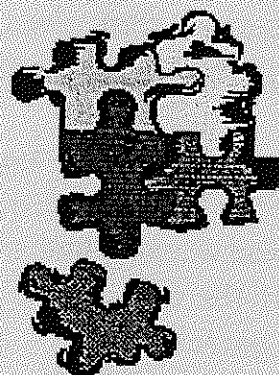


Organization

- ✍ Appealing opening
- ✍ Obvious direction/logical progression
- ✍ Effective sequencing
- ✍ Connected-ness
- ✍ Smooth transitions
- ✍ Good pacing
- ✍ Builds to high point



Organization is the internal structure of a piece of writing, the thread of central meaning, the pattern, so long as it fits the central idea well. Organization structure can be based on comparison-contrast, deductive logic, point-by-point analysis, development of a central theme, chronological history of an event, or any of a dozen other identifiable patterns. When the organization is strong, the piece begins meaningfully and creates in the writer a sense of anticipation that is ultimately, systematically fulfilled. Events proceed logically: Information is given to the reader in the right doses at the right times so that the reader never loses interest and never the "big picture" - the overriding sense of what the writer is driving at. Connections are strong, which is another way of saying that bridges from one idea to the next hold up. The piece closes with a sense of resolution, tying up loose ends, bringing things to closure, answering important questions while still leaving the reader something to think about. .

Organization

I look back and forth and see potential endings and titles and leads.
I'm looking for a trail through the material I have. . .

—Donald Murray

Without a clear trail, your ideas collapse or crash into each other. It is the **organization** that gives your writing direction and it helps the reader move through the ideas in a purposeful way.

Begin with a strong lead so you hook the reader right off the bat. Don't settle for "Once upon a time" or "My paper is all about dogs." Think about your lead working like a fishing lure or fly that dangles right in front of the nose of the fish until it just can't resist and takes a big, committed bite. Ahhh, gottcha!

If you take a look at your whole piece of writing, it should carefully build to the most important moment or point you are trying to make. Toss your reader interesting details that work like stepping stones—each getting the reader closer and closer to the key idea or event.

The order of your details is really important, too. Ideas shouldn't dive-bomb the reader out of the blue; they should come at just the right time to help the reader understand. Everything needs to fit together with a strong connecting line back to the main idea.

Watch out for getting bogged down in trivial details (what color the hero's socks were, or whether she had milk on her cereal). Keep moving right along. And when you reach the end of the story or make your last point, STOP! Make that last sentence count by leaving the reader with something to think about. Good endings are tough, but don't fall into the pit with "And I woke up and it was only a dream," or "Now you know the three reasons why Americans should car pool." Readers won't feel satisfied with these endings and *neither will you*.

Organization is the hardest trait.

—K-12 Student Writers Across America



Organization

Ideas with focus and details galore . . .

In your head, on paper, on the computer, and more.

*Time to think about order, how to get it down right,
There are so many options, you can get writer's fright.
The ideas need purpose, direction and shaping,
Decisions on how will be all to your making.*

*Reason and logic, compare and contrast,
Detailed analysis, or present to past,
Information you've given in just the right doses,
Events proceed logically—no hocus pocus.*

*Organization is the name of this trait,
From beginning to end and a middle, top-rate.
Transitions, pacing, sequencing, too,
There's plenty to think out, lots of writing to do.*

*Five-paragraph themes may seem ever so neat,
But as a way to organize, they're hardly complete.
Formula writing is nothing so hot,
Try writing with insight, freshness, and thought.*

*If you think that it's easy, we'll just see about that,
Getting it right is like herding cats.
The ideas are out there—now grab them and shake,
Good organization takes skill and imagination to make.*

--Ruth Culham

Organization



Good Organization:

1. Grabs you right from the start!
2. Everything ties together.
3. Good balance of beginning, middle, and end.
4. Transitions are smooth so you can follow it easily.
5. At the end, it feels finished and makes you think.

Organization at the Primary Level

- ◆ Think balance and harmony.
- ◆ Early signs: filling the page with text or pictures, labels, and/or titles.
- ◆ Move on to sequencing in pictures.
- ◆ Then grouping by information.
- ◆ A strong sense of beginning and ending from listening to text. (this happens long before they can produce it themselves.)

Organization:

Thinking like a writer

- ◆ How does my paper begin? Do I have a strong lead?
- ◆ Did I tell things in order and include important details? Did I leave out the trivial details?
- ◆ Did I build to the MOST IMPORTANT thing(s) or moment(s) in my paper?
- ◆ Do I have smooth transitions? Does everything tie together? Key words to look for might be: *first, then, next, later, because, one day, when I was little, at last, ...the end!*
- ◆ How does my paper END? Does the reader feel finished at the end?

