

PREVIEW

# Getting Ready to Write for Grade 1

with Reading, Writing & Art Connections



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FIRST EDITION  
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**Empowering**  
*Writers*

Write. Read. Succeed.

# Planning and Pacing Guide

**The Skills-at-a-Glance** document will serve as a guideline for planning your instruction throughout the year. Keep in mind that **The Getting Ready to Write** resource was never intended as a cover-to-cover guide. Rather, each lesson is to be used recursively throughout the year as opportunities arise within your curriculum. Once you have taught a lesson, think about how this lesson can be used again by substituting your curriculum content area. For this reason, we have included a blank template, **Make-it-Your Own**, for you to plan out how to integrate each genre using your own curriculum topics.

Each section of the guide includes **foundational lessons** for learning how to write within each genre. There is a sequential flow of lessons within each section as learning is scaffolded for students. In addition, as you look at planning for your year, keep in mind that all genres can support one another when you make relevant connections across the year. For example, when focusing on narrative writing, look for opportunities to include a connection to informational/expository or opinion writing to help make powerful reading-writing connections. *(Example: Read a story set in a rainforest: make a list of rainforest animals to learn about, decide on your favorite rainforest animal, find narrative and informational/expository paired selections on the topic, write an elaborative detail segment about the setting - the rainforest, or write an animal riddle using word referents.)*

Familiarize yourself with the **Vocabulary Lessons** that are included for use with every genre unit. These are lessons that occur **“Anytime and Always”** throughout your curriculum. **Anytime** the lesson fits nicely with your content is an opportunity to use it. Each time you introduce a vocabulary lesson, it becomes an **always** lesson - **always** applying the vocabulary skill once it’s introduced.

The final tab in this resource is **Reading-Writing and Art Connections for First Grade**. The Table of Contents in each genre includes a paintbrush icon to signify a supplemental lesson from this section. These creative lessons are designed as enriching extensions of the foundational lessons. They are to be used at your discretion to supplement any of the lessons you teach. The rich literature and creative art connections in this part of the resource assimilate language development, critical thinking, and foster both small and gross motor development.

# Skills-at-a-Glance: Grade 1 Writing

## Focus: Genre/Summarizing

\*\*\*\*Required Foundational Lessons - these lessons are a prerequisite to all lessons that come after.

### Genre/Summarizing

- Lesson 1: Genre/Author's Purpose
- Lesson 2: Informational/Expository & Narrative Book Covers
- Lesson 3: Create Your Own Book Cover
- Lesson 4: Narrative Story Pattern
- Lesson 5: The Simplified Narrative Diamond
- Lesson 6: Beginning, Middle, End
- Lesson 7: Summarizing Narrative Stories
- Lesson 8: Informational/Expository Pillar
- Lesson 9: Summarizing Informational/Expository Writing
- Lesson 10: Simplified Opinion Pillar
- Lesson 11: Summarizing Opinion Writing

## Focus: Narrative

### Narrative Writing - Organization

- Lesson 1: Genre/Author's Purpose
- Lesson 5: The Simplified Narrative Diamond
- Lesson 6: Beginning, Middle, End
- Lesson 7: Summarizing Narrative Stories

### Narrative Writing - Pre-requisite to Elaborative Detail

- Lesson 1: Identifying Story Critical Elements
- Extension Activities

- Lesson 2: Magic Camera
- Lesson 3: Using the Five Senses
- Lesson 4: Listen and Imagine
- Lesson 5: Five Senses Bingo
- Lesson 6: Describing the Five Senses

### Narrative Writing - Elaborative Detail/Suspense

- Lesson 7: Modeling Elaborative Detail
- Lesson 8: Showing Rather than Telling
- Lesson 9: Scenario Cards
- Lesson 10: Feelings Posters
- Lesson 11: Lift the Flap Emotions
- Lesson 12: Word Referents
- Lesson 13: Suspenseful Riddles
- Lesson 14: Suspense - Application
- Lesson 15: Ready to Write? Extension Riddle Activities - The Mitten
- Lesson 16: Ready to Write? Extension Riddle Activities - Who's Behind the Door?
- Lesson 17: Ready to Write? Extension Riddle Activities - What's Inside the Box?

