

# Book 3: Breathing Life into Essays Intermediate Grades

Day 1	Teaching Procedure	Materials
<p><b>Collecting Ideas as Essayists</b></p> <p><b>Lucy Session 1</b></p> <p><b>If your children don't seem to have grasped the concepts of this minilesson . . .</b> don't be surprised. They have just spent two units writing texts that follow an entirely different structure. You have now asked them to shift gears and start moving toward a new way to look at the world as writers. You might decide to move forward even if many of your children are still writing narratives because Session II will provide more strategies for generating non-narrative entries.</p>	<p><u><b>Connection:</b></u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the wonderful writing that has been completed this year. Introduce the new genre of ESSAY WRITING, writing about big ideas.</li> <li>2. Tell students that essayists observe (listen, notice, study) and then grow ideas from those observations.</li> </ol> <p><u><b>Minilesson-Active Engagement:</b></u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Tell students about a writer who first observed, paying attention to the stuff in their life. The writer noticed, observed, and then pushed themselves to think of a new idea.</li> <li>4. Tell a story (see box-Katherine Patterson's story) about a writer who observed and came upon an important idea. Explain how the writer came to a realization. They thought to themselves, "This makes me think..." or "I'm realizing..."</li> <li>5. Share a student example. Tell students the writer grew big ideas by paying attention to the stuff of her life. Read the example aloud.</li> <li>6. Discuss how the writer began with an observation (sample-dog tied to a cable) and ends with a big idea (wanting to make a difference)</li> <li>7. Ask students to look around the classroom, their clothes, or part of themselves. Partner 1-"write in the air" something you observe and say, "This makes me realize..." or "The idea this gives me is..." and complete the thought.</li> <li>8. Debrief by discussing the observations and realizations.</li> <li>9. Rename the teaching point and send students off to write: I notice... (notice the things around you-what do you see?) I am starting to realize.../I am starting to think that...</li> </ol> <p><u><b>Share/Reflect: Reread and reflect on essay entries.</b></u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Have students bring their notebooks to the meeting area.</li> <li>11. Have partners look back at entries from personal narratives writing, and then look at the entries for today. How have the entries changed? Discuss with partners.</li> <li>12. Discuss their observations.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Non-narrative notebook entries from a student that has observations, questions, musings, ideas.</li> <li>○ Sample Essay entries from students (start collecting, but in the meantime you can use the sample)</li> <li>○ Strategies for Generating Personal Narrative Writing Chart (from last 2 units)</li> </ul> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>Texts (or excerpts of texts) in which the author uses observation and reflection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Copies of texts in which the author uses lists (e.g. "I Have a Dream" by Martin Luther King)</li> <li>● Expository texts with clear-cut structures</li> <li>● Picture books that make a point and support it with examples (e.g. <i>The Pain and The Great One</i> by Judy Blume, <i>Alexander and the Terrible Horrible No Good Very Bad Day</i> by Judith Viorst)</li> </ul> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>Mid-workshop Teaching Point:</b> Teacher says, <i>When we studied personal narrative writing, we had a chart of strategies for gathering entries. When we write essays, we tailor the strategies we use so that now we come up with material that will lead us toward this new kind of writing.</i> Share a writing piece from a couple of students. Discuss starting with observations and letting them lead you to big ideas.</p> </div>
<p><b>Katherine Paterson's story</b> When Katherine Paterson was asked, "What is essential to writing?" she told about standing with her son and watching a cicada bug shed its skin. Katherine wrote about first seeing the tiny slit in the bug's back, then the slit growing larger like a zipper, and then a hint of color emerging-the wings! The wings crumbled out and then stretched out. The cicada bug swung like an acrobat onto the twig and flew away. Katherine thought about how much more important it was to watch this than to rush on to baseball or trumpet lessons.</p>		

# Book 3: Breathing Life into Essays Intermediate Grades

Day 2	Teaching Procedure	Materials
<p><b>Growing Essay Ideas in Notebooks</b></p> <p><b>Lucy Session 2</b></p> <p><b>If your children are stuck for what to observe. . .</b> teach them that anything can prompt reflection. Even a piece of paper:</p> <p><i>A paper is a mysterious object. The blank, white coat makes it seem to be daring you to write on it. It can contain a poem, a story, a document, or a project. It can be any one of these, and cant be predicted. A paper can be cut, ripped, or crumpled. It can be written on by pen, marker, crayon, paint, or a pencil. It can be a magical object that ca destroy one’s hope, or raise your hopes. A paper can be all of those things and more.</i></p>	<p><b>Connection:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tell students that they started to live like essay writers yesterday, collecting bits and pieces of their lives.</li> <li>2. Share a piece from a writer in your class (or use the student example for Lesson 2)</li> <li>3. Discuss how some students may be wondering if what they are writing is right. Explain that essay writers develop a system to collect their observations and also to grow their ideas. Today we will learn one system-the T chart.</li> </ol> <p><b>Mini-Lesson/Active Engagement:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Tell students that when writing essays, writers often begin the entries by writing what is seen or heard in the world around them.</li> <li>5. Writers know that to get a good seed idea for an essay, it is important to shift from observing to thinking.</li> <li>6. One way to do this is: Jot down the observations, then force self to write “and the idea I have about this is…” or “This makes me think/realize…” or “This reminds me of…”</li> <li>7. Model with chart paper-notice something in the class, jot down what you see, hear, feel, then finish the statement from #6.</li> <li>8. Debrief and discuss a sample student writing)</li> <li>9. Introduce the T-chart as another way to shift into thinking. Demonstrate using it for another observation/thinking.</li> <li>10. Have partners try it out by observing something in the room and thinking about it.</li> <li>11. Show the anchor chart and send students off to try it.</li> </ol> <p><b>Share/Reflect: Share essay entries with a partner</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Show one entry that was written well.</li> <li>13. Have students share with partners</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Non-narrative notebook entries from a student that has observations, questions, musings, ideas.</li> <li>○ T Chart “What I Notice” / “What It Makes Me Think”</li> <li>○ Strategies for Generating Essay Entries</li> <li>○ Writing Samples by published authors, or teacher</li> <li>○ Written sample with a subject (person, place, object), ideas related to the subject, and one developed idea</li> </ul> <p><b>Mid-workshop Teaching Point:</b> Teacher says, <i>Remember when I wrote personal narratives, I wrote, “my Dad.” Then I asked myself “What small moments do I remember about my dad?” When gathering essay entries, I again can jot down a subject that is important to me-I can write “My Dad”, but this time because I am writing essays, not stories, I am going to list ideas about my dad. I’ll list them across my fingers-one of my most important teachers, a funny guy, helped me get along with my brothers.</i></p> <p>Discuss listing ideas about a subject (like above) and then taking those ideas and writing about one of them. Model a quick entry.</p>

What I Notice	What It Makes Me Think
Two girls sit together, showing off their lunches to each other	I used to show off my lunch. Why do kids care who has the better lunch? It isn’t fair to kids whose parents have less money. Or kids with moms who won’t buy sweets!