You can organize in many different ways:

- ◆ Big picture to little picture (space)
- ◆ Chronological order (time)
- ◆ Details in bunches (content)
- ◆ Taking a side (perspective)

ORGANIZATION

Any activity that allows students to practice . . .

writing a lead that hooks the reader

sequencing in a logical & interesting way

identifying the turning point

connecting ideas to a larger theme

linking ideas together for the reader

setting up a problem—then solving it

crafting a conclusion that ties up loose ends

1. I-Search

Students use community-based and personal research to explore a topic of genuine interest. They begin by defining what it is they want to know and why the topic is important to them, and include in their research a description of methods used and what they have learned or gained from the experience. The structure of the research format provides an excellent built-in organizer, yet the task is never dry or dull because the students really care about it. The best resource: *The I-Search Paper* by Ken Macrorie.

2. Out-of-Sequence

Try reordering a student paper, poem, magazine article, etc., and then asking students to reassemble it in the correct order. This works particularly well if the article is cut into pieces so students (by themselves, in pairs, or in groups) can play with it like a puzzle, moving pieces around to try different versions. Ask them to find the lead first—then the conclusion. How can they spot these things? What are the clues? How do you spot transitions? As a next step, ask students to select a piece of their own work, cut it into pieces by paragraph, and ask someone else to put it back together. Is it easy or hard?



3. 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.

4. Sharing Leads

Ask students to share just the leads from their work. As they read them in small groups or in a large circle, other students get an idea of different ways to begin their work. At the end of the activity, make a brainstormed list of different ways to begin writing and what kinds of writing you might use for each technique. Encourage students to try several different leads before settling on the final one. Pull in samples from authors the students know and enjoy as models.

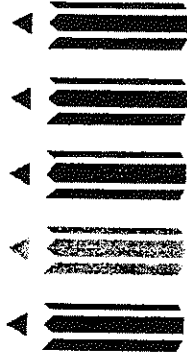


5. Sharing Conclusions

Coming up with a good conclusion is one of the hardest things for writers of any age to do. Many students don't even have conclusions until the very end of the writing process and because of lack of time, energy, or interest, just slap on the first thing that comes to mind. Try this. Ask students to think of all the ways they or others have concluded their works THAT DON'T WORK. Things like "I woke up and it was only a dream." Or, "The End." Or, "Now you know the three reasons why everyone should learn to drive a standard transmission." See if you can get the students to tell you WHY these conclusions don't work. Let them help you come up with a list of strategies that make conclusions stronger than the examples above. Now share some rip-snorters out of literature that are really strong. One of my favorites: *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White.



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.



Story Mapping Through Circular Pictures

How to Use the Strategy

- 1) Determine the selection students will read. Explain what a story map is and how it will be created using a circular formation (Routman, 1991). The story map will relate the main events of the story in sequence using pictures. Display an example of a story map using pictures and brief descriptions.
- 2) Read the selection aloud to the students or have them read it with a partner or independently.
- 3) As a class, discuss the main events of the story. Record ideas on chart paper or an overhead.
- 4) Discuss the sequence of the listed ideas. Write the first main event in the one o'clock position on the map and then draw an illustration.
- 5) Continue to draw the main events of the story in clockwise fashion, ending with the last main event and picture at twelve o'clock.
- 6) Encourage students to explain their decisions for sequencing the main events.
- 7) Create a kinesthetic activity by cutting the pictures with matching descriptive sentences into individual cards. Students read the story and sequence the main events, adding their own ideas as necessary. The picture/sentence cards can be placed in a Listening Center with a taped reading of the story. Students can listen to the story on tape and then reorganize the events of the story in chronological order. Students who created the original story map could serve as the checkers.

Benefits of the Strategy

- Teaches students how to sequence the events of a story
- Increases retention through drawing and visual imaging
- Allows the student to use different learning styles through sketching
- Highlights the main events of a story
- Provides an opportunity for a second reading of the story
- Incorporates decision making
- Creates independent readers

**Motivation is what gets you started.
Habit is what keeps you going.**

- Jim Ryuh



Story Mapping

Name of the Story

Start here.

Story ending.

Beginning scene.

Next main event.

...and so on...

Source: Routman, 1991

Story Mapping Example

He planted seeds.

He took it home.

The Carrot Seed
by Ruth Krauss

He waited and waited.

It grew.

Organization Activities

Activity One:

The Wretched Stone:

Purpose: To allow students the practice of writing endings to a story.

1. Divide the class into groups of 4. Assign each group a number; 1 to the number of groups formed.
2. Section off the book according to the number of groups you have assigned. At stopping point one, group one will then leave the room to write their ending. At stopping point two, group two will leave the room to write their ending, and so on. Provide a final stopping point before you read the end of the story.
3. Read the book to the audience, stopping at various points to allow each group to leave and write their own ending.
4. Groups will have a designated time to finish their ending.
5. When groups come back, they must first summarize the story up to point they left and then read their ending.
6. After each group has shared, discuss the differences in the endings. After everyone has finished sharing and the discussion is over, you can read the real ending *The Wretched Stone*.

Activity Two:

"You cannot *tell* everything. You must choose, whittle down, and organize. You must anticipate and answer the readers' questions."

Stephen Kramer

Purpose: Prepare students to organize and limit all the information they have on a topic.

