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ABSTRACT

Useful for writing teachers at all levels, this monograph explores the nature of writing apprehension and presents nonthreatening teaching and evaluation methods. The first section of the booklet examines theory and research on writing anxiety and its effects, along with some teaching behaviors likely to aggravate the problem. The second section reviews teaching approaches for reducing anxiety, explaining how to introduce the writing process and discussing model lessons. In considering evaluation procedures, this section suggests a strategy for helping students understand evaluation criteria, offers advice on grouping students for peer criticism, and describes effective grading practices. (HTH)

THEORY & RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE

Reducing Writing Apprehension

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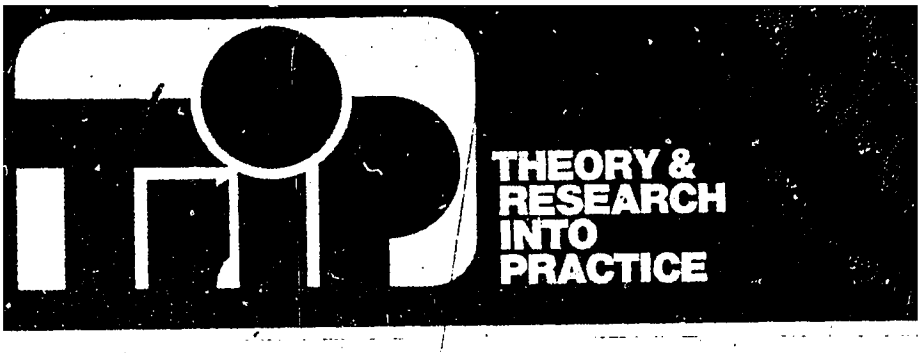

Reducing Writing Apprehension

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Foreword

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a national information system developed by the U.S. Office of Education and now sponsored by the National Institute of Education (NIE). ERIC provides ready access to descriptions of exemplary programs, research and development reports, and related information useful in developing effective educational programs.

Through its network of specialized centers or clearinghouses, each of which is responsible for a particular educational area, ERIC acquires, evaluates, abstracts, and indexes current information and lists that information in its reference publications.

The ERIC system has already made available—through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service—a considerable body of data, including all federally funded research reports since 1956. However, if the findings of educational research are to be used by teachers, much of the data must be translated into an essentially different context. Rather than resting at the point of making research reports easily accessible, NIE has directed the ERIC clearinghouses to commission authorities in various fields to write information analysis papers.

As with all federal educational information efforts, ERIC has as a primary goal bridging the gap between educational theory and classroom practice. One method of achieving that goal is the development by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC/RCS) of a series of booklets designed to meet concrete educational needs. Each booklet provides teachers with a review of the best educational theory and research on a limited topic, followed by descriptions of classroom activities that will assist teachers in putting that theory into practice.

The idea is not unique. Several educational journals and many commercial textbooks offer similar aids. The ERIC/RCS booklets are, however, noteworthy in their sharp focus on educational needs and their pairing of sound academic theory with tested classroom practice. And they have been developed in response to the increasing number of requests from teachers to provide this kind of service.

Topics for these booklets are recommended by the ERIC/RCS National Advisory Board. Suggestions for topics are welcomed by the Board and should be directed to the Clearinghouse.

Charles Suhor
Director, ERIC/RCS

1 Theory and Research

In Stephen King's *The Shining*, the main character, a novelist, goes to a secluded hotel in Colorado during the winter so that when he becomes snowbound, he will be alone with his writing and thus overcome the writer's block that plagues him. His writer's block contributes to his mental breakdown (and perhaps demonic possession), which results in his murdering his wife and attempting to murder his son.

Fortunately, none of our students react to fear of writing so excessively. If they did, hazardous-duty pay would replace merit pay as the most hotly debated salary innovation. Though the actions of the writer in *The Shining* are exceptional, the feelings that motivate his actions are not exceptions. New research is making it clear that the fear of writing, writing apprehension, is something with which all composition teachers must cope.

Studying Writing Apprehension

The study of writing apprehension began as a subset of research on communication apprehension. Daly and Miller (1975b), who coined the term, hypothesized that certain individuals might also experience a general anxiety about writing. They developed and validated a twenty-six-item questionnaire to measure writing apprehension (Figure 1). Used in most of the relevant research, the instrument measures an individual's inclination to respond favorably or unfavorably toward writing situations, thus providing information on an attitude that dynamically affects the way people write.

Daly (1978), for example, in a study of a group of students, has found significant differences in the performance of high apprehensives—those who scored more than one standard deviation above the group mean—and low apprehensives—those who scored more than one standard deviation below the group mean—on a variety of measures of writing aptitude. He has also discovered a significant difference between high and low apprehensives in the rating of message quality (1977). Faigley, Witte, and Daly (1981) have corroborated these findings using a different set of standardized measures. They theorize that apprehensive writers avoid both writing tasks and instruction and, as a result, do not get sufficient practice to develop as writers.

The research is clear: Writing apprehension interferes with the development of writing skills. Not only do high apprehensives write less skillfully, they also write differently as compared to low apprehensives. High apprehensives use significantly less intense language than do low apprehensives (Daly and Miller 1975a). Furthermore, high apprehensives make fewer statements and use fewer words in general, besides using fewer *-ly* words, fewer commas, and less delimiting punctuation than do low apprehensives (Daly 1977). Reporting similar findings, Book (1976) has found that low apprehensives write shorter sentences and use three times as many words and twice as many paragraphs as do high apprehensives. A sense of audience may account for some differences. Hurlow (1981) points out that high apprehensives write differently in journals than in essays. When writing in the latter for an audience, high apprehensives create longer t-units (independent clauses, including modifiers). Richardson (1981) also notes the effect of audience on high apprehensives, who write with greater syntactic maturity for distant audiences than they do for audiences to whom they are close.

A reason for these findings has been offered by Aldrich (1979), who theorizes that adult writers use jargon and nominalization as a cover for their insecurity. High apprehensives may try to cover for their insecurity by producing longer sentences. Increased t-unit length, often a goal of instruction, could result from students' attempts to camouflage their thoughts in verbiage. Since writing clear, straightforward sentences reveals the writer's intended meaning with greater certainty, high apprehensives may be reluctant to risk such exposure.

Differences between high and low apprehensives exist not only on the syntactic level, but also on the formal level. Wille (n.d.) delineated twelve different types of openings in a group of compositions by eighth graders. Highly rated papers are characterized by a playfulness not seen in low-rated papers. He offers the following partial explanation:

> The difference between the student for whom rhetorical options are as unlimited as the ability to imagine and the student who has only one or two choices is partly, I believe, fear. I am certain that as fear of writing lessens, writing improves (p. 20).

Just as the writing of high apprehensives differs from that of low apprehensives, the way they produce that writing is also different. In a case of two students, Hays (1981) has learned that low apprehensives produce more words and more drafts with fewer pauses. In contrast, the writing of high apprehensives appears tortuous. Lynn Bloom (1980), in a naturalistic study of anxious and nonanxious writers, has found that nonanxious writers use larger blocks of time, are more productive, and are less likely to procrastinate. Highly anxious writers may behave destructively. One subject reported that she spent ninety-eight hours revising a two-page paper, only to turn in her first draft after deciding that it was the best!

As one might expect, high apprehensives are less confident than low apprehensives, and they report less past success in writing and envision less future

success than low apprehensives (Daly and Miller 1975c). Since predispositions play an important part in a student's success, it is likely that a student's prediction of failure will become self-fulfilling. Awareness of the teacher's predispositions may also influence a student's performance. Daly (1979) reports that teachers expect high apprehensives to do less well in class than low apprehensives. Since teachers' expectations are important for student success, these predictions may be self-fulfilling as well. It is not surprising, then, that Seiler, Garrison, and Bookar (1978) have discovered a significant correlation between writing apprehension and course grades.

Another predictable correlation may be seen between students' writing apprehension levels and their academic decisions. Low apprehensives are attracted to majoring in subjects that they perceive as involving writing, while high apprehensives avoid such majors (Daly and Shamo 1978).

On balance, it is obvious that if our students are highly apprehensive about writing, they will suffer for it. They are likely to avoid writing, which means that they cannot develop their skills. Moreover, when they do write, they are likely to write in a way that precludes success. Common problems, from convoluted sentences to mundane openings, may have their roots in a student's writing apprehension.