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<p><b>Contrasting Narrative and Non-Narrative Structures</b></p> <p><b>Lucy Session 3</b></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>Example for lesson</b>  <b>Topic:</b> going to the park  <b>Narrative:</b> tell a small moment story.  <b>Non-Narrative</b> –tell about noticing how messy it was and thinking people didn't seem to care about keeping the park nice for kids.)  <b>2-3 Supporting details across fingers</b>                      noticing trash around the garbage bins, garbage overflowing, someone dropping a wrapper;                      noticing the peeling paint, graffiti, etc. on the equipment;                      noticing the lawn was not mowed, weeds growing...maybe the city didn't care either.</p> </div> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Narratives</th> <th style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Non-narratives</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories that tell what happened first, then, next.</li> <li>• Stories show a character who travels through the story.</li> <li>• Stories lead the reader through a sequence of events step by step like they are living it.</li> </ul> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essays tell ideas and what we think. (I think this, I also think this, therefore I think...)</li> <li>• Ideas are developed across the text.</li> <li>• Essays are written so the reader can think about the topic.</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Narratives	Non-narratives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories that tell what happened first, then, next.</li> <li>• Stories show a character who travels through the story.</li> <li>• Stories lead the reader through a sequence of events step by step like they are living it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essays tell ideas and what we think. (I think this, I also think this, therefore I think...)</li> <li>• Ideas are developed across the text.</li> <li>• Essays are written so the reader can think about the topic.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Connection:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss the issue of what type of writing the class is doing-essays. Talk about how essays are different things to different people.</li> <li>2. Introduce essays as a kind of non-narrative writing. Discuss “non” and narrative to formulate a meaning (you might bring in other non words)</li> <li>3. Compare and contrast narratives and non-narratives.</li> <li>4. Name the teaching point: Today I will teach that as a writer you can often choose to write in either genre-narrative (a story) or non-narrative (an essay). It is important to ask yourself which kind of writing you will do because these kinds of writing are organized and written differently.</li> </ol> <p><b>Minilesson/Active Engagement:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Model and think aloud: think of a topic to think about and “write in the air” a narrative story (example going to the park-tell a small moments story step by step of something that happened)</li> <li>6. Model and think aloud: use the same topic to think about and “write in the air” a non-narrative essay (example on left)</li> <li>7. Continue to model the non-narrative and focus on telling subordinate clauses across 2-3 fingers (see example on left)</li> <li>8. Debrief and discuss.</li> <li>9. Set students up to write about a class event, first as a narrative and then as a non-narrative. (ex: this morning or the lunchroom)</li> <li>10. Guide students to tell the non-narrative with a <b>main idea</b> (ex: mornings are chaotic or the lunchroom is too loud) and then list across their fingers a few points that support their main idea. Prompt with The ___ is ___ because...</li> <li>11. Send students off to look through examples of narratives and non-narratives-sort them at their tables; stop for the mid-workshop teaching point; then have students observe/notice/write.</li> </ol> <p><b>Share/Reflect: Share essay entries with a partner</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Discuss one students writing piece with the class. Focus the discussion on clarifying the meaning of “writing about ideas.” Discuss an idea as being different from a fact, not something you just know.</li> <li>13. Have students work with partners to share their writing and identify ideas or parts where they might get ideas.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Anchor Chart: List of features of non-narrative writing</li> <li>○ Copies of narrative and non-narrative writing examples for students</li> <li>○ Teacher writing samples-                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-one writing about a subject (narrative)</li> <li>-one that discusses ideas about that subject (non-narrative)</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Mid-workshop Teaching Point:</b> Stop the students after about 5-7 minutes to discuss how they sorted the essays. Talk about what they notice about organization.  <i>Have each student take a non-narrative essay. Tell students to look at each section. Instruct students to box the main idea of the first section, called the topic sentences, at the beginning of each paragraph.</i>  <b>Show students an example on the overhead/doc camera.</b> Read it aloud and ask students to listen for the main ideas of each paragraph. Ask where to box the main ideas. Discuss names for each sections (main idea/topic in own words).  <i>Debrief by discussing organization.</i></p>
Narratives	Non-narratives					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories that tell what happened first, then, next.</li> <li>• Stories show a character who travels through the story.</li> <li>• Stories lead the reader through a sequence of events step by step like they are living it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essays tell ideas and what we think. (I think this, I also think this, therefore I think...)</li> <li>• Ideas are developed across the text.</li> <li>• Essays are written so the reader can think about the topic.</li> </ul>					

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Day 4	Teaching Procedure	Materials
<p><b>Using Conversational Prompts to Spur Elaboration</b></p> <p><b>Lucy Session 3</b></p>	<p><u>Connection:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Celebrate the writing done so far, but point out that they could be writing so much more. Provide an anecdote of reading one of their essays and getting into the essay but there was nothing else about that topic.</li> <li>2. Introduce the teaching point: writers talk back to their own ideas. Our ideas get bigger when we talk back to them.</li> <li>3. Tell students that they can use prompts to help them talk back.</li> <li>4. Read the short entry from the chart.</li> <li>5. Ask a student to choose prompt from the Pushing our Thinking List of Prompts. Tell them to “coach you” by prompting what you might say to yourself to add more to the idea.</li> <li>6. Add on to the entry chart, using the prompt provided by the student. (sample chart to the right shows an example in the lighter font).</li> <li>7. Repeat with a few more prompt examples, adding on to the chart each time.</li> </ol> <p><u>Minilesson/Active Engagement:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. Show a new idea on chart: example-<i>I learn new things during lunch time</i>. Have students write the new idea down.</li> <li>9. Reread the new idea. Call out a prompt from the anchor chart. Have students copy the prompt and finish the thought.</li> <li>10. Repeat several times.</li> <li>11. Debrief and reflect on how the prompts help.</li> <li>12. Send students off to either: use prompts to add on to a previous piece or draft a new piece and try out the prompts as they write.</li> </ol> <p><u>Share/Reflect: Share essay with a partner</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. Have students sit next to partners with their notebooks. They should read an entry, discuss any prompts that were used, and share observations.</li> <li>14. Share a few examples for all to hear.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Anchor Chart Pushing Our Thinking List of Prompts</li> <li>○ Chart-Entry Idea for modeling (see sample on right or make up your own)</li> <li>○ Idea for class to practice with</li> <li>○ Examples of student entries in which the thinking is extended with prompts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pushing Our Thinking List of Prompts</b></p> <p>For example...      In addition...</p> <p>Another example is...      This makes me realize...</p> <p>This is important because...      This connects with...</p> <p>This is giving me the idea that...</p> <p>The reason for this is...      Another reason is...</p> <p>I partly disagree because...      On the other hand...</p> <p>This is different from...      This is similar to....</p> <p>This might not be true, but maybe...</p> <p>I used to think... but now I realize...</p> <p>What I think this says about me is that...</p> <p>Many people think...but I think...</p>		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Chart: Entry Idea for Modeling</p> <p><b><i>Many teachers ask kids to line up in two lines, one for boys and one for girls. In addition, boys and girls sometimes only play with each other at recess. For example, yesterday I saw a large group of boys playing soccer outside at recess, and a large group of girls playing basketball. This is important because I know both boys and girls like to play soccer and basketball. So I don't understand why they wouldn't play together most of the time. The thing that surprises me is...</i></b></p> </div>
<p><b>Mid-workshop Teaching Point:</b> Stop the students after about 5-7 minutes to share an example of a student doing great things.</p>		

# Book 3: Breathing Life into Essays Intermediate Grades

Day 5	Teaching Procedure	Materials
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**Growing Essay Ideas in Notebooks**

**Lucy Session 5**

**Connection:**

1. Celebrate the writing students have been doing. Share a student sample and discuss how the writer started with a simple idea and extended his level of thinking through writing.

