numbered list a passage from a story or article your students will like to read. Omit capitals and all marks of punctuation and break the sentences at random. That is, do not type a complete sentence after each number. Students identify complete sentences and insert needed capitals and punctuation marks.

I correlate this exercise with the kind of literature my students are studying. If, for example, we are studying folklore, I might base the exercise on a Paul Bunyan tale. For a short story unit, you might use a passage from another story by an author included in that unit or perhaps a page from a letter by or a biography about that author.

Linda Morgan, Fairmont Senior High School, Fairmont, West Virginia

Plus Fours

I use the following game when my students are learning the parts of speech. It also helps them learn how to expand sentences.

Label four paper bags or other containers: *noun, verb, adjective,* and *adverb.* Give each youngster four slips of paper on which to write a noun, a verb, an adjective, and an adverb. Place each slip in the correct bag.

Divide the class into teams. A player from each team picks one word from each bag and attempts to contruct a complete sentence that uses the four words. The sentence is written on the chalkboard. The next player from each team chooses four more words and tries to add them to the sentence. The expanded sentence must make sense, although there is some latitude for whimsy and humor. For each correct addition a player makes, the team earns one point. Unused words are set aside.

When the class has run out of words, the game is over and the points for each team are totaled. If you like and if there are several words in the discard pile, run a final double-point round. A player from each team in turn has an opportunity to draw one of the discarded words and add it to the team's sentence. If the addition makes sense, the team scores two points.

Judith Fields, Elbert B. Edwards School, Las Vegas, Nevada

Grammarwocky

Hand out copies of Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" and ask students to underline the nonsense words. Discuss how to figure out the part of speech for a nonsense word—noun signals, complements after linking verbs, and so on. Write the first stanza on the chalkboard and ask students to suggest substitute words that serve the same function as the nonsense words. They'll soon see the many possibilities for creating entirely original poems.

Ask each student (or pair of students) to rewrite the poem, stanza by stanza, substituting new and exciting words for the nonsense words. I ask students to illustrate at least one stanza, and I've never seen more fabulous creatures than those turned in with this project.

Elizabeth Tulin-Shapiro, Fox Lane Middle School, Bedford, New York

Grammar in Spite of Themselves

Here are a few gimmicks that help me with the teaching of grammar.

Adjectives. Give students a word like *snow, house,* or *Kings Island* (an amusement park in Ohio), and have them see how many descriptive words they can list within a given time. Share some of the lists and comment on words that are particularly apt or fresh and on those that may not be adjectives.

Common and proper nouns. Ask students to list as many common and proper noun pairs as they can in a given time. Brand names and products work nicely. Students may not list a word more than once. See who can make the longest list.

Prepositions. (1) List prepositions on the chalkboard and ask students in turn to add a word or words to make a prepositional phrase. Encourage them to be creative with their phrases. (2) Have students cut out a newspaper article and circle the prepositional phrases. (3) Ask students to write a sentence that contains a prepositional phrase, to underline the phrase, and to draw a picture that illustrates that phrase. Colored pencils or magic markers inspire students to write livelier sentences.

Direct objects. (1) Ask each student on one side of the room to make up a noun subject and an action verb. Have each student on the other side write down a noun. Go back and forth between the groups with a student from one side saying his or her subject and verb and a student from the other side adding his or her noun. Some combinations do not make sense and some are humorous. We discuss ones that don't work and really aren't direct objects. Students enjoy this exercise and after the first round tend to come up with more humorous and creative words. (2) Place two chairs in front of the classroom and position a wastecan between them. The wastecan signifies a transitive verb. Place a purse in the chair to the right of the class and sit in the first chair, saying, "I bought a purse." Vary the illustrations—use a variety of objects—to show that the subject and predicate are not the same as with predicate nominatives.

Predicate nominatives. Place two chairs in front of the classroom and position a wastecan between them. The wastecan signifies a verb of being. Ask a student to sit in the chair to the left of the class and say, "I am a student," moving to the chair on the right as he or she makes that statement. Move a book from the left to the right chair, saying, "This is a book." Demonstrate with other

objects. The point is made that predicate nominatives are the same as their subjects.

Florence C. Craig, Indian Riffle Junior High School, Kettering, Ohio

Sentence Combining

Sentence-combining exercises encourage students to create more interesting and complex sentences and to practice a variety of sentence structures. Such exercises can be made to do double duty, however, if you develop base sentences for whatever literary—or other—topic you are teaching. I use the worksheet shown below with eleventh-graders, but the technique can be adapted to lower levels. I find that students learn the author information readily and may even retain it longer, perhaps because they read and write the information several times.

> The following sentences contain biographical information about Edith Wharton, the author of *Ethan Frome*. Combine the groups of base sentences into more complex sentences.
>
> 1. Edith Wharton was born Edith Newbold Jones.
> 2. Edith Wharton was born on January 24, 1862.
> 3. Edith Wharton was born in New York City.
> 4. From the beginning of her life she was immersed in a society.
> 5. The society was noted for its manners.
> 6. The society was noted for its snobbishness.
> 7. The society was noted for its cultural emptiness.
> 8. Edith reacted.
> 9. Her reactions were against society.
> 10. Her reactions were in many of her novels.
> 11. Her novels portrayed society's weaknesses.
> 12. Edith did not attend school.
> 13. Edith received a good education.
> 14. Her education came through efforts.
> 15. The efforts were of tutors and governesses.
> 16. Edith married Edward Wharton.
> 17. Edith married in April of 1885.
> 18. Edith married when she was twenty-three.
> 19. Edward Wharton was of Boston.
> 20. Edith had a nervous breakdown.
> 21. The breakdown was mild.
> 22. The breakdown came after the publishing of her first book.
> 23. Her first book was *The Decoration of Houses*.

24. The first years of marriage were happy.
25. Events began to cloud their marriage.
26. The marriage lasted twenty-eight years.
27. Edward and Edith were divorced in 1913.
28. Edith's first significant novel was *The Valley of Decision.*
29. The novel was set in eighteenth-century Italy.
30. The novel's characters seemed to be puppets.
31. The puppets moved in jerks.
32. The jerks were at every tug of the string.
33. *Ethan Frome* was published in book form in 1911.
34. *Ethan Frome* was serialized in 1911.
35. The serialization was in *Scribner's Magazine.*
36. The serialization was from August to October.
37. Popular response was enthusiastic.
38. Critics and reviewers praised the structure.
39. The structure was finely crafted.
40. Critics and reviewers praised the vision of New England country life.
41. The vision was bleak.
42. The vision was naturalistic.
43. Mrs. Wharton died in 1937.
44. Mrs. Wharton died from an apoplectic stroke.
45. Her death interrupted her work.
46. Her work was on her last book.
47. Her last book was *The Buccaneers.*

James Olson, Osseo Senior High School, Osseo, Minnesota

Moving Forward by Looking Back

I collect writings from first- through fifth-graders to share with my ninth- and tenth-graders. Not only is reading these together a great deal of fun, but it helps my students perceive in concrete and dramatic ways their own growth in language.

After we have shared a series of these writings, I select a few of the papers and ask the class to discuss obvious errors. Sometimes we label parts of speech and sentence parts. This exercise always astonishes high school students who discover, for example, that verbals are not an exotic torture created by English teachers but rather structures used even by first-graders. A sentence beginning with "there are" can also initiate an interesting discussion.

At this point a number of other possibilities exist, depending on the grammar and writing principles you wish to emphasize.

Carol Burak, Bethel High School, Bethel, Connecticut

IGT: Individualized Grammar Text

That every native speaker of English is essentially an "English grammar" is the cornerstone on which I am building a course in grammar. Explaining that the purpose of Basic Grammar is largely to explore the grammar students already "know" and apply naturally, and to identify their variations and deviations from the Standard Language so that they may align their written language with the norm, I propose that students write their own textbooks. We call them IGTs, student-authored, individualized grammar texts.

Students write about sixteen paragraphs out of class that I correct meticulously. Lest they feel overwhelmed, I repeatedly assert my confidence in their essential competence as "English grammars." Students revise each paragraph for reevaluation; and they may rewrite paragraphs and write additional papers. Using these paragraphs, written twice weekly, for source material, each student puts together a grammar text immediately and intimately related to his or her particular grammar and usage needs. As standard grammar texts present rules, so students cite rules pertaining to specific problems that appear in their writing—the significant difference being that they concern themselves only with their own mistakes and illustrate the "wrong" and "right" (or "better") with sentences taken from their own writing—examples of sentences found to be ineffective/incorrect and demonstrations of how to improve/correct them. In utilizing—in effect dignifying—their own expressions, their motivation to modify or change nonstandard usage patterns is reinforced.

A second advantage of this technique is that compiling materials for their own textbook holds student interest more directly and over a longer period of time. Yet another support for the practicality of the IGT is the fact that all students do not make identical mistakes in grammar. The IGT is protean in nature; it changes shape to "fit" each student. It expands with supplementary drills and tests only when a student's weaknesses do not diminish; as grammar strengthens, fewer entries are required. While not *the* method, the IGT underscores the student's efforts to be as unflawed a "grammar" as he or she wishes to be.

Jeanne Howes, Atlantic High School, Delray Beach, Florida

Outdoors with Gerunds, Infinitives, Participles, and Prepositional Phrases

This outdoor adventure illustrates for students the prevalence of verbals in everyday writing and reinforces their understanding of verbals. It also provides an opportunity for descriptive writing and encourages students to use their powers of observation. Not to be overlooked, it gets the English class out of the classroom for a change. The worksheet below is the basis for this outdoor adventure.

Rules: Do stay on the paths.
Do avoid getting unnecessarily dirty.
Do behave as basic common sense would dictate.
Do as I ask the first time I ask.
Do work individually.
When you hear the whistle, do return to our starting point within five minutes.

Directions: Read through the following list of activities. Choose four. By the end of this experience, you must submit the four completed activities to me.

1. *Using participles.* Sitting very quietly, listen to the sounds around you. List ten nouns that name ten different sounds. After each noun, write a descriptive sentence using a participial phrase to clarify the sound you heard. Example: The wind, whistling through the tunnel, sounds lonely.
2. *Using gerunds.* Look around you. What activities do you see? Using gerunds to name each activity, write ten sentences telling about ten activities you are witnessing. Example: Having sat in the wild, open spaces during class will magnify my sense of imprisonment when I return to school.
3. *Using infinitives.* Relying on the outdoor environment to stimulate your thinking, write ten sentences using infinitives. These sentences may involve your personal reactions and emotions concerning this experience as well as the environment itself. Example: To feel the wind blow across my face is exhilarating.
4. *Using prepositions.* Identify three objects that you can see from your chosen site. Write the name of each object and list under it five prepositional phrases that describe it. Example: bird's nest—above my head, in the tree, on a forked branch, near the trunk, without a current occupant.
5. *Cinquain.* Follow the directions precisely, planning each word to fit the five-step pattern shown below. Steps two through five refer back to the topic named in step one, a topic that should be inspired by your surroundings.
   (1) A noun
   (2) Two past participles
   (3) Three present participles
   (4) A participial phrase

(5) The first noun or a synonym or general term that suggests that noun

Leaves
Withered, faded
Clinging, shivering, hesitating
Tumbling to the ground
Leaves.

6. *Diamanté.* This form is similar to cinquain; however, the content must show transition, growth, or change as it progresses through seven steps.

(1) Noun (Now skip to step 7.)
(2) Two adjectives describing the noun
(3) Three present participles
(4) A sentence or participial phrase relating to the change from step 1 to step 7.
(5) Three present participles
(6) Two adjectives describing the noun in step 7
(7) Noun (the opposite of the noun in step 1 or a noun that indicates growth or change from the first noun)

Students
Carefree, curious
Investigating, analyzing, challenging
Taking a headlong plunge into time.
Formulating, coping, answering
Careworn, curious
Teachers

7. *Haiku.* This verse form is three lines long and does not rhyme. Haiku is based on the number of syllables in each line. It is an excellent example of precise language use. Try to condense a thing, its essence or feeling, its core, into the following pattern.

(1) A five-syllable line
(2) A seven-syllable line
(3) A five-syllable line

1 2 3 4 5
Soft wings fluttering
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Bright colors flying through air
1 2 3 4 5
Lovely butterfly.

8. Write a detailed description of your setting or of yourself in this setting—your thoughts, feelings, reactions. Use a minimum of 5 gerunds, 5 infinitives, 5 participles or participial phrases, and 10 prepositional phrases.
9. Design your own response to this outdoor environment using verbals and prepositional phrases in some way.

Robin Jackson, Mahomet-Seymour Junior High School, Mahomet, Illinois

8 Speaking and Listening

When you introduce talking activities into your classroom, you introduce an equally important communication skill—listening. Four of the activities here have as their end products informed and structured presentations. Others challenge students to speak up in more informal ways—nonstop talking, belying the facts, "selling" a book, and celebrity interviews.

Listening skills, of course, are a part of many activities in other chapters. Papers based on interviews, for example, require students to listen carefully and critically; basic to peer evaluation of writing is attentive, tolerant listening from both author and evaluators. Of special interest to teachers who wish to emphasize listening skills are **Dialogué Duo**, page 101; **A Sound Assignment**, page 57; and **I Have, Who Has**, page 73.

Assignments that have as a major end product an oral presentation of one sort or another are scattered throughout the book, but they appear most frequently in the chapter Talking and Writing about Literature.

Jabberjabberjabber

I find these three exercises useful in creative dramatics, but I suspect they'd prove fun in almost any English class at almost any grade level.

Hold up an object; everyone must talk about it nonstop and simultaneously. After several seconds, replace it immediately with another—and the talk goes on. Only one rule: Students may not stop talking about the object before them.

Divide the class into groups of four to six and sit in small circles. Announce a topic. Person A in each circle begins to talk to the others nonstop on the topic. When you give a signal, person B immediately begins talking. When each member of the circle has had a turn, announce a new topic and repeat the activity. Again, only one rule: Don't stop talking. Suggested topics: corners, little

things, big things, buildings, butterflies, dirty socks, grandma's house, Jello.

Jeff McLaughlin, Intermediate Unit 13 School, East Petersburg, Pennsylvania

Believe It or Not

You'll need a copy of *Ripley's Believe It or Not* (several are better) and a pile of slips of paper. Ask students to find interesting facts in *Ripley's* and copy them onto slips of paper. If you have a disposable copy, they can cut out the facts and tape them onto paper. These slips are then put into a box. Occasionally students should make up a "fact" of their own, write it on a slip of paper, and put it in the same box.

Later, each student draws a "fact" from the box and tries to convince the rest of the class that it is true or fictional. All options are open—a student may try to convince the class that a true fact is true—or false—or that a false "fact" is false—or true. Students may want to keep a tally on whether they think the "facts" were true or fictional.

During the follow-up discussion encourage students to analyze their reactions to presentations. Why were they persuaded? What techniques were convincing? What techniques failed to influence? What persuasive techniques were not tried that might have worked?

This is an excellent introductory activity for persuasive speaking and can be used with students from a wide age range.

Jana Cummings, Independence Public Schools, Independence, Missouri

Book Sellers

This speaking and listening activity has ended the book report doldrums in my junior high classroom. The assignment I use is reproduced below.

> Each of you will make a presentation during a three-day classroom book fair in which you try to "sell" a book you have read to members of the class. Each of you will hold three "gift certificates" with which to "buy" three of the books you hear about. Choosing to "buy" a book is your way of voting for a presentation, but you may not vote for your own presentation.

When you present your book, think of yourself as a competent, enthusiastic salesperson who can convince people to buy books. You may include costumes, posters, and other props to make your book a best-seller. Here are some ways to create interest in and excitement about your book.

1. As you tell about your book, show posters or illustrations that you have created.
2. Bring along a record or tape of sound effects that fit your book. If the story is set in San Francisco, for example, you might introduce your talk with a tape of fog horns and ocean sounds.
3. If a particular object or skill is associated with a character in your book, bring in that object or something related to that skill. Suppose, for example, you have read the biography of a basketball player; you might attract attention by dribbling a ball at the beginning and ending of your presentation. If a particular food is important in the story, bring in small portions for the class to sample and explain how that food fits into the book.
4. Dress in a costume that suits the main character, the setting, or the historical period of your book.
5. If your book has to do with mechanical things like ships, cars, or biking, bring in models to illustrate what you say about these things.
6. Bring in a collage that shows people, objects, incidents from your book. Explain how this collage communicates significant aspects of your book.
7. Choose a conversation between two or three characters during an especially dramatic scene from your book. Ask other people to read these lines as you tape them. Use the tape in your presentation.

In addition to whatever individual, creative approach you take, your presentation must include the following information:

1. Title and author.
2. If the story is fiction—where and when it takes place and information about main characters and events.
3. If the book is nonfiction—a sampling of the kinds of material covered.
4. Reasons why the class should buy this book. (What makes it exciting, amusing, useful?)

As purchaser/listener, jot down the titles of those books you especially want to "buy." Narrow your choices to three after all presentations have been given and write those titles on your three gift certificates.

I will collect and sort the certificates by title. The person whose book "sells" the most copies—collects the most certificates—may choose a free book from our next TAB order. In case of a tie, both students will receive books.

Sheryl Jensen, Ordean Junior High School, Duluth, Minnesota

Take Your Time, Take Two Minutes

We assign oral book reports, hoping students will be motivated to read books that classmates enjoyed, but disaster results when students drone on endlessly while the rest of the class fidgets. Reverting to written reports eliminates sharing, adds to the paper load, and in my opinion generally produces little improvement in writing. I devised the following system that students seem to enjoy. It's based on a two-minute, informal talk and lots of questions and answers. Here is the guideline I distribute.

