

# Discovering Language Arts

## Introduction to Writing

### Teacher's Guide

**Grade Level:** K-2

**Curriculum Focus:** Language Arts

**Lesson Duration:** One class period

#### Program Description

**Prewriting: *A Visit to the Fire Station*** (4 min.) – One way to organize your ideas before writing a story is to draw pictures of the things you want to write about.

**Drafting & Revising: *Writing a Dog Story*** (4 min.) – When writers revise their work, they check to make sure their writing makes sense and look for places where they can add details to make their writing more interesting.

**Editing & Publishing: *A Dog Scrapbook*** (5 min.) – Writers edit their work to make sure that everything is correct before publishing their writing.

**Think Big: *An Elephant's Tale*** (5 min.) – A good writer follows the basic rules of good writing, using complete sentences and including descriptive words in a story.

**Beginning, Middle & End: *Go Bananas*** (4 min.) – Stories have a beginning, middle, and end.

**Making a List: *A Thanksgiving Dinner*** (3 min.) – Writing a list can help keep you organized. Being organized means putting things in order.

**Writing a Letter: *The Fourth of July*** (3 min.) – You can write a friendly letter to tell what you did or to say hello to a friend.

**Writing Invitations: *Chinese New Year*** (4 min.) – An invitation is a nice way of telling somebody about an event or party.

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#### Onscreen Questions

- Pretend you get to spend a day at the fire station. Draw a picture of your day. Then write a story to go with the picture.
- What animal do you want to write about? Write a first draft and then revise your story.
- What is your favorite kind of dog? Write your own story about dogs. Be sure to edit your work and add pictures before you share your story with a friend.
- What do you know about elephants? Think of three words to describe them and use the words in complete sentences.
- What did you do today? Write a story about your day with a beginning, middle, and end.
- What is your favorite meal? Write a list of what you need to make that meal.
- What is your favorite holiday? Write a letter to a friend telling about it.

- What kind of party would you like to have? Write an invitation. Make sure to include the answers to the questions *who*, *what*, *why*, *when*, and *where*.
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## Lesson Plan

### Student Objectives

- Understand that writing a list is a good way to keep organized.
- Make a list of items they would take on a vacation to the beach.

### Materials

- *Introduction to Writing* video
- An age-appropriate, illustrated book about visiting the beach (good examples include *Curious George Goes to the Beach* by H.A. Ray, *Beach Day* by Karen Roosa, and *At the Beach* by Anne F. and Harlow Rockwell)
- Pencils and erasers
- Writing paper
- Drawing paper
- Crayons or colored pencils

### Procedures

1. Talk about different reasons people make lists. A good way to introduce this topic is to watch portions of *Introduction to Writing* with the class. After watching the program, talk about making lists. How did the Thanksgiving dinner list help remind us of what is needed for a traditional holiday meal? Ask for examples of some other times when making a list might come in handy and tell students to share examples of times when they or their parents, friends, or families have made lists. Have you ever made a list? How did it help you stay focused and organized?
2. Ask students if they have ever gone on a vacation or visited somebody who lived far away. What did they bring with them? Did they forget anything when they went on their vacation? How did it change their visit? Would a list have helped them remember to bring everything they wanted? Read a book about visiting the beach to your students. Before reading, tell students to listen to the words and look at the illustrations while you are reading to see if they can come up with items a person should have with them when visiting the beach.
3. After reading the book, go back through the illustrations and talk about some of the items students think a person should have at the beach. What kinds of things do you need to bring to the beach? What should you wear to the beach? What are some toys you would want to have at the beach? Write these items on the board so that students can refer to them later in the lesson.
4. After discussing the book and the beach items students came up with, tell the class they are about to take a pretend vacation to the beach. What should they bring? Give each student paper

and a pencil and have them make a list of at least six items that they will need for their day at the beach. Remind students that their list should have a title. Help them brainstorm titles.

5. Once students have completed their lists, give them some drawing paper and crayons and have them draw a picture describing their day at the beach. In addition to the drawing, have older students write two or three sentences about this pretend vacation. What did you do at the beach? What did you see? Tell students to include as many descriptive words or images as possible and remind them that an illustration tells a story; a good illustration has lots of details so that a person looking at it can tell what is happening in the picture.
6. Ask student volunteers to share their lists and drawings with the rest of the class. Compare the items on student lists. What items did most people have on their list? What unique items did some students have? Was there anything that somebody forgot to put on their list that they now think they should have had? How did making a list help you stay organized? Did making a list remind you to bring some items you might otherwise have forgotten?
7. Display the lists and drawings in the classroom so that students may look at them at their leisure.

## Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students were highly engaged in class discussions; demonstrated a solid understanding of the benefits of list writing as an organizational tool; wrote complete, legible, and creative lists that began with a highly appropriate title and identified at least six items needed for a day at the beach; and drew a colorful, unique picture of their day at the beach.
- **2 points:** Students generally engaged in class discussions, demonstrated an adequate understanding of the benefits of list writing as an organizational tool, wrote somewhat legible and creative lists that began with a somewhat appropriate title and identified at least four items needed for a day at the beach, and drew a somewhat colorful picture of their day at the beach.
- **1 point:** Students participated minimally in group discussions, were unable to demonstrate a basic understanding of the benefits of list writing as an organizational tool, wrote incomplete or illegible lists that began with an inappropriate title or had no title and identified three or fewer items needed for a day at the beach, and drew an incomplete or sloppy picture of their day at the beach.