**Minilesson/Active Engagement:**

2. Name the teaching point: Writers can become inspired by rereading and reflecting on their own previous entries.

- Student entry that shows how writing extended the level of thinking
- A personal narrative entry from book 2 (teacher entry)
- Chart: Questions Writers Ask of Earlier Entries
- Chart: Strategies for Generating Essay Entries
- Sample student entry inspired by a previous entry

**Example for Modeling Narrative**

*When the game was almost over, I glanced toward the doorway and saw my father striding across the gym floor toward me, his red plaid hunting cap perched on his head, his rubber galoshes flapping. Why couldn't he wait in the car like all the other dads, I thought. Then, in a voice that boomed through the room, my dad called, "(insert name)" and began to climb the bleachers toward me and my friends. I wanted the floor to open up and swallow me.*

3. Explain that writers can reread old writing pieces, find an entry they care about, and write another entry that reflects on the first entry.
4. Model returning to a personal entry and using it to inspire a new entry.
5. Reread the entry and reflect on the writing.
6. Show the Questions Writers Ask of Earlier Entries Chart and model asking some of the questions by writing to answer the questions.
7. Model pushing yourself further by rereading and telling yourself, "Keep going."
8. Debrief
9. Set up partners to practice rereading a narrative entry from their writers notebook aloud, then jot some thoughts about what was written. Partners should ask questions from the chart to help extend the thinking.

**Example for Modeling Question and Ideas**

*Why is this story about the basketball game important to me? I think I wrote about being embarrassed by my father because when I was young, it bothered me that my dad didn't act like other fathers.  
(push further)*

*Why is this important to me? I think when I was young, it bothered me that my father didn't act like other fathers.  
For example, he didn't wait in the car like other fathers, but instead, tromped right into our basketball games. He didn't know parents were expected to stay in the background. He'd go up to my friends, introduce himself, and soon he'd be deep in conversations with them. My cheeks would burn because he didn't stay inside the traditional father role.  
That was long ago, however, and I've since come to see the beauty in my father's arrival at that basketball...*

**Questions Writers Ask of Earlier Entries**

Why is this important to me?  
 What is the important thing about this?  
 Why am I remembering this? How does it connect to who I am or to important issues in my life?  
 What other entries does this connect with?  
 What does this show about me? About life?  
 What does this make me realize?  
 Why did I write this?  
 What do I want readers to know about this?  
 What surprises me about this?

10. Send students off to write-show the Generating Essay Entries Chart
- Share/Reflect:** Share essay entries with a partner
11. Share an example of student writing.
  12. Have partners share their entries.

*Why is this story about the basketball game important to me? I think I wrote about being embarrassed by my father because when I was young, it bothered me that my dad didn't act like other fathers.  
(push further)*

*Why is this important to me? I think when I was young, it bothered me that my father didn't act like other fathers.  
For example, he didn't wait in the car like other fathers, but instead, tromped right into our basketball games. He didn't know parents were expected to stay in the background. He'd go up to my friends, introduce himself, and soon he'd be deep in conversations with them. My cheeks would burn because he didn't stay inside the traditional father role.  
That was long ago, however, and I've since come to see the beauty in my father's arrival at that basketball...*

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Day 6	Teaching Procedure	Materials
<p><b>Finding and Crafting Thesis Statements</b></p> <p><b>Lucy Session 6</b></p>	<p><b>Connection:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss the process we use in Writers Workshop for narratives—collecting entries in our notebook, look at entries and choose one seed idea, then develop that seed idea into a major piece of writing.</li> <li>Name the teaching point: writers reread to find a seed idea. In non-narrative writing this seed idea is called a <b>thesis</b>.</li> </ol> <p><b>Minilesson/Active Engagement:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell students that just like we looked for seed ideas in our notebooks and developed them, in much the same way we will look for a seed idea in our non-narratives. The difference is that we look for or write just a sentence two that states the idea to be developed.</li> <li>Discuss a writer friend who did this. Tell students that the writer reread the entry and found 2-3 sentences that really captured her main idea.</li> <li>The writer then figured that one of these sentences could become the seed idea. Tell how the writer thought about each idea and checked to see if it said what she really wanted to say.</li> <li>Debrief: First reread all entries, then find one the writer likes and underline a few key ideas about it. This is the seed idea. Then think about these ideas and ask, “What exactly do I want to say?” This is the thesis!</li> <li>Have students help a classmate go through the process of creating a thesis. You may use a “student” example instead (see left).</li> <li>Discuss all student suggestions from above and talk about how the writing would go with each suggestion.</li> <li>Repeat the teaching point and send students off to list seed ideas/ask themselves what they are really trying to say/draft their thesis statement.</li> </ol> <p><b>Share/Reflect: Share essay entries with a partner</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Have students go back in their notebooks to look for anecdotes or small stories that catch your notice.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Non-narrative notebook entry to demonstrate finding a thesis</li> <li>○ Student entry to illustrate the process of drafting a thesis</li> <li>○ Student entry to illustrate the process of reviewing and revising a thesis</li> </ul>
<p>Example for Student Sample</p> <p><b>Kids should be able to get exercise more often.</b>  <i>What is this writer really trying to say?</i>  <i>Discuss (Kids need to exercise more—they eat too much junk food and watch too much tv and play too many video games. They need more exercise—more gym time.</i>  <i>Turn and Talk: What could the thesis be? Put all those ideas into one sentence.</i>  <i>Discuss all suggestions.</i></p>		<p>Example Non-narrative notebook entry</p> <p><i>Cory’s Entry (just show a notebook with a lot of writing). Tell students the entry is about Cory and her friend Jen.</i></p> <p><i>2-3 sentences that capture the main idea:</i>  <i>(A) My friend Jen and I are so much alike.</i>  <i>(B) *Jen and I are close because we’ve been friends for years. We’ve been friends through the best and worst of times.</i></p> <p><i>Does it say what I really want it to say?</i>  <i>(A) Yes, Jen and I are alike, but I’m not sure that idea captures what I really want to say.</i>  <i>(B) Hmm...This is closer to what I want to say, but I need to ask “What exactly do I want to say about this topic?”</i>  <i>Best friends are like comfortable friends?</i>  <i>The world is a better place when you have a best friend?</i>  <i>I love that last one! That is what the writer was really trying to say!</i></p>
<p><b>Mid-Workshop Teaching Point</b>            Stop the writers and check for thesis statements.            Show the Questions Writers Ask of Theses</p>		
<p><b>Questions Writers Ask of Theses</b>            Is this topic something I know and care about?            Is my thesis an idea or an opinion? (Not a fact and not a question)            Is my thesis exactly what I want to talk about it?            Is it a small topic thesis (not too big?)            Is my thesis a strong, clear claim?            Is there only one claim?</p> <p>Work on narrowing thesis that are too big:            Why I love my dad so much            I love my dad because he helps me be my best.</p>		

# Book 3: Breathing Life into Essays Intermediate Grades

**Day 7**

**Teaching Procedure**

**Materials**

## Boxes and Bullets: Framing Essays

### Lucy Session 7

Teaching Sentence Starters

One reason is...  
Another reason is...  
Finally, ...

#### Mid-Workshop Teaching Point

Stop the writers and share another way to support a thesis by telling about different kinds. Use the Simple thesis below.

#### Bikes are fun

- Two-wheeler bikes are fun.
- Tricycles are fun.
- Bicycles built for two are fun.
- And, most of all, dirt bikes are fun.

Repeat with:

Working with a partner is fun.

Have students supply kinds of partner work and what they do with partners.

#### Connection:

1. Summarize the writing process that the students have engaged in thus far-gathering entries by paying attention to things in our lives and thinking hard about them, reread entries and ask “what do I really want to say?”, write the seed idea as a thesis statement.
2. Name the teaching point: essay writers frame the main sections of essays before researching and drafting them.

#### Minilesson/Active Engagement:

3. Model for students how to elaborate on a thesis statement by using reasons for the claim made in the thesis.
  4. Use the sample to the right or other simple thesis. Model thinking aloud about what you really want to say about the sample thesis, and then thinking about the reasons and making those your sections.
  5. Debrief. Discuss the process of planning out possible boxes and bullets. (Choose the seed idea and write it as a thesis. Spend time thinking about different possible sections to include in the essay. Try them out by using boxes and bullets.
  6. Have students practice using a whole---class thesis-provide a sample thesis or use the one on the right.
  7. Have students copy the thesis and then start thinking about reasons by adding **because** to the thesis. Students should work with partners and take turns listing reasons.
  8. Reconvene and list some of the ideas on chart paper.
  9. Repeat the reasons back using the “teaching sentence starters” for starting each reason. Example-One reason that working with a partner is fun is that we get to challenge each other to do our best.
  10. Be sure to do the mid-workshop teaching point to share another way to support the thesis: listing different kinds of things
- Share/Reflect: Share essay entries with a partner
11. Discuss how sometimes when you list reasons or kinds, you might find that your original thesis changes.
  12. Have students check their reasons/kinds to see if they need to change their thesis.
  - 13.

- Simple example thesis that is easy to support with reasons, parts, and examples
- Class thesis statement
- Copies of 2 example student essays (you can use the sample essays)

Example Simple Thesis

***Bikes are fun.***

*What do I really want to say about bikes? I'm thinking I want to tell the different reasons they are fun. Here are my ideas...(below) now I am wondering if they are really reasons.*

*Main Idea-Bikes are fun-Box it!  
Here are my reasons-bullet them!*

- \*Bikes are fun because you can do tricks on them.
- \*Bikes are fun because you can go places on them.
- \*Bikes are fun because you can fix them when they break.

Example Class Thesis

***Working with a partner is fun.***

***Working with a partner is fun because...***

## Sample Boxes and Bullets

I am proud of myself because I am a good baseball player.

- I am good at hitting the ball
- I am good at playing first base
- I am a good team member.

My dad is important to me. Revised to My dad helps me

- He helps me with baseball.
- He helps me with my daily life.
- He shows me how to do math.

My dog is like my best friend.

- He keeps me company
- He understands how I am feeling
- He doesn't let anyone mess with me.

Without my grandparents, I would be lonely.

- My grandparents take me shopping and let me pick out things.
- My grandparents call me every week.
- My grandparents play games with me.



# Book 3: Breathing Life into Essays Intermediate Grades

Day 8	Teaching Procedure	Materials
<p><b>Learning to Outgrow a First Thesis</b></p> <p><b>Lucy Session 8</b></p>	<p><u>Connection:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain that most of the students have drafted a thesis statement and plans for supporting paragraphs, and they may be thinking that they should get to the writing and get it their essay done. However, essay writing is not a job that should be rushed. Instead the writer’s job is to take the time needed to learn along the way. The goal is to think well as well as write well.</li> <li>2. Name the teaching point: essayists revise early, using free writing to deepen thinking and outgrow their earliest claims.</li> </ol> <p><u>Minilesson/Active Engagement:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Tell a story about a “student” who finished writing an essay, sensed there was more to say, and took the risk of revising the work. (realized they left out an important part or didn’t tell an important part or story to show their idea)</li> <li>4. Tell students that when writers have the courage to go back in and mess with their bullets, they can make the writing stronger.</li> <li>5. Show the “sample student’s” thesis and plan. Share the situation—the student had already planned her thesis and decided it was clear, strong, and clean. The student felt uneasy though, because it seemed like she was blaming grown-ups in her piece and that was not her intent. So she got out another piece of paper and restated her thesis.</li> <li>6. Have students turn and talk: List 2 things the student has done that you could also do as a writer.</li> <li>7. Debrief-list “What the Sample Student Did”</li> <li>8. Share the essay the sample student created. Discuss.</li> <li>9. Send students off to reread their thesis and plan and really think about it. They might make changes to the thesis or plan and they might not. They should free write to think about what they want to say about their topic.</li> </ol> <p><b>Remind students to write long, reread what they wrote, and if time to choose another seed idea and write it as another draft of their thesis.</b></p> <p><u>Share/Reflect:</u> share plan and thesis aloud</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Show students how to use their fingers to organize their thoughts before they read their essays. State thesis-state a reason or part for each finger (touching the finger). Have partners share.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Story about a writer who discovered the value of postponing closure</li> <li>○ Notebook entries showing how students tried to push their thinking about their thesis statements</li> <li>○ Thesis you can use to demonstrate telling essay aloud</li> </ul>
<p><b>What the Sample Student Did</b></p> <p><i>Looked closely at what she’d written. Gave her own words the truth test. Listened to her feelings of uneasiness. Was willing to mess up her paper. Tried to restate what she really wanted to say. (after reading the essay) Wrote really long about her thesis. Looked closely at what she’d written. Went from one idea to another and tried to tell the most important ideas.</i></p>		<p><b>Sample Student’s Thesis</b></p> <p><i>Grown-ups can really hurt kid’s self esteem.</i></p>
		<p><b>Sample Student’s Essay</b></p> <p><i>Your self-esteem pretty much stays the same in your life unless you really change who you are. The way you interact with the world controls how you feel. Say you were riding your bike all summer and you are about to show everyone, then you fall off. It may not change how you look at yourself if you have really good self-esteem. Self-esteem is very important to everyone on this earth. It is important to like yourself all throughout your life. Your self-esteem needs to be treated right. If people abuse you and make you feel really bad, your self-esteem can change. If you are not around who people who care about you, your self-esteem can really change. You need to always want to grow up, but you need to know that it isn’t really smooth.</i></p>

