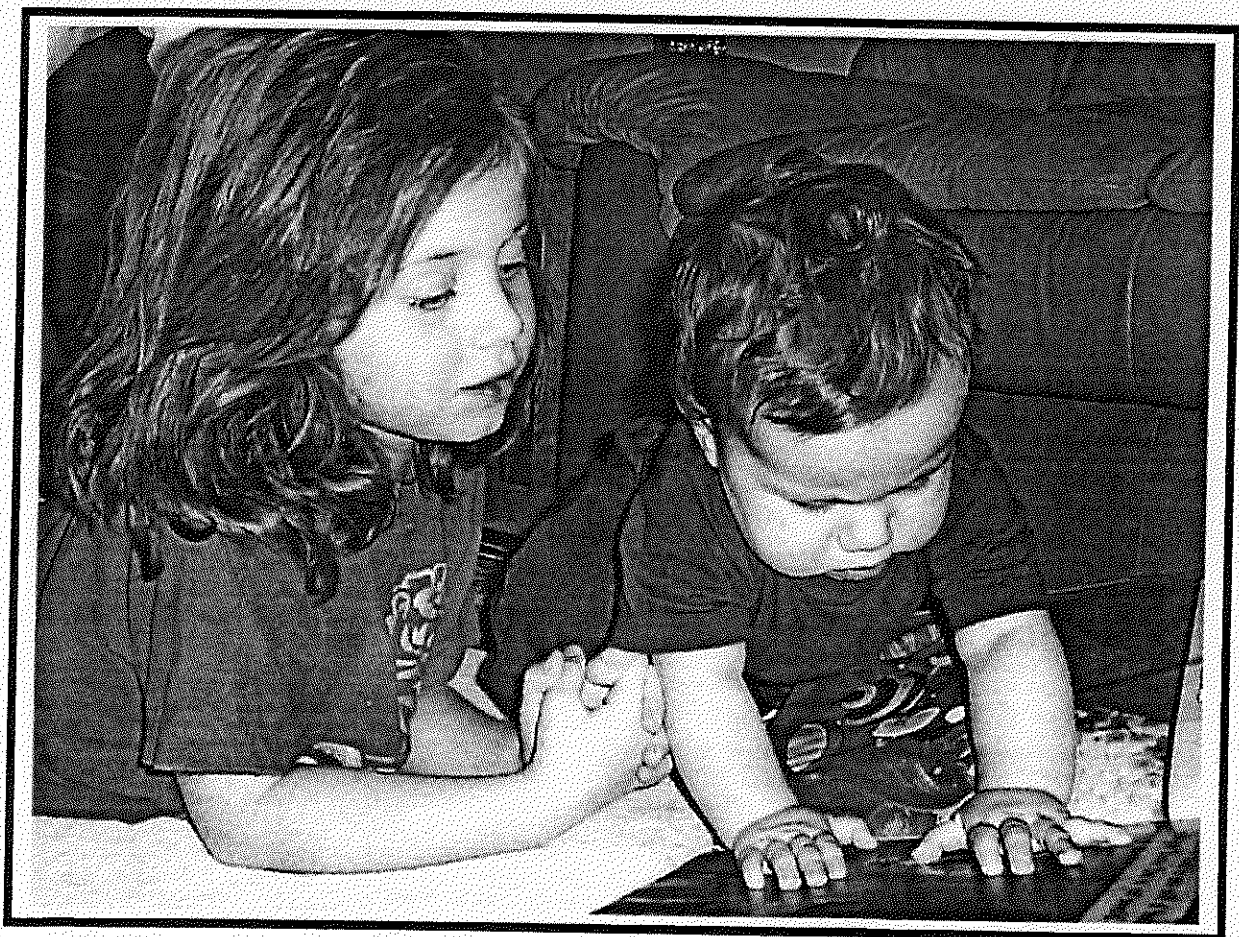


Closure

"Bringing it all
Together"



Summer 2004

1.

1911

1911

1911

6 Traits of Writing

"Bringing it all Together"

Some things to think about.....

1. 6 Traits is not a curriculum
2. The strategies outlined are not intended to be recipe, but ideas which you can modify to fit your needs.
3. These materials are only springboards for you. Use your wonderful collection and continue to build your artifacts.
4. Think small -- but think quality.

How far have we come?

1. Look at two student writings (handout) - grade for all traits.
2. Just in time teaching....teach it when they need it.
3. The writing process is a circular process. Can keep using what you already do and can utilize 6 Traits as a tool to enhance teaching/learning and assessment pieces.
4. Allowing children the choice of publication.

I dont. Nderf want to get my
name on the board and I
want to get better at
cursive and I want to get
better at math and I want
to get better at writing.

The Education Center, Inc. • THE MATHBOX • Indianapolis • August 1988

Grade 4

4.