On the basis of the evidence presented thus far, it seems possible to argue that writing apprehension is simply a recognition by students that they are not skilled. Daly does suggest that more research is needed to establish whether high apprehension causes or is caused by low skills, but he believes an interaction exists. If low skills were the primary cause of writing apprehension, however, only poor writers would be apprehensive, and this is not the case. Lynn Bloom, who has observed many high apprehensives in her workshops designed to reduce writing anxiety, treats numerous accomplished and successful writers. In addition, Powers, Cook, and Meyer (1979) report that some remedial students have low rates of apprehension. Though writing apprehension interferes with skill development and may interact with low skills, it is not limited to any ability level. Even good writers may be adversely affected by writing apprehension. Consequently, we need to be concerned with the apprehension level of all our students.

Dealing with Writing Apprehension

Though much of the previously cited research is thought-provoking, a word of warning is in order. Present research needs to be supplemented in several important areas. First, most studies consider only college students. More work needs to be done with students of other ages. Second, there are no good studies that clearly suggest the cause of writing apprehension. Similarly, it would be a mistake to argue from the work of Daly and his colleagues that writing apprehension is the cause of many of the behaviors that are associated with it. Correlation studies do not permit causal reasoning.

The construct, though, is important. The Daly-Miller test strongly correlates with lesser-known measures of writing apprehension. This correlation clearly suggests that the tests measure a discrete attitude (Daly and Wilson 1980). Daly's and Miller's work validating their instrument also allows us to accept their construct with confidence. Further, the correlations that researchers have established make sense: First, students who are anxious about writing avoid both writing and writing instruction, thus neglecting to develop their skills. Second, apprehensive students take fewer chances when they do write. Finally, these students write shorter papers and are less apt to write what they mean in a clear, straightforward manner. Thus, since composition teachers are dedicated to improving their students' writing ability, reducing student apprehension is a step in the right direction.

Concerned teachers should try to avoid those behaviors that cause writing apprehension and should adopt instruction that reduces it. Unfortunately, these are two areas in which the research cannot provide a clear guide.

While no research has established the cause or causes of writing apprehension, several theories have been offered. Daly (1977) believes that a history of adverse responses may cause writing apprehension. This makes sense. If an evaluation convinces students that they are poor writers, they may demonstrate behaviors associated with writing apprehension, thus lessening their chances for success. When they risk writing again, they are likely to receive another negative evaluation. This could increase their anxiety.

Using the results of research, Powers, Cook, and Meyer (1979) argue that compulsory writing causes writing apprehension. In fact, though, their research may support Daly's claim concerning negative responses. Their study involved students in a basic English class, half of whom had been admitted under the auspices of a compensatory educational program. During this course, students were asked to write five or six compositions of various specific modes and lengths. At the end of the course, the compensatory education students showed a statistically significant increase in their apprehension. (The other students also experienced an increase in their apprehension but it was not statistically significant.) Powers and his associates use this evidence to argue that compulsory writing increases rather than reduces anxiety. However, they wrongly presume that the compulsory writing was the only salient feature of the instruction. In fact, they note that the course featured the "typical detailed composition criticism" often found in a basic course. Since several courses (discussed below) featuring compulsory writing have resulted in a decrease in writing apprehension, it seems far more likely that the method of evaluation, not compulsory writing, was responsible for the increase in writing apprehension noted by the researchers.

Thomas Newkirk (1979) isolates five pressures that make students fearful of writing, citing first the pressure of perfectionism. Case studies seem to show that high apprehensives often search for the perfect word or phrase as they compose. Research also corroborates his selection of audience as a pressure. Lynn Bloom

(1980), for example, notes that some apprehensives are capable writers who enjoy writing for self-expression. Finally, Newkirk considers length, topic, and time allowed for the exercise to be the other significant pressures.

On balance, however, there does seem to be a consensus that evaluation plays a major role in causing writing apprehension. Teachers may avoid this by adjusting their evaluation strategies. There is still the question, however, of how to decrease apprehension in those students who already suffer from it.

Little research has been conducted on specific methods of instruction for reducing writing apprehension. Fox (1980) reported on an experimental procedure designed to reduce writing appprehension. Both the experimental group and the control group reduced their apprehension, although the reduction was significantly greater in the experimental group. Fox's treatment was especially effective for the most apprehensive students, as selected high apprehensives significantly reduced their apprehension. His treatment consisted of exercises designed to reduce anxiety about language. Fox also used peer group evaluation in an attempt to reduce student apprehension by clarifying the objectives of each writing lesson.

Thompson (1979) reported that her language-study approach not only reduced writers' anxiety but also increased their writing ability. She suggests that teachers reduce the mystery surrounding language by helping students learn symbols, patterns and sentences, the history and formation of language, and standard English and dialects. She further suggests that teachers dispel the notion that writing is an obscure process by teaching students about invention, the connection between writing and thinking, and conventional order in developing the writer's intended message.

Another approach to reducing writing apprehension was undertaken by Martin Bloom (1979) in workshops designed to reduce writing anxiety. Major features of the workshops were public discussion of what interferes with writing, individual analysis of writing (including a logbook to describe writing experiences), and public discussion of ideas for improvement. While none of these approaches were designed for secondary school students, they suggest the direction a secondary school teacher might take to reduce apprehension.

Clearly, teachers should address themselves to reducing writing apprehension. Students with low apprehension are likely to perform better than students who are highly apprehensive. They will be more receptive to instruction and less constrained in their academic decisions. This is not to say, though, that an entire curriculum should be directed toward reducing apprehension. First, *some* apprehension is necessary if a writer is to take the care that produces an acceptable product. Second, not all students suffer from apprehension. Activities that are designed to reduce or prevent the problem, then, should also benefit students who lack writing anxiety. In the best possible world, activities that reduce apprehension would be pedagogically sound for other reasons, allowing teachers to reduce anxiety and develop skills at the same time.

Measurement of Writing Apprehension (The Daly-Miller Test)

Below is a series of statements about writing. There are no right or wrong answers to these statements. Please indicate the degree to which each statement applies to you by circling the number that shows whether you strongly agree, agree, are uncertain, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement. While some of these statements may be repetitious, please respond to all of them; take your time and try to be as honest as possible. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

	strongly agree	agree	uncertain	disagree	strongly disagree	
+	1	2	3	4	5	1. I avoid writing.
−	1	2	3	4	5	2. I have no fear of my writing's being evaluated.
−	1	2	3	4	5	3. I look forward to writing down my ideas.
+	1	2	3	4	5	4. I am afraid of writing essays when I know they will be evaluated.
+	1	2	3	4	5	5. Taking a composition course is a very frightening experience.
−	1	2	3	4	5	6. Handing in a composition makes me feel good.
+	1	2	3	4	5	7. My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on my composition.
+	1	2	3	4	5	8. Expressing ideas through writing seems to be a waste of time.
−	1	2	3	4	5	9. I would enjoy submitting my writing to magazines for evaluation and publication.
−	1	2	3	4	5	10. I like to write down my ideas.
−	1	2	3	4	5	11. I feel confident in my ability to express my ideas clearly in writing.
−	1	2	3	4	5	12. I like to have my friends read what I have written.
+	1	2	3	4	5	13. I'm nervous about writing.
−	1	2	3	4	5	14. People seem to enjoy what I write.
−	1	2	3	4	5	15. I enjoy writing.
+	1	2	3	4	5	16. I never seem to be able to write down my ideas clearly.
−	1	2	3	4	5	17. Writing is a lot of fun.
+	1	2	3	4	5	18. I expect to do poorly in composition classes even before I enter them.
−	1	2	3	4	5	19. I like seeing my thoughts on paper.
−	1	2	3	4	5	20. Discussing my writing with others is an enjoyable experience.

Figure 1. Measurement of Writing Apprehension (The Daly-Miller Test).

	strongly agree	agree	uncertain	disagree	strongly disagree	
+	1	2	3	4	5	21. I have a terrible time organizing my ideas in a composition course.
+	1	2	3	4	5	22. When I hand in a composition, I know I'm going to do poorly.
−	1	2	3	4	5	23. It's easy for me to write good compositions.
+	1	2	3	4	5	24. I don't think I write as well as most other people.
+	1	2	3	4	5	25. I don't like my compositions to be evaluated.
+	1	2	3	4	5	26. I'm not good at writing.

Grading the Daly-Miller Test

The response "strongly agree" has a value of one. If a student strongly agrees with statement 1, a positive statement, add one point to his or her score. The response "strongly disagree" has a value of five. If a student strongly disagrees with statement 2, a negative statement, subtract five points from his or her score. The other responses have the following values: agree, two; uncertain, three; disagree, four. If a student makes one of these responses, add or subtract the appropriate value. To determine whether to add or subtract, simply check the symbol opposite each statement. Writing Apprehension = 78 + positive statement scores − negative statement scores. Scores may range from a low of 26 (a very confident writer) to a high of 130 (an extremely apprehensive writer).