1. Look at and read parts of *Avalanche*, *Volcanoes* or *Lightening* by Stephen Kramer.
2. Discuss how the book is laid out and organized. Students should recognize that each chapter is an answer to questions Stephen Kramer anticipates his audience might have on the topic.
3. Discuss with students how a writer can keep from boring his/her audience. (Who is my audience and what do they already know?)
4. Divide the class into groups of 2-4.
5. Have the groups pick a research topic. (or you can pick one topic as a class and each group take a different component of that topic.) In order to make sure the topic is manageable, refer back to the trait Ideas and Content.
6. Have the students answer, Who is my audience and What do they already know?
7. Each group should then brainstorm a list of questions for which they think their audience would want answers. Their final list should contain no more than 6 questions.
8. The groups then write their paper. If the class is writing about a common topic, copy editors can be appointed to merge all the papers into one document.

"SHARKS"

Put these sentences in order to form one paragraph that makes good use of sequencing and transitions.

1. It resembles a large wolftrap, equipped with innumerable sharp and gleaming teeth.
2. The force of this sawing effect is such that it requires no more than an instant for the shark to tear off a splendid morsel of flesh.
3. Have you ever wondered about sharks?
4. It is terrifying and nauseating to watch.
5. The shark's jaw is located far back beneath his long snout, but this does not prevent him from biting directly into the flesh.
6. Many people fear sharks, but they are fascinated by them, too.
7. When the shark swims off, he has left a deep and perfectly outlined hole in the body of his victim.
8. The shark plants this mechanism in the body of his victim and uses the weight of his own body in a series of frenzied convulsions, transforming the teeth of the jawbones into saws.
9. When he opens the jaw, the lower jawbone is thrust forward while the snout is drawn back and up, until it makes almost a right angle with the axis of his body.
10. At this moment, the mouth is located forward of the head and no longer beneath it.

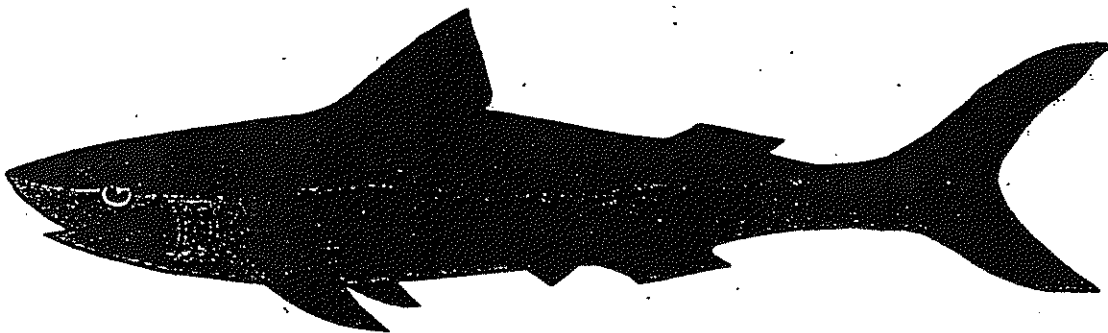
From Jacques-Yves Cousteau. 1970. *The Shark: Splendid Savage of the Sea*. New York: Doubleday.



Building Organizational Skills:

SHARKS

The shark's jaw is located far back beneath his long snout, but this does not prevent him from biting directly into the flesh. When he opens the jaw, the lower jawbone is thrust forward while the snout is drawn back and up, until it makes almost a right angle with the axis of his body. At this moment, the mouth is located forward of the head and no longer beneath it. It resembles a large wolftrap, equipped with innumerable sharp and gleaming teeth. The shark plants this mechanism in the body of his victim and uses the weight of his own body in a series of frenzied convulsions, transforming the teeth of the jawbone into saws. The force of this sawing effect is such that it requires no more than an instant for the shark to tear off a splendid morsel of flesh. When the shark swims off he has left a deep and perfectly outlined hole in the body of his victim. It is terrifying and nauseating to watch.



Fr. Jacques-Yves Cousteau. 1970. *The Shark: Splendid Savage of the Sea*. New York: Doubleday (page 37).

13.



6+1 Traits of Writing

Suggested steps on how to introduce and teach the individual traits.

By Jim Blasingame

1. Start class with a warm up that introduces the concept.

Think of this as an anticipatory set, an attention grabber that engages the students without even telling them yet the trait or trait focus.

2. Illustrate it through interesting literature or other age-appropriate written product.

3. Do hands-on activities to help students understand what it is and how to improve it in their own writing.

This is guided practice: an exercise that specifically breaks the trait down into its components and shows them how to manipulate these components.

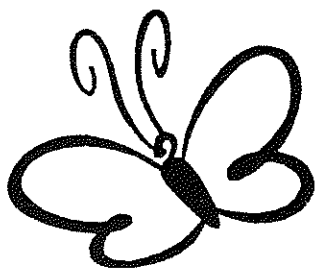
4. Guide them through the analysis of anonymous sample papers.

