

SPECTRUM[®]

Writing

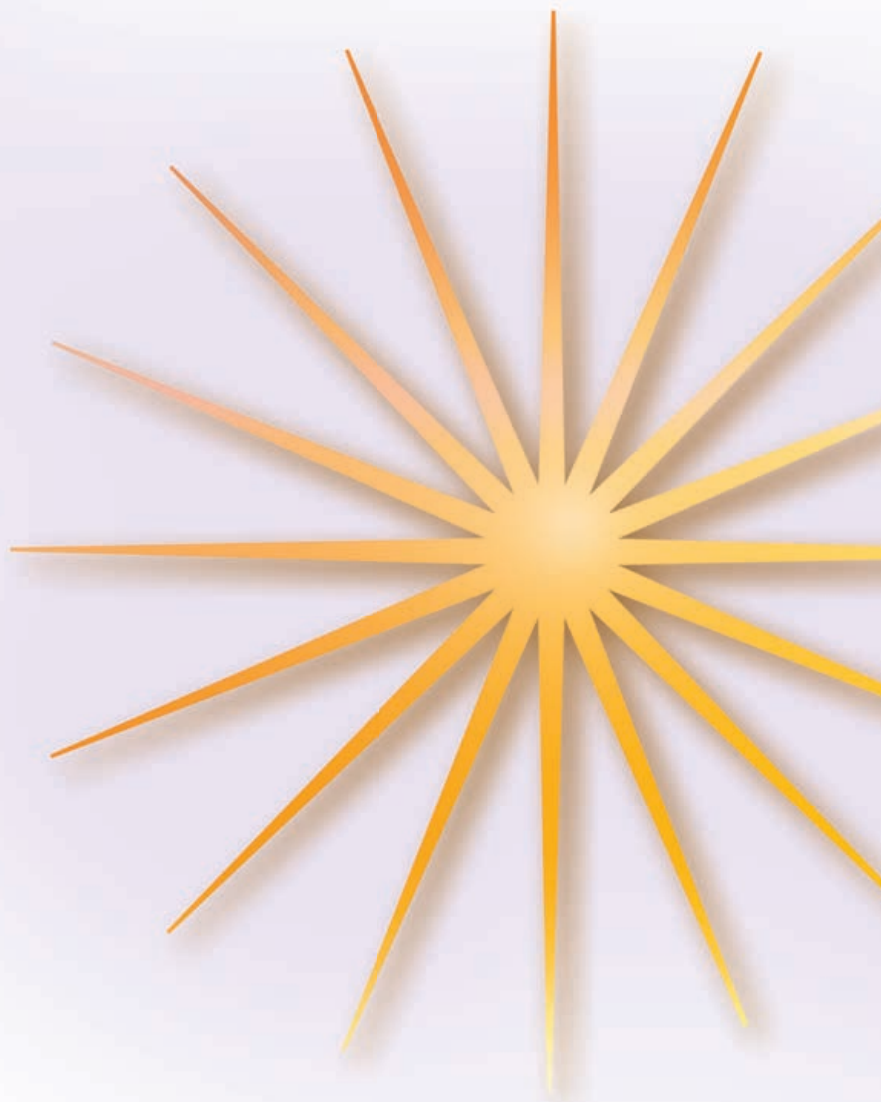
GRADE

8



Focused Practice for Writing Mastery

- Writing a story
- Writing to inform
- Writing an argument
- Using the writing process
- Writer's Handbook



Lesson 1 The Writing Process

Writers follow a plan when they write. The steps they take make up the writing process. Following these five steps leads to better writing.

Step 1: Prewrite

Think of prewriting as the “getting your act together” stage. Writers might choose a topic, or they might list everything they know about a topic already chosen. They might conduct research and take notes. Then, writers may organize their ideas by making a chart or diagram.

Step 2: Draft

Writers put their ideas on paper. This first draft should contain sentences and paragraphs. Good writers keep their prewriting ideas nearby. There will be mistakes in this draft, but there is time to fix them later.

Step 3: Revise

Writers change or fix their first draft. They move ideas around, put them in a different order, or add information. They make sure they used clear words and that the sentences sound good together. This is also the time to take out ideas that are not on topic.

Step 4: Proofread

Writers usually write or type a neat, new copy. Then, they look again to make sure everything is correct. They look especially for errors in capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Step 5: Publish

Finally, writers make a final copy that has no mistakes. They are now ready to share their writing. That might mean turning in an assignment, sending a letter, or posting your work on a Web site for others to read.

