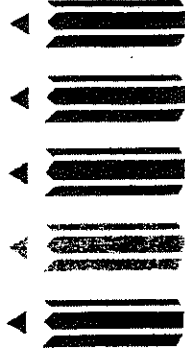


# Six Trait Writing Warm-Ups

## Trait #2: Organization



### Preparation

### Exercise

### Follow-up

1.	5 or 6 Scene Sequence Cards	Display the cards out of order. Ask the children what's wrong with them and what to do to make them make sense. Have someone put them in order and discuss why that's important.	Talk about the importance of order for understanding
2.	Set of directions for a simple activity (i.e. making a paper airplane) out of order.	Have children read jumbled directions and try to follow them. Ask what's wrong. Ask what can be done to help. Have students put directions in proper order. Ask why order is important.	Talk about importance of order when following directions
3.	A large wall map of a community or individual maps for each student.	Ask students to give directions as to how to get from one point (i.e. school) to another (i.e. store). Ask what will happen if directions are not given in the proper order (illustrate "mistakes" on map).	Talk about importance of order when giving directions.
4.	A simple recipe (ingredients - opt) i.e. "how to make a peanut butter sandwich" with vague directions	Have children read the recipe. Discuss how directions could be misunderstood. Opt: Illustrate by making silly sandwiches or have children draw what the sandwich could look like.	Talk about importance of precise directions.
5.	Display the following words: before, first, second, third, next, then, last, finally.	Ask students how these words could be used in writing, what kind of writing they could be used in, and why they are important words.	Talk about how to make order understood.

6.	Judith Viorst's "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day"	Read aloud. Ask students what kind of order this was written in. Ask why they think it was written this way. Ask if it would be as amusing written in another way. Discuss why or why not.	Talk about the importance of order in organizing writing.
7.	Several trade books with good beginnings	Read the beginnings of a few books. Discuss why they think they are or are not good beginnings. Would they want to continue reading? Why or why not?	Talk about the importance of a good beginning.
8.	Several familiar trade books with good endings	Read the endings of a few familiar books. Discuss why they think they are or are not good endings. How did the endings make them feel?	Talk about the importance of a good ending.
9.	A large map of the school or individual maps for each child.	Have children give you (a visitor) oral directions for getting from your classroom to the gym (or other location). Trace their directions on the map (or have the class walk them) exactly! Did you end up in the right place - or get locked in the janitor's closet?	Talk about the importance of giving directions in the proper sequence.
10.	No preparation	Have the children give you directions for what to do if you've swallowed a bug. Discuss and decide what you should do first, second, third, etc.?	Talk about the importance of sequence of events.

## **Organization Activities**

### **Crazy Stories**

A well written story must have a good beginning, middle, and end. You can try working with these concepts by writing crazy stories. One student can be in charge of just writing a beginning, another the middle, and still another the end. Each student does not know what the other is writing. When you get the three together, you can have a lot of laughs!

### **Conclusions**

Any piece of literature may be used to develop a sense of conclusion. Use stories from children's magazines or read a book such as The Jolly Mon by Jimmy Buffett and Savannah Jane Buffett. Stopping at preselected places in the story, have students write how they think the story will end. After sharing students' conclusions, read the original ending and compare the two.

### **Main Idea**

For early elementary students, the concept of main idea may be a new one for them. Deciding on a title for a story is a good way to get this point across. Cut out magazine pictures and distribute them to each person in the class. Have students individually decide on a good title for the picture. They could either write the title or tell the teacher orally.

### **Sequence**

Using wordless books such as Freefall or Tuesday by David Wiesner is a good organizational tool. Writers can tell the story in their own words. This type of activity gives the young writer a feel for sequence.

### **Lead Sentences**

During a given week have students collect lead sentences from books or stories that have caught their eyes. Share these leads with the class and discuss why the leads were interesting or effective.

Following a writing exercise, have students share only the lead sentence from their own stories. As a group, discuss how effective the sentences were. Did they make you want to hear more of the story? Did they pull you into the tale? What could you do to make the lead more effective?

### **Put in Order**

Use a paragraph or short story at the student's reading level. Record sentence statements on individual strips of paper. Put the statements in order. What transitional words—clues within the text—help you?

To extend this activity, have the students use to piece of their own writing. Cut the piece into paragraphs and ask another student to put it back together. Is it easy or difficult? Discuss why.

### **Sharing Conclusions**

Think of the types of conclusions that DO NOT work. For example, "The end.", "I woke up and it was only a dream." or "Now you know the three reasons why everyone should learn to drive a standard transmission." Discuss WHY these conclusions don't work. Create a list of strategies that make conclusions stronger than those cited as poor examples. Resource for good conclusion: Charlotte's Web by E.B. White

### **Ten Minutes Only**

Ask students to draft a story that all takes place within a short time-frame such as ten minutes. Every bit of the action must happen within this confined time. As they draft, ask them to look for transitional words, and how to deal effectively with the beginning, middle, and end. For students who tend to write on and on or use the dreaded bed-to-bed format (telling everything that happened no matter how trivial) without ever getting specific, this is a good antidote.

### Positions for Topic Sentences

Beginning: To give a sense of direction to the whole paragraph

End: To act as a summary of the whole paragraph

Middle: To give a sense of direction to the paragraph after a short introductory sentence or two.

Students can practice identifying topic sentences in literature. They can practice writing paragraphs placing the topic sentence in different positions.

### Connecting Ideas

Transitions can be grouped by kinds of relationships:

Time		
after	earlier	meanwhile
afterward	final	since
before	first	then
during	later	until

Contrast	
however	nevertheless
in contrast	on the contrary
indeed	on the other hand
instead	yet

Result	
as a result	so
because	then
consequently	therefore
on account of	thus

Addition or Example	
also	furthermore
and	in addition
besides	moreover
for example	too

Activities in **Using the 6-Trait Analytic Scale for Instruction: Activities for the Classroom—6-12** by John H. Bushman, F. Todd Goodson, and Jim Blasingame (pages 20-30) provide a wide range of textual forms within which students can write. Used in the order they are presented, they can help students take a subject or subjects through multiple genres, beginning with the descriptive and the narrative, and ending with persuasion.