5. Follow with a writing assignment that facilitates that trait.

6. Use the 6-trait rubric to provide useful feedback.

7. Guide students through revising their papers based on that feedback.

8. Use a pre-identified rubric to assign a grade to the paper.



William Shakespere

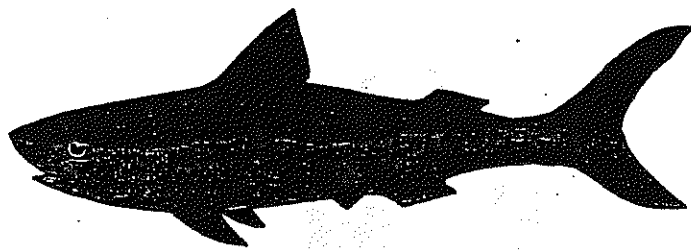
It was a rainy night on the 12 of June, a man called William and his wife were in their house working on a book called "Romio \$ Juliet"! He loved to write story's poem's, and play's too. The books he wrote in Veitnam he burned beacuase he met his destiny but then he had to leave them. But when day's passed he lived in spain! He liked to travel a lot too. He once went to visit the Great Wall of China, oh he was also a good explorer he'd visit difrent lands. Oh he also can invent stuff like oh light bualbs, a little bit of magic, and some telophones! He also was a famous man too! He also did a little line he'd say a lot "to be or not to be that is the question"? Well that is it!!!

Grade 4
(Social Studies Report)



Sharks

"Sharks are scary but they are graceful they make pretty turns!" When your on top of the ocean it looks pretty. When your In the ocean it looks dark and gloomy. Iv ben snorkeling, I saw some pretty fish, but Im glad I never ran into a shark. Lots of people have shark Jas, that reminds me I relly like the movie Jas. I'd like to take about a movie named werewolf but that would be going comepletly out of the subject. The sispens is cool in werewolf.



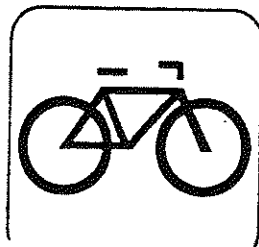
Grade 3

Crisco and the Bad Day

Once there was a boy named Crisco. He thought to himself "I should go to the ice cream parlor. So he walked right to the ice cream parlor with was named Facility cream he asked "how much for a double scoop of cookies and cream?" And the man at the register answered "Fifty cenc sir." "OK" replide Crisco "Here is fifty cence." Taking the ice cream. He was walking home and he tripped on a crack and his ice cream flew through the air and landed on the ground. Crisco was mad. He mumbled to himself "I spent fifty cence on a double scoop and I got one little lick." he got home and slammed the door and started watching. T.V.



I think everybody hwo can, should learn to ride a bike. A bike with two wheels that is. I got my chance in first grade. My dad my sister and I went to a soccer field behind my school: Chapman. My dad boosted me on to my training wheelless bicycle. He held the back of my seat and ran with me for a few paces and let go. I was riding!! I was riding by meyself on a two wheeler! But then I fell down. As I got up on my bike my said I should pedal when I ride. In the next half an hour I could stay balanced pedaling. Then my dad told me to try and steer. I went ahead and steered right into the ground. The next few weeks were smotherd in blood, scabs, bruises and band-aids. But at the end, triumph. I could ride a two wheeler.



Anti-Archaeologists

The one profession I hate is archaeology. I can tell you strait off that it is downright boring!

For one thing, you have to waste precious hours of time, studying about boring things that'll put you to sleep! You have to learn those things over, and over, and over again!

Then, you have to study about digging and carefully brushing an item that a gust of wind can break the thing into smithereens. Besides, what's fun about dusting a mass of rock, a pot, or bones?

After that, if you want to go to Egypt, the "archaeologists dreamland" then you'll be digging in the blazing hot sun, while most of the time, you get nothing!

Also, few archaeologists become rich or famous, because they were just lucky to hit something valuable! Most of them don't get a paid a lot.

So, as I said, archaeologists and archaeology, both of them, are very boring. If you want to be one, I advise you don't! Be something better like a streetsweeper!

Members

Members
Microsoft
Bremerton WA 98311

Dear Members, As we all know people in Africa, North and South. There people are dying of curable discuss. Just try to think your brother or sister is sick with the flew. Two days later he or she dies. Then a American doctor comes to visit you and give you medicine to cure it. Won't you be heart broken I know I would.

Imagine on Christmas day, you with what you have lift of a family. And you grab your first gift (that isn't even raped) and it is a half of flat bread. Or it is a holey blanket and it is your favorite gift. Just think of all the nice things we get for Christmas, computers, nice toys, chocolate, etc. Would you just feel for the poorer ones. Like I do!

Now population talk many people who loved each want to have kids right. Well these people have kids left and right cause there town is a none populated place. So your best friend is pregnant and your happy and sad for her cause she or the baby or both have a good chance of pasting away. Thats how most females die there at birth. Would that just suck. Well, it would but it the way it happens there.