Lesson I The Writing Process

What does the writing process look like? Abby used the writing process to write a paragraph about her next-door neighbor. Her writing steps below are out of order. Label each step with a number and the name of the step.

Step ____: _____

My neighbor, Mrs. Garcia, lives in 4D, and she just loves people. Her children are all grown up now, but Mrs. Garcia is never happier than when they come to see her. She always says that the more people she has in her apartment, the happier she is. Mrs. Garcia also loves to cook. She often offers to share some stew or homemade bread. I think the food just gives her an excuse to be around people.

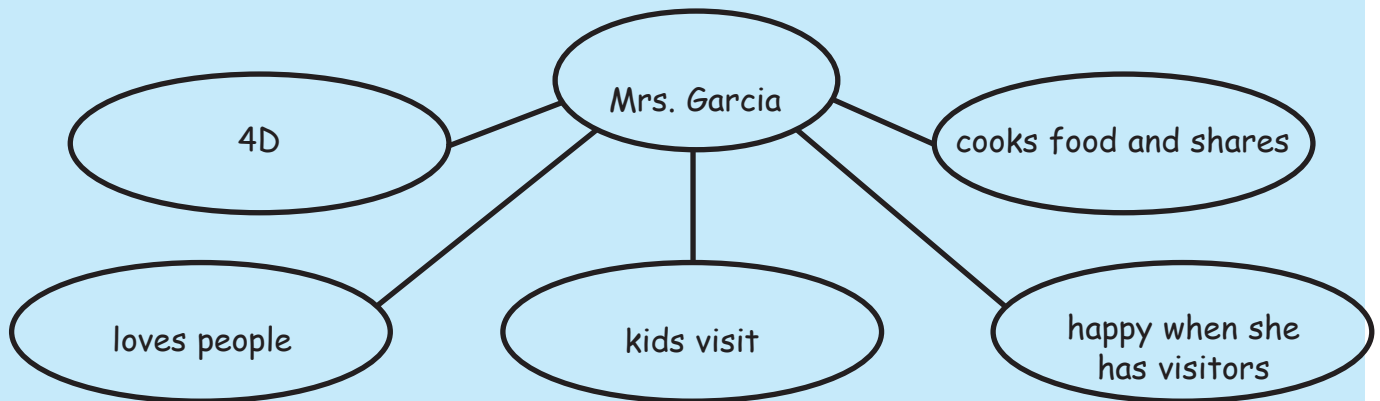
Step ____: _____

My neighbor ~~is~~ Mrs. Garcia ~~She~~ lives in 4D ~~She~~ just loves people. her children are all grown up now, but Mrs. Garcia is never happier than when they come to see her. She always says that the more people she has in her apartment, the happier she is. Mrs. Garcia also ~~cooks~~ ^{loves to} cook. She often offers to share ~~I~~ ^{some stew or homemade bread} think the food just give her an excuse to be around ~~us~~ ^{people}.

Step ____: _____

My neighbor, Mrs. Garcia lives in 4D, and she just loves people. ^Hher children are all grown up now, but Mrs. Garcia is never happier than when they come to see her. ^aShe always says that the more people she has in her apartment, the happier she is. Mrs. Garcia also loves to cook. She often offers to share some stew or homemade bread. I think the food just give ^Sher an excuse to be around people.

Step ____: _____



Step ____: _____

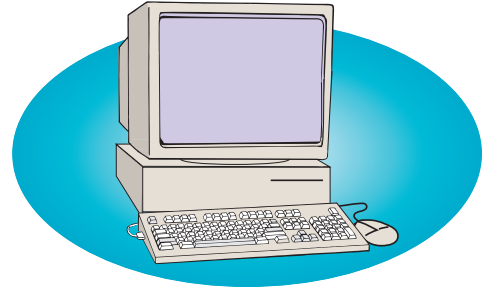
My neighbor is Mrs. Garcia. She lives in 4D. She just loves people. her children are all grown up now, but Mrs. Garcia is never happier than when they come to see her. She always says that the more people she has in her apartment, the happier she is. Mrs. Garcia also cooks. She often offers to share. I think the food just give her an excuse to be around us.

Lesson 2 Audience

Imagine that you are in an Introduction to Technology class. The teacher stands up and says this:

PC CPU input/output transits via bus systems to peripheral devices.