2 Practice

Writing apprehension cannot be treated in a single discrete unit of instruction or in an occasional activity and then forgotten. To treat it effectively, teachers must consider it in all of their planning. What follows exemplifies approaches that teachers can use to reduce writing apprehension.

The first part of the practice section suggests a way to acquaint students with the writing process. This is followed by three sample lessons that illustrate how to plan instruction to maximize achievement and minimize apprehension. The first focuses on writing style, specifically connotation and word choice; the second teaches creative writing through the fable; and the third, on argument, introduces expository writing. The remainder of the section on practice relates to evaluation. Since adverse responses appear to cause apprehension, teachers need to find ways to help students improve their work without increasing their fear.

The primary goal of each lesson, designed to do more than reduce students' writing apprehension, is to produce good writing by all students. Any approach that compromises this goal is unjustified.

Introducing the Writing Process

Purpose

Many apprehensive students see writing assignments as insurmountable barriers. Newkirk (1979) believes that the pressure of perfectionism paralyzes students as they seek to write. Case studies support his view: High apprehensives are characterized by tortuous writing marked by many pauses as the writer strives for perfection. These students do not realize that no one, not even the best writer, achieves the goal of so-called perfection without making several drafts. The following exercises are designed to acquaint students both with planning strategies for beginning their work and with the revision process. Students may thus be freed from the pressure of perfectionism as they write their first drafts. In addition, the exercises will help make the revision process more profitable. Many students think that revision means proofreading. Showing them that revision begins with discourse changes, moves to stylistic considerations, and finally focuses on correctness, will help them realize that revision may require substantive changes in their work.

Procedure

Ask students to write a paragraph on any topic; for example, describe the qualities of a good teacher. Explain that before they write, you would like them to work on their planning in groups. Divide the class into at least four groups. Assign each group a different planning strategy—brainstorming, free-writing, listing, or formal outline. After the students have finished their planning, have them work individually on their papers. When they have finished, discuss the effectiveness of the various strategies, listing the positive and negative comments for each strategy on the board. Note when students appear to disagree with each other.

In the next three days, assign the class different topics. The exact topics are not important, but you should select topics that require different types of writing. For example: Describe a funny experience, argue for or against legalizing marijuana, or explain the graduation requirements of the school. For each topic, assign the groups a different planning strategy. After each assignment, discuss the effectiveness of the various approaches, with students explaining how the type of assignment affected their feelings about the planning strategy. Note how different individuals have different preferences in different situations.

After the students have tried a variety of planning alternatives, ask them to write on those they found most comfortable, mentioning why. Use this as a nongraded assignment, since grading might seem to pass judgment on the alternative they favor. Of course, the effectiveness of the lesson would be severely undercut by requiring all students to use the same planning strategy in subsequent work. Thompson (1979) suggests that if students discover their own writing processes they will be less apprehensive. Give students a copy of the paragraph in Figure 2-A and ask them to grade it and defend their grades. Most will give it a very low grade, noting both that the paragraph is not clear and that it contains many errors. Suggest that they list questions the writer has neglected to answer. Their questions should include the following: Who are "they"? Why did "they" go into the woods? What is "it"? How did "they" feel as they walked to "it"? Why were the kids there? and, Why were the kids in costume?

Ask the students to rewrite the paragraph, supplying the answers to the questions. Then have them read their paragraphs aloud to the class or in small groups. After the students have read their revisions, explain that the first purpose of revision is to make the sort of major discourse changes that they have just made. In addition, point out that proofreading for grammatical or mechanical errors is the last step of the revision process. It makes no sense to correct errors that may not appear in the next draft.

Distribute the paragraph in Figure 2-B and ask the students to grade it and defend their grades, suggesting improvements. Most will give it a better grade than they gave the paragraph in Figure 2-A. Their suggestions should include

the following: varying the sentence structure; making the description of the screams, woods, and house scarier; introducing Halloween more smoothly; and creating a more dramatic ending. Have students rewrite the paragraph, following these suggestions but focusing on stylistic changes, since they may again notice mechanical errors. Then ask them to read their paragraphs to the class or in small groups.

Finally, distribute the paragraph in Figure 2-C as an example of a possible revision. Students may now correct the errors in the revision. Remind them of the three-step revision process: discourse changes, stylistic considerations, and correction of grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Model Lessons

Well-designed lessons must be the focus of any program to reduce writing apprehension. Fox's program, which resulted in a reduction in writing apprehension, was centered on carefully preparing students to do the writing they were required to produce (Fox 1980). This, of course, necessitates developing clear objectives for each lesson and developing activities to help students fulfill those objectives. If teachers break down the writing task and prepare students for each element of the task, students can perceive assignments as a series of conquerable steps instead of insurmountable obstacles. If students have been adequately prepared to meet the demands of an assignment they will write with confidence. Further, they will know the criteria for evaluating their own work and better understand the evaluations they receive from others.

This sort of approach not only will reduce apprehension, but will improve writing performance. Johannessen, Kahn, and Walter (1982) argue most articulately that task analysis is an essential element of designing prewriting activities. Their TRIP booklet on definition is a strong example of the kind of writing instruction that can be expected to reduce apprehension. Its effectiveness in improving composition has also been established. Hillocks's TRIP booklet (1975) is another good example of the sort of instruction that Fox suggests. Hillocks identifies the skills necessary for good descriptive writing and suggests activities that develop these skills. Again, one can expect this approach to do more than reduce apprehension. Hillocks (1979, 1982) has convincingly shown that his program improves composition as well.

The three lessons that follow—on connotation and word choice, the fable, and argument—represent the variety of areas that composition teachers address, such as style, creative writing, and expository writing. Each lesson breaks down the writing task into steps, providing activities designed to prepare students to accomplish these steps. Since students will be prepared to write, they will approach their writing with less apprehension and much greater chance of success.

Connotation and Word Choice

Purpose

Highly apprehensive writers use less intense language than nonapprehensive writers. This lesson is designed to acquaint students with the power of connotative language and to allow them to work on using more intense language in their own writing. The lesson should help reduce anxiety about language, thus reducing writing apprehension.

Procedure

Ask students if they would rather be called slender or skinny. They will respond, of course, that they would rather be called slender. Point out that they chose slender because it has more positive connotations. Write the word *connotation* on the board, explaining that it means the association that a word has beyond its literal meaning. Distribute "The Shark Menace" in Figure 3-A and ask students what the author's attitude is. Have them underline the words that most clearly show that attitude. Then distribute "Sharks Deserve Our Praise" in Figure 3-B, and have the students again indicate the author's attitude by underlining the appropriate words. List the words that students found to be most effective in "The Shark Menace" in a column marked "negative connotations" and those from "Sharks Deserve Our Praise" in a column marked "positive connotations."

Suggest replacing the effective words with neutral words (for example, *eliminate* instead of *slaughter* in the first sentence of "Sharks Deserve Our Praise"). Ask students how their feelings about the subject change as a result of the substitutions. Point out the importance of using connotative language effectively in order to involve the audience with their writing, and explain that they will thus be working on using connotative language for the next several class sessions.

Distribute the worksheet in Figure 3-C and ask students to complete it in small groups. Have the class discuss the groups' decisions. If conflicts arise, ask students to explain their ideas or to imagine situations in which they would use the words. For example, what feelings would students be trying to create if they described someone as sociable, talkative, or gabby?

After this discussion, distribute the worksheet in Figure 3-D, directing the students to work on it individually. Then discuss students' placement of the words in the columns. If there are conflicts, have the students explain their choices. In addition, ask them to read the words they generated, suggesting situations in which each of the words might be used. For example, who would they describe as musclebound or Herculean?

After students have completed the worksheets, divide the class into groups. Assign each group to generate a list of highly connotative words, both positive and negative, that relate to one of the following concepts: money, leadership, weight, intelligence. Have students report on their work to the class. Assign each group one of the following situations that relates to their word list:

1. A young person who spends a great deal of money asks his/her wealthy father/mother for more money. The parent refuses.
2. A private in the army protests a general's decision to enter a battle. The private thinks that the general is power-hungry.
3. An exercise class made up of overweight women and a group of women trying to gain weight to improve their appearance are scheduled to meet in the same room at a health club. A fight ensues.
4. A group of poor students at the senior awards assembly makes fun of the valedictorian. The valedictorian's friends seated in the vicinity rise to his/her defense.

Explain that the groups should role-play the situation that they have been given, using many of the words that the students generated. After the students have finished the role-playing, have them write out their versions of the dialog. Have the students read their dialogs to the class and discuss the use of connotative language in each. Ask the class to note the most effective words used by the writers.