Lets have a nice talk about diseases. They weep out 80% (at a estiment) of the population. Little boys a girls die mostly under the age of four. Now the newest diease going a round there is aids(not curable). People want kids so they can do alittle something something then it spreads. Then they do it all over again. Then if she gets pregnant when the baby comes out it gets it. Then when a person needs blood they don't check it and if the blood has aids in it then BOOM they got it now. Those are the most possible ways to get it.

Education is another big thing. Kids hold are future and we don't want many stupid people holding it for us. Do you? Or do you want smart people earning ton and ton of money like you and are business do. Or do you want more Mac Donald want to be workers. Well I know I don't.

Well lets get to why I'm writing you this letter. Well are company is full of money. And I was just wondering if you would like to donate \$50.00 to the families or kids who need the things I had wrote about up above. That is all I want. Please write back with your answer.

Grade 8

SAMPLE PAPERS FOR PRACTICE SCORING

PAPER 1. "MAKING DECISIONS"

Grade 8, Expository

Thinking helps you make good decisions. When making a decision, take your time and not rush into a hasty conclusion. Clarify the decision you are making. Be sure you understand all aspects of your decision, without confusion. Reason out the consequences your decision will effect. Question whether the concluding effects will be positive or negative.

Before proceeding ahead with any decision making process, devise other alternatives, if any, noticing who and what may be effected. Be sure to ask others for their opinion on the subject. Keep in mind, however, that their opinion may not be correct or even helpful. Quality decision making depends on facts, not opinions. Eventually, your decision will have impact on other things. These impacts cannot always be foreseen. Take your time in determining which impacts are most effected, and be careful in the end.

SAMPLE PAPERS FOR PRACTICE SCORING

PAPER 16. "WHAT CONFUSES ME"

Grade 12, Expository/Reflective

Last night I watched a starving child cry.

I could see the sharp outline of his bones jutting out from beneath his taught skin—his rib cage heaving visibly as the sobs shook his poor, fragile body. I saw his swollen belly and the way his limbs hung limply at his sides, like broken twigs. But what stayed with me were his eyes. Sunken and shadowed in their sockets, his tears seeming to glitter from the depths of some profound emotion that I could not seem to grasp or understand. I watched as they carved shiny, silver traces through the dust on his cheeks, and for a brief moment I wondered whether he could really see me.

Seconds later he was gone—replaced by the image of a dancing Coca-Cola can as the news broadcast switched over to a commercial. And I sat there, mulling over his predicament while wondering whether or not to start my Calculus homework. To me, he was nothing more than a poster child, and I had homework to do.

You ask me what confuses me in life. I'll tell you. I'm confused by the fact that I sleep in a two-story, four-bedroom house while an African family of twelve huddles in a dilapidated old shack made of sticks and mud. I'm confused by the fact that I'm five pounds overweight whereas others haven't seen a bite of food in over a week. I'm confused by the fact that the bracelet I wear around my wrist could support a child for over a month. I'm confused by the fact that I watched that helpless little boy cry—and didn't shed a tear.

I wonder when I changed, when I became so devoid of human emotion that I could look misery in the eye and merely shrug my shoulders. Tough break, kid! Life's rough. When I think about it, I frighten myself.

PAPER 16. "WHAT CONFUSES ME" continued

It seems as though there's a side of me that I didn't even know existed—one that has become so numb to the tragedies of this world that it no longer feels the tug of simple human kindness. I can rant and rave about the injustices of this world until I'm blue in the face. . . I can spout out Bible verses about love and charity until my voice turns hoarse. . . But the fact remains the same: I didn't cry. That confuses me.

That night as I lay in bed, the boy's image flashed before me again in my mind. And suddenly it occurred to me: he has a name. In that single, swift instant, something inside of me seemed to give way. He was a real person, flesh and blood—living under the same sky, sleeping under the same moon. It's hard to force yourself to see something you are too willing to ignore. It's easier to spare yourself the pain than embrace the truth. But at that moment I knew that I was helpless to change the reality before me. That boy had gone to bed hungry.

But he no longer cries alone.

A Good Teacher

To be a good teacher one needs to love kids, love education, be caring, dedicated, cheerful, etc. Yeah, we've all heard it before. We've been writing this essay since 2nd grade. It's what we're expected to tell you in our big, colorful words for our big, colorful grade. Sure. I agree, it does take all of that, but maybe it takes a wee bit more, hmmm?

Maybe a good teacher needs passion. Not necessarily for teaching, but for life. Perhaps they need to be rebellious and independent, as opposed to a standard issue model A.

I think a good teacher should teach what's in their hearts. They should be outrageous and have fun with their subjects. They should be there to give advice, but they should not force it upon those who don't want it.

A good teacher should understand that being free spirited doesn't mean you're stupid and that being shy doesn't mean you have no opinions. I think a good teacher could let loose and be casual. Let us have our freedoms without losing control.