### Narrative Writing - Expanding on the Diamond

- Lesson 18: Entertaining Beginnings - Awareness
- Lesson 19: Entertaining Beginnings - Modeling
- Lesson 20: Extended Endings - Awareness
- Lesson 21: Writing the Ending to a Story
- Lesson 22: Main Event - Awareness: Stretching Out the Middle of the Story
- Lesson 23: Stretching Out the Main Event with Pictures
- Lesson 24: Writing a Main Event (2-Day Lesson)
- Lesson 25: Reading with Author's Eyes
- Lesson 26: Process Writing

\*\*\*Supplement these lessons with companion narrative lessons in the final section of the resource - Reading, Writing and Art Connections

# Skills-at-a-Glance: Grade 1 Writing

## Focus: Informational/Expository

### Informational/Expository - Organization

Lesson 1: Genre/Author's Purpose

Lesson 8: Informational/Expository Pillar

Lesson 9: Summarizing Informational/Expository Writing

### Informational/Expository - Foundational

Lesson 1: Sorting Details

Lesson 2: From Sorting Facts to Main Ideas

Lesson 3: Information Detectives

Lesson 4: Informational Sentences

Lesson 5: Response to Informational/Expository Text

Lesson 6: Learning About Nonfiction Text Features

### Informational/Expository - Research

Lesson 7: What Informational Books Tell us

Lesson 8: Let's Find Out

Lesson 9: Using Digital Technology

Lesson 10: Create a Class PowerPoint

\*\*\*Supplement these lessons with companion informational/expository or research lessons in the final section of the resource - Reading, Writing and Art Connections

## Focus: Opinion

### Opinion - Organization (From Genre/Summarizing Section)

Lesson 10: Simplified Opinion Pillar

Lesson 11: Summarizing Opinion Writing

### Opinion - Foundational (From Informational/Expository, Research, Opinion Section)

Lesson 11: Exploring Opinions

Lesson 12: Opinion Cards

Lesson 13: Opinion Writing About a Topic

Lesson 14: Opinion Writing About a Book

Lesson 15: Writing Opinion Paragraphs

\*\*\*Supplement these lessons with companion opinion lessons in the final section of the resource - Reading, Writing and Art Connections

## Vocabulary: Anytime and Always Lessons

Lesson 1: Top Banana

Lesson 2: Put Said to Bed

Lesson 3: No Go Game

Lesson 4: Adverb Game



# Desired Learning Outcomes

There are many purposes for writing in Grade 1 - most involve writing at the most basic level: expressing a thought or idea on the page. The purpose may be to label, record, or reflect. The activities in this book are designed for a different purpose - to begin to lay the groundwork for eventually writing a narrative story, informational/expository, or opinion piece. Thus, the activities in this book are pre-writing activities that raise an awareness of the characteristics of narratives, the pattern, shape, sequence, and language of story as well as the pattern, shape, sequence and language of informational and opinion writing. The focus is on conceptualizing rather than actually writing a narrative. Of course, students who are developmentally ready may begin to apply the skills to their own writing.

## **The teacher will:**

Read and discuss a wide range of stories and identify the genre (narrative/informational/expository/opinion) using story templates and directed questions.

Reinforce the concept of FIRST, NEXT, LAST.

Use classic stories and story templates pointing out author's purpose, character, setting, a story problem or adventure in narrative.

Read nonfiction, informational books, pointing out the author's purpose, topic, and main idea.

Read opinion pieces and texts, pointing out the author's purpose, the issue or topic, and main reasons.

Introduce beginning, middle, end in the context of the narrative, including the simplified writing diamond.

Introduce the topic and Main Ideas in the context of Informational/Expository, including the Simplified Informational/Expository Pillar.

Introduce the topic and main reasons in the context of Opinion, including the Simplified Opinion Pillar.

Discuss the middle section of the story by identifying the problem or adventure, pointing out that authors write to stretch out the middle.

Discuss and review the five senses.

Read descriptive segments for the purpose of identifying sensory details in writing.

Model the use of sensory details in writing through the use of questioning and sentence variety.

Introduce language for what feelings look like.

Present suspense as simple riddles and use to model suspenseful segments.

Introduce narrative stories with entertaining beginnings. Model action story beginnings.

Discuss the middle of a story and how authors craft a middle using a single, significant event told in slow-motion. Model a slow-motion middle.

Discuss the end of a story, pointing out effective story endings. Model a memory ending.

Present a collection of informational details to sort and categorize into topics.

Introduce a collection of facts/details on a particular topic to sort into main ideas.

Introduce elaboration of an informational/expository text using the questions, "What does it look like?" and "Why is it important?" Model the use of these questions.

Read informational text, focusing on related facts and details.

Introduce text features common in informational/expository writing.

Present a collection of nonfiction books and other sources on a topic to glean information.