Tell the students that they will be writing a paragraph about a place that they feel strongly about. Explain that in order to communicate that feeling they will have to use highly connotative language. Give the students Figure 3-E for practice. Then have students read their choices. Note how connotative language is important in selecting nouns and verbs as well as adjectives and adverbs.

Ask students to write a composition concerning a place about which they feel strongly. As a prewriting activity, assign them to write at least five sight details, five sound details, and five details involving the other senses. Divide the class into pairs and have students exchange their lists of words. Ask each of them to write a brief paragraph on their partner's feelings about the subject and to indicate what most effectively reveals that feeling. Have the partners exchange paragraphs. After this exercise, ask the students to write their compositions.

Fables

Purpose

The fable lesson is designed to minimize writing apprehension and to acquaint students with the characteristics of fables so that they can produce fables of

their own. To this end the lesson clearly delineates the elements of the task, and allows students to practice each of these elements before they begin to write.

Procedure

Write the following sayings on the board: Little by little does the trick; United we stand, divided we fall; One good turn deserves another; Familiarity breeds contempt. Ask students how many of them have heard of the sayings. Most will have. Explain that the source of these sayings is in various fables and that there is a wide variety of fables, both ancient and modern, which have been a popular way of teaching moral lessons.

Distribute "The Tortoise and the Hare." Explain that it was written by Aesop, most famous of the fable writers and a Greek slave of the sixth century B.C. Discuss the fable, asking these questions:

1. What happens in the fable?
2. What is the moral?
3. Why did Aesop choose the character that he did?
4. In what way do the animals behave as people do? What sort of people act like the tortoise? What sort of people act like the hare?
5. What criticism does the author make about people?
6. How do the incidents of the fable help him make that criticism?

Distribute any less famous fable. Discuss the fable, using the same kind of questions as those above. If students have difficulty discussing the fable, present additional fables for large and small group discussion until the students' responses are fluent. After the students have shown that they can analyze fables, divide the class into groups and ask them to devise a definition of the fable. List the characteristics that the groups generated. The definition should include the following:

1. Fables have morals.
2. The characters are animals.
3. The animals represent human characteristics.
4. The animals are appropriate to the characteristics that they represent.

In order to develop criteria for effective fables, distribute the following examples of poorly written fables. (I explain to my students that I have written these fables and want their opinions of them.)

The Careless Hare

All of the animals were tired of the hare. He continually sped through the forest on his Harley-Davidson, ignoring all of the red lights. All of the

animals who were pedestrians scurried out of the way whenever they heard the hare's roaring engine. The hare laughed and yelled at the animals. "I'll bet you're jealous of my wheels," he cried. Finally the hare decided that the roads in the forest were simply too narrow for him to get up enough speed. He decided to drive on the main highway used by humans. All of the animals warned him not to, but he did anyway. When he got on the highway he immediately tried to go as fast as he could, but he wasn't used to the big trucks and other traffic. Swerving to pass a truck, he crashed and died. *Moral:* Sometimes it's better to stay in place than to get hurt in a faster race.

Ask the students to critique "The Careless Hare" by comparing it to Aesop's work. (My students take great delight in criticizing what I have written.) The students should note that the fable is less effective because the animals don't act like animals. They should explain that although Aesop's animals can talk, they otherwise act in a natural fashion. Then read "The Littlest Grizzly."

The Littlest Grizzly

One day a large grizzly bear brought some fresh meat to her young cub. She called the cub in from his play. "I'm not ready to come in," he exclaimed. This was a daily occurrence. Because he didn't eat well, the cub remained thin. He didn't build up the body fat necessary for warmth and nourishment during hibernation. Consequently, he was physically unprepared to face the harsh winter. He died just before spring. *Moral:* If you don't eat right, you'll be sorry.

Ask the students to critique "The Littlest Grizzly" by comparing it to Aesop's work. They should note that it is less effective because it doesn't teach a significant moral truth. Revise the original definition to note that the animals in a fable should act in a natural fashion and that the moral must be significant.

Tell your students that they are going to begin to prepare their own fables. Distribute four or five uncommon fables with the moral removed. Divide the class into groups. Have the groups generate their own morals. When the groups have finished, have them write their own morals. Compare the group's work. Read Aesop's morals and discuss the differences.

Explain to your students that the first step in writing a fable is to determine what human characteristics to criticize. Have the class brainstorm for characteristics to criticize. Ask the class to vote on which characteristic they would like to write on as a class. Ask which animal would best represent the characteristic. Have the class choose the best alternative. Have the class brainstorm for incidents that could be used in the fable. With this preparation, ask students to write a fable using the elements that the class selected. Have students read their selections aloud. Finally, ask the students to write their own fables, choosing some other characteristic. Check with the students as they complete each step.

Argument

Purpose

A major strategy for eliminating writing apprehension is to develop activities that prepare students to meet clearly stated objectives. To teach argument, then, one must first analyze what goes into effective argument. Fortunately, British logician Stephen Toulmin has facilitated that task by developing a model of argumentation that can be easily adapted for teaching writing.

In essence, Toulmin believes that an argument has three parts. The *claim* is the conclusion—that which one is trying to prove. The *datum* is the evidence on which the claim is based. The *warrant,* a critical aspect of argument and one neglected by many students, is that which connects the datum to the claim. Toulmin illustrates with the argument pictured in I.

Toulmin notes, however, that a warrant may not make an observation absolute. Because of possible reservations, a conclusion may have to be qualified. He notes further that the warrant, the general rule that allows the datum to be linked to the claim, is perhaps the most susceptible to attack from a challenger. An important aspect of most models of argumentation is anticipating possible objections from the audience and answering them. Consequently, one must present backing for the warrant. A complete argument is illustrated in II.

The scope of this booklet does not allow for a complete discussion of the Toulmin model and its superiority to other models of argumentation. (For a more complete discussion, see Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* [1958] and Toulmin, Rieke, and Janik, *An Introduction to Reasoning* [1979].) The discussion does demonstrate the sort of analysis that teachers should make before beginning any writing assignment if they want their students to be successful and unapprehensive.

Procedure

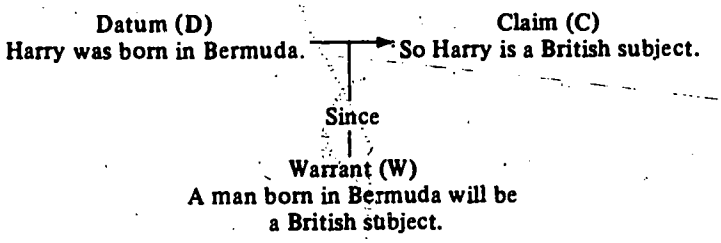
The following activities will acquaint students with the Toulmin model and its application. More specifically, the aim is to introduce the Toulmin model, to develop students' ability to discriminate between effective and ineffective data, to aid students in connecting their data to their claims with effective warrants and backing, to help students recognize possible reservations to their claims, and to help students either refute these reservations or qualify their claims appropriately.

The first step in teaching students to write effective arguments is to introduce the essential elements of an effective argument. This can be done by carrying on an argument with a student (or students). The following is an example of how I have done this with my students.

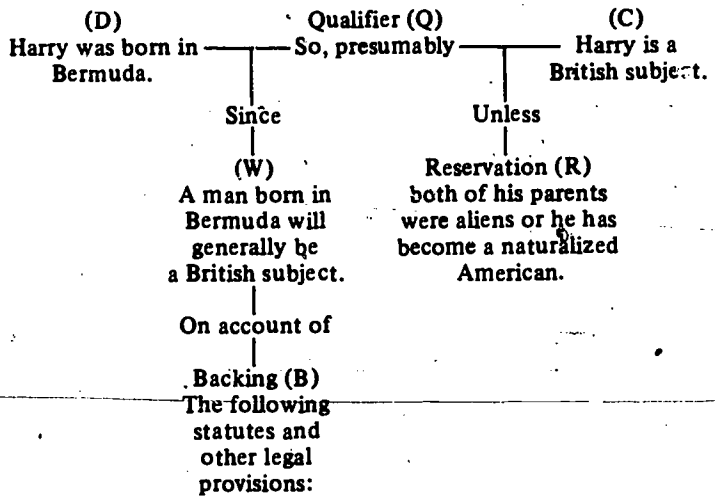
T. Let's talk about something different today. Jeff, who do you think will make it to the Super Bowl?