They must realize that I am not 4, nor am I 40. A good teacher should never fear a new idea. They shouldn't be afraid to make mistakes. They should respect me and my privacy, understanding that this will bring respect to them.

A good teacher must realize that we are individuals. They should involve us in discussions and teach us about reality and things that are relevant to us. They should understand that we don't need to be sheltered as much anymore. Now we need to be taught.

A good teacher listens.

A good teacher learns.

Grade 8-9

SHARING YOUR WRITING: A FOCUSED REVISION LESSON

If you write regularly and share your writing with students, by all means keep on doing whatever good things you have going. This is a wonderful way to model the kind of responses you want your students to give each other when they are talking about their writing and asking for suggestions—plus it gives you the opportunity to tell the stories of your writing and revision. How else can students learn what revision looks like if we don't take them through the process from the inside out and talk to them about how writers think and feel?

Suppose, however, you do NOT routinely write or share with students. In that case, here's an easy, non-threatening approach that might get you started.

1. Think which trait you'd like to focus on for this lesson on revision—Ideas? Organization? Voice?
2. Create a SHORT (one paragraph is enough) piece of writing that is WEAK in the trait. Let's say you choose organization. You might—deliberately, mind you—make the lead weak, jumble the details to make the text hard to follow, leave out transitions, put in too much information, or leave the ending off altogether. It's up to your students to use their rubrics to help you identify and revise these problems.
3. Plan a time to read your paper aloud and discuss it. You may wish to put it on an overhead or make copies to hand out. You may wish to ask students to score it for the trait you've selected. (In the example that follows, Organization was the selected trait). Then, ask students to help you make a Plan for Revision—a list of very specific suggestions for making the piece stronger for the focus trait. If their list is long, ask them to show you where to begin. For example, you may wish to revise the lead and then see what happens. One step at a time . . . building toward the bigger picture!



4. Save their suggestions on an overhead so you can refer to them later.
5. Revise your paper, making it stronger in the trait you're working on. It does NOT have to be a masterpiece. In fact, it shouldn't be a masterpiece—that kind of progress will seem out of reasonable reach for many of your students. It just needs to be noticeably better, something they can see themselves doing later on their own work.
6. Read and share your revision. Ask students to score the new version, to comment on differences they see. Ask what still needs to be done. What would make it stronger yet? Tell students what you did to revise. Did you read your work aloud? Work on a word processor? Cut out whole paragraphs? Read it to someone else? Show them the piece in various stages of revision if you can. Talk through it—talk, talk, talk, and think aloud some more. Then ask for questions and listen carefully!
7. Next steps:
You could:
 - Revise further for that specific trait
 - Score for another trait and revise some more
 - Move on to a new piece and repeat the process
 - Share a reflection of the process from your point of view

The whole secret of this activity is to have some fun—and to show positive ways of working with and responding to a writing group! When you do this, you make revision possible for students on their own work.



MY TRIP TO DISNEYLAND

An example lesson to illustrate teaching ORGANIZATION to students by modeling the writing process.

Keys to success:

- Think aloud as you go so students can hear what is going through your mind.
- Stay focused on the selected trait (even when students suggest revision ideas that are for other traits).
- Encourage students to use the rubric as they comment.
- Listen carefully to what students say . . . it will help you understand what they know and still need to learn.
- Honor all their ideas but show students how you chose to use some over others in your revision (the writer is in control!).
- Remember that you don't have to write something wonderful to illustrate the revision process, it just has to be better than the original.
- Be reflective on the process, how their comments make you feel, and how important a real audience is to a writer.
- Have fun! Show students that revision isn't as scary as they thought.



MY TRIP TO DISNEYLAND

Well, one time we went to Disneyland and it was pretty fun. And there were a lot of people there who wanted to ride on the same rides as we did so we had to wait in line for a long time and that part wasn't so great, but except for that, Disneyland was really cool. My favorite ride was Pirates of the Caribbean, but I liked the food there, too. They've got lots of different kinds of food to eat there like chili cheese fries and popcorn. My son, Sam, really liked the hamburgers there because they were barbecued and had a lot of good stuff on them, but I liked the chili cheese fries the best. Sometimes we make them at home now because they were so good at Disneyland. Anyway, Sam and I had a great time at Disneyland. Sam didn't like the ride, "It's a Small World," because he said it was really boring. But I liked it because it showed all the different countries and how they dressed. There were a lot of people at Disneyland from different countries too. When they came in they looked so surprised to see all the people and rides and food everywhere.

MY TRIP TO DISNEYLAND

Revision suggestions from fifth graders after reading the original:

- Pick one idea and stick with it.
- You talked about too many things.
- It jumps around too much.
- What's the point?
- I wasn't very interested; even at the beginning.
- You skipped around—I got lost.
- Don't start with "Well."
- Trying to follow this story is like reading a road map in the pitch black!
- Where are the paragraphs?
- The ideas are all jumbled up—it's like talking, not writing.