## **The students will:**

Recognize and distinguish between the characteristics of narrative stories and informational/expository text and make predictions about genre based on title and cover.

Understand the basic concept of FIRST, NEXT, LAST.

Identify the author's purpose, main character, setting, and story problem or adventure in the narrative.

Identify author's purpose, topic, and main ideas in a nonfiction/informational book.

Identify author's purpose, issue or topic, and main reasons in an opinion text.

Summarize narrative stories in terms of beginning, middle, end. Identify the parts of a simplified narrative diamond.

Summarize informational text in terms of topic and main ideas. Identify the parts of a Simplified Informational/Expository Pillar.

Summarize opinion pieces in terms of topic and main reasons. Identify the parts of the Simplified Opinion Pillar.

Identify story problems and solutions or adventures and conclusions, practice stretching out the middle of single-significant events.

Distinguish among the five senses.

Identify the ways in which authors use the five senses to describe story critical characters, settings, and objects.

Develop an awareness of the thought process of an author in creating descriptive segments and learning the language of story. Some students will apply these skills in their own writing.

Recognize facial expressions and body language that express feelings and use language to describe feelings.

Recognize suspenseful segments and use word referents to create suspenseful descriptions.

Analyze story beginnings. Practice writing action beginnings.

Identify a story's single significant event and explain how an author achieves a "stretched-out" middle. Practice writing a story middle.

Analyze extended endings. Practice writing a story ending.

Sort and categorize informational details into topics.

Sort facts and details on a particular topic into main idea categories.

Identify an author's use of the questions "What does it look like?" and "Why is it important?" Practice writing details using these questions.








Respond to informational text by identifying facts and details in the text presented.

Distinguish and identify a variety of text features in informational/expository writing.

Glean information from a variety of books and sources.

# Section 1: Genre/Summarizing

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## Objectives:

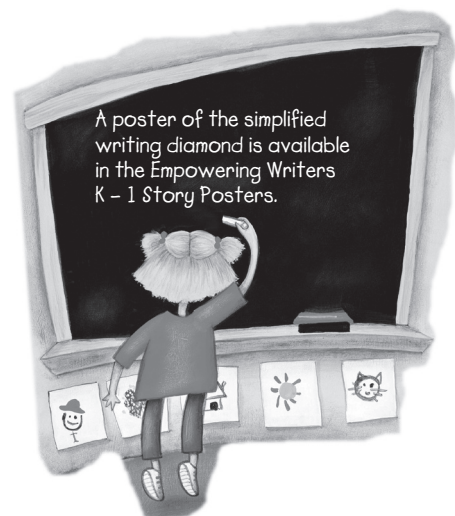
- Students will summarize stories in terms of Beginning, Middle, End.
- Students will identify story problems and solutions, or experiences and conclusions.
- Students will see the SIMPLIFIED WRITING DIAMOND as a representation of the shape narrative stories take.

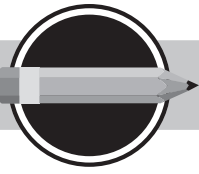
## Materials:

Read - aloud narrative picture book, story summary chart

## Procedure:

1. Read the chosen story.
2. Ask students *“Where was the main character at the beginning of the story? What was she/he doing?”*
3. Next ask, *“What happened in the middle of the story? Did the main character struggle with a problem or have a special adventure? Tell about it.”*
4. Then ask, *“How did the story end? What finally happened to the main character?”*
5. Use student responses to verbally summarize the story within the framework. The goal is to familiarize or remind students of the essence of story through simple summarizing.
6. Use student responses to write the story summary in the template provided, p. 32 (SP 11).
7. Introduce students to the SIMPLIFIED WRITING DIAMOND, SP 10. Explain that this represents the organizational structure a narrative story will take. In other words, the MIDDLE of the story (the place where the main character struggles with a problem, has an adventure or significant experience) is the LARGEST, most important part of the story.
8. This framework can be used for any narrative story.
9. Repeat this lesson with many narrative stories so that students can begin to internalize the diamond and the summarizing framework.





## Template

Download and print this template and a student-friendly landscape version via Student Pages link. (SP 11-12)

### Basic Beginning, Middle, End Summarizing Framework for Narrative Stories (Foundational Template)

**In the beginning** \_\_\_\_\_ .  
The main character and what he/she did

**In the middle of the story** \_\_\_\_\_ .  
The main character's problem or adventure

**Finally, in the end** \_\_\_\_\_ .  
How the story ended

**Author's purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_



# Suggested Classic Stories to Illustrate

## Beginning, Middle, End

### *Classic Children's Books:*

#### **Strega Nona**

*Tomie dePaola, Aladdin Paperbacks, 1975*

Summary: In the beginning, Strega Nona made pasta in her magic pasta pot.