S. The Raiders and Redskins.

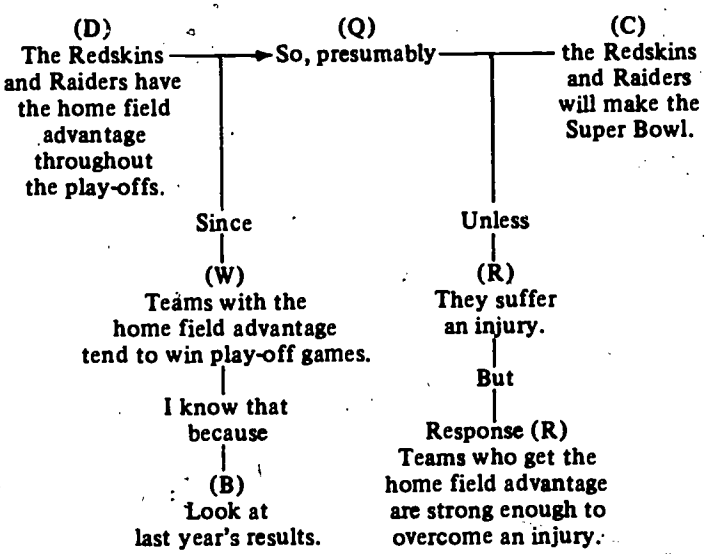
I.


Datum (D)
Harry was born in Bermuda.
Claim (C)
So Harry is a British subject.
Since
Warrant (W)
A man born in Bermuda will be a British subject.

II.


(D)
Harry was born in Bermuda.
Qualifier (Q)
So, presumably
(C)
Harry is a British subject.
Since
(W)
A man born in Bermuda will generally be a British subject.
On account of
Backing (B)
The following statutes and other legal provisions:
Unless
Reservation (R)
both of his parents were aliens or he has become a naturalized American.

III.


(D)
The Redskins and Raiders have the home field advantage throughout the play-offs.
(Q)
So, presumably
(C)
the Redskins and Raiders will make the Super Bowl.
Since
(W)
Teams with the home field advantage tend to win play-off games.
I know that because
(B)
Look at last year's results.
Unless
(R)
They suffer an injury.
But
Response (R)
Teams who get the home field advantage are strong enough to overcome an injury.

T. Why? What makes you pick them?
S. They have the home field advantage throughout the play-offs.
T. So?
S. So teams with the home field advantage generally win play-off games.
T. How do you know?
S. Look at San Francisco and Cincinnati last year.
T. But what if a key player gets hurt? That will override the home field advantage.
S. No, look at Washington. Their best receiver got hurt, but they won the first round of the play-offs anyway.

After the discussion, diagram the argument on the board. Follow the model on page 17, III.

Explain to students that all effective arguments must have these parts. Further conversations like this one will illustrate the point more clearly.

Evaluating Data. Once students are familiar with the overall model, introduce activities that address themselves to the various parts of the model. Explain that if the data to an argument are not accepted, the whole argument will fail. Note that if the data are challenged, they must be established before the argument can continue. In fact, challenged data are like subordinate claims which must be proved before one can establish the major claim of an argument. Therefore, students must use the best possible data in their arguments. To help students identify effective data, divide them into groups to work on Figure 4-A.

After the groups have finished their work, discuss their decisions. As a class, develop criteria for effective data. The criteria should include the following:

1. The data come from a qualified source.
2. The source is sufficiently unbiased.
3. The source was in a position to make the observations regarding the data.
4. The data are sufficiently recent.
5. The data are such that generalizations can be drawn from them.

Once these criteria are established, give students Figure 4-B to do individually. Discuss the choices that the students make. Note that there are many different kinds of data and that the kind of data students should seek depends upon their claim.

Writing Warrants. Once students have a clear sense of what data are appropriate, begin to work on developing warrants and backing. Review the warrants and backing of the arguments that were presented in class. Divide the class into groups to work on Figure 4-C. After the students have finished the assignment, have them read their answers. Discuss the warrants and backing by asking whether they effectively establish the claim.

Recognizing Reservations. The final step in making an effective argument is to anticipate the objections an audience might make against it and refute those objections, or to qualify the claim appropriately. Divide the class into groups of two. Have them role-play one of the following arguments.

1. A parent and his or her 18-year-old child discuss whether 18-year-olds should be allowed to buy liquor.
2. A teacher and a student discuss the value of homework.
3. A conservative parent discusses with his or her liberal child whether citizens should obey laws to which they have a profound moral objection.

When students have finished their role-playing, have them repeat the procedure, this time reversing roles. When each student has played both sides of the conflict, discuss as a class the major arguments that each speaker made. Discuss the ways in which the opponents tried to defeat the arguments. Explain how important it is to anticipate readers' objections to an argument.

After students have completed role-playing, divide them into groups to do Figure 4-D. Discuss the reservations that the students thought the audience would place on the claim, and how the students could overcome these reservations.

Writing Arguments. Students should now be able to write their own arguments. To review the Toulmin model, have students work Figure 4-E. After the students have finished, discuss their claims. When the students understand the function of each of the quotations, have them use the quotations in a composition arguing that the sale of handguns should be prohibited. When they have finished the papers, have the students read them to each other in groups. Discuss which quotations proved most effective.

After the students have finished these exercises they should be able to plan their own papers. For the first argument paper, provide students with the data—a page from *Consumer Reports,* for example, to use to argue which small car to buy. Or a list of incidents from a famous person's life could be used by students to prove what personality characteristics are most notable in the person. Other good sources for data, especially in the high school, are debate handbooks. It is also easy to type out a page of statistics about a topic of current interest taken from a news magazine. To help students plan the paper, distribute Figure 4-F.

This approach should minimize students' apprehension by helping them realize the connection between writing and thinking, a realization that Thompson (1979) argues will reduce writing apprehension. Further, this sort of task analysis allows teachers to break down writing assignments into a series of steps. Students need not face the entire assignment initially; they can do one step at a time. This is one major suggestion that Lynn Bloom (1980) uses with her apprehensive

students. Finally, students will feel prepared for their writing tasks, thus reducing their feelings of apprehension. High apprehensives will appreciate the fact that not all of the preparation involves writing.

Evaluation

All of one's efforts to minimize apprehension can go for naught because of counter-productive evaluation policy. Grading should be as helpful and undamaging as possible. The following activities and suggestions will help evaluation efforts be as beneficial as possible.

Criteria for Evaluation

Students are most afraid of and angriest at grades they consider arbitrary. If students understand the criteria by which their papers are to be evaluated, they will be less fearful of submitting them. Further, if your students agree with you on the elements of good writing, they are likely to understand the rationale for the composition instruction that they are given.

Procedure

Distribute a selection of paragraphs taken from previous classes. I have used the three paragraphs reproduced as Figure 5. Have your students grade these paragraphs. Tally the grades for each paragraph. You will find a consensus for the most part. Discuss the reasons for the grade. In the discussion the students will mention the same criteria a teacher would: specificity, organization, and correctness, among others. List the criteria on the board. Explain to students that teachers use these same criteria. Tell them to remember the list when they work on their own writing.

Peer Criticism

Peer criticism has several purposes. First, it is a major factor in reducing writing apprehension, as observed in the program described by Fox (1980). Second, peer criticism helps students develop the discipline necessary to criticize their own work. Finally, peer criticism helps students write their revisions and consequently increases the likelihood that they will succeed on an assignment.

Procedure

There are various considerations to be used in dividing students into groups for the purpose of peer criticism. First, it is a good idea to keep students in the same groups for an extended period of time. This gives them a chance to develop trust in and a good working relationship with others. Second, it is best to have groups of three or four students, to provide a variety of perceptions of each

student's paper. Finally, one should have varying ability levels within a group. One way of forming groups is to rank the students on the basis of ability after giving some sort of pretest. Then divide the class into thirds or quarters. Match one student from each segment to form groups. For example, if one wishes to divide a class of twenty-four into groups of three, one might group the first-, ninth-, and seventeenth-ranked students and so on.

The key to effective peer criticism is a well-defined task. One effective way to structure peer criticism is to distribute checklists for each assignment. Checklists for the three assignments explained above are reproduced as Figure 6.

Grading

Here are some suggestions for grading that will reduce a student's writing apprehension.

1. Do not grade everything. Students should have the opportunity to write without the pressure of grades. This will help students to write because of an intrinsic motivation rather then because of an extrinsic reward.
2. Do not mark every error. Particularly if the student has difficulty with mechanics, marking every error makes writing discouraging and it is counterproductive. Comments on the discourse level get lost amid the myriad of symbols.
3. Similarly, make a limited number of directed comments that focus on the objectives of the lesson. Not only will comments of this sort minimize apprehension, they are also more effective (Hillocks 1982).

Consider the ways of responding to students' writing shown in Figure 7. (The assignment was to describe a place, focusing on sound details.)