MY TRIP TO DISNEYLAND

Revision suggestions from ninth graders after reading the original:

- This is kinda like prewriting. Now maybe you can pick something to focus on once you look at these first ideas.
- You have four different ideas in here 1) the rides, 2) the people, 3) the food, and 4) your son's experience and that's too many!
- Reread it and make sure it makes sense to you. Do it out loud.
- Your introduction needs work. Make the first sentence more interesting because it sets the tone for the whole paper. Don't EVER start with "Well."
- Once you set up the topic, don't drift away. Stay with that idea, otherwise it gets confusing and you lose the momentum.
- All of the paragraphs should help explain the main idea. It all needs to tie together.
- The words are pretty ordinary and sometimes flat. Pick some more interesting ones to replace "a lot" and "stuff."
- Each last sentence of the paragraph should point the way to the next paragraph, otherwise it just doesn't make sense why you are talking about something new.
- End it with a conclusion but one that ties back to the beginning in an interesting way. Don't just say the same thing all over again.
- The ending is the hardest part because it really needs to make it feel finished. Leave them thinking, laughing. But don't just put "The End"—that's cheap.



MY TRIP TO DISNEYLAND: POSSIBLE LEADS

1. This paper is going to tell you about the three things I liked best about Disneyland.
2. Every kid in the world wants to go to Disneyland. Now it was finally my turn.
3. My mouth still waters at the thought of those delicious chili cheese fries.
4. Hi! My name is Ruth and I'm going to tell you about my trip to Disneyland.
5. Have you ever been to Disneyland? I have.
6. Leaning out of the car window I understood why the sight before me was called THE MAGICAL KINGDOM.



MY TRIP TO DISNEYLAND #1

Leaning out the car window I understood why the sight before me was called THE MAGICAL KINGDOM. Rising higher than the thick layers of Southern California smog was a gigantic "snow" covered alpine mountain just daring me to jump into one of its bobsleds for the ride of a lifetime.

My parents parked the car and we headed toward the entrance. My eyes were fixed on the mountain and I felt a knot in my stomach as I wondered if I'd have the courage to take the wild mountain ride. With each step, through the entrance, up main street, past Sleeping Beauty's Castle and the walk that would take us to Adventure Land, I felt terror rising in my heart and mind. What made me think I could do this? I hated scary rides—stayed away from carnivals and roller coasters like the plague—yet here I was, marching steadily toward the "Queen" of them all, the Matterhorn.

Standing in line offered only a brief reprieve. The whole 25 minutes of edging forward, I said to myself, "Just don't do it. Who will care? Just get out of line. Get out now!" But somehow my feet weren't listening and before I realized what was happening, I was strapped into the front seat of the bobsled. "Now, hold on tight. Don't stand up—you might fall out as the bobsled goes upside-down. Here we go . . ."

And with a rush of noise, grinding gears, and lights, we went up the mountain, and down. The whole thing lasted about two minutes, but to this day it felt like a lifetime to me. My first triumph over the mountain! The Magical Kingdom had woven its spell over me and allowed me to conquer a great fear. I stood in that line and rode the bobsleds one more time, confident now that I was part of the world that could master E ticket rides.

(written for grade 5 students to illustrate the trait of organization)



MY TRIP TO DISNEYLAND #2

My mouth still waters at the thought of those delicious chili cheese fries. The potatoes so hot they almost burn the top of your mouth; the cheese melted to just the right temperature that it gently oozed down the side of the dish; the aroma of chili as pungent as the Texas Prairie spices that brought it to life. I was finally at Disneyland!

Most people remember the unique and thrilling ride, or the crowds of people from all over the world milling around the acres and acres of land devoted to making people laugh, and forget their everyday lives for just a few precious hours. Not me, I remember the food—rich, delicious, and everywhere. Pleasures for the palate, just another dimension of this magical kingdom designed to fulfill your wishes and dreams.

It wasn't at all what I expected. I wanted to be thrilled as the ride down the Matterhorn sent my heart racing way up into my throat. I wanted to laugh uproariously at the antics of the ridiculous bears in Bear Country. I yearned to feel the magic as Sleeping Beauty's Castle cast its web of enchantment over me. But no, I found myself craning my neck around every corner to scope out which avenue might hold another food cart or restaurant of delightful treasures I had never dared to dream existed.

You see, when I was growing up, we ate plain food. Good, healthy (at least by 1960 standards), wholesome, but plain food. Meat loaf, tuna on toast, chicken and dumplings, fruit in Jell-O molds, and at least a weekly dose of liver. And yet here I was, finally at Disneyland where there was enough excitement to last most people a lifetime at every turn, and what amazed me most was chili cheese fries. Gloriously hot, gooey, savory, chili cheese fries. Ahhh . . . it was definitely an E ticket ride.

(written for grade 9 students to illustrate the trait of organization)

39.



SELF-REFLECTION MY TRIP TO DISNEYLAND

Working on these two pieces of writing made me realize just how true my advice to young writers is—focused *is* better! When I tried to write the piece on looking out the window at Disneyland, I realized I still needed a reason for writing; the topic alone wasn't enough. Just *going* to Disneyland was not a good seedbed for an interesting piece of writing. I knew I had to zero in on something—the theme of my fear began to emerge as I struggled to make the piece work more effectively. The ideas were strengthened as I worked on the organization—a real bonus in analytic assessment!