The teacher has forgotten to think about her audience. Her statement doesn't belong in an introductory course. It would be better suited for experienced computer technicians.



Here is the statement she should have made to her eighth-grade students in an introductory class:

In a personal computer, information and instructions go between the central processing unit and components, such as a hard disk, by means of internal cables.

Speakers and writers both must think about their audience. If they do not, they will not communicate effectively.

Writers need to consider these questions every time they write:

What will my audience enjoy?

What are they interested in?

What will make them want to keep on reading?

What do they already know?

What will they understand?

Here is part of an article from the foods section of a newspaper. Anyone who picks up the paper might read this article.

Shirring is an old-fashioned technique for preparing eggs. Shirred eggs are perfect with a little salt and pepper for those who like things simple. Others prefer a few breadcrumbs, grated cheese, or chopped herbs sprinkled over their shirred eggs.

What did the writer fail to provide for the audience?

Lesson 3 Write a Paragraph

Read through your paragraph. Ask yourself these questions. If necessary, make changes to your paragraph.

Questions to Ask About a Paragraph

- Is the first line indented?
- Does the topic sentence express the main idea?
- Does each sentence support the topic sentence?
- Does each sentence express a complete thought?
- Are the ideas in the paragraph appropriate for the audience?

Now that you have thought about the content, or meaning, of your paragraph, proofread it for errors. Look through several times, looking for a certain kind of error each time. Use this checklist.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> spelling | <input type="checkbox"/> end marks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> capitalization | <input type="checkbox"/> punctuation |

Now, rewrite your paragraph. Use your neatest handwriting and make sure there are no errors in the final copy.

Lesson 4 Staying on Topic

In a picture, the details normally fit the main idea. In a paragraph, all of the details should also fit the main idea. That's another way of saying that each sentence must stay on topic.

The following paragraph contains a sentence that is not on topic. Read the paragraph, and underline the topic sentence. Then, draw a line through the sentence that does not support the topic sentence.

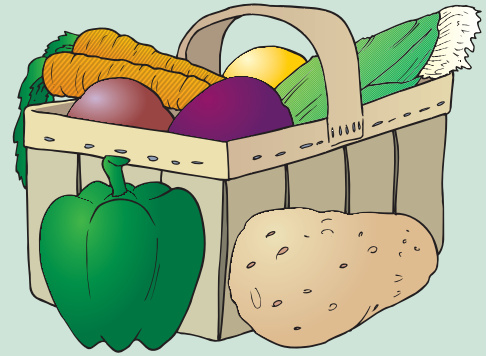
I think city life is great. I know all my neighbors in the apartment building, and they know me. I walk only a block to get to school. All the things we need, such as a grocery store, the bank, the library, and the train station, are within easy walking distance. We usually ride the 9:15 express when we go across town to visit my grandma. I can't imagine living anywhere else.

List two details from the paragraph above that support the main idea.

Now, write your own paragraph about city, suburban, or country life. Remember to stay on topic. Stick to one main idea, and make sure that all of your detail sentences support that main idea. When you are finished, underline your topic sentence.

Lesson 1 Sensory Details

The new restaurant in the century-old Capital City Hotel is open for business, and it is well worth the trip. While you wait for a table, the colorful fish in the wall-sized aquarium will entertain you. Once you step into the dining room, you will feel as though you have stepped back in time. The gleaming, golden oak tables and chairs, and the red-flocked wallpaper will pull you back to the stately hotel's earliest days. Once seated, guard against smacking your lips at the perfectly prepared meats, interestingly seasoned potatoes, and crisp-tender fresh vegetables.



In a description, a writer's goal is to help readers see, hear, smell, feel, or taste what is being described. Writers use **sensory details**, or details that appeal to readers' senses, in their descriptions. For example, in the paragraph above, "red-flocked wallpaper" helps you see and feel the walls. What other sensory details does the paragraph contain? List them here according to whether the detail helps you see, hear, smell, feel, or taste what is being described. Some details might fit into more than one category.

See: _____

Hear: _____

Smell: _____

Feel: _____

Taste: _____

The room you are in right now probably does not have red-flocked wallpaper. What kind of walls does it have? Gleaming white? Dull tan? Cluttered? Empty? Write some sensory details about the room in which you are sitting.

See: _____

Hear: _____

Smell: _____

Feel: _____

Taste: _____