1. You will deliver to the class on (date) a two-minute summary of the plot of the novel you read. You may not use material from the book jacket or divulge information that will discourage others from reading it (for example, the ending). For this, you will receive 70 points. If your time varies more than ¼ minute in either direction, you will lose points. You will be stopped at 2½ minutes. You may use a note card, but if you read your report you will automatically lose 20 points.
2. After your two-minute talk, your classmates will question you to gain points for themselves. A student receives 5 points for a good question but loses 5 points for a "bad" question. A "bad" question is one that was already answered during the talk or by a previous question, so listen carefully. Each answer to a good question receives 10 points. Questions out of the range of the book are neutral—no points added or lost.
3. Avoid small details in your talk or you will run overtime. Remember, there will be time for details during the questions.
4. Practice your talk at home with a live audience. Remember, time "changes" between silent reading and oral presentation.
5. Grading: 200 points equal an A; 170, a B; 140, a C; 110, a D; 80 or fewer, an F. Since only 70 points can be earned for the two-minute talk, questions and answers are crucial.

I keep track of the scores on an alphabetized class list, keeping the notations simple: +70, +10, +5, -5. A wall clock with a second hand is useful, but a watch can substitute.

It is true that almost every student earns an A, but if the book was read, why not? I find that students read carefully because classmates have often read the book before and ask very specific questions. And student questions are often the ones I might have asked—motivation for a character's actions, the significance of the title, the theme of the novel. Students also listen closely because classmates are quick to point out a "bad" question. Finally,

book swapping seems to occur and students are learning to summarize better and, to my delight, becoming comfortable talking about books.

Marie A. Barry, Salem High School, Salem, Massachusetts

Dictation with a Difference

This assignment involves speaking, writing, and research tasks appropriate for basic English students, but perhaps its most interesting component is student as paper-grader. The instructions I give are summarized below.

> At least once during Basic English, you will be asked to give a dictation. Your first step is to locate an appropriate saying (epigram, aphorism, proverb, witticism) to use as the basis for your dictation. Do not choose the first saying you happen to find. Do some searching and choose the best one you can find. Choose one that makes a point worth thinking about, one with an idea that trails after the words and remains in the mind. Useful reference books in our library include Bartlett's *Familiar Quotations*, *The Home Book of Quotations*, and Mencken's *A New Dictionary of Quotations*. In addition, I have placed these books on reserve; ask for them at the library desk: *Pegs to Hang Ideas On* by M. P. Katz and J. S. Arbeiter, *Speaker's Handbook of Epigrams and Witticisms* by H. W. Prochnow, and *20,000 Quips and Quotes* by Evan Esar.
>
> After you have selected a saying (it does not have to come from one of the above sources), write the following information on a half-sheet of paper.
>
> 1. Copy the saying correctly. Accuracy in wording, spelling, and punctuation is essential.
> 2. Provide the source of the quotation—who originally said or wrote it. Use *anonymous* or *unknown* if no source is given.
> 3. Indicate where you found the saying: title, author and page number of the book. Remember to underline the book title.
> 4. Write a brief explanation of why you chose this particular saying. Do not explain the meaning of the saying; rather, state clearly the reason for your choice.
> 5. You will need two copies of this material (steps 1-4 above).
>
> Turn in one of the half-sheets to me two class days before your scheduled dictation. Keep one to read from on the day of your dictation.
>
> Deliver your dictation on your scheduled day, and collect the papers from your classmates after they have transcribed the dictation. Mark them carefully. Deduct one point for each error and assign scores or grades. You may use correction

symbols if you wish. Give the corrected papers to me within two class days.

I will evaluate your work in three ways for a total of 50 points.

1. The half-sheet you turn in—completeness, accuracy, quality and appropriateness of saying and reason, neatness (10 points).
2. Delivery of your dictation—projection, rate, enunciation, pronunciation, eye contact, reading in sense units—all the things that make a good oral presentation (15 points).
3. The correcting job you do. I will review the dictated papers you have graded. Errors not marked will lower your score (25 points).

Susan L. Hahn, Hastings Senior High School, Hastings, Minnesota

Sophomore Symposium

I use this speaking assignment with sophomores and find it a successful activity and a good preparation for the more formal debate which our students undertake in the junior year. The assignment sheet is reproduced below, including evaluation.

> A symposium is a form of public discussion in which a group of experts divides up a topic. Each member is allotted a certain amount of time in which to make a brief statement. After these prepared remarks, the experts may participate in a panel discussion, they may question one another, another group of interrogators may question them, or the audience may be invited to participate. The group may partition the topic according to the interest and knowledge of individual members, or it may have its members take opposing views on a controversial issue. Under the second plan, the symposium becomes a sort of informal debate, with the speakers taking specific positions and generally holding to those positions.
>
> *Procedure*
>
> 1. Organize yourselves into groups of three, four, or five.
> 2. Decide on a topic that interests your group and will be of interest to the class. Register it with me. Some class time will be given for the selection of topics, library research, and rehearsal. We'll work out a schedule together in class.
> 3. Divide the labor. One person in each group assumes the role of moderator. That person announces the topic, comments generally about it, introduces the other speakers, and keeps discussion moving. Then each speaker discusses an aspect of the topic without interruption. Next, the moderator encourages interaction between panel members

after their initial remarks and opens the discussion to questions from the audience. Finally, the moderator gives a concluding statement.

4. Limit your topic to what can be handled in thirty to forty minutes. Time will be called if your group exceeds the time limit.
5. Prepare note cards and a bibliography of sources used. Note cards and bibliographies must be turned in to me after your presentation.

Speaker Checklist

Here is a list of do's that will help to make your part of the symposium enjoyable and worthwhile for the audience.

1. Show interest in your topic.
2. Establish eye contact with the audience.
3. Dispose of chewing gum before you begin.
4. Refer as little as possible to your notes.
5. Sit up straight and appear poised and alert.
6. Speak with animation in your face and voice.
7. Make effective use of your hands.
8. Dress neatly and appropriately.
9. Adopt an open-minded, objective, and unbiased attitude.
10. Contribute your fair share without monopolizing the discussion; make comments short and to the point.
11. Be courteous to fellow panel members and to the audience.
12. Convince your audience that what you have to say is important and that you know what you are talking about.

Sample Format

1. Introduction of topic and speakers by moderator (three minutes).

   Sample Question: What policy should the United States follow to halt the spread of communism in Latin America?

2. Five-minute presentations by each speaker.

   First Speaker: The present situation, including definition of terms, current state of communism in Latin America, and evidence of further growth.

   Second Speaker: Factors encouraging the growth of communism in Latin America.

   Third Speaker: Economic solutions to the problem.

   Fourth Speaker: Political and diplomatic solutions to the problem.

3. Interaction among panel members (three to five minutes). The moderator has planned questions to initiate this interaction.

4. Questions from the audience (five to ten minutes). The moderator must monitor the time carefully here.
5. Concluding statement by the moderator (one to two minutes).

Evaluation

Each panel will be judged on its overall presentation (25 points), and each member will be judged on his or her performance (25 points). Points may be lost if note cards and bibliographies are inferior.

Irene L. Bush, Pine Crest School, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Celebrities in the Classroom

Teaching biography and autobiography has never been easy for me, perhaps because most textbook selections are not particularly appropriate for students in our rural area. The syllabus for English II, however, dictates that I teach the seven selections in our anthology, and my challenge is to teach them in an interesting way. I decided to capitalize on the students' love for television and use a talk-show format to present the material.

In a hat I placed strips of paper labeled "author," "celebrity," and "talk-show host." Each student drew from the hat his or her role. A second drawing assigned names of authors and celebrities. Students who had drawn host slips were asked to submit the names of the television personalities they wished to emulate. Talk-show groups were then formed by matching celebrities with their authors and assigning them to show hosts.

Students were asked to read only the text material necessary to their presentations, but all students participating in a given talk show would research the celebrity so that they would know enough about that person to conduct an interview with ease. The host would prepare questions that would enable the audience to get an overview of the celebrity's life and be ready to introduce both author and celebrity. The "author" was instructed to research the celebrity about whom he or she had written but also to learn something about himself or herself as author in order to answer questions about his or her motivations for writing, and especially for writing about this particular celebrity.

Students in each group met to discuss the research to be done and to develop questions for the interview. Two more class periods were spent in rehearsal. With no prompting from me, several students asked to design sets during the lunch break.

On the day of the presentations, celebrities appeared in appropriate costume: Madame Curie wore a lab coat; Edward Steichen carried a 35 mm camera; Sam Houston wore moccasins and a coonskin cap; Pablo Casals carried sheet music; and Cole Porter brought a tape of his songs. The presentations were spontaneous! (My only direction had been that they be as realistic as possible.) Something else that was spontaneous were the questions from the audience, and Casals' host had the giggles, probably because the student who portrayed the virtuoso cellist was so completely out of character.

Later, reading the essay evaluation I gave when the presentations were completed, I was surprised and pleased by the high level of information that students had gained from this unit. Several students had gone on to read the selections about celebrities they had become interested in. Recently I surveyed the class to find out what students wanted to study during an unstructured three weeks we had saved throughout the semester. One of the top three choices was the reading of a nonfiction book.

The only change I will make in the biography/autobiography unit next year is that I will videotape it.

Kay K. Stephens, Mandan High School, Mandan, North Dakota

The Career Research Speech

Research assignments should not necessarily lead to research papers. I have found that a career information search lends itself to oral presentation. The outline below summarizes how I use the idea with tenth-graders, but the material can, of course, be adapted for other levels.

Objectives

I. Students read about and take notes on careers of their choice.
II. Students use a variety of library tools: the vertical file, *Readers' Guide, Occupational Outlook Handbook,* encyclopedias.
III. Students develop outlining skills and public speaking techniques.

Requirements

I. Each student speaks four to seven minutes.
II. A poster or similar visual aid is made and used in the presentation.
III. Speech outline and notes are collected.

IV. Three or more sources are cited in the speech and listed on the note cards.

Evaluation

I. Outline and notes are graded separately.
II. The speech is graded in two areas.
  A. Content (60 points).
    1. Meets requirements listed above.
    2. Is well organized from a listener's point of view.
    3. Has an effective introduction and conclusion.
    4. Incorporates transitional devices to aid the listener.
    5. Relies on correct grammar and standard usage.
  B. Delivery (40 points).
    1. Voice volume and clarity.
    2. Body posture.
    3. Facial expression and eye contact.
    4. Gestures and use of visual aid.

Hints

I. The introduction may include the title of the career and a brief description of it.
II. The body may cover requirements for the job and opportunities in the field.
  A. Personal requirements and training.
    1. Personality and temperament.
    2. High school preparation.
    3. Advanced training: technical schools, licenses, higher education.
    4. Experience.
  B. Opportunities.
    1. At various educational levels.
    2. In various geographical locations.
    3. For men and women.
    4. In the future.
III. The conclusion may include advantages and disadvantages of the career and an explanation of why the student chose it.

Helen R. Sprague, Plainfield High School, Plainfield, Illinois

Psychoskits

I divide my twelfth-grade English class at random into groups of four and give each group a different article on behavioral psychology from *Psychology Today:* "Santa Now and Then," December 1979; "What's in a Nickname?" January 1980; "Alcohol, Marijuana, and Memory," March 1980; "Urban Legends," June, 1980; "Prisoners of Manliness," September 1981; "Playing Dumb," October 1981; and "Profiles in Eating," October 1981. A quick glance through back issues of *Psychology Today* will provide others.

The assignment was for each group to develop a five-minute skit that would dramatize the ideas presented in its article. After delivering its skit, each group gave a short summary of the article. The skits were delightful and took surprisingly little time to prepare.

Phil McBurney, Kildonan East Regional Secondary School, Winnipeg, Manitoba

And the Past Shall Be Present

This teaching idea for eleventh- and twelfth-graders takes off from Steve Allen's PBS television series "Meeting of Minds," where significant historical figures were ostensibly brought together to discuss ideas and beliefs of the past, present, and future. It is designed first to involve students in research and the use of a variety of library materials. Since students need to prepare themselves to step into the shoes of famous persons, they need to develop insights into character and historical period. They also practice oral communication skills, especially speaking extemporaneously.

The project can be undertaken in groups of five by an entire class or by a number of individuals as an optional assignment. In consultation with the teacher, the five members of a particular group choose one person to be the moderator (Steve Allen); the other four decide on the famous people they will portray. These figures should have enough in common so that the moderator has a theme around which to build questions.

Students then thoroughly research their famous persons. The moderator needs to be familiar with all four figures and their historical periods in order to prepare introductions and questions. Students are also asked to read the script from one of the six shows in Steven Allen's book *Meeting of Minds*.

The school librarian and the English teacher team teach the research part of this project, and students are introduced to various reference tools, biographies, and other historical materials. When possible, they view films and filmstrips about their famous persons.

Finally, the teacher makes arrangements with the audiovisual coordinator to videotape each presentation, and participants locate appropriate costumes. The moderator gives a general introduction, introduces each famous person, and asks the questions he or she has developed. The best tapes are viewed in other English and history classes.

Carol A. Hanson, Moorhead State University, Moorhead, Minnesota

9 Newspapers, Magazines, and the Visual Arts

Visual arts in the English classroom—from the illuminated letter to film criticism, from the photo essay to slide-illustrated poems. Activities in other chapters with especially interesting visual arts aspects include **One Painting, Many Stories**, page 5; **Punctuation: Prelude and Finale**, page 99; **Silhouette Stimulus**, page 12; **Found Poetry**, page 28; **Decoding Decor**, page 61; **The Short Story in Black and White**, page 137; and **Pictorialize**, page 138.

The newspaper and magazine activities which end this chapter are supplemented by **Minimags**, page 42; **The Literary Magazine Is Alive and Well in Old Town**, page 41; **Window on the World**, page 180; and **The Magazine Board**, page 181. The third member of the media triumvirate of newspapers, magazines, and television is also represented by two activities in Speaking and Listening that incorporate a television format: **And the Past Shall Be Present**, page 120, and **Celebrities in the Classroom**, page 117.

Illuminating

Bring to class examples of illuminated letters—medieval and modern. Then ask students to select a favorite book and design an illuminated letter for the first word in a favorite chapter. One illumination that I particularly remember was a monkey-laden H designed for the Howler monkey chapter of *Wonders of the Monkey World* by Jacquelyn Berrill. This is an activity that should appeal to students right through junior and senior high school and might be done with English and art teachers cooperating.

Bill Bissell, George E. Harris School, Las Vegas, Nevada

Kaleidoscopic

This writing activity can be adapted for any level of instruction and for a variety of end products from journal writing to poetry. You'll need Bromo-Seltzer, food coloring (in drop bottles), water, a

clear pie pan, an overhead projector and screen, a record player, and a few favorite records.

Ask students to jot down words and images that convey what they see and feel as they watch the screen. Place the pie pan on the overhead projector and pour some water into it. Add drops of various colors of food coloring. Every now and then slip a few Bromo-Seltzer tablets into the swirls of color. These create bomb-like explosions. Use your favorite record as background music and change the water often.

Jeanne Gerlach, West Liberty State College, West Liberty, West Virginia

The Cereal Crunch

You'll need a collection of empty cereal boxes for this activity. Ask neighbors, students, and parents for help in advance. List the names of the cereals on the board. Discuss them, encouraging students to consider why cereals are named as they are. Ask them to suggest new names for cereals and to explain their choices.

Each student then covers a cereal box with construction paper and creates a new cereal name and an appropriately designed box. If there's time, assign partners and share cereal inventions through television commercials written and enacted by students.

Phyllis M. Gies, M. E. Cahlan School, North Las Vegas, Nevada

Pictures *and* a Thousand Words

Middle-schoolers enjoy writing stories and assembling books inspired by magazine pictures. My instructions go something like this:

> Page through several magazines, tearing out a collection of pictures that appeal to you. Next, spread out these pictures, letting them suggest characters, settings, plots—ways they might fit together to tell a story. Discard or add pictures if you want. Now write the story suggested to you by your pictures. Proofread and revise until the story pleases you.
>
> Now comes the bookmaking fun. Decide on the color of paper you want to use for your book, its format, the kind of script, the placement of writing and pictures on each page. I'll be giving some special instructions as we assemble our books together in class.

Results are delightful, creative, surprise-on-the-next-page books that can be shared through the library or by loaning them to other rooms.

Dorothy Wood, Highlands School, Edina, Minnesota

Photo Essay

This assignment, in which students create a story or essay by combining photos and words, helps youngsters develop an appreciation of photography as a creative force and teaches them how to substantiate a visual image with verbal images. In addition, it encourages them to think about logical order and how ideas can be tied together to form a cohesive whole. This is the work plan I distribute.

> I want you to create an essay or story by combining photos with words. Here are the rules you should observe as you go along.
>
> 1. Only actual photographs, not magazine pictures or postcards, may be used.
> 2. Mount photos neatly. You might invest in a package of photo "corners" so you won't damage your photographs with tape or glue.
> 3. A large piece of poster board will serve as the "canvas" for your work; however, do not write directly on the poster board. Instead, write on paper, cut out passages, and mount them on the board. This procedure helps to control errors. Your work must be in ink or typewritten.
> 4. You may use one photo and create a story or essay around it, or you may use a number of photos, as long as you synchronize photos and text and arrange the photos in a logical way.
> 5. Your essay or story must have a title; if you choose the essay form, you must have an introductory and a concluding statement. If you choose the story form, content may be fictional or based on fact. If you wish to write a story first and then shoot a role of film to illustrate it, feel free to proceed that way. Here are some titles to start you thinking: Firsts in My Life, Halloween Is . . . , The Asteroids Meet the Space Invaders, Family Tree, Dad—Vietnam Vet, Sloopy the Cat.
> 6. You have a month to create your essay or story, so take the time you need to select a subject, shoot the film or gather photos, and write the accompanying text. An early start helps to ensure quality control and good organization.

When the project is complete, I hang the essays and stories, literally turning the classroom into a gallery. Students love to wander around the room, reading and discussing the efforts of their classmates. The motivational force of photographs is truly amazing!

Lynda A. Forsythe, Kilmer Intermediate School, Vienna, Virginia

Say It with Music—and Slides

A technique for teaching poetry that I have found effective might be called a multimedia approach and rests on the notion that most art forms share certain fundamental characteristics. While students may not immediately relate to poetry, they may appreciate some of its qualities through other art forms.

One of the easiest parallels to establish is that between music and poetry. While a given poem may receive a cool reception by itself, the reaction may be substantially improved if the selection is taped with appropriate background music. The choice of music will vary with the poem, and there is tremendous latitude for innovation. Even extremely serious poetry can be compatible with the music of such pop groups as Focus.

I generally begin by providing an opportunity for students to read and react to the poem in printed form. At this point I follow with a straight taping of the poem. Even though students are dealing with identical material, their reaction to listening to a poem rather than reading it is often more positive. When this step is immediately followed by the same poem with background music, the reaction may be pleasantly animated.

Another approach is to accompany the poem with slides. This is a more demanding technique, but the results are well worth the effort. Obviously, this technique lends itself to a sequential presentation, with a number of slides used in conjunction with the taping of a single poem. If the poem is long, you will discover that cue cards are invaluable if slide changes are to occur at the appropriate moment. An out-of-sync presentation is a disaster that must be experienced to be fully appreciated.

If you want to go for broke, try combining poetry, slides, and music. The sequence that I have found most effective is poem, poem plus slides, and finally poem, slides, and music combined. By introducing three variables rather than two, student reactions tend to be even more spontaneous and enthusiastic. If the slides are technically good, the discussion tends to gravitate to them. If this

is the case, the parallels between techniques in photography and those in poetry provide an opportunity to justify the need for structural analysis in poetry. The bottom line: technique is as fundamental to poetry as it is to photography. With photography, technique just appears to be more obvious. If your forte is music (which mine definitely is not) the same conclusions might be drawn.

The ultimate questions are "Does it work?" and "Is it worth the effort?" To both, I answer an unqualified "Yes." And if the scheme doesn't work miracles in your class, you might just become a passable photographer.

Doug Gibson, Fredericton High School, Fredericton, New Brunswick

Criticizing the Critic

Every Friday our newspaper prints a review by a local man, David Foil, of a movie currently showing at a local theater. The assignment based on these reviews spans eight weeks so that students have several movies from which to choose. Each student acquires a copy of Foil's review of a movie he or she wants to see and then goes to the film. The student writes his or her own review and then compares that analysis to Foil's. Students generally enjoy this assignment, which encourages attentive viewing because students watch to see if Foil is "right" and to decide if they will agree or disagree with him.

Sheryl B. Sherlock, Walker High School, Walker, Louisiana

First Impressions

This past year I found myself teaching an unusually wide range of students, from learning disabled students to top-notch sophomores. Was there any thing I could do to which each of these students would respond in a positive way?

I hit upon the following idea. Why not obtain a film with numerous characters, stop the film after each character had been briefly introduced, and ask students to write their first impression of a character of their choice. The film I chose, available through the Georgia Department of Education, was entitled *That's My Name, Don't Wear It Out.* Characters included an alcoholic father, a delinquent, a deaf child, an overprotective mother, a store owner, and a hippie—something for everyone!

Later, after students had viewed the entire film, I asked them to reexamine their first impressions. Could any of their first impressions have been wrong?

Stereotyping was sorely obvious, but an awakening occurred during the second part of the exercise and students demonstrated a new and deeper understanding of human nature.

Nancy Jaye Smith, Parkview High School, Lilburn, Georgia

Viewing Review

The following viewing guide helps junior high students become more discriminating film and television viewers. The answers can be used in a variety of writing assignments or as the basis for discussions of films shown in class. The larger elements of plot and characterization were purposely excluded here.

> The first part of each section is called "Film Fact," which you can trust to be generally true. The second part is labeled "Observations." The questions there will help you to comment on films. Please feel free to add questions that you think will help us to become more perceptive and intelligent viewers. You might even want to read about the art of filmmaking and come up with a "Film Fact" contribution of your own.

1. *Film Fact*: Music often suits the action of a film. Exciting action usually has exciting music, sad scenes usually have sad music. Comic scenes may have sprightly music.
   Observations: In the film under discussion, where does the music reflect the mood of the action? Select only a few examples. What kind of instruments or voices are heard: drums, guitar, whistling, a chorus? Why do you think that kind of instrumentation was chosen? What kind of music was heard: rock and roll, classical, bluegrass, jazz? What did that choice contribute?
2. *Film Fact*: Colors stimulate us. Color glamorizes costume and actors and actresses. Color "paints" the countryside as well as the interiors of homes and buildings. It can be intense or soft, vivid or dull and dark.
   Observations: What sort of colors are used in the film under discussion: gaudy or dull and dreary or something in between? Do different kinds of colors accompany different kinds of scenes? If so, why? What is color "saying" in this film?
3. *Film Fact*: Composition is important to camera technicians because each time they look through the lens they see a "picture," and it has to be properly composed. Everything in the shot must be in its proper place to create balance.

and perspective. On the other hand, not every shot must be a beautiful picture. In some scenes, composition renders a picture that is harsh or distorted—for a purpose.
Observations: How do one or two scenes in the film under discussion create either a beautiful picture or an ugly or frightening one? How is perspective used? Was balance—or intentional imbalance—used?

4. *Film Fact*: Lighting often creates a mood. It can create a ghostlike atmosphere or a cheerful, warm feeling. Lighting can also hint at what is about to happen.
Observations: Where in the film under discussion did lighting create or support mood? Was lighting used to hint at what was about to happen?
5. *Film Fact*: A few standard principles are generally accepted concerning the distance of the camera from the subject being filmed.
   a. When a scene is filmed from a great distance, setting is established. Distance shots can occur several times during a film.
   b. When a scene is shot at a medium distance, it provides a closer look at some part of the setting—at a group of people within a crowd, for example.
   c. When the camera is used at very close range, it offers the audience an intimate association with a person or an object. The audience may see only a face, or hands, or a very small object.

   Observations: Where in the film under discussion can you find interesting examples of each of the above? How did distance or panorama shots affect you? When and why were they used? How did close-ups of persons affect you? Were you drawn closer to their thinking processes or emotional states? Were their lines more interesting now than during more distant shots?

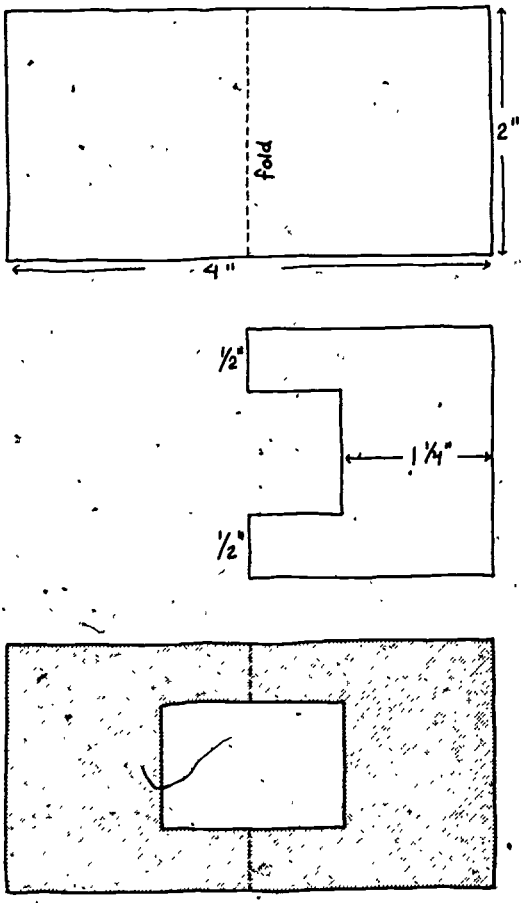
Micki Remos, Rhodes Junior High School, Mesa, Arizona, and Dolly Lein, Urbandale High School, Urbandale, Iowa

I Am a Camera

I find this activity useful in helping students identify main idea or theme, write descriptive detail, and sequence material. These are the instructions I give.

1. Select a fairly large picture, color or black and white, that shows a scene that you like or dislike. Your theme is (*the city at night, restaurant rush hour, mountain sunset, lonely beach, crowded beach*).
2. Make a "camera" with a strip of colored paper 2" wide and 4" long. Fold this paper in half crosswise and cut out a

rectangle 1½" × 1". Your camera frame should be a small rectangle centered within a larger rectangle as shown below.



3. Move your camera frame over your picture. Put yourself in the position of a photographer filming a story. Catch the sequence of your story so that a viewer will clearly understand what your story is about. When you are satisfied with the "shots" you have chosen, use a pencil to mark them out by positioning the camera frame over the picture and tracing the rectangle. You must have a minimum of five frames.
4. Cut out these frames and paste them on a piece of the unlined paper provided in class. Put them in a straight line and as close together as they would be found in a filmstrip.

5. Describe each frame of your film in specific detail. Number those descriptions to correspond to the frames.
6. Now put your description together. Add words and phrases so that your viewer knows exactly what you are trying to describe by the narration you have written. Recopy this "script" neatly.
7. On "film day" each of you will have an opportunity to display your film and the accompanying text.

Marianna Lawler, Schalmont Middle School, Schenectady, New York

Magazine Audiences

This assignment asks students to conduct an informal survey to collect data and to formulate generalizations based on that data.

Bring to class three issues each of a wide variety of magazines. Divide the class into groups of three and give each group three issues of the same magazine.

Ask each student to survey the advertisements in a single issue in order to list the general types of products advertised, naming specific products or services occasionally. All advertisements need not be listed since this is merely an informal survey. Using this list, students then describe the audience to which these advertisements are addressed, considering such factors as sex, marital status, economic status, educational level, recreational interests, general interests, and other factors that students deem important.

Next, each student surveys the articles in the same issue in order to list their topics, naming specific titles in several instances. Again, all topics need not be listed. Using this list, students then describe the audience for which these articles were written based on the factors listed above. Regional interest versus national interest might be added to that list as might other factors that seem pertinent to certain magazines.

Students then work together in their groups to compile this information from the three issues. A spokesman may present the group's findings to the class, but each student is responsible for writing a paragraph governed by a topic sentence, such as "Judging from the advertisements and articles, *(magazine)* is directed to *(key adjectives)* audience." The student goes on to offer specific examples of ads and article topics that clearly document an appeal to the audience described. The survey data may, of course, be used to write a paper that is several paragraphs long.

Rosemary A. Ortman, University of Louisville, Louisville, Kentucky

Sloganizing

Here's an exercise that makes a point in an advertising unit. Ask each student to clip an ad with a picture and slogan from a magazine or newspaper. The student then cuts the slogan from the chosen ad, being careful to keep it intact, and pastes it on a separate sheet of paper. Later, in class, students pass slogans in one direction, pictures in the other. The class then tries to match slogans with products. The exercise demonstrates vividly the sameness of the terms used by advertisers to influence buyers.

Verus Young, Lois Craig School, North Las Vegas, Nevada

Skimmers

This newspaper game helps students learn to skim for detail. Laminate grocery ads onto 8" × 10" cards or tack them on a bulletin board. Devise ten questions on the items and their prices and write them on another card. Clippings other than grocery ads may, of course, be used. Assign partners.

One student scans the ad and writes down the appropriate sale prices or other information requested on the card. The time taken to complete this task is recorded in seconds by the other student. Then the process is reversed, and time and accuracy compared. The skimming game can be repeated for several rounds if you devise several question cards.

Jeanne Hartmans, Paul E. Culley School, Las Vegas, Nevada

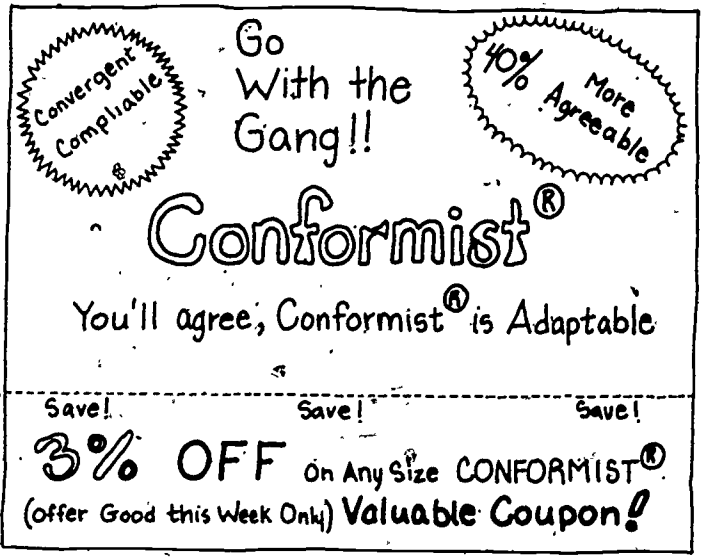
Word Advertisements

Although students enjoy this activity as part of vocabulary study, it is equally useful in developing an awareness of advertising techniques and tricks and in encouraging critical reading habits.

Ask students to bring in advertisements from newspapers and magazines and to jot down phrases from commercials on radio and television. Share these in class, discussing how advertisers encourage consumers to buy their products. Among the points you might consider are glittering generalities—positive or acceptable connotations that are used without evidence; bandwagon techniques—everyone's doing it, so you should too; testimonials—the endorsement of a product by a prestigious or well-known person; exaggeration; repetition; pressure tactics—limited quantity, limited time; devices

of format—sale price in large type, financing charges in inconspicuous type; appeals to a particular audience or consumer.

Now ask students to create an advertisement for a word from the vocabulary or spelling list—or a word of their own choice—by using several of the advertising techniques you have discussed. Their advertisements should convince their classmates to "buy" that word. A sample is given below.



Later, share the word advertisements with the class, analyzing the advertising techniques used as well as how the meaning of the word is reflected in the ad.

Janene Sonnega, Amelia Middle School, Amelia, Ohio

Advertisement Comparisons

After students have studied diction, figurative language, and tone, we analyze two or more magazine advertisements for similar products in class, pointing out both the obvious and the subtle messages contained in the ads. I then give the following writing assignment to eleventh- or twelfth-graders.

> Select two magazine advertisements for similar products. Analyze and compare them as we did with the ads in class.

Consider products, artwork, and the copy (including vocabulary level and connotations) in terms of age, sex, and educational level of the intended audience. Note metaphors employed in the advertisements that make an implied comparison between the product and something else that has favorable associations in the reader's mind. Conclude your three-hundred-word essay by comparing the effectiveness of the two ads. Attach the advertisements to your paper.

Mary Alice Fite, Columbus School for Girls, Columbus, Ohio

Classified Ads: Now and Then

This can be a thought-provoking exercise for students who are about to make career choices.

Part One: Find an ad for a job you would like that requires no additional training or education than what you will have when you graduate. Cut out the ad and tape it at the top of the page on which you answer these questions.

1. Why would you like this job?
2. In what ways does this job match your abilities, interests, and aptitudes?
3. Is this job listed through an agency? If so, what agency?
4. What will your salary be?
5. What is your work schedule?
6. What skills are required for this job? (Or what skills will you learn?)
7. Are there any statements in the ad you don't understand? Is there any information that is misleading?
8. What steps would you take to get this job?

Part Two: Find an ad for a job you would like to have sometime in your future. Assume you have all the requirements for this job—college, trade school, experience, and so on. Cut out the ad and tape it at the top of the page on which you answer these questions.

1. Why would you like this job?
2. In what ways does this job match your abilities, interests, and aptitudes?
3. Is this job listed through an agency? If so, what agency?
4. What would your salary be?
5. What would your work schedule be?
6. What education and/or training is needed for this job?
7. What experience is needed?

8. What do you consider to be the benefits of this job?
9. Are there any drawbacks?

Patricia M. Mote, Polaris Vocational Center, Middleburg Heights, Ohio

Informed Citizen/Consumer

I have had success with the following unit on advertising and propaganda techniques. I usually use it at election time, but it is easily adaptable to a more general context. The worksheet below outlines the assignments.

Rationale

Since this is an election year, I have designed this unit to help you analyze political speeches and advertisements. It should make you a more informed citizen and voter.

Since you are and always will be a consumer, this unit should also help you to analyze advertisements and commercials so that you "get your money's worth." In addition, you will learn more about your rights as a consumer. The assumption is that you will not get cheated if you are aware of the subtle psychological techniques used by advertising agencies and political campaigners.

Assignments

1. You are responsible for bringing to class at least seven advertisements, articles, or political speeches that illustrate various propaganda techniques we have studied.
2. Create a product that does not already exist and write an advertising campaign for it, using the techniques that we have studied. Include pictures, drawings, and/or diagrams. Incorporate the following five advertisements into your campaign: a television ad, a radio ad, an ad for a national women's magazine such as *Ms.*, an ad for a national men's magazine such as *Esquire*, and an ad for our high school newspaper. Gear each ad to its audience.
3. You may substitute this assignment for the one in number two above. Describe and illustrate an invention that might have a useful purpose and might be purchased by enough consumers to make manufacturing profitable. Estimate a selling price for your invention. What factors should be considered in determining that price? Survey at least twenty potential consumers to decide what market, if any, exists for your invention. Write a report summarizing your findings.
4. Choose an advertisement and use its style to write a second ad that makes fun of the original. This technique is called

parody. Take a look at *Mad* or *National Lampoon* for examples of parody. Attach the original ad to your parody.