In the middle of the story Big Anthony made pasta in her pot, but he couldn't stop the pasta from flowing.

Finally, in the end Strega Nona stopped the pasta and made Big Anthony eat all of the leftover pasta.

Author's Purpose: To entertain

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#### **The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig**

*Eugene Trivizas, Simon and Schuster Publishing, 1993*

Summary: In the beginning, the wolves built a house of bricks, but the pig knocked it down.

In the middle of the story the wolves built stronger and stronger houses, but the pig always destroyed it.

Finally, in the end the wolves built a house of flowers. The pig loved it and they became friends.

Author's Purpose: To entertain

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### *Current Children's Books:*

#### **Sticky, Sticky Stuck**

*Michael Gutch, Harper/Collins Publishers, 2013*

Summary: In the beginning, Annie was always sticky and she accidentally stuck to the dog.

In the middle of the story mom, dad, brother, and sister tried to unstick her, but instead, they all became stuck, too.

Finally, in the end the fire department came to unstick them, but they decided they liked being stuck together as a family.

Author's Purpose: To entertain

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#### **The Girl Who Wouldn't Brush Her Hair**

*Kate Bernheimer, Schwartz & Wade Books, 2013*

Summary: In the beginning, a girl with long brown hair refused to wash her hair.

In the middle of the story mice kept multiplying in her hair until she was told she could not return to school.

Finally, in the end she asked the mice to leave and she washed her hair.

Author's Purpose: To entertain

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#### **The Magic of Friendship Snow**

*Andi Cann, MindView Press, 2018*

Summary: In the beginning, Jojo was sad because everyone had friends, but not her.

In the middle of the story Jojo meets Puddles the snowman made with magic snow and he becomes her best friend.

Finally, in the end Jojo and Puddles help another friend, Ned, when he has to move away.

Author's Purpose: To entertain

# Summarizing Informational/Expository Pieces



## Objective:

- Students begin to recognize how authors organize informational/expository writing and summarize an informational/expository text orally, recognizing the author's topic and facts about the topic.

## Materials:

Informational/Expository Summarizing framework, Informational/Expository paragraph about autumn.

## Key Vocabulary:

*informational/expository, information, facts, topic, summary*

## Procedure:

1. Explain to students that today they will be delving into informational/expository writing. Ask, "Who remembers why authors write informational/expository books? What is the author's purpose?"
2. Tell students that the title of an informational/expository piece usually names the topic. Project the paragraph titled "All About Autumn." Ask them what the title is? What is the author writing about? (autumn) Tell the students that this is the **topic**. Say, "In informational/expository writing the author's purpose is to give information, so in this piece of writing the author gives information about autumn."
3. Read aloud the paragraph about autumn.

## All About Autumn

Autumn is the season that comes after summer. In the autumn, the temperature begins to get colder and the leaves turn yellow, orange, and red. Soon the leaves start to fall off the trees. Animals prepare for winter by storing food such as nuts and seeds and eating more to fatten up for the long winter ahead. Everyone gets ready for autumn holidays like Halloween and Thanksgiving. Be sure to watch for signs of autumn around your home.

(continued)



## Summarizing Informational/Expository Pieces

4. Ask students what information they learned about autumn and record their answers on a prewriting plan, chart or interactive white board. Facts must come from the text and not from their background knowledge. Explain that what they learned are **facts** about autumn. You can also go back to the text and locate the specific sentence that contains the information the students recall. Reread the sentences so that the students understand that the fact came from the information in the text. (This kind of awareness prepares students to locate evidence in text.)
5. Use the information gathered from the students to fill in the informational/expository summarizing framework either projected or on a chart. Download the template on SP 18. (Sentence Starters are provided on p. 49)

This piece gives information about autumn.

Fact 1: comes after summer

Fact 2: leaves fall off the trees

Fact 3: animals get ready for winter

The author's purpose is to inform or to give information.

Student Template

Prewriting Plan  
Informational/Expository

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Fact 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Fact 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Author's Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

SP 17

Student Template

Summarizing Framework -  
Informational/Expository

This piece gives information about \_\_\_\_\_

Fact 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Fact 2: \_\_\_\_\_

The author's purpose is \_\_\_\_\_

SP 18

Here are narrative and informational/expository side-by-side books about autumn to enhance the topic: Any of the informational/expository titles can be used for summarizing.