A Jacques Vaughn - True All-American

Jacques Vaughn is a college basketball player. He plays on the KU basketball team. Jacques is the pointguard for his team. He wears the number 11 when he plays. Jacques Vaughn has shown kids like me, how important going to college and finishing is to a person. He turned down a chance to play for the NBA. People were more interested in his decision to stay or go to the NBA than the presidential election that was going on at that time. Jacques Vaughn had the attention of everyone and proved how smart he really was by staying in school and finishing his degree. Wow, that took a lot of strength to make that decision! After he made that choice, he got hurt. During a practice game, he tore a ligament in his wrist. He had to be worried, could he play again? He wore a cast for six weeks. He started playing after the cast came off and showed everyone he is one of the best players on the team. I think he is fast and quick. He can shoot the ball really well. Jacques Vaughn can really pass that ball! He played high school basketball in California. He was a High School All-American. Now he is a senior on KU's team. He is a Kansas Jayhawk now! Jacques scored his 1000th career point. Just think, he made this record because he stayed in school. Jacques Vaughn will be a pro player with a college education some day. I know he will because he is just that good. Jacques Vaughn has shown me that if you work hard and stay in school, the rest of your life will be great!

Grade 4




California

I went down to my Gandma's house in California and I got to ride horses, I swimmmed, went shopping, saw old friends, I went to a party, I went to the new Merine World, and I had a lot of fun.

I drove down there in a car with my uncle and drove back with him. He went down to visit his mom and dad so it worked out pretty good.

I use to live in California till a year ago ~~and~~ it was a 30 min. drive away ~~for~~ from San Francico I lived in Walnut Creek. I went to school at Walnut Acres - for four years. Sense 2 grade. Then moved to Oregon and we bought a gas station. When I got to go I was glad and happy my mom let me. I HAD FUN!

A Little Mouse Statue

Every time I walk in my room, or pass my dresser, I see something that's very special to me. It is a little statue of a mouse. His tiny hands are expanded as far apart as they allow themselves to be. And, at the bottom of the statue, it reads, "I love  you this much."

I believe I was four years old when my grandma took me over to her bedroom closet one day and got my statue off the very top shelf. Then, with extreme care, she unwrapped a small object and handed it to me. It was the mouse statue.

Ever since then, even now, I have him placed on my dresser to admire. Every time I pass my dresser, or stand next to my dresser dressing or putting on earrings, I think of my grandma.

I think of the way my grandma always expanded her arms and said, "I LOVE YOU THIS MUCH" just like the little mouse statue does. And I'd do the same. Then we'd hug each other

followed by enormous kisses. Her gentle and kind smile, the glitter in her eyes and the way she always stuck up for me if I was in a fight with my mom are all things I remember about her. Today, she still takes me special places, and she's always there if I need someone to talk to or get advice from.

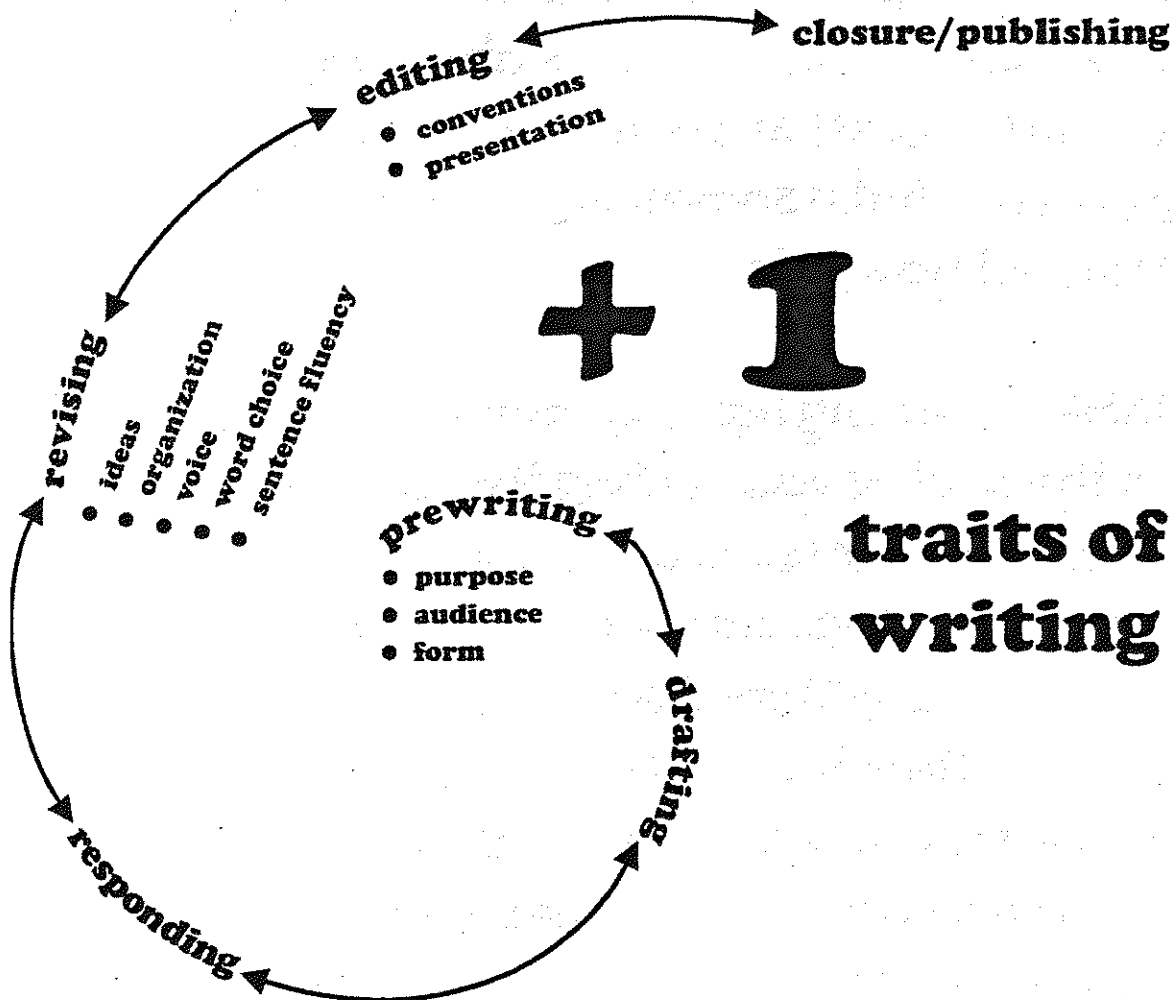
I will always treat my statue with the most of respect, just like my grandma asked me to. And, I will always treasure its unique way of making me feel close to my grandma, even when she's not around, every time I glance at him. And who knows, maybe one day I'll be giving him to my granddaughter!!!