Ruben Friedman, Farmingdale Senior High School, Farmingdale, New York

I Read It First in *The New Yorker*

I firmly maintain that students benefit from examining and discussing models of good writing, and one of my most successful strategies makes use of old *New Yorker* magazines. I give each student an issue containing a "Profile." After students have read their profiles, we discuss the nature and characteristics of the profile form as well as interviewing techniques and the art of questioning. I then ask each student to draw the name of a fellow student from the class who will become the subject of his or her profile. (I do not allow students to choose their subjects because I don't particularly want them to write about their friends.) Students write several drafts, and I serve as editor, in some cases pointing out that further questioning could lead to information that would strengthen the paper. Students asked, and I agreed, that no one except me would read the profiles without the permission of author and subject, but most students are quite eager to read their profiles to one another.

Dan W. John, Hatboro-Horsham Senior High School, Horsham, Pennsylvania

Newspaper Unit: The Finale

As part of our English curriculum, students complete a newspaper unit. Near its end, they do some "creative" work with newspapers that everyone thoroughly enjoys. The materials for both projects are newspapers, scissors, glue, transparent tape, string, staplers, and felt-tip markers. For the first, divide students into groups of four. Each group builds a newspaper structure using only the materials listed above. Prizes are awarded for the best three. I've seen everything from a van to an airplane to a gym done in elaborate detail. Students work in pairs for the second project—to design and make a costume from newspapers, one dressing the other in the finished product. A fashion show is held, and there are prizes (paperbacks, posters) for the best designs. Some of last year's creations included a tube of toothpaste, a lion, a box of popcorn, and a medieval lady.

And here is a miscellany of newspaper activities with which students can experiment.

1. List as many uses for a newspaper as you can: birdcage liners, fireplace logs, painting drop cloths.
2. Write your own obituary.
3. Write a sports headline and story with yourself as the star.
4. Develop a recipe for the foods section—humor is allowed.
5. Cut photos and editorial cartoons from newspapers and clip off the captions. Now write new captions—realistic or amusing ones.
6. Make a poster illustrating newspaper terms and parts.
7. Write five math story problems using newspaper ads.
8. Create a "found" poem using any ad or short article in the paper.

Wilma J. Weisenstein, Belle Valley School, Belleville, Illinois

I Saw It with My Own Eyes

One of the best ways to introduce a unit of subjective and objective reporting, especially in a journalism class, is to stage a "happening" without students being aware of its purpose.

One year, for example, I arranged an argument with one of the boys at the beginning of the class period. The boy came into class late without his materials. He became surly and disrespectful when I questioned him, so I told him to leave the room. When he refused to do so, I threatened to throw him out. He dared me to try. Following a brief altercation, I won. (It is best that this conclusion be made clear to the student beforehand!) After the student left the class, I explained to the remaining students that the Board of Education takes a dim view of teachers using force in dealing with students and that this episode might result in a hearing in front of the board. Since they might be called as witnesses, they should take time out now to write down exactly what happened as they saw and heard it. (I recommend secretly tape recording the event so students can hear the replay after they "swear" to what the combatants said.) After about fifteen minutes, the student returns and we explain to the class that the encounter was staged for their benefit. We read some of their "factual" accounts, which, as you might expect, differ widely. Then we play the tape and categorize each student's account as "subjective," "objective," or "evenly mixed."

The reactions of students to this episode run the gamut from hostile indignation at "toying with our emotions" (perhaps a legitimate complaint) to unreserved admiration for the acting jobs,

especially that of their peer. Most students, however, admit that they will not soon forget the differences between subjective and objective reporting.

A few final notes of caution. The student selected for the role must be capable of such behavior in the eyes of fellow students. While the school's leading drama student might have the edge in acting ability, he may be the least likely to challenge a teacher. Secondly, administration and staff should be informed in advance so they can react appropriately. Finally, be forewarned (and warn the student actor as well) that other students in the class might "get involved," and decide what action you will take in advance. With careful planning, the class learns the lesson, and the student actor achieves a touch of immortality.

Ed Gaffney, Marcus Whitman High School, Rushville, New York

10 Talking and Writing about Literature

The teacher's concern with the "right questions," the questions that reveal a literary work as well as the questions that tap a range of thinking processes—comprehension, analysis, synthesis, evaluation—is reflected in many of these activities, and especially in four that are solely concerned with the formulation of questions to meet specific ends. Role playing and improvisation, including ejecting Teacher Jones from an animal farm classroom so students may experience directly the use and abuse of power, bringing in the sinister black box for Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery," and establishing an eighteenth-century coffeehouse in the classroom, are among the other techniques that these activities endorse. Although some address specific works of literature, the tactics employed transfer readily to other stories and novels.

Several activities with a literature base are found elsewhere because of a specific writing, speaking, or art focus. An interesting poetry activity is **Say It with Music—and Slides**, page 124. Two that offer a new look at book reports are **Book Report Poems**, page 25, and **Book Sellers**, page 111. **Illuminating**, page 121, describes an art activity that can be used with almost any book.

The Short Story in Black and White

A creative group exercise from a summer workshop provided me with the raw materials for a new approach to short story analysis with a class of eleventh-graders. The original exercise involved the individual production of 18" × 24" black-on-white collages which the group then collectively arranged into a single mural. More interested in the vitality of the individual works than in the totality of the mural, I began to view each collage as a potential metaphor for the short story. Adapting this activity to the classroom proved easy, educational, and gratifying!

On the first day of the term, texts (*A Glossary of Literary Terms*, M. H. Abrams; *Fifty Great American Short Stories*, Milton Crane,

ed.; and *A Handbook of Critical Approaches*, Wilfred L. Guerin et al.) and course outlines were distributed, and an assignment was given in the *Glossary* for day three.

Day two began with the distribution of a sheet of white and a sheet of black paper to each student along with glue, tape, and scissors. Students were asked to create something interesting with the black paper on the white. In answer to a question about the purpose of the activity, I replied that a full explanation would be given the next day. I also provided soft musical background (Rampal's "Suite for Flute and Jazz Piano"). The result was a fascinating collection of representational and nonrepresentational art in two and three dimensions. Displayed on the bulletin board, these black-and-white studies became viable tools of literary analysis, providing illustrative examples and analogies throughout the trimester.

On day three we explored the term *metaphor* via the literary terms assignment in the *Glossary*, and students readily applied this vocabulary to appropriate elements of the collages.

Follow-up assignments included lighthearted, yet fruitful, analyses of the black-and-white studies for examples of archetypes, Freudian and Jungian symbols, and elements of style. Near the end of the course students wrote unique and insightful essays in which a single black-and-white study was interpreted as a metaphor for one of the short stories studied.

Mary Knecht Williams, Moorestown Friends School, Moorestown, New Jersey

Pictorialize

Visual images of all kinds are extremely helpful in teaching abstract concepts in literature—mood and theme in particular—and in helping students of all ages to sharpen their powers of observation and to exercise their imaginations. The possibilities are many, but here are two visual-image activities that have been successful in my literature classes.

In the first, students work together in small groups to create collages representing a single author or literary period. In an American literature class, for example, one group created a collage to represent the Colonial Period, another the life and work of Ernest Hemingway. Each group then produces a paper of several paragraphs in which students explain the significance of the items chosen. The explanation can also be given as an oral interpretation of the collage to the class.

In the second, students write a paragraph or a paper about the suitability and effectiveness of the illustrations for a particular piece of literature they have read. Students can also analyze the effectiveness of the illustrations in their literature text or anthology.

Kay O. Cornelius, Grissom High School, Huntsville, Alabama

A Vacuum Cleaner Is like an Anteater

I use this activity to introduce a poetry unit because riddles are an easy way to move into simile and metaphor, but it can be used more generally with other kinds of comparison writing.

Divide the class into groups of three or four and ask each group to write a four- or five-line riddle about one of the following: potato, car, vacuum cleaner, skeleton, ice cube, window. Assign topics by distributing slips of papers so groups do not know the answers to each other's riddles.

Make sure that students understand that the item itself may not be mentioned in the description. Suggest that the patterns "What is . . . " and "What is like . . . " work well. For example, "What is shaped like a box, smooth as glass, and cold, cold, cold?"

Each group then writes its riddle on the board as the rest of the class tries to figure out the answer. When the riddles are solved, consider with the class which descriptions worked best and why. Which were interesting but so far out that no one could guess the answer? Does a description have to be based on something we can all associate with for it to work? Can we describe something we don't know much about? Can imagination substitute for knowledge?

Catherine M. Kinosh, Gidean Welles School, Glastonbury, Connecticut

Taping Taps Poetry

After numerous attempts at leading class discussions on poetry and having only a handful of brave souls involved, I opted for small group discussions with tape recorders to monitor each group. Participation zoomed to 100 percent, critical thinking skills developed, fear of divergent thinking dissipated, and self-confidence bloomed.

The structure is simple, and only a few ground rules are established. Each group of approximately five students sits in a circle around a cassette recorder. The poem to be discussed is read

aloud before starting the tape. The names of all group members are announced at the beginning of the tape, and all members are required to participate. Questions from the text are used at appropriate times during the discussion, and a list of critical thinking questions is placed on the chalkboard for everyone to refer to. These questions may be used with almost all poetry:

1. What is your reason for saying that?
2. Can you give evidence to support that statement?
3. Can you clarify what you just said?
4. Is there another (or a better) explanation for that?
5. What can we conclude from what you're saying?
6. Why do you think that happened?
7. Can you give an example of that from your own experience?

Taping sessions usually run for about twenty-five minutes. As sessions continue, students begin to challenge one another freely, discussions become more thoughtful, answers more penetrating, and many logical and sound interpretations unfold.

Rosalie Lemkin, Sellman School, Cincinnati, Ohio

Poetry and Passive Pupils

"I hate poetry." "Yuk! Who needs it?" "That stuff's for wimps!" Sound familiar? How can an English teacher interest teenagers in poetry? Try approaching it through something that the kids really love—their record albums. I have had excellent results with the assignment described below.

1. Carefully choose the song you are going to analyze. Consider relevance and universal appeal. "Coward of the County" (Kenny Rogers), "Winner Takes It All" (Abba), and "Sounds of Silence" (Simon and Garfunkel) are the kinds of songs with which other students have had success. Remember, you will play the recording for us in class and should provide each of us with a mimeographed copy of the words.
2. Be prepared to identify and discuss the literary devices used in the lyrics: metaphor, simile, personification, paradox, hyperbole, motif, alliteration, apostrophe.
3. You should be able to explain the theme of the song and to comment on the "sense" of the verses as well as their "feeling." Can you interpret the title for us?
4. Be ready to talk about the rhyme scheme, and look for internal rhyme and near rhyme as well as end rhyme.

5. Write five questions (with answers) that you can ask the class.

A student who analyzed "Sounds of Silence" found examples of alliteration, apostrophe, paradox, internal rhyme, hyperbole, simile, and allusion. The student also commented on motif words and on the use of words ending in *ing*.

Related assignments might include writing a biographical sketch about the artist/performer, designing an album cover, writing a letter to the songwriter or the singer, writing a critic's review of the recording, composing lyrics and/or music for an original song, creating a collage related to music, and comparing two or more recordings by a favorite artist.

Katherine M. Mooney, Easton Junior High School, North Easton, Massachusetts.

Fill-in-the-Blanks Poem

As a different way of introducing a poem, especially one in which the words are richly connotative, try the following.

Type the poem, inserting blanks of uniform length for key words. Reproduce a copy of this fill-in-the-blank poem for each student. Before students read the poem in their textbooks, ask them to fill in the blanks with the words they think the poet actually used. This may be done individually or in small groups. Later, discuss the words suggested by students and the words actually used by the poet. I've had success with "Out, Out—" by Robert Frost, but many poems lend themselves to this strategy.

Marie Pettet, Fulton County Schools, Atlanta, Georgia

Analyzing Short Fiction: The Question Is the Answer

One interesting way to analyze short stories is to ask students to construct questions on four levels. (Of course, questions on each level may also be formulated by the teacher.) I have used this device successfully with "The Fiend" by F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Giraffe" by Mauro Senesi, and "The Scarlet Ibis" by James Hurst, but the method generalizes easily. I introduce the four levels of questions to students with the worksheet below.

> Directions: Examine the following four levels of questions that were written for "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." Then design questions on each level for the story assigned in class.

First level: Knowledge

Explanation: The reader recognizes or recalls information. (Knowledge is the lowest level of responding; primarily memory is involved.)

Types of questions: Completion, multiple choice, true or false, matching.

Examples: (1) What was the little girl's name? (2) The little girl's name was (a) Mary, (b) June, (c) Goldilocks.

Second level: Comprehension

Explanation: The reader interprets by paraphrasing, summarizing, or explaining. (Comprehension is the lowest level of understanding.)

Types of questions: Questions that elicit simple explanations in essay form; possibly carefully structured multiple-choice questions.

Examples: (1) Describe the woodland home Goldilocks entered. (2) For how many persons was the home apparently furnished? Explain.

Third Level: Application

Explanation: The reader identifies the theme of the story and demonstrates an understanding of the story's message by relating it to his or her own life.

Type of question: Essay

Example: Few of us here in the city go for walks deep in the forest; however, old warehouses and condemned tenement buildings are often accessible to us. Should we prowl about them? What sort of problems might we face? What are the dangers of trespassing?

Fourth level: Evaluation

Explanation: (1) The reader shows an understanding of the conflict in terms of value systems.

Type of question: Essay

Example: Two value systems—the rights of property (an unguarded house) and the rights of persons (a hungry little girl)—appear to be in conflict here. In terms of each, what was it that Goldilocks did wrong? Discuss.

Explanation: (2) The reader judges the value or worth of the selection in terms of given or self-designed standards.

Types of questions: Essay or carefully constructed multiple-choice questions.

Example: Would you recommend this story to another tenth-grader? Explain.

Marilyn Gelhar, Stillwater Senior High School—Hillside Campus, Maplewood, Minnesota

Discussion Catalyst

Ask students to prepare one to three questions they have after reading an assignment. Have them write these questions on the chalkboards prior to a discussion of the assignment. You should literally be surrounded by student questions. You'll find that this practice improves the quality and value of the discussion because you can quickly judge the depth of student understanding and the influence their attitudes have had on their perceptions.

William Speiser, Rumson-Fair Haven School, Rumson, New Jersey

Classified Information

Bloom's Taxonomy has been a useful model for me to refer to in curriculum planning. I apply it here to writing assignments in a drama unit; the play under consideration is *I Remember Mama* by John Van Druten. The assignments given below are labeled according to the Taxonomy.

1. Knowledge. In a paragraph, tell about a character in *I Remember Mama.* Include description, character traits, relationships. Underline your topic sentence.
2. Comprehension. In your own words, tell the events in the rising action of act 1.
3. Application. Choose a character and change him or her in any way you wish. Predict or tell what that character would do in a specific scene.
4. Analysis. Choose one of these two assignments. (a) Compare how your family is similar to or different from the family in *I Remember Mama.* (b) Compare the three aunts. What do they have in common? How are they different?
5. Synthesis. Choose one of these three assignments. (a) Write several paragraphs telling how the play would be different if the characters were living today in your town. (b) Put yourself in the play and tell what kind of person you would be and what you would do. (c) Write a scene for act 2, creating a new situation.
6. Evaluation. Choose one of these two topics. (a) In several paragraphs tell if *I Remember Mama* is a good or bad play. Support your opinion. (b) Rate the characters from most to least important. Explain your ranking.

Renée Olson, Northfield Junior High School, Northfield, Minnesota

Discussion Method for Literature

This discussion method may be adapted to any piece of literature, and I find it a welcome change from more traditional question/answer sessions. Begin by handing out a list of statements relating to a given work or genre. I've included three samples below. Students read and respond to each item individually, marking a statement "A" if they agree with it and "D" if they disagree. When students have completed this assessment, we organize the class into discussion groups of at least six students. Students now share their answers within groups and through discussion come to a consensus for each statement. All must agree or disagree.

For "Bartleby the Scrivener"

____ 1. Bartleby refuses to work primarily because he is lazy.
____ 2. The narrator's chief concern for Bartleby is for the scrivener's welfare.
____ 3. Bartleby deserved to go to prison.
____ 4. Bartleby was lucky to have a good friend like the narrator.
____ 5. As human beings, it is our responsibility to aid those who do not help themselves.

For *The Crucible*

____ 1. Society has no right to repress individual freedom.
____ 2. The Puritans were hypocrites.
____ 3. Refusing to conform is always an effective protest against society.
____ 4. Nonconformity is dangerous and useless.
____ 5. Modern people are too intelligent to believe in superstition.

For Science Fiction

____ 1. The perfection of mechanical robots will be a major achievement because it will free people from degrading manual labor.
____ 2. The brain can function normally, independent of the rest of the body.
____ 3. Technological progress has been more beneficial than harmful to us; it should continue unhampered.
____ 4. Someday, science will duplicate the human body.
____ 5. Research time and money should be devoted to solve social problems instead of creating new material goods and weapons.

D. Louise Edwards, Billings Senior High School, Billings, Montana

Teaching the Novel: Division of Labor

Novel study sometimes needs a novel approach. Divide the class into several groups, each with a chairperson to report progress to a central coordinating committee that works out a presentation that will involve all groups. Suppose the novel is *Brave New World.* One group might look into the futurography of the novel, another into character analysis, a third into Huxley's life. Students complete specific assignments within their groups. Those working on character analysis, for example, might organize a panel discussion. The committee approach ensures that everyone becomes a major contributor and, therefore, a participant in the study of the novel rather than an observer.

Naomi J. Shaw, Westbury High School, Houston, Texas

Alternatives to Plot Summary

Nothing is more deadly than the statement, "Your book report is due next week." To generate enthusiasm, introduce your students to the three book report formats on this page. I've included a student-written sample of each. I usually introduce each idea by working through a couple of examples from stories that are familiar to all—"Goldilocks and the Three Bears" or "Little Red Riding Hood," for example.

1. Ask students to write the report as a recipe—no chance of copying material from the book jacket with this one. Here's one student's recipe report for *Leap before You Look* by Mary Stolz.