***Leaves Falling Down: Learning about Autumn Leaves*** by Lisa Bullard (E)

***It's Fall*** by Linda Glaser (E)

***Scarecrow*** by Cynthia Rylant (N)

***Red Leaf, Yellow Leaf*** by Lois Ehlert (N)

***In November*** by Cynthia Rylant (N)

***Why Do Leaves Change Color?*** by Betsy Maestro (E)

***Fletcher and the Falling Leaves*** by Julia Rawlinson (N)

***The Pumpkin Patch*** by Elizabeth King (E)

***How Do You Know It's Fall?*** by Lisa Herrington and Randy Bilik (E)

**NOTE:** As with all the lessons in your Getting Ready to Write Guide, be sure to repeat this lesson with many short informational/expository pieces you have written about science or social studies topics or any age level appropriate nonfiction books. **Remember:** Oral language precedes written. First grade students will need many opportunities to orally express the summary before writing.



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## Objectives:

- Students will describe the “top banana” (special student of the week).
- Students will aid the teacher in writing fluent sentences on the chart paper incorporating good sentence variety and vivid vocabulary.

## Materials:

chart paper, markers

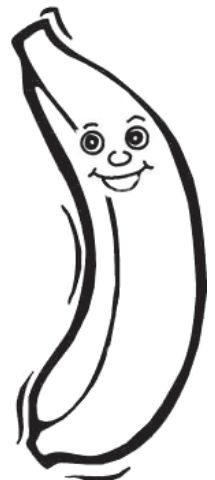
## Procedure:

1. Gather students and give each a turn to say something positive about the special student, the “**top banana.**”
2. Typically students will provide bare bones description such as,  
**“Brianna is good at math.**  
**Brianna is a good reader.**  
**Brianna shares her markers.**  
**Brianna is good at art.”**  
 Chart and read the sentences aloud emphasizing the redundant sentence structure. Ask students what they notice. (Brianna is..., Brianna is...).  
 3. Now rechart these in more powerful ways using sentence starters and word referents (in italics):  
**“I’m impressed by her math skills.**  
**Everyone notices that Brianna reads really well.**  
**One thing we all appreciate is that *this good friend* shares her markers with others.**  
**I am always amazed by *this talented classmate’s* art work.”**
4. When the week is over, give the chart to the “top banana” as a special keepsake.
5. Keep this technique in mind as you move throughout the school year. For example, at Thanksgiving, instead of having all students write “*I am thankful for*\_\_.” Provide alternatives such as, “*We’re all grateful for*\_\_. *I feel gratitude when*\_\_. *I’m thankful when* \_\_. *I appreciate* \_\_. *I feel lucky to have* \_\_. *is something I am thankful for.* \_\_ *gives me a thankful heart.*”

## Sentence Starters:

I’m always impressed with \_\_\_\_\_.  
 She/he impresses us with \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Everybody notices \_\_\_\_\_.  
 This classroom star excels at \_\_\_\_\_.  
 I respect the way \_\_\_\_\_.  
 I get a kick out of \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Everyone comments on \_\_\_\_\_.  
 What would we do without \_\_\_\_\_?  
 Have you seen \_\_\_\_\_?  
 I am honored to call \_\_\_\_\_ my friend.

I admire the way \_\_\_\_\_.  
 One of his/her gifts is \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Don’t you just love \_\_\_\_\_.  
 You can’t miss his/her \_\_\_\_\_.  
 One look at \_\_\_\_\_ and you notice \_\_\_\_\_.  
 I am amazed by \_\_\_\_\_.  
 You can count on him/her for \_\_\_\_\_.  
 We’re grateful for \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Thank goodness for \_\_\_\_\_.  
 I’m crazy about \_\_\_\_\_.







# No Go Game

## Objectives:

- Students will recognize the way an author uses alternative words for “go” and “went” to add additional descriptive information.
- Students will move according to the word card to demonstrate understanding of vivid alternatives to “go” and “went.”

## Materials:

Index cards with NO GO words, SP 28-35

## Procedure:

1. Download and print No Go Game index cards, SP 28-35.
2. Pull a card from the pile and ask a student to move across the room according to the word. For example: if the word is tiptoe, have the student tiptoe across the room.
3. As a variation you can pull a card and have the whole class move down the hallway according to the word. For example: if the word is crept, have students creep to music class that day.
4. Try a phonemic awareness connection by grouping the word cards according to the initial consonant.
5. When reading a story have students identify “NO GO” words that the author has used. A wonderful story to illustrate this concept is Crickwing by Jannell Cannon. (See bibliography for publishing information.)