Reflection

I have become a better writer this year. I have learned to put more focus in my writing and stick with one topic. I think about my topic before I write, and I share my writing in a writing group. That is something I did not like to do at first, but now I do.

I think my writing has a lot more voice now. Voice is the part of your writing that shows how you feel about your topic because the thoughts and feelings come from your heart. This year we read *Charlotte's Web*, and that is a book that I think has a lot of voice. I try to find just the right word to say what I mean and not just the first word that comes into my mind. The way I have grown the most is that I like to write a lot more than I used to, especially poems. I think I could be a poet if I wanted to, and I think my writing shows that.

6+1 Writing Assessment Traits and the Writing Process



The Prewriting Stage

1. Find an interesting subject to write about by exploring some of the following suggestions:
 - Brainstorm and list potential topics to write about with your classmates.
 - Take a photo safari through a picture album.
 - Dig up the past . . . reread past journal entries, letters, postcards, etc.
 - Take a nature walk and be on the lookout.
2. Choose a subject to write about that interests you and one you know a lot about.
3. Gather details about your topic to decide if you care enough to write about it. Organize your thoughts in some manner of paper . . . ask your teacher for a graphic organizer of some sort.
4. Sometimes if you're fresh out of ideas, your teacher might offer a topic or two!

With thanks to classroom teachers for these ideas.



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The Draft and Discover Stage

1. Begin to write. Jot down your ideas . . . the ones that are the clearest to you.
2. Decide what is most important to you as you write.
3. Decide what ideas are working and which are not.
4. Use temporary spelling at this stage. (We'll edit later!)
5. Focus on content, NOT mechanics.
6. Double space each line so that you can revise easily.
7. Think about your draft:
 - Are you ready to share it with a peer reader?
 - Do you have enough information to write about this topic?
 - Who is your audience?

With thanks to classroom teachers for these ideas.



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The Revising Stage

1. Begin to ask yourself where changes need to be made. It's time to **RETHINK!**
2. Read your draft aloud.
3. Check for the traits: Ideas, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Voice, Ideas, and Organization. (Refer to your Student-Friendly Scoring Guide.)
4. Add, delete, **CHANGE!**
5. Have a conference with one of the following:
 - a peer
 - your teacher
 - someone outside the classroom
6. **REWRITE . . .**Yes, we know it's work, but you might surprise yourself and be pleased with the outcome!
7. Don't forget your title!

With thanks to classroom teachers for these ideas.



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The Editing Stage

1. Now you can focus on mechanical correctness. Look for possible errors in the following areas:
 - capitalization
 - grammar (read it aloud again!)
 - punctuation
 - spelling
 - indentation
2. Check for spelling errors. Read your story backward to look for those spelling demons!
3. Use standard proofreading marks.
4. Find out if a peer can help you with your editing.
5. Remember this is the trait of CONVENTIONS.

With thanks to classroom teachers for these ideas.



The Publishing Stage

1. Publish your writing in an appropriate form. You've worked hard, so you want it looking good!
2. Be aware of presentation:
 - Is it legible?
 - Do I have margins?
 - Do I use adequate spacing between each word?
 - Is my name and the date appropriately positioned?
 - Is my title centered?
3. Share your finished writing with an audience:
 - Your classmates, family, or community members.
 - Hang it up someplace where you and others can enjoy it.
 - Enter it in a writing contest.
 - Send it off to your local newspaper.
 - Put it in your portfolio.
4. Take some quiet time to reflect on your writing in your writer's notebook.

