



SIMPLE STRATEGIES RESULT IN DRAMATIC DIFFERENCE IN MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT'S WRITING

These two writing samples were produced by the same student in response to the essay prompt in the Grade 7 Baseline Assessment. Before receiving *Step Up to Writing*® instruction, the student wrote a basic paragraph with little elaboration. After three days of instruction, the student composed an essay response on the same topic with considerably more elaboration and explanation.

Students learn to elaborate on the key idea using the Es: Explanation, Examples, Experiences, Events, Evidence, Expert opinions, Exact information, Effective illustrations and quotations, and Expanding on everyday life

Prompt: Write a short essay describing how the campers address their basic human needs on their winter camping trip. Make sure to refer to information from the sources in your response.

IMPLEMENTATION BACKGROUND

Writing Strategy: Stretching Paragraphs and Using the Es (Elaboration)

Grade Level of Student: 8th

Instructional Minutes/Week: 180

Class Size: 25

School: Soulsbyville Elementary, K-8

District: Soulsbyville

BEFORE STEP UP TO WRITING: Initial Assessment Response

The campers in the story had several human needs. First they had tunnel shovels to dig their way into the snow. The campers had different type of clothing, waterproof jackets and pants, wool sweaters. They also had food supplies. A good thing that they had was warm sleeping bag. If you want to stay warm and dry, you need to build a proper shelter and it stabled correctly. Try not to where cotton because it will take in water and can cause hypothermia.

AFTER 3 DAYS OF STEP UP TO WRITING INSTRUCTION:

In the Icemen Campeth, five boys went camping in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The campers addressed three of their human needs which are Physical, Safety, and Social needs. these human needs are listed from Maslouis Hierarchy of human needs. Maslouis Hierarchy is a chain from basic to advanced human needs.

First of all the five boys addressed their physical needs. The first need is bringing food to eat. The campers brought canned beans to eat, and hot cocoa to drink. They built Quinzee huts for shelter. The huts had air and warmth. They got their air from a vent hole in the roof. they kept warm by having good sleeping bags and heavy close.

After that, they addressed Safety needs. Shelter is a good safety need because it protects you from the outside. The hut they were using was called a Quinzee hut. it was a 10 by 8 foot mound of snow, hollowed out with a underground entrance. Other safety needs is having proper clothing, NO COTTON, warm sleeping bag, and having tools in a backpack.

Finally social needs. Social needs can be useful while camping with friends. The campers hung out by the fire in the snow. They drank hot cocoa because they were cold and tired to stay warm. The five boys worked together and built five Quinzee huts so they didn't have to build them in the dark and in the cold.

The Iceman Campeth taught me a lot about ice camping. How like Quinzee huts are hollowed out hounds of snow with a underground entrance. In safety needs it taught me that wearing cotton absorbers water and takes your body heat away. Also safety showed me that they blocked the entrance with their backpack from the outside. From my point of view, try going ice camping when it snows in your town.

Explanation

Examples

Explanation

Examples

Experiences



Teach the Es Across Grade Levels to Dramatically Improve Students' Writing

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Name: _____

The E's/the Reds in a Paragraph

Geckos

Topic = **geckos**

- Colors
 - many colors
 - spots and stripes
 - some change color to hide
- Sizes
 - Dwarf Gecko = about half-inch
 - Tokay Gecko = grow to 14 inches

Conclusion = **many kinds of geckos**

Geckos come in many colors and sizes. These lizards have different colors. Most kinds are green and brown. Some have stripes and spots. Some can even change color to hide from predators.

Geckos also come in different sizes. The Dwarf Gecko is less than an inch long. But the Tokay Gecko can grow to 14 inches. There are many kinds of geckos all over the world.

Name: _____

Strong E's/The Reds

Paragraph with Boring Reds

Clovn School

Some people go to clown school to learn how to look and act funny. Some clowns use makeup and costumes to look funny. They put makeup on their faces. They wear funny clothes. Others pull on wigs. Clowns at clown school also learn how to act funny. They learn tricks. For example, some clowns throw things in the air. Some fun balloons into shops. I think it would be fun to be a clown.