# Index Card Activity: No Go Game



Download and print full-size cards via Student Pages link. (SP 28-35)

NO GO CARDS

cartwheeled

crept

danced

dashed

dillydallied

dodged

hopped

marched

plodded

raced

sashayed

scurried

skipped

snuck

stomped

strolled

stumbled

tiptoed

trampled

tripped










trudged

zipped

zoomed

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# Identifying Story Critical Elements

## Objectives:

- Students will identify story critical characters, settings, and objects in narrative stories.

## Materials:

A read-aloud story, selected paper, chart, or template.

## Procedure:

1. Read a story and identify a story critical character, setting, or object. For example, in Tomie DePaola's Strega Nona the story critical *characters* would be Strega Nona and Big Anthony. The story critical *setting* is the village. The story critical *object* is the magic pasta pot.  
(Examples from classic literature are provided on p. 75)
2. Lead students in identifying these elements in familiar stories. If students can pick out at least two story critical elements (character, setting, or object) in stories they hear or read, they will eventually look for and create similar elements in stories of their own. They will learn to focus elaborative detail on relevant, story critical characters, settings, and objects in their own stories.

Use student input to complete the template, SP 40 identifying the story critical elements.

Template

Story Critical Character/Setting/Object

Who? (Story Critical Character)

Where? (Story Critical Setting)

What? (Story Critical Object)

SPANISH

SP 40

### NOTE:

A poster of the following "Story Critical Character/Setting/Object chart is available in the Empowering Writers K – 1 Poster Set:  
*K – 1 Story Posters.*



## **The Paperboy, Dav Pilkey**

Who? boy

Where? neighborhood

What? neighborhood newspapers

## **The Knitting Chicken, Travis M. Blair**

Who? Lucy, the chicken

Where? farm

What? knitted scarf

## **Seeds and Trees, Brendon Walden**

Who? prince

Where? forest

What? seeds

## **Last Stop on Market Street, Matt de la Peña**

Who? Nana and CJ

Where? neighborhood - the city

What? bus

## **The Day the Crayons Quit, Drew Daywalt**

Who? Duncan

Where? school

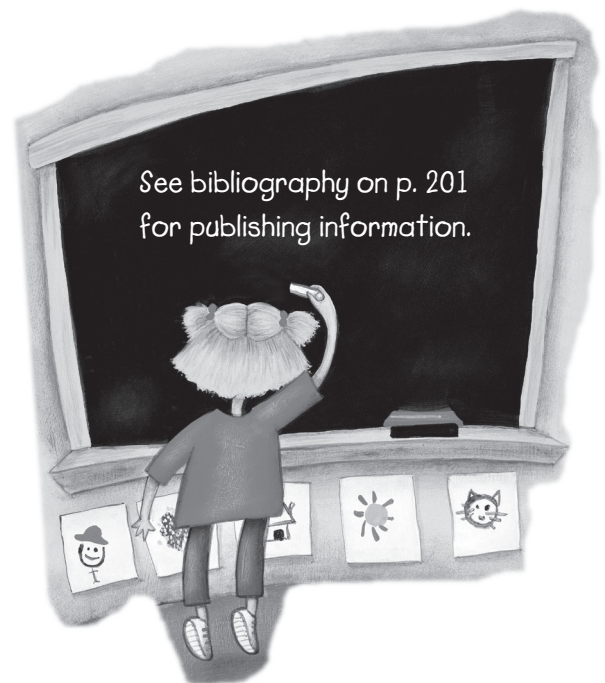
What? crayons

## **The Roller Coaster, Marla Frazee**

Who? child

Where? amusement park

What? roller coaster



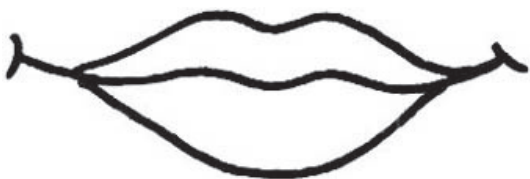
# Listen and Imagine

Download and print full size cards via the Student Pages link. (SP 43-44)

## 5 SENSES CARDS



see



taste

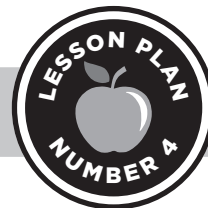
hear



feel

smell





## Descriptive Segments

**Optional:** Download these descriptive segments as cards via the Student Pages link. (SP 45-46)

### Autumn:

One autumn day I walked along the country lane. A cool breeze blew my hair up off my face. I looked up at the blue sky dotted with clouds. A flock of geese flew past. HONK, HONK, they sang as they soared above the trees. The leaves on the trees were gold, yellow, red, and orange. Some had fallen to the ground. They felt crispy and dry under my feet. CRUNCH, CRUNCH went the leaves as a squirrel scampered by gathering nuts. Near the cottage I sniffed something delicious. It was the smell of a warm sweet pumpkin pie!