With thanks to classroom teachers for these ideas.



WHAT TYPE OF WRITER AM I?

The Chunk Writer

If you are a Chunk Writer, you start with the idea most clearly in mind. That idea may be the middle of the paper, or the ending. When the first chunk is developed, you start another idea. Each idea fills a page or two. When you have all the chunks developed, you cut and tape the paper together in the sequence you wish. Then you write the beginning, the ending, and the transitions between chunks.

The Incubator

If you are an Incubator, you spend your time thinking about the writing you have to do. Your mind is constantly developing parts, ordering the sequence, thinking of new ideas, and identifying a focus or attack strategy. You may be incubating the paper even while you sleep. Eventually, the Incubator is forced to sit down and write. By this time, the entire paper is somewhat ordered, developed, and ready for print. You start at the beginning and write the whole thing straight through.

The Outliner

If you are an Outliner, you need plenty of order before you write. You jot down main ideas and try to list under each main idea the minor detail of each. You go back and forth, listing, changing, cutting, adding, and sequencing until an outline forms. When you have the outline in order with the major and minor points in sequence, you start writing your way through the outline.

The Noter

If you are a Noter, you begin the process by jotting notes about a variety of ideas. You may doodle, scribble, or use symbols. You are trying to jot down the ideas as fast as your mind generates them. One idea leads to another, which in turn, opens a new idea. After you quit generating notes, you connect ideas with lines or circles or numbers. When you finish ordering the notes, you begin writing.

—Richard Adler

Writing Together: A Peer-Editing Approach to Composition



10 Tips for Teaching Writing

10. Read aloud every day - at every grade
9. 45 minutes of real writing 3 times a week
8. Once or twice a week, assess a paper on the overhead
7. Once a week, work in pairs/partners to revise for one trait
6. File ideas for teaching writing by trait and/or strategy
5. Use language of the scoring guides in teacher comments
4. Collect writing in working files, which may lead to portfolios
3. Display traits around the room
2. Parents learn about the traits, too!
1. Grades are based on growth and achievement



Writing Glossary

Writing Process Stages

Prewriting means planning before writing. Activities in this stage include brainstorming ideas, finding information, defining the purpose and audience for the writing, organizing thoughts, planning the organization of the draft. Although pre-writing occurs before drafting, a writer often comes back to this stage between drafting and revising.

Drafting means getting ideas down on paper (or computer). Activities in this stage writing first and subsequent drafts of the paper. The focus in the drafting stage is on the ideas, not the conventions.

Revising means “re-visioning” or seeing the writing with new eyes. The foci in revising are ideas, word choice, sentence fluency, voice and organization, **not** conventions. Activities in this stage include reading the draft aloud with a partner; adding, deleting and changing content, reworking presentation issues and conferencing with a peer or teacher. Revising leads the writer back to the drafting, and sometimes the pre-writing stage.

Editing means going on an error hunt. For efficiency, editing should happen after the writer is satisfied that the revisions are complete. The focus in the editing stage is conventions. Activities in this stage include checking for spelling errors, checking for mechanical correctness, working with a partner. Editing leads the writer back to the drafting stage to, hopefully, create a final draft for publication.

Proofreading means that once last look or the “white-out” stage. Once the final draft is complete, it is time to look for typing errors, missing words, presentation errors.

Publishing means making writing public. Activities in this stage include sharing the final draft with the class, printing it in a book, giving it to the intended reader, or entering it in a contest.

Types of Writing

Genre: a category of literature. Some examples are science fiction, fairy tales, poetry, and essay. It usually refers to the form of the writing.

Mode: a purpose for writing. A writer chooses a genre (form) to match the mode (purpose).

Examples of modes:

Descriptive:

Painting a picture with words

Narrative:

Telling a story

Imaginative:

Unleashing your creative powers

Expository:

Observing and reporting

Persuasive:

Constructing an argument

Assessment Terms

Performance Criteria/Scoring Criteria: the standards for a quality performance.

“Performance criteria spell out in descriptive detail the nature of the expected performance” (Stiggins). This includes not only describing an outstanding performance, but also the different levels that lead up to the highest performance levels. The criteria should be written in language that communicates the expectations clearly to teachers, parents and students. Performance criteria need to be developed and shared before the performance task is given.

Rubric: the format for the performance criteria. Rubrics can be general or task-specific, and can be holistic or analytical, depending on the purpose for the assessment.

Performance Task: a writing assignment. A well-structured performance task explains the challenge to the students and sets them up to succeed, if they are prepared. Performance tasks contain three elements: the achievement target, the conditions for the performance and the standards or criteria which will be used to evaluate the performance. “Sound performance tasks frame clear and specific problems to solve” (Stiggins).

Prompt: a writing idea. Prompts can be topic ideas, quotes to respond to, pictures to write about or a thought to complete.