The message communicated by Figure 7-A is clear. The markings say that the paper is bad and that correctness is the most important aspect of a paper. The objective of the assignment—using sound details—is never mentioned. Certainly the student receiving this paper would feel discouraged. The single perfunctory positive comment "Good luck," would not be enough to assuage that feeling. Figure 7-B, on the other hand, lets the student know that the objectives of the lesson are important. The student is rewarded for taking the risk of using figurative language. Further, the reader is in a cooperative, not an adversarial position, which increases the likelihood that a student will seek further help. At the same time, Figure 7-B does not ignore correctness. However, it presents the issue in palatable and digestible portions. If we want our students to take the risk of writing, to enjoy it, to practice it, and to seek our help with it, we must make our responses instructive rather than aversive.

Without question, writing apprehension interferes with achievement in composition. Therefore, we should seek to reduce it. One step in that direction is to acquaint students with planning and revision strategies that will minimize the

fear of the blank page. More important, we should carefully analyze the demands of each writing task and structure activities and assignments that prepare students to meet those demands. If students feel prepared to write, they certainly should feel less fearful about it. But we can subvert even the best lessons with counterproductive grading procedures unless we use checklists and activities designed to take the mystery out of grading and make certain that our grading is instructive and not oppressive. If we do this, our students will not only be less fearful writers; they will be better writers.

Revision Paragraph 1

They approached slow. They herd the scream schoe through the woods. They were frithtened about what they might discover but they kept going anyway. The darkness of the night increased. Finally they saw it they wondered if it was worth going on. Again they herd the scream. They ran around the house to find three neighborhood kids all in costume.

Figure 2-A. Revision Paragraph 1.

Revision Paragraph 2

Even the police sargant was afraid. He had been called in by passing motorists who had heard screams coming from the old house that was not only a wuarter mile away. He thought about how the house had always been called haunted. The sargant had laughed but he never went into the woods. He realized that Halloween night was darker than usual. He and his partner made only small holes in the dark with their flashlights. They they herd the screams echoe through the wood. They hurried toward the house. They felt the mud of the wood give way as they approached, they smelled the damp. The sragant felt sweat on his face. He herd his partner cough. Finally they saw it. The house had old white paint. It had broken boards on the front steps. It also had broken shutters. He looked at his partner and swallowed. He wondered if it was worth going on when he saw his partner. He knew he was scared to. They herd the screams again. They ran to the back of the house where they heard the screams. They flashed their lights and herd the screams again but this time the knew the cause. Joe, Frank and Tom Marshall a ghose a skeleton and a pirate stood next to the house. The boys explained that they were just playing a joke on the cars below.

Figure 2-B. Revision Paragraph 2.

Revision Paragraph 3

Even the police sargant was afraid. He and his partner had been called by passing motorists who had herd screams coming from the old house that was now only a quarter mile away. For years people had called that house haunted. The sargant had laughed, but he never went in the woods anyway. What a night to enter them for the first time! It was Halloween. Thick clouds hid the moon and stars. The night was solid black. The police flashlights made only small holes in the dark. Suddenly, the sargent and his partner herd a high-pitched scream echoe through the woods. He smelled the damp. Sweat beaded on his forehead. He whirled as he herd his partners shallow cough. Finally they saw the ancient house looming before them. The old white paint was chipped and peeling. The wood of the front step was broken into moist slivers. The sargant looked at his partner and swallowed. His parners eyes asked the question he was thinking, "Do we have to go on?" Another screan, much closer now, shattered the question. The two police officers ran to the back of the house, the source of the scream. They shone there lights and drew there guns. Another scream, "Don't shoot!" Joe, Frank, and Tom Marshall, a ghose a pirate and a skeleton cowered next to the house. The screams were a Halloween trick on passing motorists. Suddenly they herd another scram. The boys clutched each other, eyes bulging. The sargant whirled around with his flashlight. Then he laughed, a low rumble. "Just the squeal of brakes on the wet hightway below. But let's get out of here." No one disagreed.

Figure 2-C. Revision Paragraph 3.

The Shark Menace

This community must embark on a campaign to rid our precious waters of the shark menace. These primitive monsters have been terrorizing our friends and families all summer long. They have not only bloodied our pleasant afternoons but have made jittery fools of us all. We have been reduced to squirming bait worms to satisfy the ravenous hunger of the gray devils. And yet the sentimental nature lovers make pets out of these prehistoric creatures, shutting their eyes at the same time to the destruction of human life. If I'm not mistaken, however, the Bible itself states that human life is sacred above all other living things. He who wishes to preserve the balance of nature should place his own child in the balance with a pack of those sandpaper-hided eating machines. Which would he choose to sacrifice? The shark, my friends, is one of the ugliest and lowest forms of life on earth. It is a stupid beast, a kind of freak of nature that knows only how to tear flesh from bone with horrifying ferocity. The shark is a kind of sinewy garbage disposal that knifes through the water, using its endless rows of ragged sawteeth to grind and rip helpless bathers into so many bits of unrecognizable flesh. Perhaps the time has come for the shark, as it did for the dinosaur, to be confined to memory. Is the balance of nature tipped because the dinosaurs don't walk on the streets of our cities? But for all that, I ask only that our bountiful waters be cleared of this evil. I ask only that we reclaim the peace and happiness which we all enjoyed before our seas were poisoned by the recent shark epidemic.

Figure 3-A. "The Shark Menace" (Littell and Rehage, n.d.).

Sharks Deserve Our Praise

The recent proposal that this community should begin a ruthless program to slaughter all the sharks in the vicinity of our beaches is a repulsive and inhumane project to the student and lover of nature. The shark is a noble and splendid being that should be protected rather than destroyed. This fish is a remarkable creation of nature and deserves our respect and admiration more than our senseless fear. The shark is a finely tuned instrument which has existed for more than three million years, and during that time, has continued to play an important role in the life of the ocean. Equipped with razor sharp jaws and an armored skin this animal carries out its mission to keep the ocean clean of dying fish, decaying matter, and even man's own garbage. With maginficant swiftness it descends upon any creature that is sick and weak or already dead and quickly removes the carcass that would rot and pollute the fresh crystal waters of the seas. The shark is a representative of nature's sanitation department and must be allowed to carry on its work. We only need to read a basic text on ecology to learn that to destroy the shark would only upset the delicate balance of nature and would eventually kill the ocean we want to enjoy.

Figure 3-B. "Sharks Deserve Our Praise" (Littell and Rehage, n.d.).

Connotation Worksheet 1

Below are thirty words and phrases. The eleven that are italicized have been put in the right place on the chart. Put the other nineteen in the chart.

old woman, bookwormish, stubborn, *sociable,* inquisitive, curious, undernourished, entertaining, silly, *gabby,* pigheaded, *leader,* hero, mischievous, smart, *house,* elderly lady, home, *steadfast, talkative,* skinny, *funny, nosy, fun-loving, intellectual, hag,* shack, pain the the neck, dictator, slender.

	Positive Connotation	*Little Connotation*	*Negative Connotation*
1.		house	
2.	intellectual		
3.			hag
4.	fun-loving		
5.		leader	
6.	steadfast		
7.	sociable	talkative	gabby
8.			nosy
9.		funny	
10.			

Figure 3-C. Connotation Worksheet 1 (Littell and Rehage, n.d.).

Connotation Worksheet 2

Place the following fifteen words in the positive connotation or negative connotation column. After you have finished, complete the worksheet by filling in the missing blanks. Remember, you are not writing opposites. You are providing words that mean essentially the same thing but which have different connotations. The first one is done for you.

Word list: musclebound, proud, chic, lazy, sloppy, caring, militaristic, courageous, bigoted, relaxed, just, gaudy, honest, brutal, charismatic.

	Positive Connotation	*Negative Connotation*
1.	Herculean	musclebound
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		

Figure 3-D. Connotation Worksheet 2.

Connotation Worksheet 3

The following paragraph is not as strong as it could be. Mainly this is because the underlined words are not very strong. In the blanks provided below, write more highly connotative alternatives for the italicized words.

The mountains stood tall (1) above the clear (2) pond. Their big (3) reflections dominated the pond's surface. The sun came (4) down on the pond, making the round, smooth pebbles on the pond's edges shine (5). The old (6) pine trees stood like soldiers guarding a treasure. Their crisp, light smell came (7) to my nose. I stood silently. The bird's calls (8) accompanied my thoughts. I noticed the colored (9) flowers on the edge of the woods. They waved in the gentle wind, beckoning me. A fat, slow (10, 11) bee buzzed around them, drunk on their nectar. I felt completely at ease. I have never been in such a good (12) place to camp.

1 _____	2 _____	3 _____
4 _____	5 _____	6 _____
7 _____	8 _____	9 _____
10 _____	11 _____	12 _____

Figure 3-E. Connotation Worksheet 3.

Argument Worksheet 1

Decide whether you would accept the following data to make the claims that I've indicated. Make sure you explain why you would or why you would not accept the data.

1. A poll of Cadillac owners used to argue who the next president will be.
2. A quotation from the general manager of a baseball team who just signed a pitcher to a million dollar contract to prove that the pitcher is the best in the league.
3. A quotation from the Republican state comptroller about the status of the state's finances, used to prove that the Democratic governor is leading the state to financial ruin.
4. 1978 Department of Labor statistics to show that the United States is the most productive country in the world.
5. The results of a National Advisory of Science study on the effects of nuclear radiation as reported in *Time*, to prove that a limited nuclear war would have disastrous results.
6. The experience of one student to prove that a teacher is unfair.
7. A quotation from *To Kill a Mockingbird* to prove what the author's main purpose was.
8. A quotation from the neighborhood mechanic to prove that foreign cars are better than American cars.
9. An incident from the life of Paul McCartney to prove what it's like to be a musician.
10. An incident from a student's life to prove that the most important expressions of love are often the quietest expressions of love.

Figure 4-A. Argument Worksheet 1.

Argument Worksheet 2

Below I've indicated five claims. Imagine that you are trying to establish each claim. What would be the most effective data you could get to establish each claim? Remember, I'm not asking you to actually get the data. But try to be realistic about possible sources.

1. Marijuana should not be legalized.
2. Florida is the best place for a family to take a vacation together.
3. The Chicago White Sox are better than the Chicago Cubs.
4. E.T. is an appealing character because he is so vulnerable.
5. The Dodge Colt is the best small car value.

Figure 4-B. Argument Worksheet 2.

Argument Worksheet 3

Each of the arguments below is missing a warrant and backing. Rewrite each of the arguments, making them complete.

1. Jem, a main character in Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird,* is a very sensitive boy. For example, his sister Scout, the narrator of the novel, said, "I went to the backyard and found Jem plugging away at a tin can, which seemed stupid with all the bluejays around."
2. Mr. Smith is a terrible teacher. Every night I have to work for three hours to finish the homework that he assigns. I asked my friends in the class and they have to work three hours a night also.
3. Elvis Presley is the best singer in history. He had more million-sellers than any other singer.

Figure 4-C. Argument Worksheet 3.

Argument Worksheet 4

Both of the following arguments are complete, but the audience could place reservations on the claim. List the reservations that the specified audience might place on the claim.

1. *Audience:* The principal of a high school.

   Argument: Mr. Smith is a terrible teacher. He gives twenty-five percent of his students Ds or Fs. This shows that he is a terrible teacher because students don't learn from terrible teachers and the number of bad marks indicates that students aren't learning. Therefore, Mr. Smith is a terrible teacher.

   Reservations:

2. *Audience:* A conservative parents' group.

   Argument: Teens are sexually active, and as a consequence, there are serious problems: over one million teenage pregnancies and a venereal disease epidemic. In fact, in 1981, according to Fred Kroger and Paul Weiner of the Center for Disease Control, approximately five million of the victims of sexually transmitted diseases will not have received their high school diplomas. One of the main functions of schools is to help students avoid the problems that they may encounter in life. Courses like consumer education and health education prove this. Therefore, sex education should be taught in the schools.

   Reservations:

Figure 4-D. Argument Worksheet 4.

Argument Worksheet 5

Presented below are four quotations which could be used to establish the claim that the sale of handguns should be prohibited. In the spaces provided, indicate whether the quotation works best as data, warrant, backing, or reservation.

Claim: The sale of handguns should be prohibited.

1. Richard B. Drooz, Department of Psychiatry, State University of New York, *Journal of American Medical Association,* July 4, 1977, p. 43.

   In a comprehensive, statistically validated study, Murray of the University of Wisconsin Department of Sociology found that "gun control laws have no significant effect on rates of violence beyond what can be attributed to background social conditions"; that such laws do not effectively limit access to guns by the violence-prone; and that accessibility to handguns "seems to have no effect on rates of violent crime and firearm accidents."

2. *Healthy People: The Surgeon General's Report on Health Promotion and Disease Prevention,* 1979, p. 113.

   About twenty percent of American households contain a handgun. Even if reducing handgun availability did not substantially reduce the number of murders committed during violent crimes, it would likely reduce both accidental deaths and murders of passion involving family members and acquaintances.

3. Charles J. Orasin, Executive Vice President, Handgun Control, Inc., *USA Today,* January 1980, p. 10.

   Some 50,000,000 uncontrolled handguns are currently in circulation in the United States. Each year, over 2,000,000 more handguns are sold into civilian hands. At the current rate of production and importation there will be some 100,000,000 uncontrolled handguns in private hands by the year 2000.

4. Jack Corbett, Chairperson, National Committee to Ban Handguns, *Journal of Social Issues,* Summer 1979, p. 22.

   . . . in the District of Columbia since the enactment in 1976 of a bill to ban the *sale* of handguns . . . murder has gone down twenty percent and robbery thirty-one percent.

Figure 4-E. Argument Worksheet 5.

Argument Worksheet 6

Data:

Are the data persuasive? Is more information necessary to establish the data? (Remember, you can't advance the argument unless the audience accepts the data.)

Warrant:

is the warrant clear? Does the warrant justify the leap to the conclusions?

Backing:

Does the backing support with specifics the truth of the warrant?

Qualifier or Reservations:

Have you considered all of the objections which your audience could make against your claim? Does your qualifier indicate how certain you can be about the claim?

Claim:

Figure 4-F. Argument Worksheet 6.

Evaluation Worksheet

Paragraph A

The reptiles of the Mesozoic era are among the largest creatures that ever roamed the earth. For instance, there was Brontosaurus which weighed approximately 35 tons and grew to about 70 feet long. Also, Stegosaurus was about the size of an elephant, and had an armor-plated hide and a short but powerful tail equipped with four long daggers. Pterosaurus were amazing flying reptiles with a 20 foot long wing span. These reptiles must have made a frightening sight as they soared through the air. Tyrannosaurus also called the tyrant lizard, was the most fearsome of all. He was as much as 47 feet from head to tail. He stood some 20 feet when standing erect and weighed perhaps ten tons. These are only a few of the many great dinosaurs that ruled during this age.

Paragraph B

There are many unique and colorful birds. Of them there is the red winged blackbird, which is very elegant. Another one is the cardinal which is very rare and cunning. Another good example is the bluejay which is also colorful. But the most colorful would have to be the tucan—my favorite bird.

Paragraph C

There are many appliances which are designed to make life easier and more enjoyable. For instance, the new blow dryers can dry and style your hair in less time than the bonnet style hair dryer. Also, there is the curling iron which can put curls in your hair without having to sit around with a dozen curlers in your hair. There are also many appliances that make life easier which are used in the kitchen. For example, while making cakes and other foods whose ingredients require mixing, the mixer is a tremendous help and less tiresome than mixing by hand. One of the most tedious chores in the kitchen is washing the dishes. It is very time consuming and boring, but if you own a dishwasher, all you have to do is load it and turn it on.

Have students grade the paragraphs. Tally the grades for each paragraph. There will be a consensus for the most part. Discuss the reasons for the grade. In the discussion the students will mention the same criteria as a teacher would: specificity, organization, and correctness among others. List the criteria on the board. Explain to students that teachers use these same criteria. Tell them to remember the list when they work on their own writing.

Figure 5. Evaluation Worksheet.

Connotation Word Choice Checklist

When I grade your assignment, I will ask myself the following questions. If the answer to all of the questions is yes, the paper is a good one. If the answer to any question is no, then you need to revise your work.

1. Are the author's attitudes concerning the subject clear? Briefly explain that attitude.
2. Does the author choose words that clearly reflect this attitude? List the words that effectively show how the author feels about the subject.
3. Do all of the details contribute to the feeling the author tries to create? If there are any irrelevant details, list them.
4. Does the author sufficiently describe the subject? List below any questions you would like the author to have answered.

Figure 6-A. Connotation Word Choice Checklist

Fable Checklist

When I grade your work, I will ask myself the following questions. If the answer to all the questions is yes, the paper is a good one. If the answer to any question is no, then you need to revise your work.

1. Are the characters animals?
2. Do the characters act as animals act, with the exception of the ability to speak?
3. Do the animals represent human characteristics? List the characteristics the animals represent.
4. Are the animals appropriate to the characteristics that they represent?
5. Is there a moral?
6. Does the action of the fable clearly establish the moral?
7. Does the moral make a significant point?

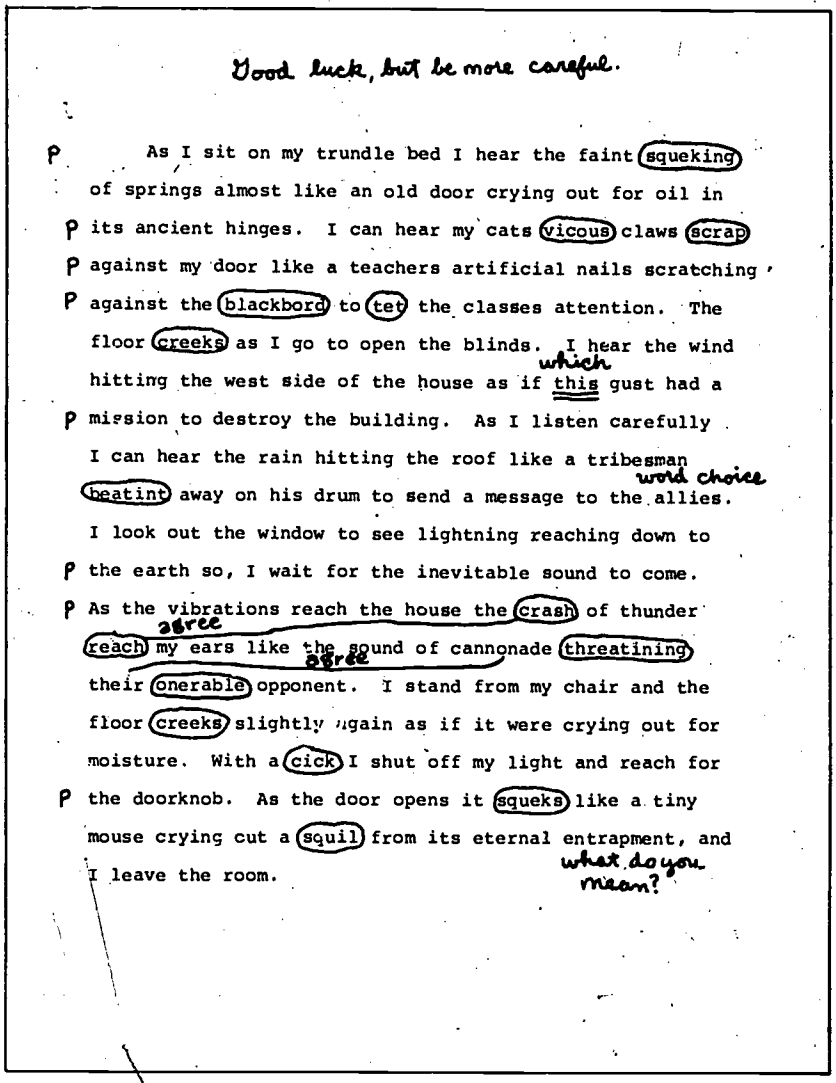
Figure 6-B. Fable Checklist.

Argument Checklist

When I grade your work, I will ask myself the following questions. If the answer to all the questions is yes, the paper is a good one. If the answer to any question is no, then you need to revise your work.

1. Does the author have sufficient data to justify the claim? Summarize the data.
2. Are the data reliable?
3. Does the author have a warrant which links the data to the claim? Explain the warrant.
4. Does the warrant have sufficient backing? Explain the backing.
5. Does the author anticipate the reservations that the audience might have? List any other reservations that the author should consider.
6. Does the author either answer the reservations or qualify the claim?

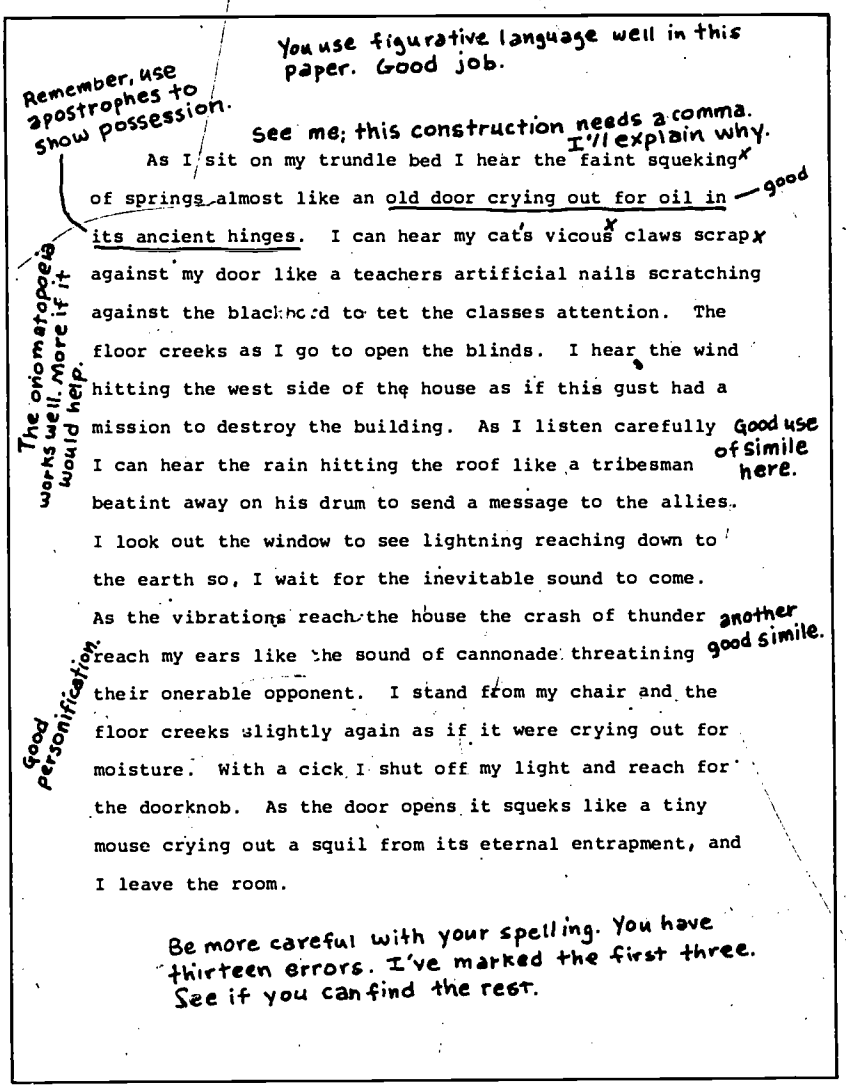
Figure 6-C. Argument Checklist.



Good luck, but be more careful.

P As I sit on my trundle bed I hear the faint (squeking)
of springs almost like an old door crying out for oil in
P its ancient hinges. I can hear my cats (vicous) claws (scrap)
P against my door like a teachers artificial nails scratching
P against the (blackbord) to (tet) the classes attention. The
floor (creeks) as I go to open the blinds. I hear the wind
hitting the west side of the house as if this gust had a
which
P mission to destroy the building. As I listen carefully
I can hear the rain hitting the roof like a tribesman
word choice
(beatint) away on his drum to send a message to the allies.
I look out the window to see lightning reaching down to
P the earth so, I wait for the inevitable sound to come.
P As the vibrations reach the house the (crash) of thunder
agree
(reach) my ears like the sound of cannonade (threatining)
agree
their (onerable) opponent. I stand from my chair and the
floor (creeks) slightly again as if it were crying out for
moisture. With a (cick) I shut off my light and reach for
P the doorknob. As the door opens it (squeks) like a tiny
mouse crying cut a (squil) from its eternal entrapment, and
what do you mean?
I leave the room.

Figure 7-A. Evaluation Example A.



You use figurative language well in this paper. Good job.

Remember, use apostrophes to show possession.

See me; this construction needs a comma. I'll explain why.

As I sit on my trundle bed I hear the faint squeking of springs almost like an old door crying out for oil in its ancient hinges. I can hear my cat's vicous claws scrap against my door like a teachers artificial nails scratching against the blackboard to tet the classes attention. The floor creeks as I go to open the blinds. I hear the wind hitting the west side of the house as if this gust had a mission to destroy the building. As I listen carefully I can hear the rain hitting the roof like a tribesman beatint away on his drum to send a message to the allies. I look out the window to see lightning reaching down to the earth so, I wait for the inevitable sound to come. As the vibrations reach the house the crash of thunder reach my ears like the sound of cannonade threatining their onerable opponent. I stand from my chair and the floor creeks slightly again as if it were crying out for moisture. With a cick I shut off my light and reach for the doorknob. As the door opens it squeks like a tiny mouse crying out a squil from its eternal entrapment, and I leave the room.

good

The onomatopoeia works well. More if it would help.

Good use of simile here.

another good simile.

Good personification.

Be more careful with your spelling. You have thirteen errors. I've marked the first three. See if you can find the rest.

Figure 7-B. Evaluation Example B.

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