Janine's Upside-down Crumb Cake

To assure success in baking, make certain that you have the following ingredients on hand:

2 grandmothers—1 heavily made-up, 1 comfortable and old looking
1 mother—intellectual, politically minded, unloving and detached
1 father—likeable, irritable in mother's presence
1 dental assistant named Emily—beautiful and charming
1 younger brother—likeable, excitable
1 young girl—trying to be loved, trying to find a mother, a father, and a family
spices: Ann Ferris and friends, a divorce

In a regular home, combine a young girl, brother, father, and mother until mixture is together yet very crumbly. Add grandmothers to make a smoother texture. Add dental assistant at the end of mixing time. (This will force the batter to separate as the cake bakes.) Bake from one Christmas season to the next. Cake should separate into layers that are better served apart. May be iced with reconciliation at the end.

2. Ask students to write the report as a letter to Ann Landers. Another student who has read the book responds as Ann Landers might. This example is based on *Lisa, Bright and Dark* by John Neufeld.

Dear Ann,

Can a person who is mentally ill know it? My friend Lisa keeps saying she's crazy and, to tell you the truth, her behavior is becoming so peculiar, even violent, that I am beginning to agree with her. She says her parents won't listen to her, and our teacher thinks she just wants attention. How do I get help for Lisa? I'm frightened for her.

Betsy

Dear Betsy,

It certainly is possible for someone to know that she requires help. Have you tried talking with Lisa's parents or minister? Perhaps there is a teen helpline in your town, and you could discuss the matter with them. Don't give up; it sounds as if Lisa really needs a friend who is concerned.

Ann

3. Ask students to write want ads for several of the characters in the book. Then give them time in class to explain why these ads tell a great deal about the plot and characters. Here is an example for *Ox Goes North: More Trouble for the Kid at the Top* by John Ney.

WANTED: Someone to care for grandfather. Applicant must be available during day. Must offer respect and attention. Salary low. Phone Chris at 999-2222.

Anonymous contributor

Role Playing in Literature Class

Among the techniques I use to spark interest in and encourage reactions to literature is role playing. The advantages of this device are many. Students are actively involved instead of passively listening, creatively interpreting and presenting their ideas and

insights. Often students express their ideas more freely through a character, and many come to realize that classics truly transcend the barriers of time.

Sometimes presentations rely on familiar television formats. A group adapting "To Tell the Truth" directly involved the audience, who had to be alert to the fallacies intricately woven into the questions and answers. In a talk-show adaptation, the host interviewed the author as well as the actors and actresses chosen to portray the movie version of the book. This discussion revealed how author and actor felt about a given character. In some instances, the two agreed; in others, their different viewpoints gave added insight to the work.

Courtroom scenes were used effectively to portray Hemingway's "The Killers" and Chekhov's "The Druggist's Wife." The questions and answers of the trial made the scenes come alive. In one instance a seemingly insignificant prop played a large role. As successive guests were brought before the protagonist in John Cheever's "The Country Wife," Francis's "security blanket," the piece of wood that he was whittling, became a focus of interest. As Julia and the children appeared, Francis whittled peacefully; when Mrs. Wrightson and Anne Murchison appeared, the whittling became pointedly more aggressive.

Depending upon the size of a class, students usually work in groups of five or six. They choose a story and decide on the format to be used in the presentations. Responsibilities are parceled out: research on the author, written descriptions of each character in the presentation, a script to be used in the role playing, typing.

I schedule a performance date for each group, and all groups are required to pass in papers on an agreed-upon date. (That day, in some cases, falls before a group's presentation.) The contribution that each member made to the paper must be clearly stated. Finally, I offer an evaluation, both written and oral, to each student.

Sister Barbara Willett, R. S. M., Marian Court Junior College of Business, Swampscott, Massachusetts

Animal Farm, Middle-School Style

To help students understand the problems inherent in creating and implementing a new government, as the characters attempted to do in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, I removed the existing political structure of two eighth-grade classes for two weeks.

Students were given an understandable, obtainable goal—to prepare for a test on the novel using techniques they had previously employed that year. Most students were highly motivated and eager to earn a high test grade. Decisions about how to use class time, however, were not made by me; responsibility was handed to all students equally, just as the animals received responsibility for *Animal Farm* after Jones was ejected. I chose this technique to allow students to experience firsthand one of Orwell's primary messages about the use and abuse of power.

The day before the unit began, I distributed copies of the book and a letter to students that included the following points:

1. The usual structure of a classroom is dictatorship.
2. This structure often leads to frustration and discontent because the majority is not in control.
3. For the next two weeks, I will step down and hand control to the majority.
4. After two weeks, I will assume my usual role and administer a test on the book very similar to other literature tests given this year.
5. Meanwhile, your goal is to prepare yourself and your fellow students for this test, using the study guide system we have been following this year.

For the next two weeks, I sat in the back of the classroom, observing and recording "majority" activities and behavior. As promised, the test was administered at the end of the second week.

The day following the test, I distributed copies of the log which I had kept for fourteen days. Students then worked in small groups, preparing reports that attempted to explain the causes of important recorded behaviors. I also asked each student to design a chart showing the various roles he or she plays in an average day—student, son or daughter, sibling, friend, and so on. I further requested that students describe differences in their behavior as they fulfilled these roles, thereby leading them to realize that we change our behavior according to the role we assume at the moment.

Here are some of the insights developed through the reports of the small groups and the ensuing class discussion—and the results of the test.

1. Most students realized that the "democratic" setting required that they modify their classroom behavior; some did so and some did not.

2. Almost all students stated that they felt uncomfortable with the lack of dictatorial structure during the two-week period.
3. Students agreed that one class had organized itself to a degree while the other never achieved any permanent organizational plan. Students in the unorganized group recognized that they knew how to organize but that their suspicions of one another's motives in attempting to assume leadership prevented progress.
4. The class that had some success with organization earned test scores comparable to those of earlier literature tests. The unorganized class earned scores that were lower than those of earlier tests.

To conclude the project, each class discussed ways in which the situation could have been handled more effectively than it had been and why these strategies had not been used by students during the unit.

Paul Schluntz, Middlebrook School, Wilton, Connecticut

Children—As Seen by Harper Lee, Francois Truffaut, and Eighth-Graders

Children—impish, chimerical, creative—provide a writing and research topic for my eighth-graders in connection with the reading of Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Students take notes on one child as they read the novel. Then I establish groups to discuss Scout, Dill, Burris Ewell, and Walter Cunningham. After meeting and comparing notes, each group chooses a representative to present its findings to the class.

Next, each student spends a minimum of one-half hour observing a student in our lower school engaged in an active pursuit: painting, singing, playing outdoors, eating lunch. These written observations make up the prewriting for descriptive essays in which we emphasize the use of forceful verbs, concrete details, spatial organization, and, most important—surprise.

This year I plan to take the class to see Truffaut's film *Small Change*, which offers a glimpse of children in another culture and in another genre.

Judith Solar, Brimmer and May School, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts

The Innocent Narrator Composition

This assignment generally produces an interesting set of papers from students in an eleventh-grade American literature course. What follows is a brief paraphrase of the assignment.

> An innocent narrator is one who describes the action in a literary work without realizing the importance of the events. We have read Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and William Faulkner's "Barn Burning," both of which rely on an innocent (and youthful) narrator to tell the story, in spite of the fact that significant and mature themes (justice, courage, fear, love) are involved. *Huck Finn* is told from the first person point of view, "Barn Burning" from the third person.
>
> Write a composition in which you tell a story from the point of view of an innocent narrator. You may make up a story or use an incident from your past or from the past of someone you know. Remember, the innocent narrator simply tells what happened as he or she saw it occur. The incident may take place over several minutes, hours, days, or weeks, as you choose, but build the action chronologically, developing it to a climax. Select carefully the incidents you will describe in detail because you obviously cannot include everything.
>
> Decide in advance where the main emphasis will lie since you must focus attention on the main event fairly quickly. Have the conclusion clearly in mind before you begin to write so that you'll be able to organize your material clearly and efficiently with that end in view. It is important to let the action and dialogue reveal the characters.
>
> Your paper must be at least 600 words, but you may write more if you wish. Watch grammar, spelling, and all the things I regularly nag about. The paper is due in one week.

Marguerite L. Kownslar, Alamo Heights High School, San Antonio, Texas

Potluck Papers with *Pigman*

This assignment, part of our study of Paul Zindel's *The Pigman*, has produced some interesting narrative writing. Before class, write objects, characters, settings, and themes from the novel on slips of paper. Simplify matters later on by including the category on each slip now, for example:

symbolic object: spaghetti	setting: the zoo

Substitutions and additions, of course, can be made to these lists.

Symbolic Objects and Events	*Characters*
Bathroom Bomber	Miss Reillen, the Cricket
telephone	John
broken pigs	Lorraine's mother
the pigs	Bore
money	Norton, the Marshmallow Kid
skates	John's mother
wine and conversation	Bobo
spaghetti	Mr. Pignati
Conchetta's white ruffled dress	Conchetta Pignati
baboons	Kenny
Settings	*Themes*
the zoo	alienation
the cemetery	generation gap
Mr. Pignati's house	old age (loneliness)
the Coffee Exchange	love
Beekman's Department Store	truth versus falsehood

Ask each student to draw a slip at random and complete the following assignment.

1. Bring a contribution to the bulletin board in the form of a magazine picture (or collage) that represents the symbolic object, character, setting, or theme you drew.
2. Write a paper about the topic you drew: minimum length, one and a half pages; maximum length, three pages. Here are more detailed directions.
   a. If you drew the name of a character, you will be writing a character sketch. The paper should be about the kind of people in society that your particular character represents. Do *not* write a synopsis of what your character does in *Pigman.*
   b. If you drew the name of a symbolic object or event, you may write a paper that relates that object or event to the novel or you may write an imaginary episode that is centered around that object or event.
   c. If you drew the name of a setting, write an original episode or experience that uses that particular setting.
   d. If you drew one of the themes of the story, discuss this theme as it relates to *The Pigman.*

Jean Kinnard, Selvidge Junior High School, Ballwin, Missouri

Character Study: *To Kill a Mockingbird*

I use this writing activity when students read *To Kill a Mockingbird*, but it can be adapted for any novel or short story.

Preliminary Instructions: Choose a character who interests you from *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Observe this person carefully as you read. To help you study this person you will perform detailed prewriting activities. These are similar to the steps that experienced writers take before they start a first draft.

Step One: Describing the Outer Person

You're ready to begin collecting information on your character. On a separate piece of paper write this heading: What (*name of character*) looks like. Under this heading, jot down sentences, phrases, even single words that come to mind as you read the questions below.

a. Make believe you are looking at your character. What comes to mind first? What stands out as you fully envision the person?

b. Try to express your impression by comparing the character to something else: Nathan Radley is as suspicious as an alley cat. Put your ideas into words by completing this statement: (*Name of character*) is as _____ as _____.

c. Now pretend you are handling the camera in a movie or television production. Move in close to the head of your character. Zoom in to the face—what do you see? What shape is the head? What is distinctive about the face? What color hair and eyes? What happens to this person's face when he or she smiles, frowns? How do these details fit your general impression of this character?

d. Now think about how this character moves. How does he or she walk down the street? If your character were part of a crowd, could you pick him or her out of the group immediately? What distinctive gestures or motions does he or she make?

e. Finally, what aspects of dress do you associate with this character? Is there something particular about the way this character dresses that makes him or her recognizable in any situation?

Step Two: Describing the Inner Person

On a separate sheet of paper, write this heading: What (*name of character*) is like inside. Under this heading, write words, phrases, or sentences that describe what your character is like inside. Use questions like the following to guide you.

a. What does your character do with a day off from work or school? Does he or she prefer to be alone or with friends? What does this character do when he or she is alone?

b. You have observed your character reacting in different situations within the novel. What makes him or her angry? What will this person fight for?

c. Of what accomplishments is your character proud? If asked what he or she does best, what do you suppose your character would answer?

Step Three: Using Figurative Language to Describe Your Character

Practice portraying your character by fooling around with words in different combinations; fill in the blanks below. Jot down the first words that come to mind as you read each sentence. Trust the feelings and ideas you have buried away in your mind. The point here is not to describe your character completely but to arrive at original thoughts that suggest the person. And don't be afraid to use words that sound a little peculiar or outrageous; you may come up with some completely original ideas.

(*Name of character*) loves (*name of a color*) but hates (*name of a plant, tree, or bird*).
(*Name of character*) is like (*name of song or kind of music*).
(*Name of character*) is a _____.
(*Name of character*) was at one time _____,
but now he or she _____.
(*Name of character*)! You're a (*name of a creature*).

Look over what you have just written. Add words. Cross out those you don't like. Start over if you feel like it. Write entirely new sentences for your character. Read the sentences consecutively and you will discover you have created a poem of sorts.

Step Four: Final Instructions

Now you are ready to draft a poem about the character you chose from *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Here are the final directions.

a. Your *purpose* is to write a poem that reveals the outer and inner characteristics of the character you chose.

b. Your *readers* will be the students and teacher in this room.

c. Your *writer's role* is to delight your readers by your surprising and accurate use of language. Since you are writing a relatively brief poem, you will not be able to describe every aspect of your character. Instead, you must meticulously choose those that suggest and reveal the essence of that character.

d. Here is what is due: a page of notes answering a through e in Step One; a page of notes answering a through c in Step Two; the practice poem you wrote in Step Three; the final copy of your character poem.

Rhoda Quackenbush, Greece Athena High School, Rochester, New York

Gnarled Apples and Sherwood Anderson

As part of a semester course on the anti-hero, we include a unit on the absurd hero that focuses on Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio* and his influence on twentieth-century writers. The following activities comprise the unit:

1. We read Richard Bach's *Jonathan Livingston Seagull,* Bernard Malamud's *The Natural,* and Karel Capek's "R. U. R." to introduce the archetype of the absurd hero.
2. We emphasize Sherwood Anderson's gift of perceptive characterization as a legacy to more renowned contemporary authors.
3. We read and discuss *Winesburg, Ohio,* focusing on the need to see "beneath the surface of lives" in order to understand the "grotesques" of this novel and their "moments of truth."
4. Students then write a creative characterization of their own based on a person whom they know or have encountered. This person is "grotesque" in the Anderson vein and needs to have "his story told."
5. Finally, we compile a class anthology entitled *Gnarled Apples* (from the "Paper Pills" chapter on Dr. Reefy). Each student receives a copy, complete with cover designed by someone in the class.

This assignment has proved to be a very enjoyable and worthwhile part of the unit. Students come to recognize Anderson's influence on other great writers, to appreciate and value the "unusual" personality types we all encounter daily, and to understand the challenge of characterization in creative writing.

Paul Mork, Mariner High School, White Bear Lake, Minnesota

Elementary, My Dear Dupin

I use this assignment after eleventh-graders have read and discussed several Poe short stories, including "The Purloined Letter." Since our anthology does not include "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," this exercise seems a logical and entertaining follow-up to the reading we do.

> The following paragraphs comprise the "clue" section of Poe's story "The Murders in the Rue Morgue." Can you intuit the solution to the mystery along with Monsieur Dupin, or

will you be misled by your "reason" like the typical police detective? State your conclusions about the case in a well-supported paragraph.

(I follow these instructions with the passage from "Murders" beginning, "EXTRAORDINARY MURDERS.—This morning, . . . " to Dupin's statement, "There is no method in their proceedings, beyond the method of the moment."

Although few students encountering "Murders" for the first time can be expected to solve the mystery completely, this exercise led to careful reading, good discussion, and creative sleuthing.

Arthur W. Brown, South Kent School, South Kent, Connecticut

Sci Fi Tri

Here is an example of how activities dealing with a variety of skills can be incorporated into the study of almost any piece of literature. In this instance, the class has read "Tomorrow's Children" by Poul Anderson and F. N. Waldrop, which appears in *Mutants: Eleven Stories of Science Fiction,* edited by Robert Silverberg (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1974).

Creative Dramatics and Speaking Skills

1. After the class has discussed the intial meeting between Robinson and Drummond, divide yourselves into small groups and take turns enacting their encounter upon Drummond's return from his mission.
2. Divide yourselves into four- or five-member teams of experts who are meeting to decide what to do about the mutant crisis. After considering the alternatives, each group reports its decision to the class, including reasons for and justifications of that decision.
3. Hold a town meeting. The class is the town and chooses a leader. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the mutant situation and decide what to do. Divide yourselves into two groups; half of the class will now be mutants who have heard about the town meeting. Allow them to plan their course of action, too.

Language Lesson

1. Find examples of alliteration in the story and explain their effect.
2. Discuss the use of the dash by Anderson and Waldrop. What does it mean in most cases? Why do you think they use it instead of another punctuation mark?
3. When do the authors use italics? What are its functions? Cite examples to support your theory.

Writing Assignments

1. Write a news bulletin for newspaper, radio, or television about Drummond's findings. Describe the countryside as well as the mutants. Make a news hotline bulletin board with these or read them to the class in the manner of newscasters.
2. Assume the identity of Drummond and write the Official Report of your findings.
3. Write a letter to a friend on another planet about what has happened and what it is like to live here now. Be specific. What has happened to your crops? Your cattle? Your relatives? What do you think is going to happen? What are your hopes and fears?
4. Write a forecast or prediction for the future.
5. Write a poem or lyrics to a song based on the events of "Tomorrow's Children."

Ruth Garrett, Field Kindley High School, Coffeyville, Kansas

Science Fictions

When discussing science fiction, particularly short stories, ask students to analyze the kinds of ideas science fiction writers come up with. Usually their list includes changing a law of science, the environment, time, or human behavior, creating an unfamiliar setting, formulating a new social law. Expand the discussion by asking students to select one of the ideas on the list and change a "normal" to a "new." They should then list considerations that would be contingent upon that new idea. These "what if" ideas are fun to share with the class and can become the basis for a written exercise, either creative or expository.