Before you consider the suggestions on the following pages, there is one basic premise to using the six traits as an instructional tool that you HAVE to believe.

It's very simple, but fundamentally important to everything that follows . . .

REVISION IS DIFFERENT THAN EDITING

That's it! The heart and soul of teaching the traits.

Revision:

Ideas

Organization

Voice

Word Choice

Sentence Fluency

Editing:

Conventions



It takes a completely different part of your brain to know that you need to add more specific details, choose different words, or begin with a different lead than to recognize a word is misspelled or to capitalize a proper noun. By separating these two significant parts of the writing process and defining them clearly so students (and teachers, too) can work on them in a purposeful and focused way we unlock one of the key mysteries of writing.

So now, on with the specifics

WRITING COACH CHECKLIST

Introduction

1. Tell me about your writing – where you are in the process and which trait(s) you'd like to talk about.
2. Where did you get the idea for your paper?
3. How would you describe your paper (e.g., story, expository essay, persuasive argument, description)?
4. What are you planning to work on next?
5. What would you like me to listen for as you share your writing?

To the coach:

Depending on the answers to #4 & #5, choose *one* or *two* traits that will best support the writer's plan for revision. Don't try to discuss everything, or you'll both wind up exhausted! Keep it focused.

Ideas & Development

1. What do you see as your main idea?
2. What do you want your reader to learn or think about?
3. Which part of your paper comes *closest* to saying what you think is really important?
4. Is there one detail you're really proud of including because other people might not have thought of it?
5. Do you feel you have plenty of information to keep writing on this topic?
If not, do you know how/where to get the information you need?
6. This is the main thing I learned from your paper: (*Explain*)

Organization

1. How did you think to begin where you did? Did you write more than one lead, or were you happy with the first one?
2. For *expository/persuasive* writing: What is the most important point you make in this paper? Is it close to the beginning, middle, or end? Why?
3. For *narrative* writing: Does your story have a turning point or most important moment? Does it come close to the beginning, middle, or end? Why?
4. Read *just your conclusion* out loud to me and talk to me about it. Tell me why you ended the paper the way you did.
5. I (did/did not) have any trouble following your paper *Explain*.

21.

Voice

1. How would you describe your voice in this piece?
2. Who do you see as your main audience?
3. What would you like a reader or listener to feel?
4. Here's how I feel when I listen to your paper: (*Explain*)

Word Choice

1. Do you have favorite words or expressions in this piece? Show me.
2. Are there any words you used for the first time? Which ones?
3. Are there any words you weren't sure of? Which? Shall we look them up?
4. Did you use a thesaurus or dictionary? Tell me about that.
5. Are there any words or phrases you're not happy with? Shall we brainstorm some other ways to say it?
6. The word or expression which caught my attention was: (*Explain*)

Sentence Fluency

1. You seemed to have an (easy/not so easy) time reading your paper aloud. Am I right about that? Why do you think that might be?
2. My impression was that your sentences (did/did not) tend to begin the same way. Do you agree?
3. Would you like me to read all or a piece of your work so you could be the listener? [If yes, then – *Tell me what you hear as I read.*]

Conventions/Editing

1. Have you edited your paper yet? Show me how much of the paper you are editing (e.g., first line, first paragraph, two paragraphs).
2. Do you have any editing questions you'd like to ask me?
3. Is there a handbook you feel comfortable using? Show me.
4. Which copy editor's symbols do you feel comfortable using [refer to chart]?
5. Do you feel comfortable using a dictionary (spell check)? Do we need to talk about that?
6. Tell me about *this* mark of punctuation (*choose one from the student's paper to indicate*). Why did you use that just here? What does it tell your reader?

Closure

1. Are there any questions you'd like to ask me about your writing?
2. Do you know where to get the help or information you need?
3. What will you do next with your writing?

Other Ideas for Teaching Traits Using Print Materials

What else might you do, using other forms of printed materials, to teach students the traits? Here are a few ideas classroom teachers have found successful:

1. Rate an office memo for Conventions. Score it first, then edit it. Try it for Presentation, too! Redo the piece in small groups, and if you have an office with a sense of humor, share the new copies with them!
2. Look through junk mail for examples of strong and weak ideas, strong and weak voice, etc. Which pieces get your attention and why?
3. Find some samples of greeting cards that catch your eye or touch you—as well as some that turn you off. Score them for word choice and voice—then revise. Create your own greeting cards for your own special occasions. You might have special days like: "Best Tree on the Block," "Most Interesting Hair Day," "Everything's Just Clicking Along Day."
4. Check out a sample menu or two. Which ones are the best written? Why? What revisions or suggestions for improvement would you make?
5. Review a set of directions for the trait of organization. Could you follow the instructions? What about the voice in the piece?
6. Score a textbook excerpt for ideas, voice, word choice, or conventions. Are some traits stronger than others?
7. Browse through a computer manual. Is the voice strong? Does that affect ideas?
8. Examine newspaper articles. Which traits get the most emphasis? Why?
9. Collect published examples that are strong and weak in conventions. What impression does each create?