# Book 3: Breathing Life into Essays Intermediate Grades

Day 9	Teaching Procedure	Materials
<p><b>Session 9 Composing and Sorting Mini-Stories</b></p> <p>In this session, you will teach children to write, angle and unpack mini stories that support the ideas they want to advance.</p>	<p><u>Connection:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Tell students that the boxes and bullets they wrote in the previous lesson will provide the frames for their essays. Provide a metaphor for using frames to support a story (iron beams-hold up a building).</li> <li>2. Explain that writers make files (show the colored file folders and manila folders). Tell students to                      Write or tape their thesis across the top of the colored folder                      Write one support sentence on a manila folder                      Repeat with additional manila folders for rest of supports</li> </ol> <p><u>Minilesson/Active Engagement:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Help students set up their folders. Call the colored folder the thesis folder and the manila folders the topic sentence folders. <b>You might model with the boxes and bullets to the right.</b></li> <li>4. Tell students that writing nonfiction will require a lot of information so their folders will be a system for gathering and collecting the materials they will by using.</li> <li>5. Teaching point: the most important materials writers collect when writing essays are <b>STORIES!</b></li> <li>6. Tell students that they can use what they already know about writing good stories to collect materials for their essays.</li> <li>7. Show the sample plan for an essay (sample on right). Tell students that to get writing a story that relates to your thesis/main idea, you take one topic sentence (one bullet), and ask yourself, "What true story can I think of related to this?" Then list several (jot these down quickly or pretend to-while saying them aloud)</li> <li>8. <b>Model choosing one of the stories, make a mind movie to picture the beginning, think about the thesis, and start to write the story in detail.</b></li> <li>9. Debrief and discuss.</li> <li>10. Have the students try it with the sample plan to the right. Debrief</li> <li>11. Send students off to try it with their first manila folder (bullet).</li> </ol> <p><u>Share/Reflect:</u> share plan and thesis aloud</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Create an anchor chart of all the things they have learned that essayists do.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Colored file folder for each student</li> <li>○ Several manila folders for each student</li> <li>○ Teacher sample of thesis, topic sentences, and supporting list of true stories</li> <li>○ One story developed to support a topic sentence</li> <li>○ Colored file folder and several manila folders for modeling</li> <li>○ Class thesis and supporting topic sentences from previous lessons, written on chart.</li> <li>○ Chart: Guidelines for Writing Essays</li> </ul>
<p><i>Sample list of mini stories about bullet #1</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the last day of summer, Dad and I went camping together. He said he couldn't wait for vacation to be over so he could return to work.</li> <li>• On Christmas mornings, my father always goes to the hospital carrying a waffle iron, ready to make waffles for the doctors and patients. I asked why he didn't send someone else to do this, but he said he likes going to work. "It's my hobby."</li> <li>• When Dad was a kid, he heard a book about Louis Pasteur read aloud. Dad said, "listening to that read-aloud, I realized that the research Louis Pasteur loved so much was his job." Until then, Dad had always thought a person's job was a chore. He vowed that he would grow up to love his job.</li> </ul>		<p><i>Teacher Sample of thesis, topic sentences</i></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px 0;"> <p>My father has been my most important teacher.</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My father taught me the importance of loving your job.</li> <li>• My father taught me to love writing.</li> <li>• My father taught me to believe that one person can make a difference.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Guidelines for Writing Essays</b></p> <p>Essayists frame the main sections of their essays. Essayists revise early, using free writing to deepen thinking and outgrow their earliest claims. Essayists set up a system so we can sort and compose material to support our ideas. Essayists collect and write mini-stories that are angled to illustrate our topic sentence.</p>		<p><i>Sample for students to try mini stories</i></p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px 0;"> <p>Working with a partner is fun.</p> </div> <p>One reason working with a partner is fun is that you get to teach other.                      Another reason that working with a partner is fun is that you get to share the work                      Another reason that working with a partner is fun is you get to make new friends.</p>

# Book 3: Breathing Life into Essays Intermediate Grades

Day 10	Teaching Procedure	Materials
<p><b>Seeking Outside Sources</b> In this session, you will teach children that writers seek outside sources, other people's stories, to support our ideas in essay writing.</p>	<p><u><b>Connection:</b></u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Remind students that writers collect stories that show the idea they want to convey. Show that one story can be angled differently, conveying a different idea.</li> <li>2. Show students, by presenting an example, how outside sources can support their essay writing. Illustrate this by showing a piece of writing and an outside source that would support the thesis statement. For example the story from yesterday with father and the waffles showed the Dad's dedication to his work, but if the story had told about the mess and missing Dad on Christmas it would not have supported the thesis.</li> <li>3. Go back into the story and underline parts that support the thesis.</li> </ol> <p><u><b>Minilesson/Active Engagement:</b></u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Tell students that another thing writers do to support their essays is to use other people's stories. Read part 1 of the student sample (or use the one on the right) and discuss how the student could have told their own sports stories, but instead they included another person's story.</li> <li>5. <b>Discuss how the writer told the story and also talked about how the story goes with his main idea. Repeat the story and ask students to notice what the writer says.</b></li> <li>6. <b>Share the next part of the story and ask students to notice again, how the writer connects the story to their thesis/main idea.</b></li> <li>7. Ask students to use the class essay sample (Working with a Partner is Fun or other sample you have been using). Have them imagine the folders. Hold up one of the folders and read the topic sentence that is bolded. Have them interview each other to find out what the other person can say about it (or you might have a sample response ready on chart paper and just read it!</li> <li>8. Send students off to try work on their manila folders-writing mini stories about their thesis or gathering stories.</li> </ol> <p><u><b>Share/Reflect:</b></u> share a student's work</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Share the work of a student who has written a good mini story to support their thesis.</li> <li>10. Have partners reread their own and their partner's stories to check that they support their topic sentences.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An incident from which you have written 2 stories: one that illustrates your topic sentence, one that illustrates a different point.</li> <li>○ A few sentences from an interview that support a bullet point from the class story, written on chart paper.</li> <li>○ Example of a child's story and topic sentence requiring revision to support the main idea.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Sample for students to try mini stories</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Working with a partner is fun.</p> <p><b>One reason working with a partner is fun is that you get to teach other.</b> Another reason that working with a partner is fun is that you get to share the work Another reason that working with a partner is fun is you get to make new friends.</p>		<p><b>Sample Student's Mini Story:</b> Thesis: when learning sports, practice makes perfect</p> <p><i>Part 1: As a kid, famed basketball player Michael Jordan was heartbroken when he heard that he had not made his high school basketball team. He was so heartbroken that he spent most of his free time that summer on the basketball court, practicing. And guess what? The next time he tried out for that team, because of all that practice, he made the team, and was one of the best players.</i></p> <p><i>Michael and most other athletes will tell you that the key to their success is mostly practice. When you're practicing, someone else isn't, and when you two meet up, who's going to be better? You: the person who was practicing.</i></p> <p><i>Part 2: Take Pedro Martinez, a MLB (major league baseball) pitcher for the Boston Red Sox. When he was asked for tips by a reporter from <a href="http://www.mlb.com">www.mlb.com</a>, he said to just play. "Play every day. They have to work hard and understand that it isn't going to be easy." That's right. Hard work and practice and hard work is the best way to get good at a sport.</i></p>