*Remind them that the author COULD HAVE just said, "I took an autumn walk."*

#### What You Saw

blue sky/clouds  
colorful leaves  
squirrel/nut

#### What You Heard

HONK, HONK  
crunching leaves

#### What You Felt

cold breeze  
crispy dried leaves

#### What You Smelled

sweet pumpkin  
pie

#### What You Tasted

\*n/A

### Troll:

I stared at the troll in front of the cave. He was about the size of a small child, but powerfully built with huge muscles rippling across his strong arms and short stocky legs. His large head was covered in wild yellow hair that hung around his shoulders in thick tangled clumps. His small beady eyes darted this way and that. His laugh sounded like the hee-haw of a donkey. As I got closer, I detected a green, minty smell. I realized he wore a necklace of woven mint leaves around his thick neck. He reached out and shook my hand and his grasp was strong as steel.

*Remind them that the author COULD HAVE just said, "I saw a troll."*

#### What Sara Saw

short, muscle-  
bound body  
wild yellow  
tangled hair

#### What Sara Heard

hee-haw

#### What Sara Felt

strong steely  
grasp

#### What Sara Smelled

mint

#### What Sara Tasted

\*n/A



## Objectives:

- Students will recognize that description is specific rather than general. (Show don't Tell)
- Students will take part in the modeling process by asking detail generating questions and answering those questions in words or phrases.
- Students will observe the teacher modeling in paragraph form a number of elaborative segments.
- Students will begin to internalize the detail generating questions, become comfortable with the language of elaboration, and write their own elaborative detail segments.

## Materials:

Chart paper, markers

## Procedure:

1. Select a critical element to describe from the following pages. In order to give concrete experience to students, have pictures available for reference to the story critical element you will be describing. For example; calendar art, picture books, or artistic renderings. See the list of CREATIVE CONNECTIONS following each activity.
2. Explain that the class will be helping you to describe an important character, setting, or object. Tell them to close their eyes and imagine. Quietly read the appropriate questions (listed on the following pages) in order to inspire some specific description and imaginative thinking.
3. The next step is to chart the questions, asking the class “What do you want to know about the character, setting, or object?” (Sample questions are on the following pages.)
4. Modeling: When you have finished charting the questions it is time to chart the responses that your students provide. These are usually one or two word phrases. Students almost always know more than they can articulate. In other words, their experience and feelings extend beyond their ability to express these clearly. Children’s simple words, the inflection used, facial expressions, and body language all provide clues about their intended meaning. The teacher’s role involves careful listening and observation in order to intuit what is implied and to provide vivid vocabulary to best express these intentions. This process of scripting for students, of assigning powerful language based on their intentions, is an empowering means of building vocabulary. It also promotes awareness of basic print conventions and reinforces sound/symbol connections. (See Scripted Lesson, pp. 42-43)
5. Finally, using the student generated responses, write a fluid, vivid description of the character, setting, or object, using good sentence variety. (Sentence starters are available on the following pages. These are provided for reference purposes as a means of assisting the author – student or teacher – by encouraging good sentence variety.)



## Modeling Elaborative Detail

### Story Critical Character: Awesome Dog

#### Sample Scripted Elaborative Detail Lesson

Ask students to close their eyes and tell them that you have an awesome dog and to get a mental image of this awesome dog. Share images of “awesome dogs.” Dogs that are dressed up, have funny faces, or distinguishing features. Ask students, “Which one is my awesome dog?” They may point to one or two, but ultimately, they need to know that “awesome” is not enough description to pick out the exact dog.

Explain to students that if you want to describe an awesome dog, it will need to be specific rather than general description. Ask, “How would we be able to pick out the dog I’m thinking of?” Lead students to understand that by asking some specific questions, they would be able to figure out which one you had in mind.

Ask students, “What do you want to know about my awesome dog?”