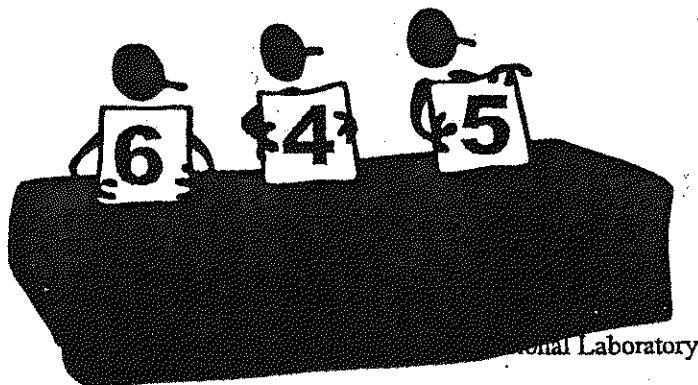
Conclusions That Satisfy

Here's another idea to blend traits into the curriculum:

All writers seem to agree that knowing how and when to end their piece is one of the trickiest parts of "getting it right." Sometimes, students just don't know any other way to finish their piece other than "The end" or "That's all I know about this subject" or "I hope you liked my story." Sometimes writers will work on the ending over and over again until they are finally satisfied with the conclusion.

The following pages have some models from literature that show a variety of techniques authors use to conclude their works.

- Put them up on the overhead and see if students can describe how each makes them feel and whether they think they are effective or not.
- Brainstorm a list of techniques authors use to conclude their works.
- Ask students to use one of the techniques illustrated on a piece of their own writing and see if it works.
- Search their favorite pieces of literature for more examples to share. Don't forget to include picture books as a resource here. You can examine many different ending techniques quite quickly with a few well-chosen pieces.
- Look at other resources (encyclopedias, research articles, letters, etc.) for further examples of conclusions to study and try out on their own.



R. A. F. T. S. Writing Assignments

- Role
- Audience
- Format
- Topic
- Strong Verb

Use this strategy to design classroom writing topics for ANY classroom (language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, etc.) so students have lots of mental elbow room to connect what they know and are learning to different genres of writing.



DESIGNING R. A. F. T. S. WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Effective writing assignments enable students to write fluently and purposefully for an audience. R. A. F. T. S. can help teachers identify and incorporate the elements of an effective writing assignment.

Role of the writer—helps the writer decide on point of view and voice

Audience for the piece of writing—reminds the writer that he must communicate ideas to someone else; helps the writer determine content and style.

Format of the material—helps the writer organize ideas and employ the conventions of format, such as letters, interviews, and story problems.

Topic or subject of the piece of writing—helps the writer focus on main ideas.

Strong verb—directs the writer to the writing purpose, e.g., persuade, analyze, create, predict, compare, defend, evaluate.



R. A. F. T. S. CLASSROOM PROMPTS

R - role

A - audience

F - format

T - topic

S - strong verb

EXAMPLE:

You are Ulysses on your journey home from Troy after being
(role)
gone for over 10 years. Write a letter to your wife Penelope
(format) (audience)
explaining why you won't make it home for dinner, AGAIN.
(strong verb) (topic)



Strong Verbs for R.A.F.T.S. Assignments

align
annotate
apply
brainstorm
cancel
carve
charge
coalesce
communicate
connect
consider
construct
contest
create
decipher
delineate
diagnose
divulge
embellish
engrave
explain
harmonize
imagine
inform
investigate
memorize
mold
participate
photograph
quote
reconstruct
reflect
relate
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rhyme
search
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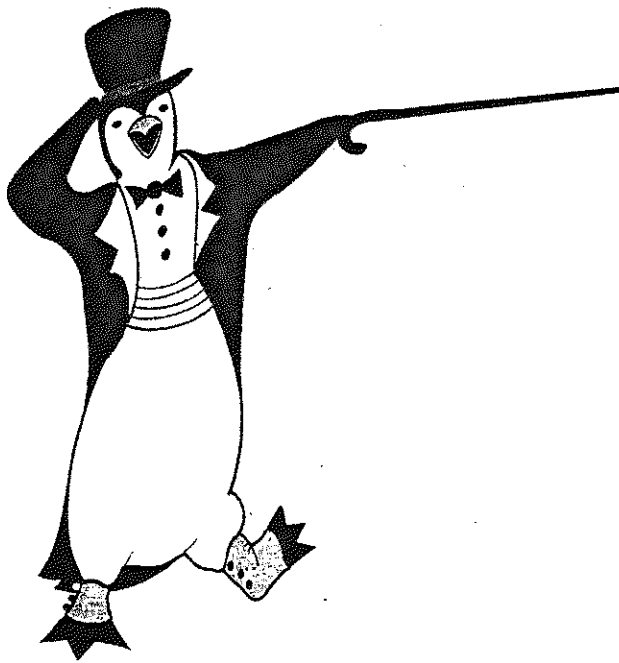
amaze
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characterize
clarify
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design
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elucidate
encourage
exemplify
fold
illuminate
improvise
melt
modify
orchestrate
peruse
ponder
reconcile
record
reject
remark
review
scrutinize
shrivel
trigger
visualize



R. A. F. T. S. Practice Activity

Here's your chance to write your own R.A.F.T.S. assignments. Try your hand at one of the examples that follow. The role, audience,



format, topic, and strong verb have all been identified. (Feel free to change/modify if you wish.) Turn one or more of these into a paragraph so it's ready to use!