## Book 3: Breathing Life into Essays Intermediate Grades

Day 11	Teaching Procedure	Materials
<p><b>Creating Parallelism in Lists</b>                      In this session, you will teach children that writers structure information to support a claim in the same way again and again. Writers create parallelism that can begin in a list.</p>	<p><b>Connection:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remind students that writers collect material, like mini stories, to use in their essays. Share a student example and discuss how the mini stories help support the main idea.</li> <li>Name the teaching point: Sometimes writers collect lists of examples.</li> </ol> <p><b>Minilesson/Active Engagement:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell students that you will share some parts from one of the most famous non-narrative writing piece in the world. Introduce Martin Luther King’s “I have a dream” speech.</li> <li>Have students listen for how the writer uses lists to support his idea and watch as you think aloud about it.</li> <li>Read aloud the excerpt (see the attachment for speech excerpt and think aloud) and discuss the repeated phrase.</li> <li>Have students watch as you use a list with each part starting with a repeated phrase. (see right-make list on chart) Debrief.</li> <li>Tell students that it is important to study the work of the pros. Ask what they learned today that they could try.</li> <li>Pass out the student copy of Martin Luther King Jr.’s speech excerpt. Have students partner up and read the first paragraph aloud, then name what they notice King has done that they could do.</li> <li>If they finish, they should read the second paragraph and notice what is done.</li> <li>Send students off to try it in their writing today. They should be continuing to collect stories and lists for their files to support their main idea.</li> </ol> <p><b>Share/Reflect:</b> share the student sample for this lesson</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Share the student sample pdf and discuss. Remind students that content matters, not just listing.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student work in which the student collected a story to support their idea (last session).</li> <li>Examples of published writing where the author used lists (“I have a dream” speech by Martin Luther King) on chart paper</li> <li>Sample topic sentences and supporting lists to illustrate use of repeated phrases and parallel wording</li> </ul>
<p>Mid Workshop Teaching Point</p> <p><i>Stop students and tell them that you noticed some of them are having trouble getting started on their lists with repeated phrases. Part of the problem may be they are not sure what to use as their repeating phrase from the story.</i></p> <p><i>Share a student example of a mini story. Ask students to listen and identify a possible repeated phrase that could be used over and over again.</i></p>		<p>Sample Topic Sentences and Lists</p> <p><b>My father taught me to believe that one person can make a difference.</b></p> <p><i>My father taught me to believe ...</i>  <i>that one person could start a hospital clinic...</i>  <i>that one person could make a bad day better...</i>  <i>that one person could start a smile chain...</i>  <i>that one person could teach someone to read...</i>  <i>that one person could save a life.</i></p>

Excerpts from “I have a dream” by Martin Luther King Jr.

(You might need to include a little context for kids about what was going on in America during this time period.)

We have come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now...**Now is the time to** make real the promises of democracy; **now is the time to** rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit porch of racial justice; **now is the time to** lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood; **now is the time to** make justice a reality for all of God’s children.

*Listen to how King had one main idea-that Americans need to work toward civil rights now.*

*Then he gives example after example of that main idea, telling what we need to do right now-make real the promises of democracy, rise from segregation to racial justice, lift out of racial injustice into brotherhood, and make justice a reality for all children.*

*The key words are repeated so they sound like a song. Reread the piece and accentuate “Now is the time..” each time.*

# Book 3: Breathing Life into Essays Intermediate Grades

## Day 12

## Teaching Procedure

## Materials

### Revising Toward Honesty

In this session, you will teach children that writers strive to tell the truth, even when inventing what happened.

#### Connection:

1. Discuss the ways they have learned to improve their essays and support their ideas (mini stories, outside stories, lists with repeating phrases).
2. Name the teaching point: Writers also try to improve the quality of their thinking by aiming for honesty.

#### Minilessons/Active Engagement:

3. Tell a story about a time when you (or a writer you know) wrote in easy glib words-telling what was expected but not really telling the truth. Tell students that the writer decided to try to write the truth-share the truthful version.
4. Discuss the differences of the two versions.
5. Set students up to practice rewriting with more honesty. Show the chart with the sample passages.
6. Have students reread the passages and give them the "truth test." Asking, "Does this say the exact and precise truth of what I want to say about working with a partner?" If it doesn't, rewrite them in your notebook to be truthful. If it does, add more to make it even more truthful.
7. Debrief and share ideas.
8. Send students off to practice all that they have learned, and to be honest in their writing. They should be continuing to collect stories and lists for their files to support their main idea.

#### Share/Reflect: Discussion

12. Tell students that writers have to be very careful to make sure that they don't include stories that don't support their claims.
13. Tell the story of a child who checked to see if her story supported her claim and found that it didn't. Discuss.

Teddy bears are like friends that stay quiet, but deep down, you hear them talking to you. Teddy bears are good friends because when you are sad teddy bears cheer up. They cheer you up because one time I came from school and a boy said a mean thing to me so I went home and I talked to my teddy bear. She made me feel good.

- o Example of writing that needs to be revised with honesty
- o On Chart paper: Passages from class essay that can be revised for honesty

Lucy's examples of glib/truth-dedication page

**I want to thank my husband for not minding the long hours of desk work.**  
*(but he did mind the long hours-he complained all the time! Not honest,)*

Although it is traditional to dedicate a book to thank one's spouse for not minding all the work that was done, I want instead to thank my husband for calling me away from my desk. I want to thank him for the days of hiking in the mountains and for the quiet adventures with our cat, dog, home, and family.

#### **Mid Workshop Teaching Point**

Share writing from students who are telling the truth in their mini stories and lists.

Have students reread their writing and find a place where they told the truth. If they can't find that place they should find a place where they need to tell the truth.

#### Sample Passages from Class Essay

Working with a partner is fun.

One reason working with a partner is fun is that you get to teach other. I really like teaching my partner to read hard words and use more expression.

Another reason that working with a partner is fun is that you get to share the work. Both kids do the same amount of work so it is fair. Both kids listen to each other to make the best grade. Both kids learn!

Another reason that working with a partner is fun is you get to make new friends. It is nice to work with kids who are not your best friends. Working together allows boys to work with girls and girls to work with boys. This lets kids become friends with more people.

# Book 3: Breathing Life into Essays Intermediate Grades

## Day 13

## Teaching Procedure

## Materials

### Gathering a Variety of Information

In this session, you will teach children that writers gather a variety of information to support our claims. You'll demonstrate strategies writers use for collecting and writing with that information

*Sample for students to try mini stories*

Working with a partner is fun.

