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Grades 4–6

Open-ended Writing Activities for Children



by Linda Beth Polon

Dedication

My Mom, Edie Wolff, who always encourages me to write, write, and do more writing

Lisette, a writer fan of mine

Aileen Cantwell, my favorite co-author

Gail Hendricks, a wonderful friend

Laura Strom—my editor, who is always on the other end of the line when I need advice

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How to Use This Book

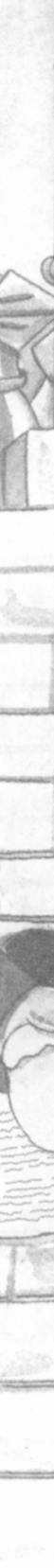
The purpose of this book is to help students improve their writing and grammar skills while enjoying the writing process. Included in each writing activity is a grammar mini-lesson to help students improve their grammar skills and use of the language. Students are encouraged to write using their newly acquired or reinforced language skills to help their stories come alive.

This book is arranged sequentially, and except for one or two pages should be used in order. After students have written, they should review it, looking to see if they have incorporated what was taught in the mini-lesson. If they find applications of the skill, they should underline them in their writing as directed. If they do not find that application, then they should revise or rewrite to incorporate examples of the skill. This not only teaches the students the importance of rereading their writing, but also gives them practice in revision and rewriting. Incorporating the skills taught in the mini-lessons will give students an appreciation for the variety of structures and components of sentences. This will lead to more effective use of the language when they write.

On the last page of the book, there is a list of open-ended story starters to use either for freewriting exercises or to reinforce concepts that need extra attention. As a freewriting exercise, you may simply write the story starter on a chalkboard and let the students take it from there. Or to reinforce a concept, have the students review their completed story and revise, reusing any of the mini-lessons that they need extra help on.

If there is not enough room for students to do their work on the worksheets, they can continue their work on another piece of paper.

Declarative

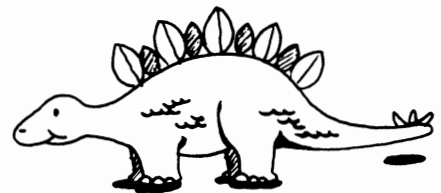


6

A sentence that expresses a complete thought, begins with a capital letter, and ends with a period is called a declarative sentence. ("The soda fizzed in my face. I enjoyed walking in the warm ocean.") An incomplete sentence does not tell anything. (in the corner of the room/a friend yelled at)

- ◆ If you owned a store, what kind would it be?
- ◆ What if you lived during the dinosaur period?
- ◆ You have invented something that will help people. What is it and what does it do?

A cartoon illustration of a Stegosaurus dinosaur is positioned at the bottom right of the page, standing on the bottom-most horizontal line. The dinosaur is facing left and has a friendly expression. It features a row of large, pointed plates along its back and a tail with a small tuft at the end. The illustration is simple and suitable for a children's educational activity.



A declarative sentence expresses a complete thought, begins with a capital letter, and ends with a period. (I always use the scooper when I walk the dog.)


Write a story using one of the story ideas below. Title your story and draw a picture to illustrate it. Afterward, review your story and see if you can find any declarative sentences. If so, underline them. If not, try revising or rewriting to incorporate some.

- ◆ If I could be famous in any sport. . . .
- ◆ If I was an inanimate object (something not alive). . . .
- ◆ If I was on TV, I would do and feel. . . .



Title:

[illegible]



Interrogative


8

An interrogative, or asking, sentence is a sentence that asks a question. It begins with a capital letter and ends with a question mark. (**W**here did you go?) Most asking sentences begin with the words: *how, why, are, is, which, where, when, have, did, could, would, should, wouldn't, couldn't, what, will, does, didn't, or do.*

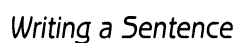
- ◆ If you could invent a new sport, what would it be?
- ◆ If you became President, what would you do for the country?
- ◆ If you could go to school in disguise, what would happen?

[illegible]

Imperative



9

[illegible]

Exclamatory

10

Name _____ Date _____

Another type of sentence is an exclamatory sentence, which shows a strong feeling of surprise. It begins with a capital letter and ends with an exclamation point. (I can't believe my mom is in the hospital! I won the contest!)


Write a story using one of the story ideas below. Title your story and draw a picture to illustrate it. Afterward, review your story and see if you can find any exclamatory sentences. If so, underline them. If not, try revising or rewriting to incorporate some.

- ◆ You're at a fire drill at school.
- ◆ You get into a popcorn fight with your brother/sister while watching TV.
- ◆ Your dog runs away while you are walking him/her.

Title: _____

A cartoon illustration of a boy wearing a hard hat and holding a small cloud-like object. The boy is smiling and looking towards the left. He is wearing a hard hat with a chin strap. He is holding a small, fluffy cloud-like object in his right hand. There are several other similar cloud-like objects floating around him. The background is white with horizontal lines.

Sentence Review



11

Name _____ Date _____

Write a story using one of the story ideas below. Title your story and draw a picture to illustrate it. Afterward, review your story and see if you can find a declarative, an interrogative, an imperative, and an exclamatory sentence. If so, underline and label them. If not, try revising or rewriting to incorporate some of each type.

- ◆ Somebody in class wore the same outfit I did.
- ◆ I thought I couldn't make it, but I did.
- ◆ My best friend told my secret to everyone.



Title:

