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GRADES 4-6

STORYWRITING



LINDA BETH POLON

Dedication

To Bobbie Dempsey

To Laura Strom

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Storywriting, Grades 4-6 is designed to make writing fun for children. This book will serve as great practice for students still learning to express themselves through their writing. As they write stories, letters, journal entries, etc., they are absolutely unrestricted and free to soar with their imaginations. Children's confidence will grow as they practice and so will their joy in sharing their thoughts and ideas.

These *Storywriting* storystarters offer a variety of writing activities such as retellings, invitations, narratives, direction writing, informational pieces, letters, and journaling. Feel free to present the writing activities in any order that supports your teaching goals.

Most students should be expected to write to fill the space provided, while more advanced writers should be encouraged to write as much as they can and go beyond the page constraints. It is always helpful for you, the teacher, to read each page aloud and answer any questions students might have before they start writing.

At the completion of a writing assignment, students can share their writings in a whole group class activity, in a small group, or in pairs. These sharing sessions are most effective when held regularly.

As an extension activity, *Storywriting, Grades 4-6* includes a Teachable Moments Grammar Skills List. This list is comprised of writing and grammar skills that can be used at your discretion with any of the writing activities. The list can be used to teach or to reinforce previously learned skills. For example, if your class is studying plural nouns, perhaps you would emphasize Skill #16 (plural nouns) when assigning the writing activity. For more on Teachable Moments, see the next page.

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

A special feature of this book is the Teachable Moments Grammar Skills List, p. 3. In this list are skills that can be taught with any of the writing activities, depending on what is being taught “at the moment.” This is purely an extension activity and can be used at your discretion.

The Teachable Moments Grammar Skills List can be used to teach or to reinforce previously learned skills. It will be up to you, as the teacher, to choose the teachable moment skill and then assign it to your students.

First, assign a creative writing exercise. When the assignment is complete, select a skill from the Teachable Moments Grammar Skills List. Teach or review the skill, and then have children practice the skill by proofreading what they have written, checking for usage. If children have not used the skill in their story, have them rewrite a sentence or two at the bottom of the page to illustrate their understanding of the skill.

For example, suppose you have just taught plural nouns, Skill #16. A student proofreads her story and finds only singular nouns. To do the extension activity, she should lift a sentence or two (your option) out of her story, rewriting it at the bottom of the page to incorporate two (you choose the number) plural nouns. The new sentences are not to be incorporated into the story. They are merely for practice.

original story: Her dog followed her to school.

revision: Two dogs followed her to school.

original story: I lost my baseball.

revision: I lost many baseballs.

This extension of the creative writing process will not only help teach the skills studied, but it will also give children valuable practice in reading and proofreading what they have written. Additionally, children will begin to understand the role of different parts of speech and the makeup of grammatically correct sentences. This solid foundation will serve them well in the future as they continue to study language and grammar in later grades.

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

TEACHABLE MOMENTS GRAMMAR SKILLS LIST

1) Types of sentences. **Statements** tell something and end with a period. *I like the color brown the best.* **Questions** ask something and end with a question mark. *Can I have some french fries?* **Exclamations** exhibit happy or sad emotions and end with an exclamation point. *It's my birthday!* **Commands** order or demand that something be done and end with a period. *Pick up the books. Clean your room.*

2) Simple subjects and predicates. A **complete subject** tells what or who the sentence is talking about. In the sentence *The wind felt good across my face*, “The wind” is the subject of the sentence because it tells what the sentence is talking about.

The **predicate** of the sentence tells what the subject does. The words “felt good across my face” is the predicate of the sentence and tells what the subject does.

3) Nouns. A **noun** names a person, place, or thing. **Proper nouns** are capitalized because they name such things as the names of people and pets, companies and buildings, books and movies, cities, states, countries, planets, products, days of the week, months, holidays, street names, initials, and so on.

4) Verbs. **Verbs** are found in the predicate of sentences. They tell what someone or something does. In the sentence *I run fast to the market*, “run” is the verb.

A **linking verb** joins the subject of the sentence with a word or words in the predicate. A linking verb usually tells what the subject is or is like, for example, *The boys were sick. They are proud.* Verbs can be in the **present**, **past**, or **future** tense and have helping verbs such as *have*, *has*, or *had* in front of them. Many verbs add the letters *-ed* to make them past tense, but some double the consonants at the end before adding *-ed*, such as *admit-admitted*.

5) Antonyms. **Antonyms** have opposite meanings, such as *began—ended*, *enjoyable—boring*, and *loudly—softly*. **Synonyms** are words that have very similar meanings, such as *big—large*, *smart—intelligent*, and *work—job*.

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

6) Contractions. **Contractions** are made up of two words that are brought together in a shorter version as one word. One or more letter is omitted and in its place is an apostrophe. (Examples: are not—aren't, is not— isn't, there is—there's). There are a few exceptions to this rule and these must be memorized.