## Vocabulary

### describe

*Definition:* To give an account in speech or in writing; to convey an idea or impression of something

*Context:* Think of three words to describe elephants.



### **list**

*Definition:* A series of names, words, or other items written, printed, or imagined one after another

*Context:* Let's write a list of the foods we want to serve at Thanksgiving dinner.

### **picture**

*Definition:* A visual representation or image painted, drawn, photographed, or otherwise rendered on a flat surface.

*Context:* Pictures can make a story even more interesting for the reader.

### **organized**

*Definition:* Efficient and methodical; putting things in order

*Context:* Being organized means putting things in order.

### **revise**

*Definition:* To prepare a newly edited version of a text; to reconsider and change or modify

*Context:* How can you revise or change this sentence so that it makes sense? "This job has a dog."

### **story**

*Definition:* An account of events or series of events, either true or fictitious

*Context:* We will draw some pictures that will help us write a story about Jack's day at the fire station.

## *Academic Standards*

### **Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)**

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit [www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp](http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp).

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Language Arts – Writing: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process; uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing; uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions
- Language Arts – Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

### **The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)**



The National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association have developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching English language arts. To view the standards online, go to [www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm](http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm).

This lesson plan addresses the following English standards:

- Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes
  - Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes
  - Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts
  - Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes
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## Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
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## DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

### *How to Use the DVD*

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

**Play Video** – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

**Video Index** – Here the video is divided into sections indicated by video thumbnail icons; brief descriptions are noted for each one. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.



**Curriculum Units** – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

**Standards Link** – Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

**Teacher Resources** – This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

## ***Video Index***

### **I. Prewriting**

Drawing pictures can help writers organize their thoughts before writing.

### **II. Drafting and Revising**

Writers revise their work to make sure their writing makes sense and is as interesting as possible.

### **III. Editing and Publishing**

Writers edit their work to make sure everything is correct before publishing their writing.

### **IV. Think Big**

A good writer utilizes the basic rules of good writing, using complete sentences and including descriptive words in a story.

### **V. Beginning, Middle, and End**

In order for a story to make sense, it must have a beginning, middle, and end.

### **VI. Making a List**

Writing a list can help keep you organized and on task.



## VII. Writing a Letter

Letters are a good way to say hello to a friend or describe an event that has occurred. Learn about the five parts of a letter.

## VIII. Writing Invitations

An invitation is a nice way to tell somebody about an event or party.

## Curriculum Units

### 1. Prewriting Pictures: Organizing Your Thoughts Before Writing

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: When writing a story, how do you decide what you want to write about?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: How might drawing pictures before you start writing help you write a better story?

A: Before writing a story, it is helpful to organize your thoughts and decide what you want to say. Drawing pictures is a good way to do this. Pictures help you remember what you want to say in your story.

### 2. Writing First Drafts and Revising Your Stories

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: What can you do to be sure your stories are interesting and make sense?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: Describe what a writer does during the revising stage of writing.

A: After writing their first draft of ideas, writers go back and take a second look at what they have written. This is called revising. When writers revise their work, they check to make sure their writing makes sense and look for places where they can add details to make their writing more interesting. When they are satisfied with their story, they rewrite a final draft with all their revisions.

### 3. Editing Your Work

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: What do you know about dogs?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: What do writers look for when editing their work?

A: During the editing process, writers check spelling and punctuation. They make sure all words in their stories are spelled correctly. They also make sure all sentences begin with a capital letter and end with the correct punctuation. Writers may also add pictures to their work during this stage.

### 4. Using the Basic Rules of Good Writing

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: What words would you use to describe your favorite activity?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: What are the two basic rules of good writing?

A: The basic rules of good writing are the following: Always write in complete sentences; a complete sentence tells a whole thought. Use good description in your writing; the better you describe what you are writing about, the easier it will be for the reader to understand.

### 5. Learning About Story Order

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Describe the ending of your favorite book or story.

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: What kinds of things do you write about in the beginning, middle, and end of a story?

A: The beginning of a story tells readers about the people in the story and where and when it happened. The middle tells about the main action of the story. The end tells what happened to the people in the story.

## 6. Organizational Skills: Writing Lists

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: What do you know about Thanksgiving?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: How might making a list help you with a project?

A: Making a list can help you remember all the things you need to do for a project. Writing a list can also help keep you organized. Being organized means having everything in order.

## 7. The Parts of a Letter

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Have you ever written a letter to someone?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: What are the five parts of a letter?

A: The five parts of a letter are the date, a greeting, the body, the closing, and a signature. The date tells a reader when the letter was written. The greeting is a way of saying hello to the person you are writing your letter to. The body is the story of a friendly letter. The closing is a way of saying goodbye and the signature is your name.

## 8. The Parts of an Invitation

*Pre-viewing question*

Q: Have you ever received an invitation to a party or event?

A: Answers will vary.

*Post-viewing question*

Q: What five questions should an invitation answer?

A: An invitation should say who is having a party, what the people at the party will be doing, and why the party is occurring. It should also say when the party will take place and where it is going to be held.