Paragraph with Strong Reds

Clovn School

Some people go to clown school to learn how to look and act funny. Some clowns use makeup and costumes to look funny. They wear makeup to look happy or sad. Some clowns wear baggy costumes with big buttons. Others wear bright red wigs. Clowns at clown school also learn how to act funny. They learn fun tricks. For example, some clowns juggle balls and clubs. Others practice making balloon animals like dogs and cats. I think it would be fun to be a clown.

GRADES K-2

Name: _____ Date: _____ Tool E4-18a

The E's—The Reds

The E's Are the Reds—Stop and Explain

The E's add interest to your paper and help your reader understand your ideas. Always ask yourself if you have explained your key/str ideas clearly and included enough specific examples, or Reds.

Types of Elaboration

- Events
- Explanations
- Experiences

Name: _____ Date: _____ Tool E4-20b

The E's in Paragraphs vs. Reports

Paragraph	Report
<p>Henry Ford's Assembly Line</p> <p>In 1907, Henry Ford announced that he wanted to build cars that more Americans could afford. He knew he needed to speed up the car-making process. He wanted to find ways that fewer workers could build more cars.</p> <p>In 1913, the Ford Motor Company developed its first moving assembly line to build cars. The car parts moved on a conveyor belt. Workers could stay in one place. They could do one task over and over. More cars could be built in less time. In this way, Ford made cars affordable for more families.</p>	<p>Henry Ford's Assembly Line</p> <p>In the early 1900s, only rich people could afford motor cars. They were complex machines that took a long time to build. In 1907, Henry Ford announced that he wanted to build cars that more Americans could afford.</p> <p>He knew he had to speed up the car-making process. He needed to find ways that workers could build more cars in less time. Other factories had tried using assembly lines, but Ford wanted to improve the idea so it would work well in a big car factory.</p> <p>In 1913, the Ford Motor Company developed its first moving assembly line to build cars. It named car parts on a conveyor belt. Workers stayed in one place. Each worker performed one specific task over and over again. Now, the company was making a new number of cars each day. That meant it could lower the price. In this way, Ford made cars affordable for more American families.</p>

Work Cited: "Ford Inside First Moving Assembly Line 1913." PBS. Public Broadcasting Service (PBS), n.d. Web. 23 Apr. 2014.

GRADES 3-5

Name: _____ Tool S4-16a

The E's—The Reds

The E's are the Reds—stop and explain. The E's add interest to a paper and help the reader understand the paper's ideas. While writing and revising, check whether there are enough of the Reds and if the key/str ideas are explained. Check to see if the paper includes specific examples or presents enough evidence.

- Explanation
- Events
- Experiences
- Explanations
- Effective illustrations
- Effective quotations

Name: _____ Tool S4-18b

Elaboration in Essays/Reports

An informal outline will help wit

Topic = **A young boy, Zach Bonner, helps others**

- At age 6 began to help
 - Florida hurricane
 - Delivered food and water
- Little Red Wagon Foundation
 - Wanted to help children who are homeless
 - Assembled backpacks with supplies
 - Staged events like hikes to raise money
 - More dramatic way to increase public attention
 - Hiked 2,478 miles from Florida to California
 - March Across America
 - Got lots of media coverage

Conclusion = **Continues to work for others**

The Hero with the Little Red Wagon

No one is over too young to make the world a better place—just ask Zachary Bonner. From preschool through today he has worked to improve the lives of others.

In 2004, Zach was just six when he found his first opportunity to help others. Hurricane Charley slammed ashore near Zach's Florida home. The massive storm's damage left many people without food or safe drinking water. Zach rolled into action. Pulling his little red wagon, the rambunctious boy collected water and food from helpful neighbors and made delivery after delivery to those in need. This was just the beginning of a life that has been devoted to helping others.