#### Detail Generating Questions:

*What color is your dog?*

*What kind of fur/hair?*

*What is the dog’s size?*

*How do you think the dog feels?*

*What is the dog wearing?*

*What color eyes does your dog have?*

*If this dog could talk, what might he/she say?*

**(Notice there are no yes/no questions!)**

Chart the questions, prompting students when necessary. Then begin to answer the questions, translating simple, one-word responses into more specific responses. You may need to probe further for more detail. Adjust your questioning accordingly. Remember that the quality of the questions you ask will determine the quality of the responses you get. Specific questions yield specific responses.

#### Example:

**What kind/color fur?** Brown with spots (*“What color were the spots? Where were they on the dog’s body?”* Student points to his own back and says, *“They were darker than the fur”*). You write: Covered with brown fur that had dark spots on its back • white fur (*“What kind of fur was it? Was it long? Short? Curly? Straight?”*) Student says *“like a poodle fur.”* You write: Curly, white fur that was cut close to its body

**How big/small?** (compare) this big-points to his knee, came up to my knee, • enormous (*Was the dog taller than you?* Student puts his hand in the air above his head) towered over me

**What might the dog say?** I don’t like this bow • This bow in my hair makes me look silly • help • (*Why is it saying help?* Student responds *“It wants to get out of the yarn that it’s stuck in.”*) • HELP! I’m stuck inside this ball of yarn and can’t get out!

The lesson will continue in the same way. Elicit as many responses as possible for each question and then move on to the next one.



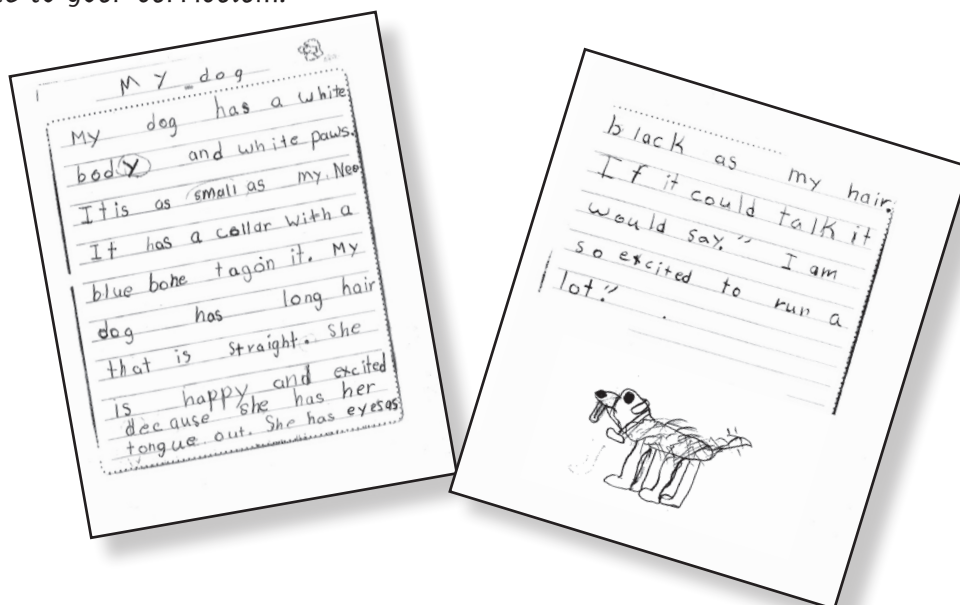
**From this list you can write an elaborative segment:**

*I couldn't take my eyes off of this small dog with large pointy ears and short light tan fur that looked almost white. Her tiny paws each had five pointy claws that reminded me of fingernails. She stood elegantly staring at me with her shiny round brown eyes. My canine friend wore a sparkling diamond crown and a matching necklace. She seemed to be saying "I'm the most beautiful girl in the world!"*

**Here are some sentence starters:**

- I couldn't take my eyes off of \_\_\_\_\_.
- This fine specimen had \_\_\_\_\_.
- My canine friend wore \_\_\_\_\_.
- The pup's \_\_\_\_\_ brought a smile to my face.
- His expression seemed to say "\_\_\_\_\_."

**NOTE:** Keep in mind that you can substitute other characters, settings, and objects of your choice, to better relate to your curriculum.



**My dog has a white body and white paws. It is as small as my knee. It has a collar with a blue bone tag on it. My dog has long hair that is straight. She is happy and excited because she has her tongue out. She has eyes as black as my hair: If it could talk, it would say, "I am so excited to run a lot."**

**Creative Connection:**

Ask students to bring in pictures of their own dog or a dog they'd like to have. (Option: Have images available for students to choose from or have them draw their "awesome dog.") Then, encourage them to write a detailed description of their awesome dog. Be sure to have the charts you've created as well as the sentence starters available for student reference.