Here are two examples to get you started.

1. *What if* everything weighed 100 pounds.
   Consider putting on earrings, juggling, wearing contact lenses.
   Weird possibility: When two objects are combined (i.e., woman and earrings), the total weight is still 100 pounds.
2. *What if* objects (including people) could move across (laterally) or down but never up?
   Consider eating, producing food, travel.
   Weird possibility: Don't ever bend over to tie your shoe!

Philip Buley, Middlebury Union High School, Middlebury, Vermont

Big Black Box: Teaching "The Lottery"

A popular story in many anthologies is Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery." A film version of this story has been produced by Encyclopaedia Brittanica Educational Corporation (19 minutes, color) and may be ordered with its companion film, *A Discussion of Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery"* (10 minutes, color). I recommend both films.

Before teaching the story and viewing the film, I construct a large black box—the larger, the better. Then I fold a slip of paper for each student in the class. On one piece of paper I put a large black dot. Then I place the slips in the box. When class starts, I place the box on the top of my desk for everyone to see. Questions are asked but never answered.

I discuss the word *lottery* and provide some background information for the story. Then students view the film. When the drawing begins, I stop the film. Each student then draws a slip from the box but is told not to open it. I restart the film. When the final person in the film is ready to unfold his or her paper, I stop the film and ask the students to open theirs. I then continue the film.

After the film, various things occur. Don't be surprised. This will lead into a good discussion. (I usually reward the person who drew the marked slip with a candy bar.)

Donna Beimer, Lincoln High School, Dallas, Texas

Writing Assignment: *The Turn of the Screw*

I use this assignment in a sophomore honors English class, but I think it would prove equally successful with juniors and seniors.

> Choose one of the following hypothetical situations and write your version of what happened at Bly. Keep in mind the facts of the story and write only that which agrees with these facts or seems a natural development of the plot. Tailor your writing style to fit the point of view of the character you choose.
>
> 1. You are the governess. Because of your master's stern admonition not to trouble him with the affairs of his wards, you are reluctant to call on him to explain the circumstances leading up to Flora's illness and Miles's death; instead you have written him a letter.

Task: Write this letter, bearing in mind that it is natural for anyone to justify his or her own actions.

2. You are Flora. You have been brought to your uncle's townhouse in London. How will you explain to your uncle the events at Bly that led to your illness and your being brought to London by Mrs. Grose?

   Task: If you choose to have Flora speak directly to her uncle, write your account of their meeting in narrative form as if it were a continuation of the story. Do not use the dramatic form of a play. If you choose to have her uncle absent, let Flora write him a letter in her own "charming" manner.

3. You are Mrs. Grose. You have just arrived at your master's townhouse in London. How will you explain the events leading up to Flora's illness and your bringing her to London and leaving Miles under the care of the governess at Bly?

   Task: If you choose to have Mrs. Grose speak directly to her master, write an account of their first meeting in narrative form as if it were a continuation of the story. Do not use the dramatic form of a play. If you choose to have the master absent, let Mrs. Grose dictate her report to his private secretary.

4. You are a reporter from the *London Times*. Word has reached you of the strange death of a ward of Mr. _____ of Harley Street, London. You have gone to his country place in Essex to find out the facts of the death.

   Task: Write an article for your newspaper explaining the facts of this strange death. Be sure to satisfy the *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* questions of journalistic writing.

Irene L. Bush, Pine Crest School, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Heroes, Has-Beens, and Hemingway

I find many comparisons between Manuel, the aging bullfighter in Hemingway's "The Undefeated," and contemporary athletes, movie stars, and other "personages." After students have read the story, I pass out the following list and ask them to label each name according to the directions. This activity provides for a lively discussion and varied opinions. It also leads into a discussion of the Hemingway Code.

Label the following list of athletes, artists, and politicians according to the code shown below.

A—on the way up
B—at the top
C—on the way down
D—a has-been

Muhammad Ali	Donna Summer
Bob Avellini	Jimmy Connors
Gloria Steinem	Christopher Reeves
Rod Carew	Pete Rose
Billie Jean King	Kristy McNichol
Farrah Fawcett-Majors	Bruce Jenner
John Travolta	Sly Stallone
Reggie Jackson	Glen Campbell
Bo Derek	Cher
Bjorn Borg	Jimmy Carter
Pat Boone	Pelé
Gloria Vanderbilt	Gerald Ford
Artis Gilmore	Jim Plunkett
Jay McMullen	Fonzie
Marlon Brando	Rod Stewart
Richard Nixon	Charles Bronson
Walter Payton	Ayatollah Khomeini
Robin Williams	Tracy Austin
Nadia Comaneci	Debbie Boone
James Cagney	Georg Brett
Andy Gibb	Wilbur Wood
Donny and Marie	Henry Kissinger

Joan Pignotti, Homewood-Flossmoor High School, Flossmoor, Illinois

Coffeehouse Conversation

Each year when I teach the eighteenth century in my British literature class, I set aside a day for students to visit what we call our "coffeehouses." Students form groups of four or five, arrange desks as tables in various corners of the room, and bring in "munchies and liquid refreshments" to create a relaxed atmosphere for informal conversation and discussion. Students understand that their forty-five minutes of socializing at the coffeehouses must be based on a discussion of one of five topics that the class defined ahead of time.

Here are representative topics.

1. You were present at the time of the Great Plague of 1665 in London. You are talking with Daniel Defoe, describing the people and the situations as you saw them.
2. Among you are Addison and Steele. They are listening to your conversation (gossip) in hope of finding a story for their *Spectator*. Provide them with information that would be appropriate.

3. You all know a couple, a man and a woman, who are feuding over a trivial matter. To make them see how silly their behavior is your group makes up a satire along the lines of Pope's "Rape of the Lock."
4. Decide on a contemporary situation that all of you feel is troublesome. Through the use of satire, devise a solution to this problem.
5. You are having dinner with your friend James Boswell at the home of Samuel Johnson, a mutual friend. Describe your evening and conversation with the esteemed Johnson, including any peculiarities that occur during the evening.

Students have the entire class period to discuss one of the five topics. The following day each group reports on its conversations, experiences, and discoveries. Repeatedly, I have found this assignment to be an informative one for my students and one they have a lot of fun completing.

Renée Marie Campbell, Bangor High School, Bangor, Maine

Enter and Exit: *Romeo and Juliet*

Before we read Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, I distribute the following inventory. After students complete it, we share our responses.

1. List two or three words that come to mind when I say the name William Shakespeare.
2. List one fact about William Shakespeare that you know.
3. How do you feel about reading Shakespeare?
4. Why do you think you feel the way you do?
5. Write one sentence telling anything you know about the play *Romeo and Juliet*.
6. Answer YES or NO to each of the following:
   a. Do you enjoy reading love stories?
   b. Do you like dueling scenes?
   c. Do you enjoy surprise endings?
   d. Do you believe in arranged marriages?
   e. Can a fourteen-year-old be truly in love?
   f. Is it ever right to deceive your parents?
   g. Do adults sometimes treat you as though you were a child?
   h. Do you believe in magic potions?
   i. Would you be interested in reading a play that contains all of these elements?

After we have completed the play, students undertake one of the following projects.

1. Choose a soliloquy from the play that is at least fifteen lines long and memorize it. Either construct a hand puppet or outfit yourself in appropriate garb and deliver the soliloquy to the class.
2. Learn about the theater in Shakespeare's time and construct a model of the Globe.
3. Using the play's prologue as a model, write an original epilogue for *Romeo and Juliet.*
4. Pretend that you are Juliet and compose a diary that covers the five days' action of the play. Include your feelings about Romeo, your parents, the nurse, the feud. (You may pretend you are Romeo, if you wish, and adapt the assignment accordingly.)
5. On poster board at least 8" × 11" copy in calligraphy or other decorative script a sonnet from the play. Cite act and scene and illustrate the sonnet using any medium.
6. Construct a shoe box diorama of a scene from the play. Be sure setting is accurate and costumes appropriate.
7. Design a poster for a performance of *Romeo and Juliet.* Title and author should be prominent and the illustrations or design should arouse interest in seeing the play.
8. Write a series of four letters, two from Juliet to an advice columnist and two from the columnist to Juliet. Juliet's letters should introduce problems from the play so that the columnist can offer advice or solutions.

Arlene R. Delloro-Wheeler, North Rockland High School, Thiells, New York

Archetypal Analysis

I use the following exercise in conjunction with a course in the archetypes of literature. It is intended to encourage students to experience the richness of their own imaginations and, later, to see how their imaginative world participates in archetypes common to all.

Early in the course, I invite students to close their eyes and to imagine the following. I pause for about three minutes between segments.

Their ideal dwelling—environment and dwelling itself.

They go out for a walk—what time of day and where?

They come upon a body of water—what do they do?

They continue and come upon a key—what do they do?

They continue and come upon a cup—what kind? What do they do?

They come upon a clearing with people in it.

The people see them and there is some communication.

Most students relax and fully enjoy this exercise. I then ask them to write down these responses for me as homework, with as much detail and good style as they can. Sometimes we begin writing in class; sometimes they want to talk about "where they have been."

I do nothing with the papers until the end of the course. After they have studied the archetypes of Romance, Tragedy, and Comedy, I return their papers as part of the final exam. I ask them to identify three archetypes similar to ones they have identified in the work of other writers.

Students enjoy this analysis; it usually comes as a surprise. (Although they ask regularly if I have graded their "stories" for a few weeks after turning them in, they usually have despaired of getting them back by the time of the final.) Quite frequently they express delight in discovering, as one sophomore put it, that "even my writing has certain archetypal patterns that relate to great literature from all over the world."

Sister Barbara Sitko, St. Pius X High School, Atlanta, Georgia

Telling Tales in and out of School

My world literature class tackles frame tales and story cycles, including selections from *The Panchatantra*, *A Thousand and One Nights*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Students in our electronic age often find it difficult to understand and appreciate the art of storytelling, so we follow a three-step process.

1. Students number off by fours, and each group is assigned a different tale to read: ones, a tale from *The Metamorphoses;* twos, a tale from *The Decameron;* and so on. After reading is complete, students establish new groups of four—each group containing a one, a two, a three, and a four. Within these groups each student tells the story he or she has read to the other three. Step one provides initial practice in storytelling.
2. Next we move to a class story cycle of sorts. One person begins the story, establishing characters, setting, and tone. That student talks for one minute and then passes the story

on to the next student who adds a minute's worth and passes the story on. The cycle continues until every member of the class has added a minute to the story. Along with storytelling, the class gets plenty of practice in listening in order to keep details straight.

3. Finally, we talk about various contemporary circumstances where people might engage in storytelling. After considering the options, each class chooses a framing device and develops the type of characters who might appear in that setting. The next day each student is responsible for telling a story from the viewpoint of a character in that setting.

The results of the framing exercise are especially interesting. Two classes, for example, used fairly conventional approaches. One had themselves stranded in a ski lodge, the other told ghost stories in a haunted house. Conversely, two other framed tales actually turned into group improvisations, with one class a variety of visitors to a neighborhood bar and the other inmates of an asylum talking in a group therapy session.

Students thoroughly enjoy this assignment and develop a new appreciation for the ancient art of storytelling.

Linda Pinnell, Fairmont Senior High School, Fairmont, West Virginia

Author! Author!

Author Day is an exciting way to motivate students to read and write enthusiastically. On such a day young people meet a contemporary author. Students plan the program during the previous month in English classes. Their preparation includes the following:

1. Reading books by the author
2. Preparing questions to ask the author
3. Finding biographical information about the author and reviews or critical material on his or her writing
4. Writing an introduction of the author
5. Writing invitations to administrators, librarians, and other interested persons
6. Writing publicity for local and school newspapers
7. Creating art work and book displays for Author Day

Following the program, students write thank-you letters to the author, and many have received letters back. Another follow-up activity is to report on the event for local newspapers.

Why do we hold Author Day?

1. Enthusiasm is contagious. When other schools hear of our program, they ask to be included. A project of this kind brings together administrators, parents, teachers, librarians, and students.
2. The motivation for reading is authentic. When students know they will meet and talk to the author, they read with attention. They read with a purpose when they read to discover what questions they might ask the author.
3. The experience of writing for real audiences is a new one for most junior high students. Correctness and clarity suddenly matter when you are writing for publication and to adults.

How do you organize an Author Day?

1. Convince administrators that it is a good idea. You will need their help (and financing).
2. Select an author. When you call, clearly state the age and interest of the audience. Define what you expect. How long should he or she plan to speak? Is the format to be a lecture, a panel, an informal question-and-answer session, or a combination? Discuss fees.
3. Compile a list of books by the author. Decide which ones you want students to read. Get help from your community and school libraries. Sometimes an author's publisher will help.
4. Make a reading schedule for students. Better readers may complete several books. You may want to read some material aloud to ensure the involvement of all students. As students read and listen, have them write questions they would like to ask the author on file cards.
5. Set up student committees to divide the work. Assign chairpersons and set deadlines. Typical committees include writers (publicity, invitations); artists (publicity, library and bulletin board displays, program design); reception (greeting guests, ushering); typing and mimeographing; refreshments (set-up and clean-up); questioners.

Two weeks before Author Day you and your classes should be ready to do the following:

1. Submit publicity to local papers.
2. Send invitations.
3. Print programs.
4. Send a letter to the author to reconfirm time and place. Include a map or directions to your school.
5. Ask students who will make introductions to rehearse before the class.
6. Organize the question period. Know who will ask what. Have a planned order of questioning to ensure that all those who prepared get a chance to ask questions. This procedure also avoids duplication of questions.
7. You may wish to videotape the event, make a tape recording, or take slides and photographs of students and author.

Our school has found that Author Day develops specific skills in an integrated way and with much enthusiasm. It is obvious to the entire community that students are developing reading, writing, and speaking skills. Public interest in Author Day helps to develop good school and community relations.

I have a videotape of Author Day in 1977 that includes four authors talking about their books and writing: Jane Langton, Betty Cavanna, Georgess McHargue, and Michael Roberts. I also have a list of over a hundred authors and illustrators and their addresses. You can reach me at the address below, just add the ZIP 01773. Of course librarians in your school and community are able to help you locate authors in your area.

Helen M. Greenhow, Brooks Junior High School, Lincoln, Massachusetts

11 Classroom Management

"I'll learn him or kill him," remarks the steamboat pilot in *Life on the Mississippi*, and the irony of his words will not be lost on teachers. But the struggle to teach—and to learn—is eased according to many of our contributors by a hospitable classroom and a thoughtful teacher. Helping students get to know one another, stretching your time with a tape recorder, and bulletin boards worth looking at are a few of their suggestions along with a cache of ideas to get a class period off to an efficient beginning or bring it to a lively conclusion. Activities in this section are found under three headings: *Organizing the Classroom—and the Students, Bulletin Boards,* and *The First Five Minutes—and the Last.*

Organizing the Classroom—and the Students

Here are two games that enable you and your students to know the class roster before the period is out, and two inventories that tell you a lot more about your students than their names. Also included are plans for a color-coded classroom, a scheme for helping students develop a conduct code of their own, and a way to recycle old textbooks.

People Bingo

This beginning-of-the-year activity helps students get acquainted and learn each other's names. In advance, mimeograph bingo sheets with a grid containing four rows and four columns, for a total of sixteen squares. You'll also need paperclips, cardboard squares, or other bingo markers. Finally, write the name of each student on an individual slip of paper.

Distribute the bingo sheets and ask each student to write his or her name in the square at the top left corner. Students then walk around the classroom, introducing themselves to other students and obtaining signatures from fifteen of them for the remaining squares. When the sheet is filled, one name to a square, students return to their seats.

You (or a designated student) choose one of the name slips at random and call out the name. The student whose name has been called raises his or her hand. The other students take note of that student's identity. Students who have that name on their sheets, cover it with a marker. Proceed as in any bingo game. When a player calls "bingo," he or she must be able to match the four names in the horizontal, vertical, or diagonal row with the four correct people. By the end of the period everyone will have made new acquaintances and members of the class will be able to address one another by name. It's a beginning.

Karen M. Rezendes, Danbury, Connecticut

Icebreaker

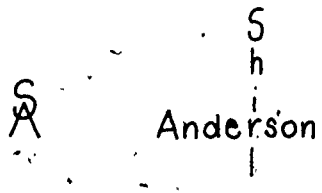
Here's a get-acquainted game that relies heavily on memory and builds a relaxed climate in the classroom. One student begins by giving his or her first name preceded by a word that begins with the same letter as the name: Curious Carol. The next student says, "You are Curious Carol and I am Just Jack." The game continues until all students have joined the chain, each student repeating in turn the names of all who preceded. To really break the ice, elect to be the last person in the chain and repeat all names correctly. You'll never forget them if you do!

Karen Rugerio, Orange County Administration Center, Orlando, Florida

Name Brain Drain

Names are important! Fitting into a new classroom is important! My students and I like to begin the school year by examining our names. Here are some of the activities I use.

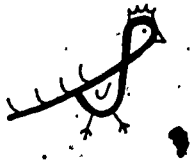
1. Students write their initials and names in new and different ways.



2. Students write positive thoughts using the letters in their names. Letters used don't need to be initial ones.

Sure
has
interesting
roads
to follow.

3. We look up the meanings of our first and middle names and last names where possible. Baby books, dictionaries, and special dictionaries of names are helpful resources.
4. We share the stories behind our nicknames and devise new nicknames, explaining their significance.
5. Students design logos for themselves or for each other.
6. Students print their names on a sheet of paper in as many different styles as possible. Have on hand books that illustrate typefaces to get this activity started.
7. Distribute gummed paper. Students make name labels in different sizes and shapes. These can be stuck on many items—for identification or for fun.
8. Post a class picture on the bulletin board. Each student creates a name label to post under the picture.
9. Write names in code for classmates to decode. Students will have no trouble inventing codes.
10. Students use their names or initials to create a picture or mobile or other art project.

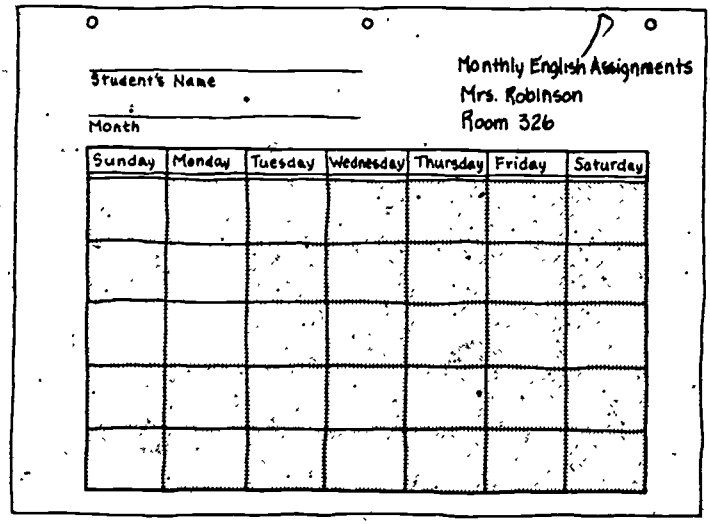


11. Provide stencils, rubber stamps and ink pads, label makers, colored pens, cut-out letters, old magazines, fabric scraps, yarn. Declare a name brain drain during which each student creates "something" based on his or her name.

Shirl Anderson, Myrtle Tate School, Las Vegas, Nevada

Assignments by the Month

Each month I give students a blank calendar like the one shown below on which to write the English assignments for that month. The dates are left blank and filled in by the students so that the calendar can be used for any month of the year. I have included weekends because I occasionally ask students to watch a television show on Saturday or Sunday.


Student's Name _____

Month _____

Monthly English Assignments
Mrs. Robinson
Room 326

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

On the last school day of each month I distribute the calendars for the coming month. I dictate the assignments, and we discuss them as students record them to see if they have suggestions or comments. Sometimes an assignment or two can be shifted if the change works better for them; sometimes they remember an upcoming pep rally or assembly that I have forgotten. This flexibility seems to work best for all of us and students feel they have had a say in their assignments.

The monthly calendar has many advantages. Absent students know what they have missed and when an assignment is due. Students who wish to work ahead may do so. Students appreciate a sense of direction and organization. I also give a copy to my department chair so that he can see what is going on in my classes over an extended period of time.

The only disadvantage is a lack of daily flexibility. What if I do not complete Tuesday's assignment on Tuesday and need some

time on Wednesday? I have not found this to be a major problem. If I need a few minutes the next day, I take it. I try not to schedule too much for each day—I can add material if necessary. Pacing seems to have come with practice. This is my fourth year with this technique, and I believe it benefits me as well as my students.

Julie S. Robinson, Smithtown High School East, St. James, New York

The Assignment Board

Having been plagued by students who could not seem to remember what homework was due when, students who had been absent and wanted to know what had to be "made up"—usually asking at an inopportune moment, or students who were so involved in other classes or in extracurricular activities that they had neglected English class, I devised a method that has helped my students plan their work and complete it on schedule. Using the side chalkboard of my room, I draw vertical columns for each class period and horizontal columns for each day of the week. I write in at least one week's work in advance and a brief outline of what will follow the next week. In this manner, the student with a poor memory can easily see what is due and when, the student with ill health or sporadic attendance can quickly identify missed assignments and need consult me only for further explanations, and the student with the hectic schedule can more effectively organize his or her time, thus learning a valuable skill for later life.

The assignment board is beneficial from many educational standpoints, but it also shows students that the teacher is aware of the amount of work they must complete within their busy schedules. The assignment board also forces me to have definite plans at least two weeks in advance and has eliminated the "night-before" syndrome.

I have used the assignment board for five years and find it to be an extremely useful teaching tool.

Geoffrey L. Davis, Hempfield High School, Landisville, Pennsylvania

Time Enough with Tapes

A tape recorder enables you to "clone around" in class. Record oral tests, drills, dictation, exercises, lectures, and class discussions and

you have an instant replay for absentees, individual remediation and review—and for repetition of a quiz or exercise in other classes. Using the tape recorder helps you find the class time to help students individually, to keep records, to read student drafts. I find that I have fewer sore throats and that students' listening skills improve.

Susan Howard, Paxon Junior High School, Jacksonville, Florida

Dollars for Scholars

Teachers in the junior high often have difficulty convincing their students to come to class prepared to work. Seventh- and eighth-graders tend to arrive without books, pencils, paper, or homework. Since the teachers in our school also teach a practical arts class based on the idea of using the world of work to teach responsibility, we devised a dollars-for-scholars plan that seems to have worked as an incentive for completing homework, participating in class activities, and getting to class on time and with the necessary equipment.

First, we brought in $100,000 in play money. Then we announced that each student was on salary of $25 dollars a week. Payday was Friday. In order to receive full salary on Friday, students would have to come to class ready to work each day of the week. They were fined for forgetting books, pencils, or paper; for having incomplete or no homework; for being tardy; and for unacceptable classroom behavior.

Since working conditions were to be duplicated as much as practical, a method of earning overtime and bonuses was also provided. Earning a grade of 100 percent on a test, answering questions correctly in class, and completing extra-credit work were three ways to increase the amount a student received on payday.

Both fines and money earned were recorded daily on a chart. On Friday, accounts were balanced and students paid.

As in the world of work, a student's salary must have purchasing power or it becomes valueless. At the end of a specified period of time a flea market was held in English class. Items for sale were donated by both teachers and students and could be purchased only with the play money earned in class.

Students have responded by being both punctual and prepared. We judge the plan to be successful.

Rebecca Lawson, Spencer County High School, Taylorsville, Kentucky

Color-coded Classroom

Keeping material organized for several similar classes taught in the same room in the same semester takes time away from teaching. A technique that I have found useful is the color coding of material for each class. I designate one color for each class. That color, then, is used for a class three-ring binder, for a fish net to display that class's work, and for a backdrop for special class announcements. Each class is aware of its color and students quickly identify their materials.

The first color-coded item is the class three-ring binder. Within these binders, I organize material in three sections. The first section is a diary of the work presented each day, that is, work collected, discussed, assigned, and so on. The second section contains a copy of class notes entered daily. Each day one student in each class is assigned to make a carbon copy of his or her notes to file in that section. The third section contains copies of all handouts given to students. Those who have been absent or have questions regarding a particular aspect of an assignment may refer to the class binder for clarification.

The second color-coded item is the fish net. These nets, color-coded by class, are used on the walls to display the work of each class. They are an inexpensive, colorful way to add display area to a room.

Finally, construction paper or poster board, color-coded by class, is used as a backing for special class notes or reminders.

These are only a few applications of a color-coded system. The possibilities for its extension are many—color-coded pens, folders, and so on.

Patricia Stuart, West Allis Central High School, West Allis, Wisconsin

Classroom Stations

Eighth-graders and even freshmen seem to be caught between being "mature" high school students who are ready for lectures and youngsters who like—and need—to move around and be more active. I have found that workshop stations break up the more lecture-oriented parts of the week and bring the best of both worlds to my students.

I establish five stations in different parts of the room. On days when students are at these stations, they seem more relaxed and accomplish quite a bit. They also seem more willing to ask

questions and to seek out information. Each student has a folder with his or her name on it, and all work completed during the workshop is placed in this folder. I assign students to their initial stations, and while they are working, I frequently work with one or two students on areas that they are finding difficult. Students are graded on the work they completed and how well they used their time.

A description of the five stations and the kinds of activities to be done in each follows.

Grammar station. Work sheets that relate to previous class discussions and lectures work well. I provide answer sheets so that students may check their answers and get immediate feedback. Grammar games are also included. One example: Provide a set of cards with one word on each card and a game board that has columns labeled with the parts of speech. Using a stop watch, students see how quickly they can place the words in the correct columns.

Spelling station. Using new word lists weekly, or spelling demons, points out to students the need for this station. Crossword puzzles, word finds, word scrambles, and other games add interest. For students who need repetition, assign tasks that require rewriting the words.

Writing station. Here is an opportunity to pull together creativity, spelling, and grammar. Change the writing assignments frequently. Here are five examples.

1. Write a description that could be used as the setting for a Halloween story.
2. Describe your best friend's most important characteristic.
3. Imagine that you are looking in a mirror and describe what you see.
4. Try a poem of your own. (Haiku or five-line grammar poems—noun, two adjectives, three verbs, two adjectives, noun—work well.)
5. Write a story about the picture you find inside this envelope.

Dictionary station. This station allows students to complete much more dictionary work than they would normally accomplish. Use activities that develop a thorough understanding of the dictionary. (The *American Heritage Dictionary* has an excellent user's guide.) Activities cover pronunciation, how to find words, spelling changes, suffixes, prefixes, and so on.

Reading station. If you have the space, make this a special place with rug, book shelves, and chairs or large cushions. Display a variety of anthologies and books (which you get from the library

and change periodically) and magazines. Allow students to select what they want to read and ask them to keep a journal in which they record what they have read. Games can also be used at this station. Students enjoy making board games based on stories they have read. One student, for example, used a mystery book to make a board game similar to Chutes and Ladders. False clues led to chutes; authentic clues led to ladders.

Gail W. Rose, Sycamore High School, Cincinnati, Ohio

Right off the Wall

I have successfully used this method for setting classroom rules with classes of disruptive and emotionally disturbed students, but I think it may appeal to the wider school population. It generates feelings of acceptance and importance for students and eliminates some of the tedious testing that teachers face early in the year. It often sets a tone and spirit for the class that lasts for the entire year.

Conduct a guided "tour" in which students envision the perfect classroom. Help them in this discovery with appropriate questions: How do you feel as you approach this classroom? How are you greeted by the teacher? What are the looks on the faces of your classmates as you enter? What goes on in this perfect class? How is the room decorated? How will your work be evaluated and graded? When the imagining is complete, provide felt-tip pens in assorted colors and a roll of shelf paper. Ask students to write down words and phrases that occurred to them during the imagination session. Switch pens frequently so ideas are not readily identified by author. Encourage students to add to their previous ideas. Ask that they work in silence but expect only a reasonable period of silence, for silliness often takes over as students react to the humorous remarks of others. Be prepared for an occasional obscene or brutally honest statement about the school in general.

Now ask students to group these ideas into logical patterns. Usually three or four general categories emerge. Still using the roll of paper and the markers, ask students to formulate a statement of rules—a code—that covers all of these elements. Tape the entire sheet to the wall for several weeks as a reminder to all. Later in the year when things are not going too well, take out the roll of paper and tape it to the wall again. It's a good way to start some honest communication.

Robert E. Coleman, Pomperaug High School, Southbury, Connecticut

Interest Inventory

An interest inventory identifies general interests as well as reading interests and can be used to initiate and extend informal teacher/student discussions. I administer an inventory similar to the one shown below to students at the beginning of the school year. It's a way to discover and develop their reading and writing interests and it provides an informal analysis and a basis for further exploration.

Name _____ Age _____

1. What do you like to do after school?
2. What do you do indoors when it rains?
3. What hobbies or collections do you have?
4. Do you have a pet? What?
5. What are your favorite television shows?
6. What games or sports do you like best?
7. What clubs or other groups do you belong to?
8. What is your favorite type of movie?
9. Which subject in school do you like best? least?
10. Do you have a public library card? If so, how often do you go to the library?
11. Do you own books? What are some of them?
12. What things do you like to read about?
13. Do you subscribe to any magazines at home? Which ones?
14. Name a book you would like to read again. Why?
15. Do you read the newspaper? How often? Which section do you read first?
16. Do you talk to your friends about the books you have read or are reading?
17. Do you use books to help answer questions you have?
18. Do you like to read aloud in class?
19. Where is your favorite place to read?
20. Do you like to write about what you read?
21. Do you think that you are a good reader for your age?

Suzanne Irwin and Nancy A. Wrzesinski, Irving School, Lorain, Ohio

Experience Portfolio

I ask students to respond early in the year to the questionnaire reproduced below and file the completed forms in a binder for future reference. I use them in the following ways throughout the year, but I'm sure you'll add to this list and to the portfolio itself.

1. Getting to know my students—their interests, hobbies, and experiences.
2. As a source for writing topics. When a student tells you that he or she has nothing to write about, refer to the questionnaire. The student has already told you what he or she knows about and is interested in. Foiled again!
3. As a reading guide, I find this list invaluable, and so does our school librarian. Reluctant readers can be motivated through their special interests. When a new book arrives, the librarian can call a student whose questionnaire indicates an interest in the topic and ask if the student would like the book. Students are amazed—and pleased—that you take the time to consider their interests!
4. As a way of grouping students for panels, writing assignments, and other classroom projects.
5. As the genesis for after-school activities or interest groups.

Read through the following activities/subjects/experiences and respond to each by writing in the appropriate letter(s).

A Haven't the faintest idea about this one.
B Yeah, I could fill you in a little.
C You're getting warm—I know quite a bit.
D This is really down my alley.
E I'd like to know more about this area.

___ 1. dirt-biking
___ 2. photography
___ 3. scuba-diving
___ 4. Kung-Fu
___ 5. needlepoint
___ 6. yoga and meditation
___ 7. rock hounding
___ 8. sewing
___ 9. horses
___ 10. boating
___ 11. candle-making
___ 12. gymnastics
___ 13. writing
___ 14. macrame
___ 15. sky-gliding
___ 16. ceramics
___ 17. car engines
___ 18. chemistry
___ 19. track and field
___ 20. swimming
___ 21. skateboards
___ 22. astronomy
___ 23. astrology
___ 24. model construction
___ 25. modeling clothes
___ 26. collecting mushrooms
___ 27. paper plane construction
___ 28. judo
___ 29. wild flowers
___ 30. acting
___ 31. acupuncture
___ 32. softball
___ 33. water colors
___ 34. chess
___ 35. taffy pulls
___ 36. maple syruping

___ 37. singing
___ 38. musical instrument
___ 39. rocketry
___ 40. homemade ice cream
___ 41. cooking
___ 42. flying
___ 43. traveling
___ 44. backpacking
___ 45. lifesaving
___ 46. fly-tying
___ 47. clamming
___ 48. canoeing
___ 49. rock climbing
___ 50. embroidery/crewel
___ 51. wood carving
___ 52. carpentry
___ 53. electronics
___ 54. deep-sea fishing
___ 55. poetry
___ 56. pop music
___ 57. deep-sea diving
___ 58. hunting
___ 59. leatherwork
___ 60. camping
___ 61. pen & ink drawings
___ 62. horse racing
___ 63. sign language
___ 64. rodeos
___ 65. lobstering
___ 66. pinball machines
___ 67. gumball machines
___ 68. ice fishing
___ 69. stamps
___ 70. skating
___ 71. coins
___ 72. antiques
___ 73. pastels
___ 74. haircutting
___ 75. foraging
___ 76. bowling
___ 77. ski-mobiling
___ 78. sailing
___ 79. diving
___ 80. railroads
___ 81. trapping
___ 82. Disney World
___ 83. national parks
___ 84. origami
___ 85. weaving
___ 86. oil painting
___ 87. Parcheesi
___ 88. mahjong
___ 89. movie-making
___ 90. impersonations
___ 91. batiking
___ 92. caterpillars and insects
___ 93. kite flying
___ 94. frisbee throwing
___ 95. indoor plants
___ 96. kite construction
___ 97. silversmithing
___ 98. script writing
___ 99. karate
___ 100. falconry
___ 101. gerbils
___ 102. kazoos
___ 103. bobsledding
___ 104. soccer
___ 105. lacrosse
___ 106. surfing
___ 107. backgammon
___ 108. squash (game)
___ 109. tropical fish
___ 110. trivia
___ 111. jug and bottle bands
___ 112. ballet
___ 113. puppetry
___ 114. knitting or crocheting
___ 115. Monopoly
___ 116. football
___ 117. baseball
___ 118. skiing
___ 119. ski-jumping
___ 120. animal training

121. Areas or subjects in which I excel that have been left off the list: _____

_____

_____

122. Something I've done that no one in the class has ever done: _____

_____

_____

T: Bell, Dixon Grove School, Weston, Ontario

Old Textbooks

Ever wonder what to do with those old textbooks that pile up year after year? After all, they are bound to be worth something. Well, they are. Review them for stories and poems, essays and plays that are worth saving. Tear these out and staple each inside a folder. Students will enjoy decorating the outside of the folder to reflect its contents. File these folders in colorfully covered boxes and use them for free reading or for extra credit. They make ideal catch-up assignments for students who have missed class. Many of them will serve for independent or programmed study if you write questions or suggest additional assignments on the inner cover of the folder.

Now that you've torn the worthwhile selections out of the book and there are only a few tattered pages dangling from the spine, *don't* throw that book away yet! As a class activity, hand out some of the pages to each student and ask students to locate examples of different types of paragraphs—descriptive, narrative, comparison-contrast, and so on. Ask students to cut out the paragraphs and paste them on file cards (5″ × 7″ work best). You may want to label the paragraphs or you may want them left unlabeled, depending upon the exercises you design. Some paragraphs may be better used if you write questions or vocabulary exercises on the cards.