In 2005, Zach expanded his mission by forming the Little Red Wagon Foundation. He contacted companies for donations, filling backpacks with shampoos, socks, food, and other supplies and gave them to kids living in homeless shelters. He distributed more than 6,000 of these backpacks. Zach also planned long-distance walks to increase awareness about the more than one million youth without homes in the United States. Between 2007 to 2009, he hiked 604 miles, from Florida to Washington, D.C. He called the project "My House to the White House." "I truly believe that there should not be ANY child left homeless in this country today," Zach said.

In 2009, Zach—now 12—wanted to do something bigger and more dramatic for his cause. With his mom traveling along in a recreational vehicle, Zach walked 2,478 miles from Tampa, Florida, to Los Angeles, California. He called it the "March Across America." The journey took nine months. He hiked like a real explorer, wearing a hat, carrying a map, and taking breaks when he was tired. Zach gave a speech, saying, "There's an ancient Chinese proverb: 'A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.' Most people don't walk a step farther... but what if really meant is that we all need to take the first step to get something big done. If I've helped even one homeless child, I hope I've accomplished that!"

Today, Zach is learning to use video to report the challenges and dangers children without homes face all around the world. He deserves a lot of praise for his dedication to helping others. To him, however, the best honor anyone can share is to pitch in to help all children have homes of their own.

GRADES 6-8

Name: _____ Date: _____ Tool T4-14a

Elaboration—The E's

Elaboration—the E's—helps explain and support each key/str idea. Elaboration can include:

- Explanation
- Events
- Explanations
- Experiences
- Effective illustrations
- Effective quotations
- Expert opinion

An informal outline can help organize the elaboration (dashes and dots) for each key/str idea.

Title = History of the Bonneville Salt Flats

Topic = The Bonneville Salt Flats' composition and flatness draw racers to the Bonneville Salt Flats Speedway

Major geological transformation

- Enormous
- Covered
- Changed or
- Water in
- Mineral
- Lake tur
- Area's crust
- Ideal for
- Vehicle set
- First use
- The public
- take 's w
- of the U
- Racers now
- Blue Fla

Creation of Bonneville Salt Flats Speedway

Conclusion = Nature and technology meet at

Name: _____ Date: _____ Tool T4-17b

Selecting the Strongest Elaboration

Directions: Read the assignment and decide which pieces of elaboration would be appropriate to include.

Assignment 2: Because you won the high school science fair, you have been invited to write an article that will be published in a science magazine for middle school students. The article should help students understand how electromagnetic waves are being used in the world around them.

Source	Elaboration	Include?
Dictionary entry	An electromagnetic wave moves energy through both an electric and magnetic field. Types: radio waves, microwaves, visible light, x-rays, gamma rays.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Notes: too technical for audience
Science website for kids	An electromagnetic wave is a way to move energy from one place to another. "These waves are everywhere! But most of these waves are invisible to the human eye."	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Notes: simple enough for kids to understand
Article in science magazine	Radio waves are electromagnetic waves. TV stations broadcast shows using radio waves. Radio waves get picked up by your television. Cable companies have antennae or dishes to receive the radio waves.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Notes: Not about modern uses, too high-level, source not current
Article from science journal	Electromagnetism is used in maglev trains to levitate the train and make it float in air. A second set of electromagnets creates a magnetic force to help move the train forward.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Notes: Add short definition of "maglev train" for kids
Article in Modern Technology magazine	Electromagnetic waves generate energy that powers electric motors. Computers use electric motors to operate hard drives, CD-ROM drives, cooling fans.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Notes: too technical for audience
Kate's Personal Blog	Made an electromagnetic for the science fair. Do magnets use electromagnetic? Yes!	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Notes: not relevant to topic
Podcast from public radio station	Electromagnetism used in modern appliances: printers, microwave ovens, hair dryers, can openers, vacuum cleaners.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Notes: too general, not specific
Documentary	Medical Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) machines to capture internal images are based on principle of electromagnetism.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Notes: Middle school kids might not know what MRI is, not enough detail

GRADES 9-12