When I wrote about the chili cheese fries, however, it was a totally different story. The writing just flowed and seemed to work so much better. Though I thought this idea would be really hard at first, I found it easier than the other piece because the writing was purposeful and allowed me to explore the real story—which had more to do with my family and growing up than the fantasyland of Disneyland. I think I have more to say on this topic—more ideas to explore here—and have salted them away for another day.

I used the same ending on both pieces because it captured the mood and feeling I was looking for. The E ticket ride reference turns out to be a story inside the story. If I write more on this, I think it will be a whole piece focusing on the E ticket reference and how it has worked its way into our shared vocabulary even though it has been more than 20 years since ticket booklets were issued with A-E tickets.

I jotted the E ticket reference down in my writer's notebook. It's an interesting idea to think about. Maybe I can even find an old E ticket somewhere and that will help me share this idea with kids who have no clue where E tickets came from and how they were used. Maybe I can get my brother to write his own world of reference to E tickets as an air traffic controller. This could be a fun collection to work on and watch grow—all from the original idea of "Disneyland."

40.



6 +1 TRAITS™ OF WRITING LESSON PLAN

NAME: MARY SCHMIDT

DATE:

7/29/02

GRADE LEVEL/COURSE: ENGLISH 9

WRITING TRAIT(S)/STANDARD(S) ADDRESSED (CIRCLE ANY THAT

1 IDEAS	2 ORGANIZATION	3 VOICE	4 WORD CHOICE	5 SENTENCE FLUENCY	6 CONVENTIONS	7 PRESENTATION
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TYPE OF WRITING (CIRCLE ONE):

DESCRIPTIVE

NARRATIVE

IMAGINATIVE

EXPOSITORY

PERSUASIVE

WRITING PROMPT: AS DAVID WEISNER'S CREATIVE CONSULTANT,
WRITE AN ENDING FOR THIS BOOK THAT WOULD SATISFY THE READER.
THEN, AS CREATIVE CONSULTANT TO WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE WRITE AN
ALTERNATIVE ENDING FOR *ROMEO AND JULIET* THAT FOLLOWS THE
FORMAT OF A DRAMA AND WOULD SATISFY THE DISCERNING
"SHAKESPEAREOPHILE."

BOOK TITLE (OPTIONAL): JUNE 29, 1999 BY DAVID WIESNER

TIME REQUIRED: 45-50 MINUTES

WHAT TO DO/MATERIALS/PREPARATION NEEDED:

- ⇒ DISCUSS THE SIX STEPS OF PLOT : ACTION, CONFLICT, COMPLICATION, CRISIS, CLIMAX, RESOLUTION (INCLUDING SOLVING THE PROBLEM AND PROVIDING A PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL ENDING)
- ⇒ DISCUSS WHAT A GOOD ENDING DOES: SOLVE THE PROBLEM, TELL THE MAIN CHARACTER'S FEELINGS, HAVE A PHYSICAL ENDING, ANSWER THE READER'S QUESTIONS. RELATE THIS TO THE TRAIT OF ORGANIZATION BY LOOKING AT THE RUBRIC.
- ⇒ READ *JUNE 29, 1999* STOPPING AT "AND WHOSE BROCCOLI IS IN MY BACKYARD?"
- ⇒ DISCUSS WHAT AN ENDING TO THIS STORY WOULD NEED TO DO TO BE A "SATISFYING CONCLUSION."

- ⇒ STUDENTS WORK IN PAIRS OR ALONE TO WRITE THEIR OWN ENDING TO THE STORY. THE ENDING NEEDS TO ACCOMPLISH THOSE THINGS LISTED IN POINT #2.
- ⇒ VOLUNTEERS TELL ONE THING THEIR ENDING DID (SOLVE THE PROBLEM, TELL THE MAIN CHARACTER'S FEELINGS, PHYSICAL ENDING, ANSWER READER'S QUESTIONS) AND SUMMARIZE HOW THEIR ENDING ACCOMPLISHED THAT.
- ⇒ FOLLOWING THIS DISCUSSION, WORK ALONE OR IN PAIRS TO WRITE A NEW, MORE PERSONALLY SATISFYING ENDING FOR *ROMEO AND JULIET*.

HOW DOES THIS ACTIVITY CONNECT TO THE TRAIT(S)?

THIS ACTIVITY FOCUSES ONE NARROW COMPONENT OF ORGANIZATION—CREATING A SATISFYING CONCLUSION. THROUGH DISCUSSION STUDENTS COME TO KNOW HOW THEY MIGHT DO THAT. THEY ENGAGE IN AN ACTIVITY BASED ON A PICTURE BOOK AND CARRY THEIR NEW LEARNING TO A CONTENT-BASED SITUATION.

REFLECTION: