

A young boy with short hair, wearing a light blue shirt, is smiling and looking towards the camera. He is in a classroom setting with other students in the background. One girl in a blue shirt is visible, holding a red cup filled with pencils. The background is slightly blurred, focusing attention on the boy.

Unit of Study:
Breathing Life into Essays

Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District
Elementary Language Arts Department, Grades 3-5

Breathing Life into Essays Writing Workshop Unit of Study

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Breathing Life into the Essay

Overview of the Unit

PURPOSE

An essential part of preparing students with the critical written communication skills necessary for the 21st century is developing their ability to write in a variety of forms. Expository writing provides students with the opportunity to write about academic experiences and learning in a thoughtful, informative manner, which supports the type of writing expected in the College and Career Readiness Standards.

The main purpose of expository writing is to present a central idea (thesis) about a topic and explain it with relevant supporting sentences that includes facts and details. Merriam Webster defines a thesis as “a position or proposition that a person advances and offers to maintain by argument.” During this unit of study, students will collect a variety of seed ideas and select one that they will use to compose an essay on a self-selected topic. The essay will feature a central idea about the topic that will be explained in depth with meaningful examples, facts, and details.

The chart below shows the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills standards for expository writing in grades 3 – 5.

Writing Expository Texts		
Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
<p>20 A Create brief compositions that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i establish a central idea in a topic sentence. ii include supporting sentences with simple facts, details, and explanations. iii contain a concluding statement. 	<p>18 A Create brief compositions that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i establish a central idea in a topic sentence. ii include supporting sentences with simple facts, details, and explanations. iii contain a concluding statement. 	<p>18 A Create multi-paragraph essays to convey information about the topic that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i present effective introductions and concluding paragraphs. ii guide and inform the reader's understanding of key ideas and evidence. iii include specific facts, details, and examples in an appropriately organized structure. iv use a variety of sentence structures and transitions to link paragraphs.

LENGTH OF THE UNIT AND INTENDED PURPOSE

This document is a resource for teaching students how to develop a thoughtful idea or position about a topic and present evidence to support the central idea. A total of 16 minilessons are included in the four-week essay unit of study. Teachers need to select and modify the minilessons to address the specific needs of their learners. As a result, some minilessons may need to be re-taught or explored in greater depth. The lessons are progressive in nature, allow for the immersion in the genre, and the movement throughout the different phases of the writing process.

FRAMEWORK OF THE ESSAY UNIT

Note about the Explanation of the Phases – This unit of study conforms to stages in the writing process detailed in Katie Wood Ray’s book, The Writing Workshop: Working Through the Hard Parts (And They’re All Hard Parts) and Katherine Bomer’s Writing a Life. See information below for a more detailed description of each stage that students will experience during the unit.

Phase 1: Immersion – Students are immersed in the genre of essay writing by examining models from published authors and students. In this phase, students spend considerable time reading texts and gathering ideas for writing during their independent writing block.

Phase 2: Writing in a Writer’s Notebook/Generating – Students generate ideas for essay writing inside their writer’s notebook by engaging in quickwrite activities that may include jotting down a quicklist of expert topics, sharing their personal reflections on a topic, and expressing their ideas about a subject by “taking a stand” or position about a topic. It is important that writers see this phase as a risk-free opportunity to think on the page without being bound to rules, structures, and consequences.

Phase 3: Project Planning – Students reread entries from their writer’s notebook, looking for seed ideas that can be developed into focused essays. Students will examine their ideas with a discerning eye and will self-select topics for writing. During this phase, students will also begin to envision how they want to organize their essay and plan accordingly. In this unit, Lucy Calkins’ “Boxes and Bullets” graphic organizer is used as tool to help students plan for the drafting of their essay.

Phase 4: Drafting and Revising – Students begin a first draft using the information collected during phase three. Throughout the drafting and revising phase, the teacher will reveal author’s craft techniques and revision strategies through a variety of minilessons. As students continue to draft their essays, they will apply techniques and strategies to refine the central idea (thesis), enhance the organization of the relevant supporting details, add effective transitions to link ideas, and rearrange/delete portions of the text to create new versions of a draft. They will share their revised version with classmates and the teacher, getting feedback on what works and what needs fine-tuning.

Phase 5: Editing, Publishing, and Celebrating – Students will reread their final drafts, adding, changing, and fixing the surface features such as capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and grammar. A final, corrected copy might be typed or handwritten, illustrated or bound. As a culminating activity, students will read and share their published essay with their peers and/or another suitable audience.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

Students will use the writing process to craft an essay with a central idea and supporting details with simple facts, details, and explanations. The grade-level writing process TEKS are shown below.

Writing Process		
Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
17 A Plan a first draft by selecting a genre appropriate for conveying the intended meaning to an audience and generating ideas through a range of strategies (e.g., brainstorming, graphic organizers, logs, journals).	15 A Plan a first draft by selecting a genre appropriate for conveying the intended meaning to an audience and generating ideas through a range of strategies (e.g., brainstorming, graphic organizers, logs, journals).	18 A Plan a first draft by selecting a genre appropriate for conveying the intended meaning to an audience, determining appropriate topics through a range of strategies (e.g., discussion, background reading, personal interests, interviews), and developing a thesis or controlling idea.
17 B Develop drafts by categorizing ideas and organizing them into paragraphs.	15 B Develop drafts by categorizing ideas and organizing them into paragraphs.	18 B Develop drafts by choosing an appropriate organizational strategy (e.g., sequence of events, cause-effect, compare-contrast) and building on ideas to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing.
17 C Revise drafts for coherence, organization, use of simple and compound sentences, and audience.	15 C Revise drafts for coherence, organization, use of simple and compound sentences, and audience.	18 C Revise drafts to clarify meaning, enhance style, include simple and compound sentences, and improve transitions by adding, deleting, combining, and rearranging sentences or larger units of text after rethinking how well questions of purpose, audience, and genre have been addressed.
17 D Edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling using a teacher-developed rubric.	15 D Edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling using a teacher-developed rubric.	18 D Edit drafts for grammar, mechanics, and spelling.
17 E Publish written work for a specific audience.	15 E Revise final draft in response to feedback from peers and teacher and publish written work for a specific audience.	18 E Revise final draft in response to feedback from peers and teacher and publish written work for appropriate audiences.

FORMAT OF THE MINILESSONS

Lessons in this unit are written using the format recommended by Lucy Calkins and other teacher researchers working at Teacher's College at Columbia University. More detailed information about the format of the mini-lesson can be found in Chapter 5 of *The Art of Teaching Reading*. Below, however, is a short checklist which describes the amount of time spent in each part of the mini-lesson, as well as a brief description of what should be happening during each portion.

Steps in a Mini-Lesson

Connection (1-2 minutes)

- I connected today's work with our ongoing work.
- I explicitly stated my teaching point.

Teach (5-6 minutes)

- I restated my teaching point.
- I told a personal or class story connected to the teaching point.
- I demonstrated by thinking aloud.
- I pointed out things students should have noticed.

Active Involvement (2-3 minutes)

- I asked students to be actively involved by turning and talking.
- I listened / observed / coached their active involvement.
- I shared an example of what I heard / observed.

Link (1-2 minutes)

- I restated the teaching point.
- I told students how what I had taught can be used in the future.

LESSONS INCLUDED IN THE UNIT OF STUDY:

The following is a list of lessons that are included in the *Breathing Life into the Essay* unit. Each lesson has been assigned a number that correlates to a number found in the upper right corner of each lesson card. The lessons are organized in a sequential manner.

Lesson Title	Focus/Purpose
1 Collecting and Growing Ideas as Essayists	<i>Thoughtful writers observe the world with extra care and then write with thoughtfulness at greater length.</i>
2 Contrasting Narrative and Non-narrative Structures	<i>Thoughtful writers explore the craft of non-narrative writing in order to collect, elaborate on, and structure their writing.</i>
3 Using Conversational Prompts to Spur Elaboration	<i>Thoughtful writers talk about their ideas to help them expand their thinking on a topic.</i>
4 Generating Essay Writing from Narrative Writing	<i>Thoughtful writers revisit narrative entries in their writing notebook, layer them with insights, and embed them into new, meaningful ideas.</i>
5 Finding and Crafting Central Idea Statements	<i>Thoughtful writers reread their writing to find or invent a seed idea, which is called a central idea statement.</i>
6 Boxes and Bullets: Framing Essays	<i>Thoughtful writers frame their essay writing with “boxes and bullets” before they write their first draft.</i>
7 Learning to Outgrow a First Central Idea Statement	<i>Thoughtful writers “free write” and ask questions about their writing in an effort to outgrow early drafts of a central idea statement.</i>
8 Composing and Sorting Mini-Stories	<i>Thoughtful writers compose, angle, and unpack mini-stories that help advance the claims of their central idea.</i>
9 Seeking Outside Sources	<i>Thoughtful writers seek outside sources, soliciting other people’s stories, to support their ideas in essay writing.</i>
10 Creating Parallelism in Lists	<i>Thoughtful writers structure information to support a central idea using parallelism that can begin as a list.</i>
11 Revising Toward Honesty	<i>Thoughtful writers strive to tell the truth, even when inventing what happened.</i>
12 Gathering a Variety of Information	<i>Thoughtful writers use a variety of strategies to gather information that supports their claim.</i>
13 Organizing for Drafting	<i>Thoughtful writers take their collected files of writing and transform them into drafts by organizing them and piecing them together.</i>
14 Building a Cohesive Draft	<i>Thoughtful writers create cohesion with repeated phrases, logically sequenced information, and transition words.</i>
15 Writing Introductions & Conclusions	<i>Thoughtful essay writers write introductions and closings that let the reader know that their thesis is important and should be listened to.</i>
16 Celebrating Journeys of Thought	<i>Thoughtful writers celebrate not only their published essays, but the way essay writing helped them discover ideas about themselves and the world.</i>

Materials:

- *Things I Notice & What It Makes Me Think* graphic organizer
- *Strategies for Generating Essay Entries* anchor chart
- Chart paper and markers
- Teacher and student writing notebooks

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers observe the world with extra care, and then write with thoughtfulness at greater length.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Congratulate students for their previous work on their stories. Explain to students that writers don’t just write *small moment* stories. They write songs, speeches, picture books, and essays. Let them know that today, instead of writing about *small moments*, they will launch their study of writing about *big ideas*. Explain that students will give thoughtful attention to the purring of their cat, the stuff that piles up in their bedroom floor, or the words they overhear in an argument. Students will let this sink into their minds and write about it in their notebooks. Tell students that during this unit, they will be collecting ideas and growing the big ideas around them. Today, students will work on sharpening their ability to observe the world closely and think deeply about what they see.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Tell students that you often begin your entries in your writer’s notebook with what you see or hear in the world around you. However, to get a good seed idea for an essay, you now have to shift from *seeing* to *thinking*. Explain that writers have two ways of going from *noticing* to *thinking*. Inform students that the first way you do this is by putting the stuff from your life onto a page, and then almost forcing yourself to write, “*And the idea I have*

about that is...” Let them know that you don’t always use those exact words. You might write, “*This makes me realize...*” or “*This reminds me of...*” Tell them that either way you use those phrases to push yourself from noticing to thinking. Demonstrate this process by pointing out something you notice in the room. Choose a student to coach you by saying, “*And the idea I have about this is...*” Then share your thoughts about that idea right then. For example, you might share, “*I’m looking at the clock ticking on the wall. The second hand seems to be moving in circles so quickly.*”

Nudge the student to push you to have a deeper thought about the observation using the sentence starter, “*And the idea I have about this is...*” A possible thought you might share about the clock is, “*And the idea I have about this is...I’m wondering why time seems to fly when I am doing something I like, but it seems to move at a snail’s pace when I have to do something I don’t enjoy. Things like mowing the lawn, vacuuming the house, and road trips in the car seem to take forever! On the other hand, things like birthday parties and pedicures never seem to last long enough.*”

Have students notice that you observed first, and then you used the phrase, “*And the idea I have about this is...*” to create a brand new thought. Let students know that another system you sometimes use is making two columns in your notebook. You put your observations on one side and your thoughts on the other. Show students a chart similar to the one shown below.

Things I Notice	What it Makes Me Think
<i>Two girls sit together, showing off their lunches to each other.</i>	<i>I used to show off my lunch. Why are kids so competitive? It’s not fair to kids whose parents have less money, or to kids whose moms won’t buy sugary foods.</i>

Review with students that today you showed them two ways in which they can shift from *noticing* to *thinking*.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Have students seated in partnerships. Instruct partner 1 to let their eye fall on anything in the room that they can describe. After they find an item, tell partner 1 that they are going to write in the air, saying aloud the exact words that they would say if they were writing one paragraph about their observations. Tell partner 1 to start with, “*I see...*” and describe what they observe to their partner.

After a minute, interject with the phrase, “*And the thought I have about this is...*” Have students repeat the phrase and continue writing in the air about their thoughts.

Next, tell partner 2 that this time, they are going to see something in their memory. Have them put themselves somewhere in their home. Tell them to watch something in their mind, maybe a cat purring on the couch or a pile of books beside their bed. Repeat the same thinking process used with partner one. Debrief the experience with the students as a group.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Remind students that today and for the rest of their lives, they need to remember that writers not only collect the stuff from our lives, but we grow ideas about the stuff we collect. Show students the *Strategies for Generating Essay Entries* anchor chart, and let them know that they can use any of these strategies to generate more entries.

Strategies for Generating Essay Entries
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We observe the small stuff, and then let what we see and hear spark an idea. • We record an issue that matters in our lives, and then we push ourselves from observing to saying, “<i>And the thought I have about this is...</i>” • We write in two columns – one section for what we see, hear, and notice, and the other for that we think.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What is an idea from your collection that you think you might grow?
- Which strategy for going from noticing to thinking do you plan to try first?

Materials:

- *Features of Non-Narratives (and of Essays)* anchor chart
- Teacher writing samples – 1 that tells the story of a subject and 1 non-narrative version that discusses ideas about the same subject
- Narrative and non-narrative writing samples (1 set per table)
- Teacher and student writing notebooks

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers explore the craft of non-narrative writing in order to collect, elaborate on, and structure their writing.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Let students know that you recognize there is still some confusion about the difference between an essay and the personal narrative stories they have written. Explain that essays are a kind of non-narrative writing that are not the same as the narratives they have been working on. Writing with a narrative structure is told in time order or sequence. Share with students the following ways to distinguish non-narratives from narratives.

Narratives (Stories)	Non-narratives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell what happened first, second, & next • A character experiences a sequence of events; in personal narratives, we are the main character • Main purpose is to entertain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use different structures to organize ideas • Focuses on a topic or issue that may include people, but it does not include story elements • Main purpose is to explain or inform

Draw students’ attention to the *Characteristics of Non-Narratives (and of Essays)* anchor chart.

Characteristics of Non-Narratives (and of Essays)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organized by ideas (“I think this one thing, I also think this other thing, & furthermore, I also think this third thing.”) • Held together by an idea that is developed (or an argument that is advanced) across the whole text. • Written so the reader can think about the topic.

Tell students that throughout this unit, it will be important for them to listen to that little voice inside their head that asks, “Wait, am I writing a narrative (story) or a non-narrative essay?”

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Ask students to watch you as you decide whether you are writing a narrative or non-narrative piece. Share a personal story, or use the following example: *Yesterday, after school I noticed that the air felt a little chillier than it usually did. When I got home, I put on a long-sleeved t-shirt and my warmups. After tying the shoelaces on my cross-trainers, I walked outside and began jogging down the street towards the park. Soon, I was “in the zone,” running to the beat of my favorite tunes on my iPod. When I got to the park, only one other person was jogging on the path. “That’s unusual,” I thought to myself. I began to notice that the sky appeared to be growing darker than it normally did. A strong blast of wind hit me in the face as I rounded a corner. Suddenly, a flash of lightning caught my eye. Carefully, I removed my headphones and heard the rumble of thunder in the distance. Nervously, I turned around, picked up my speed, and dashed home.*

Next, ask the students to listen while you write in a non-narrative way: *When I went jogging yesterday, I was surprised by the incredible power of a thunderstorm. I had been so focused on listening to my music that I had not noticed the sky turning black with heavy clouds. A strong blast of air nearly knocked me off my feet. Suddenly, a new idea began to grow in my mind. I thought about the recent unusual weather we had been experiencing around the world – tsunamis, earthquakes, floods, and drought. No matter how hard we try, humans can’t stop nature from unleashing its fury.*

To show you are about to support your statement, touch one finger and share the detail: *The April 6, 2011 earthquake that caused the tsunami in Japan struck so suddenly that many people did not have time to leave their homes for higher ground. Sadly, thousands of lives were lost. People were left without homes and businesses. No one could stop the destruction that occurred when the enormous waves of water rushed in and flooded the land.*

Raise a second finger for your next thought and share it: *The Texas summer drought in 2011 devastated the lives of thousands of people. For example, farmers lost the crops they were growing for their livelihood. Because there was no rain, forest fires raged out of control and burned hundreds of acres of land, including many homes and businesses. The drought also made life difficult for wildlife in need of water.*

Remind students that if they are writing a non-narrative, their piece will be organized not by a chronological sequence, but

instead by different reasons, facts, examples, or categories.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Point out to students that they can write about one topic in a narrative way such as arriving at school this morning way. They can tell what happened with phrases like, “First, we..., then we..., or finally, we...” Have students turn and tell a partner about this morning.

After a minute or two, stop them and have them realize that they can also write about this morning in a non-narrative way. Tell students that before they can write a non-narrative essay “in the air,” they will need to ask themselves, “What’s my idea about this morning?” Share an example of an idea about the morning, such as, “Mornings are a quiet time when I do my best thinking.”

Give students a minute to come up with an idea, an opinion, about this morning. If any students have trouble, tell them to think about what they noticed or observed this morning. Next, provide each partner a few minutes to state his idea about arriving at school this morning and to list points that support his main idea across his fingers.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Remind students that they are going to continue to use all the strategies they have learned for growing ideas. Tell them that now, in addition to writing it in a narrative form, they can also try writing their ideas using a non-narrative structure. Let them know that today, before they write, they have an activity to complete.

When students return to their tables, instruct them to sort the narratives and non-narratives into two piles so that they are separated into stories and essays. Once they have sorted the papers, work with a partner to choose an essay that appeals to them. After students make their selections, ask them to discuss what the author does that they admire.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What did you admire about this author’s essay?
- Can you think of a story you could write as an essay?
- What did you notice about the essays you read today?

Materials:

- *Pushing Our Thinking* anchor chart
- Non-narrative prompts for teacher modeling and student practice for growing an idea about a topic
- Chart paper and markers
- Teacher and student writing notebooks

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers talk about their ideas to help them expand their thinking on a topic.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- *connect today's work with our ongoing work*
- *explicitly state my teaching point*

Tell students that last night, as you were reading their writing notebooks, you were really impressed with their great ideas. Explain that after you read a few sentences in their notebooks, however, you wanted to know more about what they thought about their topic. As you continued reading, you would find that many students jumped to a whole new topic that was different from their original topic. Tell the students that you wanted to call them up on the phone and ask them questions, such as, “*If this is true, then...*” or “*What’s an example of this?*”

Tell your students that they have become skilled at coming up with entries that spark all kinds of thoughts. However, today you want to teach them that they need to hold onto those thoughts for longer stretches of time. Explain to students that you want to teach them that after they have written a provocative idea, they are going to make it bigger by talking back to their idea just like you did while you were reading their stories last night.

Teach:

- *restate my teaching point*
- *tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point*
- *think aloud & point out things for students to notice*

Tell students that they already know how to grow ideas by talking back to them, because that is what they do during read aloud time. Just like they use

phrases to grow their ideas about a story being read aloud, they will use similar phrases to grow their ideas about the essay they are writing. Read through the phrases on the *Pushing Our Thinking* anchor chart with your students.

Pushing Our Thinking

For example...

Another example is...

In addition...

This makes me realize...

This is important because...

This is giving me the idea that...

The reason for this is...

Another reason is...

This connects with...

On the other hand...

I partly disagree because...

This is similar to...

I used to think..., but now I realize...

What I think this says about me is...

Many people think..., but I think...

Share a short 1-2 sentence entry with your students, such as, “*My son’s bedroom is always such a mess!*”

Select one student to choose a phrase from the anchor chart that will help you think more about your claim. Reread your original statement, ask the student to prompt you with a phrase from the anchor chart, and then continue writing aloud with your example: *My son’s bedroom is always such a mess!*

The student will choose a prompt from the chart for you such as, “*For example...*” *For example, his bed is never made, his toys are always on the floor, and his clothes are never in the hamper.*

Repeat this process 2-3 more times with the student selecting different prompts. Refer to the examples shown below for similar ways to grow the idea you are modeling.

This makes me realize... that I need to spend some time this weekend helping him clean his room and making sure he knows how to make his bed and where to put his toys and clothes.

I used to think... he should always have his room clean, but now I realize... he might not know exactly what I expect him to do.

Active Engagement:

- *involve students by asking them to turn and talk*
- *listen, observe, and coach active involvement*
- *share an example of what you heard or observed*

Tell students that they are now going to try this through writing, not talking. Give all students the following claim, “*Recess is an important part of the school day for students.*”

After students write the claim in their notebook, add a conversational prompt and ask them to generate additional thinking using the prompt, such as “*Recess is an important part of the school day for students. For example, today...*”

Give students time to generate more writing. After they have time to add another sentence or two, insert a second prompt, such as, “*Another example is...*”

When students’ pencils slow down, prompt them again with another phrase from the chart, “*This makes me realize...*”

Have students read what they’ve written to a partner and talk about how it felt using conversational prompts to spark new ideas.

Link:

- *restate the teaching point*
- *explain how the learning can be used in the future*

Remind students that their writing needs to get them thinking. They should have an engaging conversation with themselves that will yield insightful ideas, just like read alouds do. Remind students that they can use all the prompts in the world and go nowhere in their thinking. The whole idea is for students to push themselves to grow insightful, surprising, and provocative ideas that can spark powerful writing.

Possible Conference Questions:

- How is your essay coming along?
- How have you used the prompts to expand your thoughts in your story?

Materials:

- Student entry showing how writing extended the level of thinking
- Teacher personal narrative entries
- *Questions Writers Ask of Earlier Entries* anchor chart
- *Strategies for Generating Essay Entries* anchor chart
- Teacher and student writing notebooks

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers revisit narrative entries in their writing notebook, layer them with insights, and embed them into new, meaningful ideas.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- *connect today’s work with our ongoing work*
- *explicitly state my teaching point*

Tell students that yesterday, you watched them slow themselves down so that instead of writing one new idea after another and another, they wrote an idea and extended that idea using a prompt that got them to think more. Share an example of a student who started with a simple thought and expanded it to make it more powerful.

Explain to students that as writers, we push ourselves to write not only from what we’ve just written, but from ideas and moments we recorded weeks and months earlier. Explain that you often reread your old writing, find an entry you care about, and then write another entry in which you reflect on the first one. This is how writers add insight and thoughtfulness to their writing. Today, students will learn how to revisit narrative entries, ask themselves questions, and develop new insights that can be used to grow ideas for essay writing.

Teach:

- *restate my teaching point*
- *tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point*
- *think aloud & point out things for students to notice*

Share one of your personal narrative entries with your students. Tell the students that now that you’ve read this over, you’re going to ask yourself some questions to help you gain new insights about the topic. Explain that these questions may work for them as well. Display the anchor chart shown below.

Questions Writers Ask of Earlier Entries

- Why is this important to me?
- What is the important thing about this?
- Why am I remembering this? How does it connect to who I am or important issues in my life?
- What does this show about me? About life? What does this make me realize?
- What do I want readers to know about this?
- What truth/ truism do I want to share with my reader?

Read the first question and model answering it in your writer’s notebook. Share with students that you could stop there, but as a good writer, you are going to push yourself to say more about the topic. Reread what you just wrote in your notebook and keep going, adding more insight and thought to your entry.

Remind students that you read an entry you had already written, and then asked yourself one or two questions from the chart. That is how you explored the meaning of the first entry.

Active Engagement:

- *involve students by asking them to turn and talk*
- *listen, observe, and coach active involvement*
- *share an example of what you heard or observed*

Have students grouped together in their writing partnerships. Have partner 1 read a narrative entry from their notebook aloud to partner 2. When finished, partner 1 will try to add some thoughts about what they have written. Partner 2 can then use the *Questions Writers ask of Earlier Entries* anchor chart to interject prompts and help partner 1 think aloud what he or she could write in a new entry. Be sure to listen in to student conversations and make sure each child is successful in sharing their thoughts and insights about their narrative story.

Link:

- *restate the teaching point*
- *explain how the learning can be used in the future*

Tell students that today they will reread their writer’s notebook and select a story upon which they will reflect. Explain that students will ask themselves a couple of questions from the anchor chart to push their thinking to a deeper level and add that thoughtfulness to their writing.

Call attention to the *Strategies for Generating Essay Entries* anchor chart developed in the first lesson and add the detail found below.

- We reread our earlier writing, and we have new thoughts about it. We ask questions of those earlier entries.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What did you learn by writing this entry?
- What new idea did you form as you wrote?

Materials:

- Questions Writer Ask of a Central Idea Statement anchor chart
- Chart paper and markers
- Teacher and student writer’s notebooks

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers reread their writing to find or invent a seed idea, which is called a central idea statement.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Remind students that they are very familiar with the process of looking through their notebooks for a seed idea. Explain that when students are writing personal narratives, they are looking at the stories as a whole to become the seed idea – which almost made them seed stories rather than seed ideas. Explain that when writing essays, they are looking deeper into their notebooks for specific sentences that could become their seed idea, or thesis, for an essay. A central idea statement is one idea or claim that the writer will advance, explore, or defend throughout their essay. Tell students that developing a central idea is a thoughtful process, and they will learn strategies to help them create an insightful central idea.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Tell students that you are going to look through your notebook for one or two sentences that you think you could develop into a central idea statement. Show them how you will underline sentences that stick out to you. Explain that you will not simply choose just any sentence and begin writing your essay, but rather, you will look at the sentences you’ve underlined and evaluate if they reveal a strong, clear idea that could be used to develop a thoughtful essay. Read some of your underlined sentences to the students. You can use your own sentences that are similar to the following example:

“My mom and I disagree sometimes. My Grandma says it is because we are both stubborn. Even though we disagree at times, I wouldn’t trade my mom for anyone else. My mom sticks by me through the best and worst of times.”

Display the following anchor chart:

Questions Writers Ask of Central Idea Statements

- Is this topic something I know and care about?
- Can I imagine writing about this general topic for the next few weeks?
- Is my central idea statement an idea or an opinion – not a fact, and not a question?
- Is my central idea exactly what I want to address?
- Is my central idea as specific as possible?
- Is my central idea a strong, clear claim?
- Is there only one claim I’ll need to support in this central idea?

Model for students how you will use these questions to guide your thought process. For example, *I could create an essay around my first idea, that my mom and I disagree sometimes, but that isn’t really the point I want to make. So I can look at another sentence I underlined, like ‘I wouldn’t trade my mom for anyone else.’ This is getting closer to what I want to talk about in my essay. I want to express the importance of my mom. My last sentence about my mom sticking with me through good and bad times relates to how a parent cares for their child. So, I could change my central idea to ‘It is good to have a mom who loves you.’ But that statement doesn’t feel as strong as the point I’m trying to make. Perhaps I could say ‘The world is a kinder, gentler place when you have a mom who loves you.’ This feels like a strong claim that I could support with many different examples.”*

Point out to your students that you did not just settle on your first idea, but rather tried multiple ideas and asked yourself many questions to develop a central idea that you could use to compose an entire essay. Remind them that the sentence a writer starts with will change many times as you dig deeper into what you are really trying to say.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Have students grouped in their writing partnerships. Tell the class that you have a good seed idea, but you want them

to work with their partner to come up with some ways to create a central idea statement from the original idea. Give them your own idea, or use the example, *“Kids should eat healthier snacks.”* After students have had time to discuss possible central idea statements, allow the groups to share their ideas. Record the ideas in a list on chart paper. For the above example, some student responses might be *“Nourishing snacks make tasty treats for kids,”* or *“Healthy snacks help kids grow strong bodies and minds.”* Point out to the class that everyone began with the same original thought, but if they were developed into essays, they would be very different. One essay would focus on healthy snacks that children enjoy eating, and it would provide different examples to support this central idea. In contrast, the other essay would focus on the positive effects that nutritious food has on a child’s physical and mental health. It would provide factual details to show how a child’s health is impacted. Emphasize how the entire class began with the same basic idea, but the students developed them into different central idea statements based on the message they were trying to get across to an audience.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Tell students that today they will go through their writer’s notebook searching for seed ideas that they could use to develop into a central idea statement. Tell them to begin by underlining sentences that jump out at them, but remind them not to settle on just any sentence from their notebook. Encourage students to utilize the questions on the chart to help them dig deeper into their thinking process about a notebook entry. This will aid them in developing a strong claim they want to express in a central idea. Have students write down their ideas throughout their inquiry process, so they can see how their seed idea changes and grows into a new, insightful central idea statement.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What sentences in your notebook sparked your interest?
- How did your original sentence change as you dug deeper in your thinking?

Materials:

- Chart paper and markers
- Teacher and student writing notebooks

Note: Prior to the lesson, determine a central idea statement and supporting bulleted points that you can use for modeling during the next several minilessons. Additionally, select a class example that you will use to provide opportunities for students to practice during the active engagement portion of the lesson.

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers frame their essay writing with boxes and bullets before they write their first draft.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Congratulate students for writing a central idea statement from their seed idea in the previous lesson. Tell students that their next step as essay writers is to create an aligned plan before drafting their essay. Hold up a piece of paper that displays the class’s central idea statement written inside a box at the top of the page. Ask your students to write their central idea statement at the top of a clean sheet in their writer’s notebook and draw a box around it. Tell students that today they will create a plan for “framing” their essay using a box and bullets plan. Explain that the box contains their central idea statement, or main idea, and the bulleted points that they will add below the box are the supporting details or categories that elaborate their central idea. The bullets are the main sections of their essay, and they will need to think deeply before adding these to their frame.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Explain to students that to write an essay from a central idea statement they will need to create an aligned plan, or frame, for the main sections of their essay. They must think about the reasons that will match the claim stated in their central idea. These reasons become the categories or sections of their essay that support what they truly want to say about their main idea. Tell students that selecting the reasons to elaborate a central idea

is not a quick process. Good essay writers spend time reflecting upon all they have written, especially their main idea. Tell students that you will model how to use boxes and bullets to create a frame for writing an essay. On chart paper, write inside a box as you read aloud a simplified central idea statement similar to the example below.

Swimming is fun.

- *Swimming is fun because you can cool off on a hot summer day.*
- *Swimming is fun because you can use floaties.*
- *Swimming is fun because it is great exercise.*

Model by thinking aloud about the thesis statement by asking the following questions.

- *What do I really want to say about... (swimming)?*
- *What are some different reasons I can write down as categories that will support my claim that ... (swimming is fun)?*

Strike a thinking pose and pause for a few seconds to emphasize the importance of taking your time to reflect upon the questions. Then voice your words as you jot down one reason at a time using bullets under the boxed thesis. Tell students that you feel you have come up with three good reasons to support your central idea or claim. Each category or bullet gives a different reason, but all the reasons are about the same claim. They are consistent with one another, and each reason can be written into a separate paragraph to support the central idea statement. Explain to students that you did not write down all of the reasons you thought about because some of the ideas didn’t support your claim. Each time you thought of a reason you first asked yourself, “Is this what I really want to say in my essay about my central idea?”

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

On chart paper, display the class’s central idea statement or use the following example, “*Watching clouds in the sky is fun.*” Tell students that it is now their turn to practice using reasons to elaborate this central idea. Encourage students to always repeat the stem of the thesis, add the word *because*, and then continue with the reason that supports the claim. Invite students to use a “teacher’s voice” when they state their bulleted points to make it sound important. Have students seated in partnerships. Tell partner 1 to list the main reasons that support the central idea by

“writing in the air.” (Lucy Calkins uses the phrase “writing in the air” to describe the process of having students talk about their ideas as if they are actually writing them.) Remind students that they are trying out their ideas to see if they sound right and make sense with their central idea. Move among the students as you listen in on their conversations. Guide students to use their “teacher voice” when they state their bulleted points. Invite students to share their reasons as you record them as bullets under the boxed central idea. The following anchor chart is a sample of supporting ideas for the sample class’s central idea.

Watching clouds in the sky is fun.

- *Watching clouds in the sky is fun because we get to see clouds change form.*
- *Watching clouds in the sky is fun because we can use our imaginations.*
- *Watching clouds in the sky is fun because it reminds us of something funny we have seen.*

Show students how they can trim their bullets by adding the phrases, *one reason*, *another reason* and *the final reason*. You may trim your own class’s central idea or use the example below:

- *One reason that watching clouds in the sky is fun is that we get to see clouds change form.*
- *Another reason that watching clouds in the sky is fun is that we can use our imaginations.*
- *The final reason that watching clouds in the sky is fun is it reminds us of something funny we have seen.*

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Ask students to apply what they have learned using the boxes and bullets to plan the categories to support their central idea. Tell students to consider whether the ideas they want to convey would fit into paragraphs in which they write, “I think this because.....” and then, “Another reason I believe this is because... Remind them to repeat the stem of their central idea. Tell students that they can use this strategy to help them organize their thinking to support a claim they want to make.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What did you learn about boxing your central idea?
- How did you determine which ideas to use as your supporting bulleted points?

Materials:

- Teacher and class’s central idea statement & supporting details for modeling and student practice
- *Kayla’s Original Central Idea Statement* - Appendix A
- *Kayla’s Free Write* - Appendix B
- Chart paper and markers
- Teacher and student writing notebooks.

Note: Prior to the lesson, locate or create an example of a student writer who revised an essay. Alternatively, teachers may use the student writing samples by Kayla found in the appendix.

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers “free write” and ask questions about their writing in an effort to outgrow early drafts of a central idea statement.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Tell students that yesterday you watched them plan their writing by using boxes and bullets to frame their essay. Praise students for their hard work in creating a central idea statement and supporting it with reasons or examples. Tell students that you noticed many of them engaging in free writing yesterday to help them expand their thinking about their topic. Explain that good essay writers use this same process. Furthermore, a well-composed essay shows strong thinking and thoughtful elaboration. Encourage students that they are strong writers who are not afraid to revisit their central idea and make changes so that their writing is more powerful. Today, students will become courageous essayists who “stay strong” and revise their central idea and claims to make them honest and reflect what they really want to say about their topic.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Share a story, or use the example below, about a writer who finished an essay and thought of a different way that he/she

wanted to frame the central idea. Explain that this writer was courageous and took the risk of revising a finished essay. Good writers sometimes postpone closure in order to say what they really want to say in their essay.

I remember reading a book by the author Ralph Fletcher. Mr. Fletcher says that revision lies at the heart of his writing process. He says it’s like “surgery.” When Mr. Fletcher rereads his stories, he gets a chance to reshape his sentences into strong, clear writing. So, when we read his stories, like the ones from Marshfield Dreams, we know that Mr. Fletcher was brave enough to go back, reread, ask questions and make powerful changes to his writing so that we are able to enjoy his stories.

Share a student’s writing, before and after revision, or use the example plan shown below and on Appendix A, by the student essayist, Kayla.

My mother is a hard worker.

- She is a single parent.
- She works long hours.
- She is going back to school.

Just as we did, Kayla free wrote to gather ideas to support her claim that her mom is a hard worker. Then, she reread her first draft. While rereading, she asked herself questions like, “Do my reasons support my claim? Does my writing really tell the truth, or show what I really feel? How can I write this part better to say exactly what I mean? What do I really want the reader to know?” Let’s look at Kayla’s free writing that she did to support the idea, “My mom is a hard worker because she’s a single parent.”

Read aloud the student story found on Appendix B, or share a similar student story.

After rereading her writing and asking herself questions, Kayla noticed that each of her reasons proved the claim that her mom is a hard worker. However, Kayla asked herself, “What do I really want the readers to know about my mom?” She picked out this section of text.

“...she’s a great mom who never complains about taking care of us. I love my mom and I am so proud of her.”

In the rest of her essay, Kayla wrote from her heart about the long hours her mom works, and that her mom attends an online university working to get her college degree as a nurse. Kayla realized that she really wants the reader to know that she’s proud of her mother. So, she changed her central idea to

“I am proud of my mother.” “I am proud of my mother” is a central that allows Kayla, the essayist, the freedom to write honestly. She made the changes necessary for her writing to say what she really meant to say about her mother.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Have students turn and talk about the work that Kayla did as an essayist and discuss how they, too, could do use free writing to help them express more honestly, what they really want to say about the topic of their essay. Listen to make sure that students are being specific about what they can learn from Kayla’s work. Tell students that you heard some very good advice for writers during their talk time. Generate a list of advice statements and record them on chart paper so that students can use them later. Emphasize that Kayla did not settle for a “finished” essay. She returned to her writing and made a powerful change that expressed her true feelings about her mom.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Tell students that today, and every time that they write an essay, students should remember that strong writers purposely return to their finished work to make sure that their message is clear. Today, students learned that an essayist grows one central idea from another if they are willing to push themselves to make their writing more powerful. Explain to students that when they return to their seats, they will reread their draft, free write, and ask themselves questions about their topic. When they are stuck, they can refer to the advice generated by their classmates. Challenge the students to find an even more honest and precise idea about their topic by making changes to the thesis statement.

Possible Conference Questions:

- Did you make changes to make your central idea statement more precise?
- What advice did you take for making your writing stronger?

Materials:

- Teacher & class’s central idea statement & supporting details for modeling and student practice
- Teacher-developed mini-story to support a topic sentence
- Colored file folder or construction paper (1 per student/teacher)
- Manila folders or construction papers (3 per student/teacher)

Note: To help students prepare for STAAR writing, take extra care when using mini-stories as a way to support a central idea. Students need to understand that mini-stories are just 1 type of support they can provide for a central idea in an essay. Some students may have difficulty distinguishing between personal narrative (to entertain) and expository (to explain) writing, which is not organized using a narrative structure. Revisit lesson 2 to help clarify the differences between the two different writing purposes.

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers compose, angle, and unpack mini-stories that help advance the claims of a central idea statement.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Congratulate students on revising their boxes and bullets in the previous lesson. Tell students that their boxes and bullets will provide the frame for their essay. Explain to students that writing an essay is similar to the process builders use to create a structure such as a tall building. The builder forms the shape of the structure using iron beams. A writer forms the shape, or the purpose of their essay, using boxes and bullets. Builders use a blueprint that shows them a picture of what their building will look like when it’s completed. Then they gather the necessary materials to attach to their iron frame to create the structure. Similarly, students have developed a plan for their essay with the boxes and bullets frame. Tell students that it is now time to gather their materials, or ideas, to help them build their essay. Explain to students that both builders and writers need to have a system to store and organize the materials that they collect. Furthermore, all the materials need to be stored together so that when they are ready, the builder and writer can focus on creating their building or essay in the exact manner specified on the blueprints or writing plan. Tell students that file folders is one that way writers can store the materials that they will use to build their boxes and bullets frame into an essay. Use a think aloud process to

demonstrate how the students will set up the files. Write your central idea statement on the front cover of a colored file folder or folded colored construction paper. Write each of the supporting topic sentences on the manila file folders or folded manila construction papers (1 topic sentence per folder / paper). Place each of the folders or papers inside the colored central idea statement folder. Tell students that now that they know how to organize their materials, today they will focus on collecting the materials – mini-stories – that writers use when they are crafting essays.

Teach:

- *restate my teaching point*
- *tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point*
- *think aloud & point out things for students to notice*

Tell the students that they can use what they already know about writing good stories to help them collect powerful materials in their folders. Explain to the students that you will model how to collect mini-stories to illustrate the bullets in your essay plan. Begin by sharing your plan with your students similar to the example shown below.

<p>As a child, book characters become my friends.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>As a child, book characters became my friends when my family moved from the suburbs to the country.</i> • <i>As a child, book characters became my friends when I had to babysit late at night.</i> • <i>As a child, book characters became my friend when I traveled long road trips with my mom and dad.</i>
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Tell students you will now select one of your bullet points to write a true story that relates to your central idea. Read aloud the bullet as you think aloud, “What true story can I think of related to this idea?” Then begin writing your ideas on chart paper as you think aloud about the mini-story. Use a format like the example.

<p>As a child, book characters became my friend when my family moved from the suburbs to the country.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>In the middle of fourth grade, I moved from the kid-populated suburbs to the wide-open country. Out of loneliness and boredom, I started to read nonstop.</i> ▶ <i>One summer, I read <u>The Secret Garden</u> in a secret garden I had found at the edge of our orchard. I pretended that Collin and Mary were helping me clear out the dead brushes.</i>

Tell students that you will now pick just one of the stories to compose a focused mini-story to highlight the ideas from your bullet point, or topic sentence. Explain that the story you are writing will be small – a mini-story. Tell students you are not writing a summary, but a brief narrative of the events told in the order that they occurred. Begin writing and thinking aloud your

mini-story using the example below as a model.

<p><i>As a child, book characters became my friends. For example, in the summer before fourth grade, I had to move to the country. There were not any neighbors with children my age. Seeing my loneliness, my mom gave me the book, <u>The Secret Garden</u>. Right around that time, I had been exploring the orchard and came upon my own secret garden. That summer I spent time reading in my garden hide away and playing out the scenes from the book with my favorite characters, Mary and Collin from <u>The Secret Garden</u>.</i></p>
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Debrief with your students, pointing out that to get started you rewrote your claim and topic sentence, and then you wrote, “For example.” Invite students to use this phrase or a similar transition, such as “One time I...,” when they write a mini-story for one of their topic sentences. Show students how to file the mini-story in the correct topic sentence file.

Active Engagement:

- *involve students by asking them to turn and talk*
- *listen, observe, and coach active involvement*
- *share an example of what you heard or observed*

Invite students to sit in partnerships and then review the class boxes and bullets (central idea statement & supporting ideas) from the previous lesson. Explain that partner 1 will “write in the air” as he/she rereads one of the bulleted ideas, adds “For example...,” and then tells a mini-story to partner 2 to illustrate the topic sentence’s claim. Listen in on your students’ work and provide guidance as needed.

Link:

- *restate the teaching point*
- *explain how the learning can be used in the future*

Remind students that today they learned that one of the most important materials for “building” an essay is the mini-stories they “mine” from their own experiences. Encourage students to use everything they already know about writing powerful stories. Additionally, students learned how to organize their mini-stories inside their topic sentence files to keep the ideas together. Invite the students to begin filling out their files before they start writing their mini-stories.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What stories have you written to illustrate your ideas?
- How do files help you to organize your mini-storiesq?

Materials:

- Teacher-created stories - 1 story supporting the central idea (thesis) & 1 off-topic story
- Student sample of a collected story that illustrates the central idea (see “Lead” from Calkins’ *Units of Study for Teaching Writing, Grades 3-5*)
- Class central idea (thesis) statement and supporting topic sentences from previous minilesson (recorded on chart paper)
- File folder or construction paper storage system created in previous lesson (student & teacher)
- Chart paper and markers
- Teacher and student writing notebooks

Note: Prior to the lesson, write one story that supports the teacher’s central idea and another story that does not support the central idea to model how to determine supporting evidence. Additionally, generate teacher-created sentences that could have come from an interview to support a bulleted point from the class’s central idea. To add a dramatic element to the lesson, teachers may wish to role play a trial setting to determine whether the stories support a writer’s claim.

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers seek outside sources, soliciting other people’s stories, to support their ideas in essay writing.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Congratulate students on their previous work in collecting and writing stories that highlight the message they wish to convey about their topic. Explain that when authors write stories to emphasize an idea they must reread their stories and determine if the story supports their intended thesis. Remind students of the story that you wrote in the previous lesson to support your central idea (thesis). Explain that you could have written the story in another way using a different perspective. Read aloud the alternative story from your writer’s notebook.

Point out the new story does not advance your central idea, and it does not provide supporting evidence for the idea you wished to convey. Remind students that when we write stories for our essays we must keep in mind our intended message, and we must tell the story in a way that helps the reader understand our message. Model rereading your first story and underline sections that support your original idea. Inform the students that today they are going to collect their stories, along with the stories of others that help illustrate their central idea.

Teach:

- *restate my teaching point*
- *tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point*
- *think aloud & point out things for students to notice*

Tell students that essay writers use multiple sources of information to support the message they want to share with their readers. Essayists can find and use other people’s stories to support their ideas. Present an example of a student’s collected story that illustrates the student’s central idea. Introduce the central idea and ask the students to notice what the student does to highlight the central idea. Ask the students to also listen and notice that the student’s story is shaped like a story with a problem, struggle, and resolution. Read the story aloud. When finished, point out the story elements. Focus students’ attention on how the writer talked about the connection that the story had to his/her central idea. Often, the writer makes the connection near the end of the story. Reread the connection from the student essay so that your students can focus on how it is written. Tell the students that it is like the story is evidence in a trial, and the writer is the lawyer showing people that the evidence proves his/her case. Model how to underline the key words in the supporting bullet point, and underline the sentences in the mini-story that match those key words. Discuss the importance of aligning the story to the central idea.

Active Engagement:

- *involve students by asking them to turn and talk*
- *listen, observe, and coach active involvement*
- *share an example of what you heard or observed*

Have students seated in partnerships. Ask students to use the class thesis to practice seeking outside sources and

writing them into an essay. Say to the students, “Let’s try this on our class essay. Imagine that you are writing a page to go into your folder labeled ‘Another reason that (central idea statement) is that (supporting statement).’” Ask students to pretend they have interviewed someone regarding a particular bullet point (supporting detail) for the class’s central idea statement. Tell students that you interviewed someone by asking them questions about the supporting detail. Furthermore, you have recorded what that person said on chart paper. Read aloud the details from the interview and ask students to think about what part of the interview supports the bullet point of the class thesis. When you finish reading the interview, ask, “What part of the comments would you quote to support that bullet point?” Have students turn to their partners and ask partner 1 to tell what parts of the interview they would use to support the claim from the central idea. Partner 2 should do the same. Listen in on the conversations and provide guidance as needed. When students finish, compliment students on their deep thinking and share any strong ideas you heard. Remind students to connect their comments with their claim. If they have not done this yet with their partner, have them turn to their partners again and create that final sentence. Make sure students have ample time to practice this process.

Link:

- *restate the teaching point*
- *explain how the learning can be used in the future*

Tell students that today they will continue to collect their own stories as well as stories from outside sources that illustrate a supporting detail for their central idea. Remind students they need to angle their stories to support their topic sentences. One way to make sure that the details support their topic sentence is by underlining 2-3 key words in the topic sentence and checking to see if the story aligns with the topic sentence.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What are you noticing as a writer today?
- What are 2-3 key words in your topic sentence?
- Can you show me a story that you have collected related to your central idea?
- Is your writing related to your key words? Show me.

Materials:

- Example of published work where author used lists
- Teacher-created lists to support central idea statement and to illustrate use of repeated phrases and parallel wording
- File folder or construction paper storage system created in previous lesson (student & teacher)
- Objects of different sizes/weights to explain parallelism
- Chart paper and markers
- Teacher and student writing notebooks

Note: Prior to the lesson, select a published work that uses lists as part of the organizational structure. For example, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *I Have a Dream* speech, "Hairs," an excerpt from Sandra Cisneros's *The House on Mango Street*, or Barack Obama's *Of Thee I See: A Letter to My Daughters*. MLK's speech can be found at <http://www.usconstitution.net/dream.html>.

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers structure information to support a central idea (thesis) using parallelism that can begin as a list.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- connect today's work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Congratulate students on their hard work in collecting personal and other people's stories as supporting evidence for their essays. Remind them that over the past few days they have learned that, much like builders who build with plasterboard and lumber, writers build with words. Recap the work that students have completed thus far in previous lessons by reminding them of all they have done: collected ideas to build box and bullet (central idea/supporting details) statements, created mini-stories, used transitional phrases such as 'for example' to link stories to main ideas, and collected stories from other sources. To reinforce the type of essay writing you want your students to compose, share examples of effective work processes and stories that you have observed students engaging in and creating during independent writing. Tell students that they will continue to collect stories to support the ideas in their files, and more stories will come to light as they write. Inform students that today they will explore collecting examples that will not be stretched out into a story, but rather will be organized as lists.

Teach:

- *restate my teaching point*
- *tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point*
- *think aloud & point out things for students to notice*

Explain the concept of literary parallelism – a balance of two or more similar words, phrases, or clauses – using a model such as objects of different weights and/or dimensions. For example, you might give a student an apple to hold in one hand and a large ball in another. Students should notice that the objects are not equal. Replace the ball with an orange or a similar object, and explain that although the two objects are different they are now balanced or parallel in nature. Inform students that you are going to illustrate the importance of using parallel – balanced – lists in writing by examining the parallel construction found in a well-known speech (or text). In this lesson, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s *I Have a Dream* speech is used as the model. Ask students to follow along in the text on the whiteboard or chart paper as you read it aloud. Remind them to pay attention to the way that Mr. King uses a *list* in one part of his speech to support his central idea (thesis). Instruct the students to first listen to a part of his speech, and then watch how you as a writer go back and study what the author has done in order to borrow the techniques.

Read, "*We have come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of now. . . Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy; now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit porch of racial justice; now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood; now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.*"

Direct the students' attention to King's main idea – that it is urgent to work toward civil rights *now*, and guide them to notice how he lists example after example of that main idea and repeats the key words or phrase, "*Now is the time to . . .!*" Ask the students to watch how you use the same techniques to write a tight list related to your topic. Say, "I am going to try to use this technique with the idea, 'I believe that an education is important to succeed in life.'" Model repeating the idea to yourself and how you select what part of the idea to use as a repeating phrase. For example, "I believe that an education. . ." Next, model coming up with things that fit under the idea, that an education is important to success and write the ideas on loose leaf paper. *I believe that an education is important. . . to learn to read and write, to understand history so the worst parts do not happen again, to learn about other cultures, to*

explore all the possibilities found in the world.

Point out to students how you took a key phrase and repeated it. Also, tell them that some of the lines are not great, but that you think you have some good ideas to work with. Put this writing in your essay folder.

Active Engagement:

- *involve students by asking them to turn and talk*
- *listen, observe, and coach active involvement*
- *share an example of what you heard or observed*

Remind students that to learn techniques to use in their own writing, they can study the craft of a published author. Invite the students to work with their partner to try to do that with the next part of King's speech. Provide each partner with a copy of the text or display it on chart paper or the whiteboard. Ask students to read the next paragraph with their partner and to try and name specifically what King has done that they can imitate. Once the partners have an idea that they could try, ask them to work together in planning a list they could use to support one of the bullet points from the class thesis. Reiterate the writing process for creating a tight list by reminding the students to determine the stem or repeated phrase for their list. Then they must make sure that all the items in their list align to the repeated phrase. Listen in as partners work on their lists. Compliment the students on their hard work and share an example of what you heard.

Link:

- *restate the teaching point*
- *explain how the learning can be used in the future*

Remind writers that today and always, essayists collect not only stories, but also lists that illustrate their ideas. Tell the students that writers make important decisions about the best way to communicate their ideas. Essayists can choose to compose a story or a list to illustrate their thesis. Instruct them to ask themselves, "Should I simply create a list, or does a story better illustrate my main idea?" Remind students that both formats take time to write effectively, so their decision should be based on the best way to communicate their ideas.

Possible Conference Questions:

- Which main idea are you using to create a tight list?
- What is your repeating phrase/word? How did you decide?
- Do all the items in your list match the repeating phrase?

Materials:

- Hallmark greeting card &/or commercial (optional)
- Teacher &/or student writing sample for modeling
- Sample text revised for honesty and text for modeling – Appendix C and D
- Excerpts from class essay written on chart paper
- File folder or construction paper storage system created in lesson 8 (student & teacher)
- Teacher and student writer’s notebooks
- Chart paper and markers

Note: Prior to the lesson, record excerpts from the class essay that contain generalities, lack specificity, and insight onto chart paper. Students will practice revising the text to show more thoughtful, precise ideas during the active engagement portion of the lesson. The teacher or student text used for modeling should also exhibit the same characteristics as the class excerpt. It is suggested that the teacher revise the text before the lesson by adding more precision and insight. Refer to the example found on Appendix C for a model of revising towards honesty.

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers strive to “revise for honesty” by adding precise details and examples that illustrate what they really want to say about their topic.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Commend students on their efforts to improve the quality of their developing essay. Inform students that improving the quality of our thinking helps writers compose more effective essays – ones that make readers stop and think. Explain to students that when we’re involved in the process of writing it may seem as though we’re writing honestly about our ideas. However, when we check our writing and find words like “nice” or “special,” we are not using the precise words that convey exactly what we mean. Furthermore, learning how to *think well* is not easy. Tell students that *thinking well* means telling the truth and pushing ourselves to think more precisely and deeply about the ideas in our writing. As essay writers, we must strive to provide our readers with

“Hallmark moments.” Share a Hallmark commercial or special occasion greeting card that uses precise words to communicate the ideas. Connect the commercial or greeting card to the idea of revising for honesty. Today, students will work on improving the quality of their thinking by aiming for honesty and precision in their writing.

Teach:

- *restate my teaching point*
- *tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point*
- *think aloud & point out things for students to notice*

Reiterate the idea that “telling the truth” in our writing is hard work. Often, when writers compose first drafts, they tend to use “safe” words that they have heard before. Writers may even describe things as they imagine them to be in their mind, but in reality an object, place, or experience might be less than perfect. For example, when describing the beach, it is easy to write, “I walked down the long stretch of white, sandy beach.” Remind students that telling the truth in our writing means that a writer must make the effort to *think well*. A more honest description of the beach might be, “I walked down the long stretch of white beach, scattered with seaweed and debris tossed haphazardly by the waves.” Next, share the student or teacher excerpt from an essay that needs to be revised for honesty and precision. Model how to reread the text and ask yourself the question, “Does this say the exact and precise truth of what I really want to say?” Let the students hear your thinking as you talk aloud about pushing yourself to “think well” about the ideas in the text. On chart paper, jot down some of the questions that writers ask themselves to revise a text with more honesty.

Questions Essay Writers Ask Themselves to Revise Towards Honesty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does my essay say the exact and precise truth of what I really want to say? • What is the main idea I want my reader to understand? • What details or examples might I add to help my reader create a picture in their mind? • What words might I replace to make them more precise?

As you ask yourself the questions, model how to revise the text by “telling the truth” with precision. Then examine the new version and identify what makes the revised text stronger. Guide students to notice how much energy and

effort, as well as courage, is needed to revisit a first draft and revise for the truth.

Active Engagement:

- *involve students by asking them to turn and talk*
- *listen, observe, and coach active involvement*
- *share an example of what you heard or observed*

Inform students they are going to practice the strategy of revising a draft with more honesty. Display one or two passages from the class essay on chart paper. Say, “Let’s practice this. I have written a passage from our class essay on this paper. Would you pretend that you, personally, wrote these? Reread them and ask yourself, ‘Does this say the exact truth of what I want to say about this topic?’ Spend a few minutes working in your writer’s notebook to rewrite one passage until it is truthful.”

As students work, observe and coach them towards honesty. After a few minutes, ask the students for their attention and have them give you a thumbs-up if they were able to rewrite one of the passages to be more honest. Say, “I wonder if any of your writing is more specific? I wonder if any of you used more specific words? Would you turn and show your partner how you rewrote and rethought the writing so as to be more honest?” Listen in on the conversations and provide guidance as needed. Debrief the experience with the whole class.

Link:

- *restate the teaching point*
- *explain how the learning can be used in the future*

Remind writers that today and every day they can draw on everything they know as they collect entries for their essays. Challenge students to strive towards the goal of writing honestly with precision and depth as they try to create “Hallmark moments” for their readers.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What are you noticing as a writer today?
- Have you been able to rewrite one of your passages to be more honest? Show me.
- What words are you changing to be more specific and precise?
- Are there any places where you are having trouble?

Materials:

- Teacher-created essay
- Class central idea statement (thesis) and topic sentences
- Variety of clothing and accessories that work well together to create a stylish look
- Model for Gathering Information from a Variety of Sources – Appendix E (teacher reference)
- File folder or construction paper storage system created in lesson 8 (student & teacher)
- Teacher and student writer’s notebooks
- Chart paper and markers

Note: Prior to the lesson, compose an essay that includes an example of how an observation, an interview, and statistics can support a topic sentence. Appendix E provides an example of each of these methods that teachers can use to craft their own personal example. This lesson uses the analogy that crafting a well-developed essay is like putting together a stylish look with clothing and accessories gathered from many different places. To illustrate this idea, wear a stylish outfit and/or bring a variety of accessories to share with students. During the active engagement portion of the lesson, Lucy Calkins’ phrase, “write in the air,” is used to ask children to talk about their ideas as if they were writing them down on paper. This helps children speak with greater specificity and to hear the sound of the words that can be later be written down.

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers use different strategies to gather a variety of information to support their claim.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 A ii, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 A ii, 5.15 A, 5.15 B 5.18 iii

Connection:

- *connect today’s work with our ongoing work*
- *explicitly state my teaching point*

Praise students for thinking well and aiming for the truth as they worked to improve their essays by including more precise details and deeper insights. Share the analogy that crafting a well-developed essay is like putting together a stylish look with accessories and pieces gathered from many different places. To illustrate this idea, tell students that as you dressed this morning, you were pleased with the variety of colors, textures, and fabrics that made up your outfit. Even though the clothing and accessories were purchased at different times from different stores, all the pieces worked together to create an outfit that matched the design you had in mind for today. Explain that just

as fashion designers search the world to collect materials and ideas to create a stylish outfit, essayists must also learn to look in different places to find varied types of information for building a strong case of “evidence” to support their claim, or main idea. Like a fashion designer, writers assemble the information they gather from different places to craft a strong essay that is supported with a variety of “literary accessories.” Along with the mini-stories that essayists collect to illustrate their central idea, writers gather observations, interviews, and statistics to “accessorize” their essay. Today, students will learn to collect a variety of sources from different places to add substance and style to their essay.

Teach:

- *restate my teaching point*
- *tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point*
- *think aloud & point out things for students to notice*

Remind students that they have already learned how to support their central idea (thesis) with mini-stories taken from their everyday life. Tell students that you recently realized that you needed to collect more stories, quotes, and questions related to your thesis in order to build a stronger case of evidence to prove your claim. As you introduce each of the new ways to gather information, record the methods on an anchor chart similar to the one below.

Ways that Essayists Gather Ideas
1) Mini-story experiences from everyday life
2) Observation of someone or something
3) Interviewing a person and recording quotes
4) Statistics from factual sources

Display the central idea statement for your essay and explain that good writers spice up their essays with information from different sources. If they only use mini-stories to support their ideas, the essay might be a little “blah,” just like a monochromatic or unaccessorized outfit. Next, explain the process you used to observe someone or something to gather additional supporting details for your central idea. Then share an excerpt from your essay to show how you used the observation to enhance your ideas. Now introduce the next method you used to gather more evidence by explaining the process you used to interview someone. Discuss the kinds of questions you asked and share 1 or more quotes from the interview. Tell students that quotes can provide compelling evidence to readers. Finally, share the process you used to gather statistics on your topic. Discuss different ways to gather statistics, including reading for information in reference sources, conducting a search online from a reputable source, experimenting and recording information, and carrying out a

survey or poll. To sum up the key points, hold up your central idea folder and explain to students that you now have multiple pieces of evidence that will help you better advance your central idea. After sharing your evidence, point out, by counting on your fingers, the different strategies that you used to collect evidence to prove your case: 1) the observation that you recorded, 2) an interview to gather quotes, and 3) a statistic to support your case.

Active Engagement:

- *involve students by asking them to turn and talk*
- *listen, observe, and coach active involvement*
- *share an example of what you heard or observed*

On chart paper, display the class’s central idea statement. Invite students to sit in partnerships to practice collecting a variety of kinds of information about the essay topic. Guide students to focus in on a moment that they experienced that supports their central idea. Have students angle their description of the memory in a way that illustrates their claim. Tell partner 1 to “write an entry in the air” by retelling an observed moment to partner 2. Listen in on the conversations. Then remind students that they also learned to collect information through questions, quotations, and statistics. Invite partner 2 to share some topic-related questions they could ask during an interview. After a few minutes, switch roles and ask partner 1 to share some topic-related statistics that could be collected to build a strong case for the central idea. On the chart paper, share and record a few student examples of varied information sources that support the class’s central idea.

Link:

- *restate the teaching point*
- *explain how the learning can be used in the future*

Remind students that essayist and designers both keep their eyes and ears open to the world around them to collect their materials. The essayists collect different types of information to support their claim, the designer collects different materials to assemble an outfit. Tell students that today and every day that they write an essay, they will want to write down their thoughts, observations, questions, or statistics that related to their topic.

Possible Conference Questions:

- Which sources are you collecting to support your claim?
- What quote might you use to strengthen your claim?
- How might an observation or statistic improve your ideas?

Materials:

- You Tube video of barn raising:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SvTWYc01GQ>
- Stories and information collected for the class essay (partner copies)
- File folder or construction paper storage system created in lesson 8 (student & teacher)
- *Questions to Ask of Writing Before We Draft* anchor chart
- Chart paper and markers
- Teacher and student writer’s notebooks

Note: Prior to the lesson, create at least one story or piece of information that does not support the central idea of your essay. During the teach portion of the lesson, model how you determined that the piece does not support your ideas. Additionally, create an example of information for the class essay that students can practice determining whether it belongs.

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers take their collected files of writing and transform them into drafts by organizing and piecing them together.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- *connect today’s work with our ongoing work*
- *explicitly state my teaching point*

With enthusiasm, tell students that you are excited for their “essay-raising” experience that is ready to take place in your classroom. Connect the idea of drafting an essay to the practice of a barn raising. Explain to students that a barn raising occurs when a whole community comes together after careful planning to erect a finished barn in just one day! Furthermore, a barn raising was especially important during the pioneer era when families traveled west and needed to quickly erect shelters for themselves and their livestock before winter. Tell students to closely watch the You Tube video of the barn raising and to pay particular attention to the careful planning that went into each stage. After viewing the video, point out some of the things that you noticed such as people working together for several weeks preparing the wood, gathering the materials in place, and bringing everyone together for the actual barn raising. As a result, the barn is finished in one day. Today, students are preparing for an “essay raising.” After days of collecting, researching, writing, and planning the structure of their essay, it’s time to

pull it all together into one piece and compose the first draft.

Teach:

- *restate my teaching point*
- *tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point*
- *think aloud & point out things for students to notice*

Compliment students for their efforts in collecting stories and information for their essays. Ask the students to recall the piles of materials lying in different areas on the ground at the beginning of the barn raising. Explain that the people planned ahead by determining exactly what materials were necessary before they began. Once all the materials and people were in place, the barn raisers quickly transformed the piles of lumber and materials into a finished barn. Similarly, in a single session, writers move from a collection of stories and factual details organized in folders to a rough draft of an essay. When the day for an “essay raising” arrives, writers check to make sure that they have all the materials they need in order to proceed. Tell the students that the first thing an essay writer will do with all the materials that they have collected in their folders – stories, observations, quotes, or statistics – is to sort them and determine which ones they will use. Tell them that it is like going on a treasure hunt to find the entries that best support the topic sentences written on their folders. Essay treasure hunters ask themselves questions like the ones found on the *Questions to Ask of Writing Before We Draft* anchor chart.

Questions Essay Writers Ask Before Drafting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does each piece of material help develop my central idea? • Is each piece based on different information? • Does the material, in total, provide the right amount and kind of support? • Am I missing any important details that will help me convey my central idea?

Model going through one of your folders from your essay materials collection and asking yourself questions about one entry. Empty the contents of a folder and sift through each item to determine which treasures you will keep for your essay. Teach students that they may need to revise their topic sentence if the supporting details represent a slightly different idea. Also, a writer may discover that they need a new topic sentence if they discover that they have a lot of good material that would help them advance their claim. Next, model reading an entry that does not fit your essay. Look puzzled and think aloud, “Oh my! I’m not sure that this entry works with my main idea. I wonder if it could go

into one of my other folders.” Model how to check the ideas on your other folders to see if the entry would support them. Tell students that when they find an entry that doesn’t belong, they have important decisions to make. Add these options to the anchor chart under a new heading (see below). Then model the process for making one of these decisions.

Decisions Writers Make about Entries
1. Tweak the entry so that it works with one of the topic sentences.
2. Save the story for another time.
3. Rewrite your topic sentence.

Active Engagement:

- *involve students by asking them to turn and talk*
- *listen, observe, and coach active involvement*
- *share an example of what you heard or observed*

Provide students with a copy of entries from 1 folder of the class essay. Invite students to work with their partner to sort through the entries to determine whether they support the central idea. Remind them to ask the questions found on the anchor chart and to select the entries that they feel best support the thesis. Lean in and listen to the conversations. Provide guidance as needed. When students have finished examining the entries, debrief and discuss which ones are the best and which one(s) do not support the central idea.

Link:

- *restate the teaching point*
- *explain how the learning can be used in the future*

Inform students that today they will sort and organize the entries they have collected for their essay. As students sift through each folder, they will put the entries into the order that they will appear in the written essay. Students can line their entries up on the floor or make a stack on their table. Once students have organized the entries, explain different ways that they can keep the items together in a systematic way. For example, students may paper clip the entries together or number them in the order that they will appear.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What are you noticing about the entries you collected?
- What question(s) do you need to ask about this entry?
- Does your entry talk about the subject of your claim?
- Does your entry match the point you want to make?
- What decisions are you making as you organize the entries?

Materials:

- One folder from the teacher’s essay with varied entries recorded on chart paper
- *All Aboard the Transition Train* handout – Appendix F (student copy)
- *Sample Folders with Central Idea Statement and Supporting Ideas* handout - Appendix G (teacher copy)
- *Sample Folder with Collection of Entries* handout - Appendix H (teacher copy)
- *Sample Arrangement of Entries* handout – Appendix I (teacher copy)
- *Sample Paragraph with Transitions* handout – Appendix J (teacher copy)
- Teacher and student writing notebooks
- Chart paper and markers

Note: Teachers may opt to split this lesson into two parts. Prior to the lesson, write an array of entries (e.g., mini story, extended/tight list, quotes, statistic) related to one of the main supporting ideas (topic from 1 folder) from the teacher essay. Record them onto chart paper. Also, prepare an example of how to use transition words to connect the ideas within a folder. Refer to the examples found in Appendix G – J for ideas on developing the teacher model. If additional modeling is needed, teachers may use the sample to show students how another writer organized her ideas. During independent writing, encourage students to staple or tape their entries for a single paragraph together. Furthermore, students can insert the transition words and repeated phrases recorded on sticky notes or paper. Students should not be expected to write several drafts. Rather, they can literally piece together the entries as described in this lesson, and then they can write one final copy from the draft.

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers create cohesion with repeated phrases, logically sequenced information, and transition words.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- connect today’s work with our ongoing work
- explicitly state my teaching point

Revisit the barn raising metaphor to help students imagine

that they are in the process of an “essay raising.” Recognize student effort by discussing the preparations that students have already engaged in to build their essay through the collection and organization of their notebook entries. Tell students that today, just like a builder, they will put their materials together by selecting a system for arranging their entries. Students will use transitional words and repeating key words to “cement” or link the entries together to help the reader easily move from one thought to the next.

Teach:

- restate my teaching point
- tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point
- think aloud & point out things for students to notice

Tell the students that good writers choose a logical way to sequence the materials within a single paragraph as well as throughout the whole composition. Remind students that the colored folder that lists your thesis, or topic sentence, represents the whole composition. The other folders each have a supporting main idea. Writers must make careful decisions to link the big ideas together (hold up all the manila folders) within the whole composition, as well as the smaller ideas found in each of the paragraphs (hold up a single manila folder). Briefly recap your central idea and describe the material you have collected to support it. Choose one of the folders and read the main idea sentence written on it. Point to the enlarged copies of your entries. Explain that you will show them how to organize the ideas within a single folder. Model spreading out the folder’s contents and rereading the entries to determine the best way to organize them. Use a think aloud process and say, “What order will best help my reader make sense of these ideas?” Read aloud a few pieces from the folder and discuss how you might link the ideas. Slowly, move back and forth between your demonstration and the explicit explanation of the process you are using to make decisions about your writing. Discuss how you are putting your materials into logical categories and linking them together in a way that advances the central idea. Next, explain that writers cement their ideas together using transition words that match their organizational structure. Display an enlarged copy of the *All Aboard the Transition Train* handout. Briefly explain the different types of transitions that students might find helpful as they are thinking about the different ways to link ideas within a paragraph and to link all of the paragraphs

together. Continue on with the lesson by explaining that writers often repeat key words to help readers understand the most important parts of the essay. With your entries, model how to use transition words to link the ideas together in the manner you selected. Furthermore, show how you can take parts of the entries and physically connect them to the next part by stapling or taping them together. Be sure to include a transition word or phrase to link the ideas.

Active Engagement:

- involve students by asking them to turn and talk
- listen, observe, and coach active involvement
- share an example of what you heard or observed

Provide students with a copy of the handout, *All Aboard the Transition Train*. Review the steps you engaged in to organize the entries for one of your folders and discuss how you chose the transition words to link the entries together. Ask students to select one folder and share with their partner how they will link their ideas. Listen in on the conversations and confer as needed. Debrief the process by sharing a few of the effective strategies that students shared regarding the organization of their materials.

Link:

- restate the teaching point
- explain how the learning can be used in the future

Remind students that every time they are ready for an “essay raising,” they need to figure out a logical way to organize the materials they have collected. Encourage students to piece together the parts of their draft using the entries from their folder, transition words, repeating phrases, and staples or tape to connect the ideas.

Possible Conference Questions:

- Are there any folders that do not have enough materials?
- Have you reread your notebook to look for an entry that may fit?
- How have you organized your ideas within a single paragraph?
- What transition words or phrases will you use to link the ideas together within a paragraph? throughout the essay?

Materials:

- *Ways to Start an Essay* anchor chart
- *Ways to End an Essay* anchor chart
- Teacher and student writing notebooks

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers open their essays with strong introductions and end with powerful conclusions that tie everything together.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- *connect today’s work with our ongoing work*
- *explicitly state my teaching point*

Congratulate students on the hard work they have done thus far in putting together their essays. Recap the steps that students have completed to get to this point in their writing. Point to your fingers as you count off the different tasks that students completed. First, they paid attention to things in their lives that made them think. Then, they used conversational prompts to extend their thinking. Next, they learned that writers form a picture or image of the topic they will write. They also learned to choose a seed idea, to write a strong central idea statement, and frame the main sections of their essays. Additionally, students learned to sequence their entries, and finally they began drafting. For a dramatic effect, wipe your forehead and let out a big sigh of relief, “Whew! That was a lot of hard work!” Tell students that although they are nearing the end of their essay journey of thought, they still have some very important work to do. Crafting strong introductions and conclusions that show readers that the ideas in their essay are important takes careful planning. Today, students will learn how to begin their writing with a boom and to end it with a bang! Explain to students that essay writers take time to consider effective ways to capture their reader’s attention at the start of their essay, and they reflect on how they can leave their reader with a final compelling thought about their topic and with a sense of completion.

Teach:

- *restate my teaching point*
- *tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point*
- *think aloud & point out things for students to notice*

Tell students it is important for good writers to start their essays with strong introductions and to end them with powerful conclusions that tie everything together. This is a technique

writers use to tell the reader to “listen up,” or pay attention, because this is important information. Let students know that sometimes this can be the most challenging part of writing an essay, and that is why you often don’t write these two sections until after you have constructed the body of your essay. Continue by telling students that narrative writers often start their stories with common phrases, such as “Once upon a time,” “Long, long, long, ago,” or “One dark and stormy night.” Essayists use similar strategies to begin their writing. Review the “Ways to Start an Essay” anchor chart and explain the purpose of each one. Tell students that they might start their essay using one of these examples.

Ways to Start an Essay – Beginning with a Boom!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell a story about one person needing the information this essay will convey. “What (that person) and others need to know is that . . .” • Tell something most people don’t know and what you’ve learned. “Many people (don’t know, don’t think, don’t realize) but I’ve (come to know, think it’s important . . .” • Raise a question that people ask about the topic and show that this essay will answer it. “Have you ever (wondered / wanted to know) . . ? I have found . . .”

Have students turn to a partner and share how they might use one of these statements if they were talking about a specific topic, such as, taking care of a pet or being a younger or older sibling. Choose one or two students to share their responses with the whole group. Continue the lesson by telling students that at the end of an essay, the writer wants the reader to realize that the writer has been affected by sharing his or her journey of thought. Furthermore, the writer also wants the reader to think or act differently because of what he or she has read. Writers do this by using common phrases similar to the ones in their introductions. Review the “Ways to End an Essay” anchor chart with students. Tell students they might want to end their essay with one of these phrases.

Ways to End an Essay – Ending with a Bang!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (My central idea) is true. Because this is true, isn’t it also true that . . . • I realize that . . . • This makes me think . . . • I realize that when I . . . , I feel . . . • Other people should care about this because . . • This is important because . . .

Have students turn to a partner and share how they might use one of the statements if they were talking about the topic they

chose earlier for an introduction. Listen in on the conversations and provide guidance as needed. Choose one or two students to share their responses with the group. Tell students that not all of the starter phrases and ending phrases work with every topic. They need to try different phrases for their essay’s introduction and conclusion to see which ones work best.

Active Engagement:

- *involve students by asking them to turn and talk*
- *listen, observe, and coach active involvement*
- *share an example of what you heard or observed*

Ask students to work with a partner to see which of the starting phrases might work for the introduction of their essay. Have them try a way that is different from the original idea that they tried. Highlight the different reasons why writers use the different types of beginnings. Listen in on the conversations and confer if needed. Debrief with the whole group by having one or two students share their ideas. Next, explain that students will repeat the process by trying out a different way to end their essay. Remind students they will use the sentence stars on the *Ways to End an Essay* anchor chart. Listen in on the conversations and provide guidance when needed. Wrap up the activity, by sharing 1 or 2 different ways that students created to end their essays.

Link:

- *restate the teaching point*
- *explain how the learning can be used in the future*

Remind students that the introduction and the conclusion of their essay are two of the most important parts because they grab the reader’s attention at the beginning and leave the reader feeling or acting differently at the end because of what he or she has read. Therefore, good writers start their essays with strong introductions and finish them with powerful conclusions that tie everything together. One way to do this is to use common phrases that fit with their essay topic. Inform students that in their work today and in the future, they will try writing some introductory and conclusion phrases for their essays. They will share these with a partner and decide which one would be the most effective for their essay.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What is the purpose of your essay?
- Which starter phrase works best with your purpose?
- Which ending phrase works best with your purpose and ties everything together?

Materials:

- Souvenirs from a trip - optional
- Publishing materials such as special paper and various writing utensils
- Student published essays
- Student reflections
- Flip video camera
- Computer with PowerPoint or Adobe Premiere Elements
- Teacher and student writing notebooks

Note: Teachers may opt to share a few souvenirs from a trip during the “Connect” portion of the lesson as they use the analogy of a “journey of thought” to discuss the learning that has occurring during the essay unit. As a culminating activity, students will share their final reflections in a multimedia presentation. There are several ways to share students’ reflections depending upon an individual’s level of comfort with technology. A few ideas are described below.

- **Option 1 - PowerPoint:** Each student creates two separate PowerPoint slides. The first slide would contain the favorite part of their essay. The second slide would contain their writing reflections. All student slides can be dropped into one class PowerPoint presentation.
- **Option 2 - Adobe Premiere Elements Video:** Use a flip video to record students reading their favorite part of their essay and their reflections. All student videos could be uploaded into Adobe Premiere Elements to create one class video.
- **Option 3 - Adobe Premiere Elements Video & Text:** This option is an extension of option 2. After recording students’ favorite essay parts, drop the individual clips into Adobe Premiere Elements. Add text slides with the students’ reflections between the video clips. Each of these products could be shared with the class and uploaded to School Wires for parents to view.

Purpose: *Thoughtful writers celebrate their published essays and the writing that led them to discover ideas about themselves and their world.*

TEKS: 3.17 A, 3.17 B, 3.20 Ai, 4.15 A, 4.15 B, 4.18 Ai, 5.15 A, 5.15 B, 5.18 Ai

Connection:

- *connect today’s work with our ongoing work*
- *explicitly state my teaching point*

Congratulate students on finishing their essays. Explain that just as we celebrate other accomplishments in our lives like graduations, sports championships, etc., we also celebrate our writing. Tell students that writers not only celebrate because they have completed a piece of writing, but they celebrate the new knowledge they have acquired as they engaged in producing this new kind of essay writing. If desired, share a few of the souvenirs you have collected from a trip and connect the idea to the learning and growth that students gained during their essay “journey of thought.” Discuss some of the ways that you grew as a writer during your own essay journey. Explain that students will take time today to reflect upon the things that they have learned about themselves as writers and the world as they “traveled” on their own “essay journeys of thought.”

Teach:

- *restate my teaching point*
- *tell a personal or class story linked to teaching point*
- *think aloud & point out things for students to notice*

Explain to students that they will be doing three things during independent writing time today. First, they will write their finished essays on the publishing materials you provide (e.g., colored paper, paper with a border, etc.) Next, students will choose their favorite part of their essay to share. Finally, they will write three to four sentences to reflect on what they learned during the essay writing process. This information will include what they learned about themselves as a writer during the essay writing process, their favorite thing they learned about their topic, and how what they wrote changed the way they feel about themselves or the world. Tell students that just like other writers, whenever you finish an essay, you take time to celebrate the finished product and reflect upon the things you learned during the process. Relate a personal example of an informative writing assignment (e.g., college paper, magazine article, etc.) in which you were challenged to try out new ways of organizing your writing. Discuss your sense of accomplishment and what you discovered about yourself as a writer. Explain to students that celebrating the

completion of their essay is a way to give themselves a congratulatory “pat on the back” for their effort and to feel a sense of pride in their accomplishments. It is also a way for students to reflect upon the ways they have grown as a person and as a writer.

Active Engagement:

- *involve students by asking them to turn and talk*
- *listen, observe, and coach active involvement*
- *share an example of what you heard or observed*

Tell students to take a minute to think about what they have learned during the essay writing process. Have students turn to a partner and share. Listen in on the conversations and coach students, if necessary. Share one or two of the things that you heard with the whole class. Next, have students take a minute to think about their favorite part of their essay and describe why it was their favorite part. Have students turn to a partner and share. Share one or two of the things you heard during the partner talk.

Link:

- *restate the teaching point*
- *explain how the learning can be used in the future*

Remind students that writers not only celebrate the completion of their essay, but also the things that they learned about themselves and the world from their writing experience. Tell students that each time they complete a writing assignment, they should celebrate their accomplishment and reflect on their learning. Remind students of the three things they will be working on during independent writing. First, they will complete their final copy. Next, they will choose their favorite part of their essay to share. Finally, they will write their three or four sentence reflection to share with the group. Provide any additional instructions regarding the process for developing the class multimedia product.

Possible Conference Questions:

- What did you learn about yourself as writer while writing your essay?
- How have your thoughts about yourself or the world changed as a result of your writing?
- What is the favorite part of your essay and why?