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory would like to thank Michele Rich and R. E. Miller for contributing the following RAFTS section.



READING

James and the Giant Peach

Role:	Audience
Audience:	Art critic
Format:	Portrait
Topic:	Aunt Sponge and Aunt Spiker from <i>James and the Giant Peach</i>
Strong verbs:	Describe, characterize

The One Hundred Dresses

Role:	Peggy
Audience:	Wanda
Format:	Letter
Topic:	Apologize for teasing
Strong verbs:	Apologize

Frindle

Role:	Advertising Executive
Audience:	Consumers
Format:	Advertisement
Topic:	An ad campaign for Frindles
Strong verbs:	Consider, convince, search, amaze, compare

Amelia Bedelia

Role:	Boss
Audience:	Amelia
Format:	List of chores
Topic:	What to clean
Strong verbs:	Tell



SCIENCE

Role:	Illustrator
Audience:	Third graders
Format:	Comic strip
Topic:	Saying no to drugs and alcohol
Strong verbs:	Remind, warn, persuade, tell, urge

Role:	Dietician
Audience:	Family
Format:	Menu
Topic:	A day's meals
Strong verbs:	Announce, consume, digest, food groups

Role:	Organ or Body System
Audience:	Your host
Format:	Letter
Topic:	How you work and why you are important
Strong verbs:	Communicate, explain, inform, remind

Role:	Drop of water
Audience:	Fourth grader
Format:	Diary
Topic:	Water cycle
Strong verbs:	Evaporate, condense, precipitate

Role:	Poisonous animal
Audience:	Fourth graders
Format:	Persuasive paragraph, or a letter
Topic:	Why you want to be left alone
Strong verbs:	Avoid, consider, inform, explain, remind, warn, urge, annoy



Role:	Weather Forecaster/Meteorologist
Audience:	Picnickers
Format:	Oral weather report
Topic:	Weather
Strong verbs:	Predict, precipitate

Role:	Vet
Audience:	Child
Format:	Instruction sheet
Topic:	How to care for a hamster
Strong verbs:	Care

SOCIAL STUDIES

Role:	Song writer
Audience:	Tim and Willy
Format:	Song
Topic:	Cowboys on a cattle drive
Strong verbs:	Travel, tell

Role:	Magazine writer
Audience:	New students
Format:	Magazine
Topic:	Welcome to our school
Strong verbs:	Introduce, announce, tell

Role:	Travel agent
Audience:	Student travelers
Format:	Travel brochure
Topic:	Social studies
Strong verbs:	Charm, describe, immortalize, visualize



Role:	Leprechaun
Audience:	First grader
Format:	Speech bubble
Topic:	How to find a pot of gold
Strong verbs:	Tell, show

LANGUAGE

Role:	Yourself
Audience:	Someone special
Format:	Poem
Topic:	Friendship, why the person is special
Strong verbs:	Divulge, inform, reflect, relate, reiterate

Role:	The Moon
Audience:	The Cow
Format:	Letter
Topic:	Persuade the cow that she cannot jump over the moon
Strong verbs:	Convince, consider, explain, warn, tell, annoy

MATH

Role:	Shoemaker
Audience:	Cinderella Bigfoot (from the book <i>Cinderella Bigfoot</i>)
Format:	Blueprint for a shoe
Topic:	Shoe size
Strong verbs:	Measure, estimate, evaluate, mold, fit



R. A. F. T.S. CLASSROOM PROMPTS

R - role

A - audience

F - format

T - topic

S - strong verb

Using one of the starter ideas from the previous pages, write your own R.A.F.T. assignment here.



MISCELLANEOUS

Role:	Speaker
Audience:	Classmates
Format:	Speech
Topic:	Will vary
Strong verbs:	Depend on speech topic

Role:	Sculptor
Audience:	Artists
Format:	Relief sculpture
Topic:	Nature (whatever else you are studying)
Strong verbs:	Describe (title/caption)



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Getting Started: Some Frequently Asked Questions

1. How long should I spend on each trait?

Most teachers spend one to two weeks per trait, but you could spend more or less, depending on how quickly you think students develop an in-depth understanding.

2. How do I know when students really get it?

They can tell the difference between writing that's strong on a trait and writing that isn't, and they can tell you *in detail* not only what's good about the good pieces, but also *exactly* what to do to revise the weaker pieces.