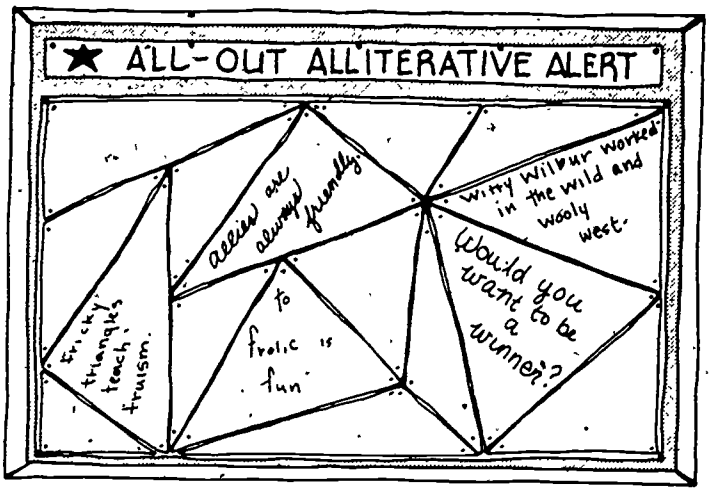
Belinda Ann Bair, Bohemia Manor High School, Chesapeake City, Maryland

Bulletin Boards

Bulletin boards for readers and news sleuths and a magazine board that is guaranteed to stop pedestrian traffic.

Banal Bulletin Boards Banished

For an easy and attractive bulletin board on alliteration, cut construction paper of assorted colors into triangles. Distribute one triangle to each student. Ask each student to write an example of alliteration on the triangle; simple illustrations may be added. Black markers work well and can be seen from across the room. Fit the triangles together in a bright mosaic pattern on the bulletin board. This idea also works nicely with puns, similes, metaphors, idioms, and so on. The effect is something like this.



Joyce Siler, Amelia Middle School, Amelia, Ohio

Super Bowl Readers

To encourage independent reading I run a football read-off from September to the Super Bowl in January, at which time I award small prizes to high scorers.

Set aside a bulletin board on which you can lay out a football field. Get help from the class for a more creative design than you might invent: yard lines laid out with string or paper clips, end zones in vivid yellow, astroturf from indoor/outdoor carpeting! Each student needs a paper football labeled with his or her name. You'll also need a supply of book-check cards to verify that students have read the books that enable them to gain yards for a touchdown.

I generally ask for title, author, setting, major characters, brief retelling of the part liked least and the part liked best, but card requirements may vary from one week or month to the next.

For each book read, the student fills out a book-check card. When you are satisfied that the student has completed the book, put his or her football on the ten-yard line. Each time the student hands in an acceptable card, he or she advances another ten yards. If you like, grant bonus yards for especially well-done cards. Keep track of all touchdowns as students advance down the field. In January, declare your Super Bowl readers. Paperbacks make good trophies.

Nancy Y. Ottman, T. Edwards Junior High School, South Windsor, Connecticut

Window on the World

Clip a dozen or so pictures of prominent leaders/events on the world, national, or local scene that fit a theme: world leaders, sports professionals, television personalities, good citizens in our town. Number each picture but do not identify it and display the collection on the bulletin board with an appropriate title.

Encourage students during the following week to unravel the mysteries of these pictures, using the resources of newspapers and magazines at home and school and discussion clues from parents and peers. At the end of the week, spend fifteen minutes (or longer) identifying the pictures and discussing their significance.

Vary the activity by dividing the class into groups of four or five. Give each group a minute to offer its hypothesis and choose a picture to identify. Continue with each group in turn until all pictures have been identified. Each group earns one point for each correct identification. Members of the group with the highest score are the news sleuths of the week.

Ann B. Holum, Excelsior School, Excelsior, Minnesota

Vocabulary Follow-up

To sustain an interest in words that my students have studied in vocabulary lessons, I have a bulletin board titled "Vocabulary in Action." Here I tack cartoons, newspaper headlines, or whatever I find that uses a word we have studied. Sometimes I add related words that might prove useful and interesting to my students. This

bulletin board helps students realize that the words they study have value in the world outside the classroom.

Sandra K. Vendel, Pendelton Heights High School, Pendleton, Indiana

The Magazine Board

Bulletin boards can be decorator items, teaching tools, or catchalls. But for the writing teacher, the bulletin board can be a class magazine or an interclass newspaper.

Transform your bulletin board into a magazine with mass audience appeal and total market coverage!

1. Use art, graphics, and typography to capture attention; lead the reader to the text.
2. Select bulletin boards in prime locations, where traffic moves freely without tie-ups. Extend bulletin space with standing screens and walls.
3. Divide large boards into sections for cover story, news, articles, editorials, humor. Use string, ribbon, colored paper as dividers.
4. Position papers and graphics horizontally and vertically in neat, rectangular modules. Collages are out in today's magazine design.
5. Every magazine board needs a headline or title. Often the assignment, printed in large letters with felt-tip markers, can serve.
6. Illustrate your magazine board with appropriate pictures or ask students to bring pictures or artwork to illustrate their work.
7. Don't restrict student writers to notebook or theme paper. Encourage them to present poems as posters, figurative language as bumper stickers.
8. The magazine board is not a display case. Do not post spelling papers and test papers. Stories, poems, essays are there to be read. Present longer papers—library reports, research papers—in envelope packets so they can be removed for reading, then returned.
9. Notify students before posting their writing. Announce in advance that an assignment is intended for the magazine board, or ask permission to "publish."

10. Do not display grades, but be sure all copy is edited and proofread before it is posted.
11. Do not restrict writing to creative writing. Ask students to write informative articles on "How to Diagram a Sentence," "How to Recognize an Adverb," "How to Study for a Test." Let students come up with cover story ideas.
12. Keep a tool box with felt-tip markers, thumb tacks, scissors, stapler, glue, string, ribbon, construction paper.

Discover . . . that students' magazine boards outsell teachers' bulletin boards!

Frieda M. Owen, Wood County Schools, Parkersburg, West Virginia

The First Five Minutes—and the Last

Begin a desktop file box of five-minute idea cards with these. Add to it with clippings from newspapers, magazines, and professional journals. You'll be glad you did on a noisy Friday or a sleepy Monday—and your substitute will be forever grateful.

Classroom Calisthenics

An overhead projector works nicely for daily warm-up exercises. As students enter the room, their attention is focused on the overhead screen where an analogy, thought puzzle, or clozure exercise awaits them. I take attendance and they are ready to check the warm-up and begin class.

Susan Howard, Paxon Junior High School, Jacksonville, Florida

Playing the X's

Place a sentence (sometimes I use a famous quotation) on the board but in place of the letters, use only x's. Students then take turns guessing a letter in the sentence. If that letter is present, the corresponding x or x's are erased and replaced with the correct letter. A student who has correctly identified a letter is allowed to guess at the entire sentence, but students quickly learn to be careful. Guessing only part of a sentence correctly may give the entire sentence away for another student.

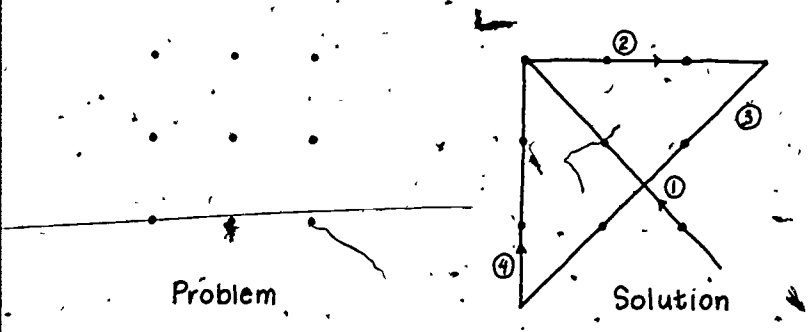
This simple little game has more potential than is at first apparent, especially if you give some thought to the sentences you use. It's useful for those extra five minutes before lunch or dismissal.

Candice Bush, C. P. Squires School, North Las Vegas, Nevada

Creative Problem Solving

It was Albert Einstein who observed that "imagination is more important than knowledge." Brainstorming is a technique to generate as many alternatives or solutions as possible for a given problem. Do not stop to evaluate; this is done after all suggestions are recorded. (Why fly with the flaps down?) Too often, we encourage students to do things in a prescribed fashion. (Convention is the gravity that imagination must transcend. Encourage students to let their minds soar.) Take or make frequent opportunities for students to see things in new ways. Here are two examples.

1. Ask students to join all points on the grid in four straight lines without raising their pens.



2. Challenge the class with an object such as a coat hanger or an ashtray: What uses could you find for this object on a desert island? Each student draws up a long list in competition with others. Alternately, divide the class into groups, each group vying with the others.

After students get the hang of brainstorming, move on to more English-related tasks, again listing solutions, evaluating them, and selecting the best. Assignments such as these lend themselves to brainstorming.

1. What other courses of action could Hamlet have taken?
2. A number of short stories and novels deal with prejudice. How should society deal with bigotry?
3. Ask students to correct in several ways an awkward sentence you have written on the board: list, evaluate, choose.
4. Assign an abstract poem that lends itself to multiple interpretations. Ask students to list possible "messages."

Nick Sopinka, Sheridan College, Oakville, Ontario

The In-group

Here's a deduction activity for an odd moment or two. Put the following columns and heads on the board but give *no* directions:

In	Out

Decide without telling the class what group will be "in" (green vegetables, for example). Begin by writing the name of an object in that group under "in"; add another from that category. Now put an "out" word in its respective box. As soon as students catch on to what you're doing, they'll begin offering suggestions. Don't tell them what you're looking for; allow them to discover the solution themselves. Other categories I've used—objects through which one can see, students in the room wearing red, and categories appropriate to material we have studied in class.

Beverly J. Midthun, Rippleside School, Aitkin, Minnesota

Open-ended Question

What began as a technique to begin class smoothly has had surprising results.

Each day I write an open-ended question on the board. Some questions are serious (Should marijuana be legal and why?); many are related to current events (Should there be increased regulation on foreign car imports?); others are more personal (Who is your favorite movie star?). I call each student by name to answer the question, thereby taking attendance.

This simple activity is well worth the two or three minutes it takes. Everyone knows that class is beginning. Everyone present is sure to have had at least one chance to speak during the class period. And students generally seem to become more interested in current events. It can be used at any level and with any course. I use it in my American Studies classes and also in my Spanish classes. In Spanish class I ask the questions in Spanish and students answer in complete sentences and in Spanish.

By spring students are coming in with their own questions.

Gail Bossert Klink, Newark Senior High School, Newark, Ohio

Simile, Metaphor, and Psychoanalysis

Ask students to complete sentences like the following: "Are you more like a VW or a Cadillac?" Their response begins, "I am more like a . . . because . . . " The game taps thinking skills, produces some genuinely creative responses, and generates good humor. Here are a few other questions to try, but you and your students will come up with many others.

Are you more like a bikini or a raincoat?

Are you more like a baseball or a football?

Are you more like a sneaker or a black leather loafer?

Are you more like disco or country music?

Are you more like Calvin Klein jeans or cutoffs?

Are you more like the sun or the moon?

Are you more like the Rocky Mountains or Daytona Beach?

In a variation, ask students to complete sentences like this one: "If I were a *(flower)* I would be a *(rose)* because I like to be considered . . . " Use a variety of topics: If I were a movie, sport, car, song, piece of furniture, item of clothing, food.

Karen Rugerio, Orange County Administration Center, Orlando, Florida

Inflation

Here's a filler for a few leftover minutes or a journal entry: If you were walking down the road and saw a penny, would you *stoop* to pick it up? Why or why not?

Susan Rietz, substitute teacher, St. Peter, Minnesota

In the Manner of the Adverb

When a few minutes remain at the end of a class period, we sometimes play this game. Someone is chosen to be "it" and asked to leave the room. The class then chooses an adverb, *quickly* for example. When "it" returns, he or she asks members of the class to do something specific "in the manner of the adverb." "Erase the board," for example, "in the manner of the adverb." Or, "Smile, in the manner of the adverb." The student who is "it" continues to ask for demonstrations until he or she guesses the adverb.

I think this game gives students an understanding of adverbs as well as practice in getting up in front of the group. It also generates a class spirit since I participate in the game.

Betty Ford, Brecksville High School, Broadview Heights, Ohio

Jim Dandy Name Game

Introduce at the chalkboard several names that are also used in other contexts, for example, an Indian drum (tom-tom) or a type of song sung at Christmas (carol). The examples that follow—without their answers—may be on worksheets or used at the board. After a few minutes, share the answers as a group. Be sure to allow time for students to add to the Jim Dandy list.

1. short prayer said before meals (Grace)
2. absorbent fabric with uncut pile (Terry)
3. winner (Victor)
4. statement of what is owed (Bill)
5. sharp projection or hook (Barb)
6. flower (Iris, Daisy, Rose)
7. award for best movie (Oscar)
8. award for best television show (Emmy)
9. award for best mystery book (Edgar)
10. type of beef roast or steak (Chuck)
11. British policeman (Bobby)
12. wine of Spanish origin (Sherry)
13. sandwich of ground beef, barbecue sauce, and spices (Sloppy Joe)
14. tall grass (Reed)
15. to bring legal action (Sue)
16. quick down-and-up motion (Bob)
17. plant used in cooking as a seasoning (Basil, Rosemary)
18. Mafia leader (Don)
19. beam of light (Ray)

20. precious stone (Opal, Ruby)
21. flowerless, seedless plants with leaflike fronds (Fern)
22. spearlike weapon (Lance)
23. abnormal growth within the shell of some mollusks (Pearl)
24. American flycatcher (Phoebe)
25. forthright and sincere (Frank)
26. thin nail with small head (Brad)
27. notch or chip (Nick)
28. shrub with thick, glossy leaves (Holly)
29. to flatten or shape with light blows of the hand (Pat)
30. pole used for fishing (Rod)
31. state (Virginia)
32. abbreviation for instrument that transmits sound (Mike)
33. legal document to dispose of property (Will)
34. 10,560 feet (Miles)

Sue Jarvis Rauld, Department of Defense School, Panama

Word of the Day

Each day in each of my English classes one student prints clearly on the chalkboard one word that becomes the word of the day. I follow the alphabetical class list to determine which student is to contribute the word. The word must be one that the student has seen in recent reading or has heard around home or on television or radio. It must be a usable word, not a technical or obscure word such as *vervain* or *jaconet*. The student is responsible for providing the meaning and origin of the word, a stipulation that saves the "all-knowing" teacher some embarrassing moments!

An eighth-grader offered the word *diminutive* because a local sports announcer had used it to describe a certain small, good hockey player. An eleventh-grader contributed *facetious*, a word his father frequently uses. The student had a rough idea of the meaning from his father's tone of voice, but he didn't really know with certainty.

Annually each of my classes has an opportunity to acquire more than 150 words, words that are usually relevant and interesting, unlike many listed in vocabulary workbooks. A minute or two at the beginning of class is all the time this activity requires. Students record the words in the inside covers of their English notebooks. These words may be added to later vocabulary tests, but perhaps the greatest value of the activity is that it helps students to be aware of words on a regular basis.

David Morton, Lower Canada College, Montreal, Quebec

A Quotation a Day . . .

Quotations seem to encompass and encapsulate the combined wit and wisdom of the ages, and I am an inveterate collector of them. For the last two years I have placed a quotation on the chalkboard before leaving for home at the end of the school day. The quotation is always in the same place. Sometimes the quotation has no significance other than it struck me as worth putting up. At other times, I choose a quotation that relates to work with which a class is involved. The quotations are useful for those slack moments at the beginning or ending of a period.

Homeroom students protest if I miss a day or if yesterday's quote has not been replaced. Students ask for explanations of some quotations, while they vociferously affirm or deny the validity of others. Writing assignments, journal entries, productive digressions, and analyses of sentence structure and punctuation have resulted from the quotations. At times I refer to the quotation during class while at other times I let it stand without comment. Students of all levels seem to relate to the quotations. In fact, students of average and below-average levels have provided common-sense insights that are truly enlightening. Many students copy the quotations on their own and later use them in their writing.

Among my favorite sources: *Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, The Pocket Book of Quotations* edited by Henry Davidoff, and *Peter's Quotations* edited by Laurence J. Peter.

John P. Dansdill, Bethel High School, Bethel, Connecticut

Five-Minute Grammar Course

Each day before class begins, I write a sentence containing one or more errors in grammar or usage on the chalkboard. For example: The book laying on the desk is Marys. Without talking, students rewrite the sentence as they think it should be. When everyone is finished, we discuss the corrections and the rules and principles involved. If a student "corrected" the sentence in a wrong way, he or she rewrites it correctly now. I also ask students to make a notation concerning rules covered in a section of their notebooks set aside for this purpose.

The sentences I choose contain errors common to the writing of my students so I know they aren't drilling on something they already know. Occasionally I slip in a sentence with no errors, just

to keep them on their toes. Periodically I give a test that covers the principles of grammar and usage we've covered during these five-minute sessions.

Using this method to begin each class period eliminates the problem of getting students to settle down. When they enter, they automatically get ready to write. I take attendance while they are correcting the sentence, and discussion rarely takes longer than three or four minutes. The process is almost effortless and totally painless, yet I have found it very effective. Students correct writing errors of the type they make, and we don't spend hours drilling on language rules that students already know.

Beverly A. Stofferahn, Winona Junior High School, Winona, Minnesota

Final Five

And here is a poem to hand your students during the final five minutes of the final day of class.

> Now do not stop. Don't lay your writers down—
> Your pencils, felt-tips, Smith-Coronas, Bics—
> Please keep them softly pressed to notebook pad
> And make them dance around and through your life.
> Fill pages, tablets, journals, books. Sling ink
> Across your years, and paper-mate your mind.
> Keep track on lines, look back in time, and see
> Some stranger growing there. Where once you wrote,
> Now ask, "Who thought that thought? Who was I then?"
> The draft revised, syntax transformed, your slant
> May lead you to some fresh enlightenment.
> Then join with me; repeat the poet's lines:
> "No one can know how glad I am to find
> On any sheet the least display of mind."

Christopher Moore, Arlington-Green Isle High School, Arlington, Minnesota

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