7) Adjectives. **Adjectives** tell about a noun or pronoun. They help describe nouns by giving information that answers the questions “How many?” (*Two children played ball*), “What kind?” (*A silly grin lit up her face*), and “Which one?” (*That boy plays basketball well*). Adjectives are also articles, such as *a*, *an*, and *the* to help identify any person, place, or thing in a group. Adjectives are used in comparisons such as *strong-stronger-strongest*.

8) Adverbs. An **adverb** describes a verb and tells something about the action in a sentence. Adverbs tell how, when, or where an action occurs. Usually an adverb is next to its verb, but sometimes an adverb is found somewhere else in the sentence. (Example: *I ran down the street quickly*). Some adverbs, such as *very*, *too*, *fully*, *quite*, *barely*, *rather*, and *slightly* are used to describe adjectives and other adverbs. Adverbs are also used in comparisons, such as *late-later-latest*.

9) Pronouns. **Pronouns** take the place of a noun or a proper noun in a sentence. *Mr. and Mrs. McNeil live in Pacific Palisades. They live in Pacific Palisades.*

10) Compound subjects and compound predicates. **Compound** means two. (**Compound subject:** *The boy and girl* raced to the supermarket. **Compound predicate:** *The man screamed and pointed* at the robber.)

11) Commas. Use **commas** between a series of words (*I like peas, carrots, and apples.*), between the day and month of the year (*January 25, 2000*), after introductory or transitional words (*First, I'll go to the movies.*), to set off the name of a person (*Bob, may I have some candy?* or *Can I have some candy, Bob?*), between a person's last and first names (*Robertson, Phil*), and between a city and a state (*Los Angeles, California*).

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

12) Prepositions. **Prepositions** show the relationship between a noun or a pronoun and other words in a sentence. Prepositions include such words as, *about, above, across, before, between, up, toward, with*. (Example: *The bird flew into the volcano.*)

13) Run-on sentences. **Run-ons** occur when two sentences are not separated by the correct punctuation or conjunction (Incorrect: *Lissette went to the bank Hector met her there*. Correct: *Lissette went to the bank. Hector met her there.* or *Lissette went to the bank, and Hector met her there.*)

14) Possessives. **Possessive** words tell who or what owns or has something. An apostrophe plus the letter *s* is added to most nouns to show ownership. (*The girl's hat flew off in the wind.*) In plural nouns the apostrophe is usually added after the letter *s*. (*The girls' hats flew off in the wind.*) There are some exceptions to the rules (men's clothes, children's shirts, women's dresses, mice's feet, and so forth).

15) Abbreviations. **Abbreviate** personal titles (*Mr. Richards, Dr. Jones*), names of streets (*Elm St., Ninth Ave.*), time designations (*12:00 pm*), and initials (*A. B. Cantwell*). Other abbreviations, such as months of the year, are optional.

16) Plural nouns. Many nouns merely add the letter *s* to make them **plural**. However, nouns that end in the letters *s, ss, ch, sh, x, or z* add *-es* (*Bus-buses, lunch-lunches*). In nouns that end in a consonant plus *y*, the *y* changes to *i* and then an *-es* is added (*hobby-hobbies, story-stories*). In some nouns that end in *f* or *fe*, the *f* or *fe* changes to *ve* before an *-es* is added (*half-halves, life-lives*). Some nouns change a lot in the plural form (*man-men, woman-women, child-children, foot-feet*, and so on).

17) Capitalization. Always **capitalize** the first word in a sentence, names of people and animals, places, streets, businesses, titles, days of the week and month, and greetings and closings of letters.

PERHAPS YOU'LL BE A PARENT ONE DAY

Name _____

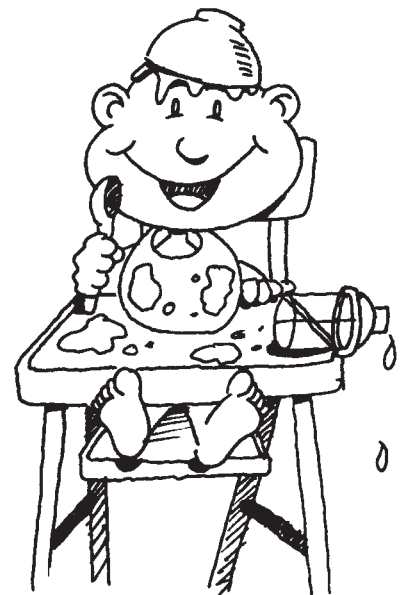
Date _____

Being a mom or dad is a job with many responsibilities. Answer the questions below by imagining you are a parent. Write one paragraph for each situation.

If you were a parent, what would you do if . . .

1) your children fought a lot?

2) your children would not eat the dinner you cooked for them?



PERHAPS YOU'LL BE A PARENT ONE DAY

Name _____

Date _____

Our parents sometimes do special things for us to make us feel good. Can you think of some things your parents have done to make you feel happy? Now imagine you are a parent. Describe a fun-filled day you would give your child.