- One reason working with a partner is fun is that you get to teach other.
- Another reason that working with a partner is fun is that you get to share the work
- Another reason that working with a partner is fun is you get to make new friends.

**Mid Workshop Teaching Point**  
 Stop students to talk about another way to gather information-evidence from books!  
 Example if you are writing about bullies and how they feel bad because they bottle up their feelings and keep them inside. You might talk about Rob from Tiger Rising by Kate DiCamillo or another story character who does this.

#### Connection:

1. Discuss how artists combine a variety of material in their art-to add color, texture, flavor. Tell students that essay writers add a variety of information to their writing too-mini stories, lists, and today we learn two more-observations and statistics.
2. Name the teaching point: Essayists, like other artists, collect a variety of materials to assemble in their work.

#### Minilessons/Active Engagement:

3. Show the folders for the sample you have been using (from previous lessons)
4. Choose one folder, read the topic sentence, and discuss how the folder is nearly empty so you wanted to collect stories, quotes, and questions related to it. Tell about collecting this information by observing and recording anything related to the topic. Show what was collected. (right)
5. Discuss how another method to collect information is to interview a person. Add on to the sample by telling students about interviewing Dad and tell them some things he might have said about writing.
6. Tell students one more method of collecting information is to tell statistics-numbers-like the number of articles written or drafts done or money spent on paper.
7. Show the class sample essay. Have students collect information from each other to add to the essay-observing partners working together; interviewing a partnership; telling statistics-number of times worked with partners, amount of work done, time saved, etc. Remind students that the observations need to support the topic sentence!
8. **Partner one: write an entry in the air in which you do an observation of a moment.**
9. **Partner two: write in the air about quotations, statistics, interview questions**
10. Send students off to gather more information. They should be continuing to collect stories and lists for their files to support their main idea.

#### Share/Reflect: create a chart or writing examples

14. Have students write examples of observations, statistics, interview quotations, etc. on the chart (or sentence strips). Share.

- Sample teacher essay demonstrating how observations and statistics can support a topic sentence.
- Sample class thesis and topic sentences
- Samples of student writing where a variety of types of evidence are used to support a topic sentence

### Sample Teacher Essay

Topic Sentence:

**My father taught me to love writing.**

*Observations collected:*

*I was at my parent's house and I saw my Dad at his desk. I took a mental photograph of the scene so I could write about it later. When I wrote, I described the things I saw related to his loving writing.*

These days, whenever I go to my father's home I usually find him at his desk. He may be writing his memoir, an article, a speech, or sketches and plans for new bird houses or a deck-whatever he is writing, he's always surrounded by piles of papers and books. I get the feeling he's turned his desk into a tree fort, built with walls of books and magazines. He's having the time of his life writing.

# Book 3: Breathing Life into Essays Intermediate Grades

Day 14	Teaching Procedure	Materials
<p><b>Organizing for Drafting</b> In this session, you will teach children that writers take collected files of writing and transform them into a draft by organizing and piecing them together.</p>	<p><u>Connection:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the work done on the essays so far. Name the teaching point: writers have a process they use to go from folders full of entries to a draft in a day. All the folder work will be used to create the draft for their essay.</li> </ol> <p><u>Minilessons/Active Engagement:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss a metaphor for building a building—the day to raise the building is here, and we need to make sure we have all the materials needed ready to go.</li> <li>Think Aloud: <i>Usually I take one folder at a time and I lay whatever I've collected out on the table and then I look over my materials. I ask myself some questions like the ones on the chart.</i></li> <li>Continue to think aloud: <i>After I ask each of these questions for each folder, then I decide whether these are in fact the topic sentence I will use, or whether I need to revise the topic sentence.</i></li> <li>Take one of the sample folders and model-read the thesis, then choose a folder and read the topic sentence. Pour out the stories and reread each one, asking the questions.</li> <li>Show students how to underline sections in the stories that go with the point you are making.</li> <li>Debrief.</li> <li>Show another story from the folder and pass out copies to the students. Have partners read the story and the chart questions to see if the story goes with the topic.</li> <li>Discuss why the story does not fit the topic sentence and check to see if it works with any other of the topic sentences.</li> <li>Send students off to reread and check the stories in their folders.</li> </ol> <p><u>Share/Reflect:</u> Small group share</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put students into small groups. Have the students share the contents of their first folder with the groups.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sample essay with supporting evidence collected in colored and manila folders (with topic sentences written on them)</li> <li>○ On chart Paper: copies of a story from one of your folders that <b>doesn't</b> support you claim</li> <li>○ Copies of the chart paper story for each child</li> <li>○ Several student essays, with supporting evidence collected in colored and manila folders.</li> <li>○ Chart: Questions to Ask of Writing Before We Draft</li> </ul>

**Questions to Ask of Writing Before We Draft**

- Does each bit of material develop the idea?
- Is each bit based on different information?
- Does the material, in total, provide the right amount and right kind of support?

**My father has been my most important teacher.**

- My father taught me what it means to regard a job as a hobby.
- My father taught me to love writing.
- My father taught me to believe that one person can make a difference.

**Sample Teacher Essay Mini-Story  
Topic Sentence:  
My father taught me about what it means to regard a job as a hobby.**

*I remember on Christmas mornings after the presents had been opened, my dad always sent into the kitchen and began doing the one bit of cooking that he did all year. He stirred Bisquick and eggs in a huge bowl and set off for the hospital, leaving us to finish Christmas celebrations without him. For Dad, Christmas mornings were not just a time to be with family they were also a time to serve hot waffles to the medical doctors and patients. When I asked him once why he didn't send someone else with the waffles, he told me he loved being at the hospital on Christmas mornings. "It's my hobby," he said.*



Sample Story for Topic Sentence: My Father taught me what it means to regard a job as a hobby.  
Student Copy

On Christmas Day, my dad went to move a log in the fireplace and gouged his head on one of the nails from which the Christmas stockings hung. To stop the ferocious bleeding, he held a bag of frozen peas on the top of his bald head. Guests arrived for our Christmas party and he greeted them with the bag of frozen peas draped over his forehead. The guests weren't surprised to see Dad's odd ice pack because he's always done what he pleases without much concern for fitting into social norms. It isn't important to him to dress "right." He wears his red plaid hunting cap everywhere. When I was a kid he would wear that hunting cap to my school events, I was often embarrassed by him.

# Book 3: Breathing Life into Essays Intermediate Grades

## Day 15

## Teaching Procedure

## Materials

**Building a Cohesive Draft**  
 In this session, you will teach children that writers create cohesion with repeated phrases, logically sequenced information, and transition words

**Connection:**

Restate the building metaphor to help students imagine their essays as materials, arranged in a structure. Remind students that they are in charge of deciding what materials go together and why.