3. Which trait should I teach first?

That's up to you, too, but many teachers find it makes sense to begin with *ideas*. After all, the message is the foundation of everything else. Without something else to say, why write? You might go to *voice* next (most people think it's easier to teach than *organization*); then cycle back to *organization*. Many teachers like to weave *conventions* all through the instruction (seems strange to wait until April for a unit on *conventions*, doesn't it?), using examples out of real text to teach this trait. End with *word choice* and *fluency* (which you've probably been teaching all along!)

A completely different approach would begin with one of the "surface" traits, say, *word choice*. Some teachers feel that it helps them get things off and rolling by starting with a trait on which they have lots of materials all ready to use (vocabulary units, word banks, lessons on choosing powerful verbs, etc.). This way, students learn the routine of the traits, reading papers off the overhead for one trait at a time, revising for one trait, etc. without taking on one of the more "complex" traits (like *ideas*, *organization* or *voice*) right off the bat. Remember the strong link between *word choice* and *voice* so if you do begin with *word choice* a logical next step would be *voice*. It's your choice. Begin where it makes sense to you and where you feel most comfortable.



4. How do I begin?

Try brainstorming the qualities of good writing. (See materials under Strategy 1 of this packet.) Another way to get at the same thing is to brainstorm a list of favorite authors and ask what makes them favorites. Next, you might share what teachers of writing value: this list (included in your packet) is the result of informally surveying thousands of writing teachers. Student writers are often surprised and pleased to see that they value much the same things teachers value and that, contrary to many students' beliefs, teachers really do look for lots more than neatness, commas, and correct spelling. Once you've shared this list, it's easy to take a short step back and say, "Now, for a time, we'll focus on just ONE trait—*ideas*."

5. How many papers must students score or discuss per trait?

This is a little like asking, "How much spaghetti do we need to fix?" You'll know when it's too much or too little. In the beginning, try doing at least one or two papers per week. This goes much faster than you might think—unless students really have a lot to say. Our experience is that students nearly always want to do more scoring than there is time for. Then, once a month or so, stop and revise a paper that has scored a 1 or 2 in the trait on which you are focused. It's always good to remind students that the assessment is there to help them make the writing better—and it's a lot easier to practice revision on someone else's work than your own!

6. I'm pretty happy with the way I teach writing now. Do I have to change what I'm already doing?

No, no, no!! Please do not abandon any of the successful activities you're already sharing with students. The analytical trait model is intended to support, not replace, the writing process approach. Remember, the traits are not a curriculum in and of themselves.

When you teach the traits, you're teaching the criteria that define quality performance. Students who know precisely what is expected—and who can judge for themselves whether expectations have been met—stand a FAR greater chance of succeeding. The traits are a foundation for revision, which for many students is a weak link in the writing process. They may feel comfortable



prewriting and drafting, but when it comes time to revise, many say, "What do I do now? Help!"

7. Do I score students' papers on all the six traits?

Sometimes yes, sometimes no. Score papers on the trait or traits you've taught. This means that the first few assignments may receive only one or two scores. You will want to score papers on all traits on pre- post assessments, longer, more comprehensive assignments and projects, and any other occasion where the "big picture" is useful.

8. What about grades?

Most teachers who use the analytical model prefer to keep a tally of total points earned during the grading period, then base the grade on a percentage of points possible for that period (e.g., the student earns 40 points out of a possible 45). Of course, other factors such as participation in the writing process or evidence of improvement or effort may play a role, too, depending on how you usually grade students' work. (See the Grading section for more information.)

9. What if I don't get through all six traits by the end of the year?

Relax! Don't rush! It is far, FAR preferable to spend plenty of time on the first three—*Ideas*, *Organization*, and *Voice*—than to rush to "cover" all six. Take your time, use lots of examples from literature and the writing all around us, score and discuss plenty of papers, and by all means, give students lots of practice revising for each trait you teach.

10. As students move from one trait to another, are they still responsible for the first trait(s) they learned?

Sure. However, when you move from, say, *Ideas* to *Voice*, you might want to focus just on *Voice* for a while. Then you can say, "Remember, *Ideas* are still important. In your next piece of writing, I want you to concentrate on making both *Ideas* and *Voice* strong."



11. Is there ever a time when all the traits come together?

Of course. They're never really separated. It's just that revision is such a big task, it's very helpful to student writers if we allow them to break it into manageable pieces. Think of it this way: Swimming is one coordinated activity, too; however, it might help a beginning swimmer to focus just on breathing for a while, then arm strokes, then kicking, etc. Eventually, however, she must be able to pull everything together.

12. Suppose I teach middle school and my students have already learned the traits at the elementary school level?

Never fear. There's always more to learn. Review never hurts—and some students may be new. Need more of a challenge? Score more difficult, more complex papers. Score papers for three, four, five, or all six traits at once. Give students plenty of opportunity to show what they know through skillful revision—or perhaps a written evaluation of someone else's work. Students can use the traits as a basis for selecting the best work or judging their own level of growth.