**Minilesson/Active Engagement:**

1. Tell students that we organize in two ways:  
 \*\*Choosing what goes together  
 \*\*Using transition words and key words from our thesis to connect ideas together.
  2. Demonstrate how you read a piece of data from your collection and decide where it belongs (read/think aloud). Show that you go through the following steps:
    1. Take out the contents of one folder and spread it out (see sample on following page)
    2. Reread it (the outside first, then each "bit" (item in the folder)
    3. Think about what the one bit of story is about and then decide if it still belongs with the topic.
    4. Decide what order to place all the bits in-chronological for the sample
    5. Do not copy the bits-staple the page where you want it to go!
  3. Drive home the fact that you reread one bit of date and try to figure out what exactly it is about so you can decide where it belongs.
  4. Debrief and review the steps again.
  5. Share some other ways to order the bits for a topic-strongest claim to weakest claim, categorize by similarities, time/order, etc.
  6. Have students look at one of their folders, think about how they could order the information, then turn and talk to their partner about how they would organize their bits.
  7. Send students off to reread, think, order, and staple/tape their information together.
- Share/Reflect: Transition Words**
8. Share with students that once writers choose an order for their materials, they cement it together with transition words that match their organizational plan.
  9. Review the transitions chart and model how to add transition words to the beginnings of some of the bits. (you might use a sticky note to place the transitions.
  10. Partner share and place transitions in student writing.

- One of the teacher sample folders for sample essay with entries organized into categories and **written on chart paper**
- Chart: List of transition words
- Second example from teacher sample essay illustrating use of transition words and another way to organize the material.

### Transitions Chart

When I was young...  
 This began when...  
 At first...  
 After awhile...  
 Later or Still later...  
 Finally...  
 Recently...  
 Now...  
 in other words  
 point in fact  
 specifically  
 consequently  
 clearly, then  
 furthermore  
 additionally  
 and  
 in addition  
 moreover  
 because  
 besides that  
 in the same way  
 following this further  
 also

**You might extend this lesson over a few days- a couple to organize folders and one day for transitions.**

**Mid-Workshop Teaching Point**  
**Stop the writing to share another way essayists can organize their materials.**

*Sometimes essayists look at all the material and rank it according to importance, least important bit first and most important bit last.*

*To do that, we use transition words to introduce each part, like first, building on that point, more important, most important.*

*You might try this organizational structure and these words for one of your folders if you think it will fit well with what you have to say and would help support your claim.*

*Show the student example paper (PDF)*

## My father taught me that one person can make a difference

<b>A List</b>	<p>When patients wanted to squeeze into my father's full schedule, he always said yes.</p> <p>When organizations wrote to my father for money or support, he always said yes.</p> <p>And although he and my mother have nine children of their own, when a local couple died in a car accident, and someone needed to take care of their children, he said yes.</p>
<b>Quotes</b>	<p>My father often quoted Rockefeller to me: "To whom much is given, much shall be asked."</p>
<b>Extended List</b>	<p>My father got arrested for participation in a political protest. He volunteered at our church, and at the local soup kitchen.</p>
<b>Story</b>	<p>My father once told me a story that made a big impression on me-it was of how he decided to be a doctor. As a teenager, he went to Camp Merryweather. One day, after lunch, the wife of the camp director read aloud from <i>The Microbe Hunters</i>, sharing stories about Marie Curie's and Louis Pasteur's research. Lying on his cot with a green army blanket over him, my father thought to himself, "That research is their job!" His father was a banker and it had never, until that moment, occurred to him that a person's job could be their hobby, their passion. The fact that my father told me his story and shared his insight has changed my life.</p>

# Book 3: Breathing Life into Essays Intermediate Grades

Day 16	Teaching Procedure	Materials
<p><b>Writing Introductions and Conclusions</b> In this session, you will teach children the ways writers commonly open and close essays. You'll help children try these ways in their own writing.</p>	<p><u>Connection:</u> Remind students of all the work they have done so far in essay writing. Review all the things they have learned (from getting ideas to choosing a seed idea to writing supporting bits). Use your anchor charts to review!</p> <p><u>Minilesson/Active Engagement:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name the teaching point: Writers use several phrases to help us create introductions and conclusions for our essays.</li> <li>2. Tell students that instead of looking at a mentor text to get ideas for how writers start and end their essays, today the teacher will simply share what he/she has learned about starting and concluding essays.</li> <li>3. Tell students that often essayists want both their introduction and the closing paragraphs to say to readers "This essay is really important. Listen up!" They don't use those words of course, but they convey that idea with a beginning and ending paragraph.</li> <li>4. Show the charts Ways to Start an Essay and Ways to End an Essay.</li> <li>5. Model for students how to choose a phrase from the chart to see if it might work for the sample essay. Discuss how you might have to change the words around just a little to make it work.</li> <li>6. Model using a few possible introductions-write them out-and then choosing one that will work for the essay. (see example)</li> <li>7. Have students try some of the phrases from the Ways to Start an Essay chart with their own essays. They should work with their partner to find the best fit.</li> <li>8. Restate the teaching point and remind students to choose carefully how they start and end their essays. Send them off to write their introductions.</li> </ol> <p><u>Share/Reflect:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Share some student samples of beginnings and endings.</li> <li>10. Have students discuss how their beginnings and endings worked out.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Chart: List of common ways to begin an essay</li> <li>○ Chart: List of common ways to conclude an essay</li> <li>○ Possible introductions and conclusions for your sample essay on chart paper</li> <li>○ Sample students essays with drafts of several introductions and conclusions.</li> </ul>

### Ways to Start an Essay

- **Tell a story about one person needing the information this essay will convey. What that person and others need to know is that...**
- **Many people don't know/think/realize, but I think it is important...**
- **Have you ever wondered...? I have found...**
- **(Ask a question that people often ask) (Show that this essay will answer it.**

### Ways to End an Essay

- **(my thesis idea) is true. Because this is true, isn't it also true that...**
- **I realize that...**
- **This makes me think...**
- **I realize that when I..., I feel...**
- **Other people should care about this because...**
- **This is important because...**

Teacher sample: My father's been my most important teacher.

**Look at the list for ways to start an essay, read the first item aloud**

**"A story about one person needing the information this essay will convey."**

*Hmmm...Who'll need to know that my father is y most important teacher? Who will want to read this essay? Maybe my father, or parents who could learn to be their child's best teacher/ Let me try telling a story about one person who needs to know this:*

A friend of mine is expecting her first child soon, and she is already worrying about the schools that her child will attend. I tell her not worry, what she needs to know is that she and her husband will be her child's most important teachers. My father has been my most important teacher, teaching me to regard my job as a hobby, to love writing, and to believe that one person can make a difference.

**Look at the list again and try out another item.**

**"I used to think...but now I realize..."**

*Let's see... I want to talk about what I used to think about who teachers were...*

I used to think that the teachers my students have in school would make or break them. I'd worry frantically if one them had a teacher who wasn't superb. But I've come to realize that the teachers who matter most aren't always the official ones we have in school. In my life, my father was my most important teacher. He taught me regard my job as a hobby, to love writing, and to believe that one person can make a difference.