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Introduction

The Write Stuff is a series designed to help students build strong foundational skills in writing. To master the skills needed to write effectively, students benefit from guided instruction, analysis of writing models, and writing for a variety of audiences. The books in this series guide both teachers and students through the process of writing as it relates to three specific writing formats.

This book provides writing samples for students to study, as well as opportunities for students to write their own pieces. Students receive feedback on their writing in a variety of ways. They participate in peer reviews, complete self-evaluations, receive evaluations from the teacher, and compare differences in these assessments of their writing.

About This Book

Sections: The book is divided into three main sections, one for each type of writing students need to learn for college and career readiness: Opinion/Argumentative Writing, Informative/Explanatory Writing, and Narrative Writing.

Themed Modules: Each section has two modules, or in-depth units.

First Module: This module presents a series of step-by-step lessons to introduce students to and teach the characteristics of that type of writing. Students read and discuss strong and weak examples of the type of writing in focus. Reading passages fall within the fourth-grade reading range based on Lexile estimates (740L–940L) for this grade level. Students then model what they learned to write a piece in that specific genre, from opening sentence to conclusion.

THREE SECTIONS

Opinion/Argumentative Writing

Paragraph Module

Essay Module

Informative/Explanatory Writing

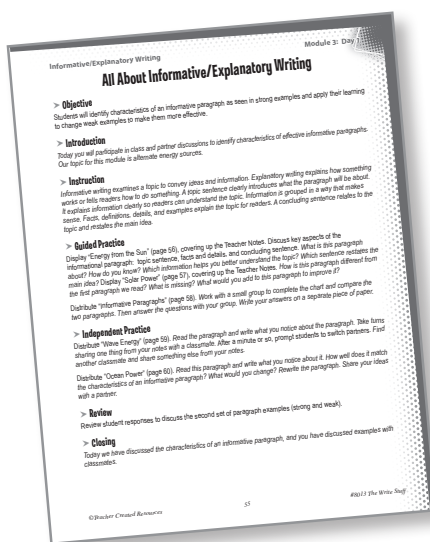
Paragraph Module

Essay Module

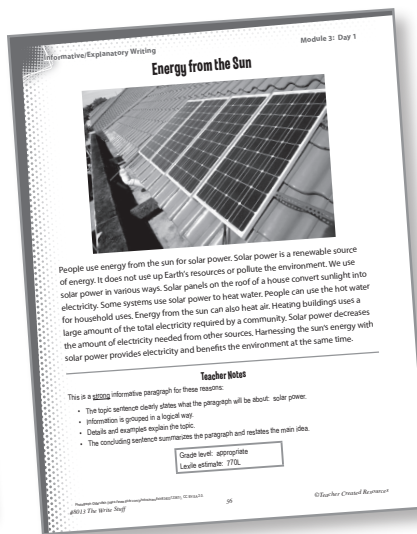
Narrative Writing

Paragraph Module

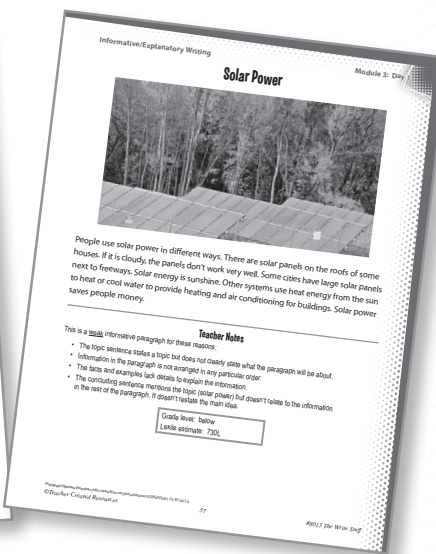
Essay Module



Lesson Plan



Strong Writing Sample



Weak Writing Sample

Second Module: This module provides additional experiences in which students learn about and practice writing a longer piece, or essay, in the focus genre. Each module suggests a topic for student writing. Additional related writing topics are listed at the back of the book on pages 155–156.

Note: Modules 1, 3, and 5 require 10 days or class periods to complete, while Modules 2, 4, and 6 require seven days.

A chart on pages 157–160 lists the Common Core State Standards addressed in each lesson.

How to Use This Book

Each module includes writing samples written below, at, and above grade level as indicated. Lessons suggest how to incorporate the writing samples, although you may use them in other ways for additional practice. For example, conduct a shared-writing activity in which students work together as a class to mimic a sample paragraph about the same or a different topic. Alternatively, have students work with a partner to strengthen an example of a weak paragraph. Students may also work independently to practice writing paragraphs using one or more strong examples as a model.

When instructed, use a document camera or make photocopies onto transparencies (for overhead projectors) to display text. Cover the Teacher Notes with a piece of paper as needed during class discussion.

Each lesson begins with a scripted lesson plan. The script for the teacher is presented in italicized font. These lesson plans inform teachers about what to expect students to learn and be able to do. They enable teachers to make the best use of the time they have available for teaching writing in an already busy school day. The lessons include strategies that effectively help students learn to write.

Within each module, student activities build on one another. Answers to activities are provided in the lesson plan. Students focus on a single topic throughout the module as they work toward a finished product. You may wish to have students keep their activity pages in a folder for reference as they complete each lesson. Alternatively, you may refer to the related topics on pages 155–156 to give students additional writing experiences during lesson activities.

Guided Practice provides opportunities for students to work together as a whole class, in small groups, or with partners to focus on a particular aspect of the writing type in focus. Independent Practice offers additional activities for students to apply new skills as they write one or more parts of the work in progress.

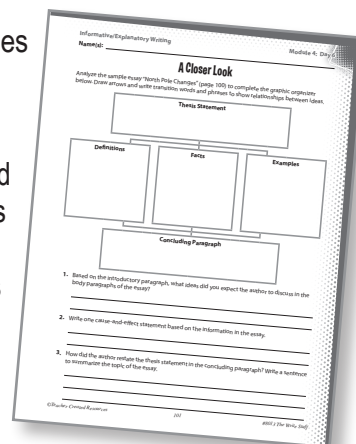
Each module has one lesson in which students participate in a peer-review activity. Encourage students to offer positive feedback as well as constructive criticism that will motivate their classmates to improve their writing.

Students complete a self-evaluation activity during each module and then later compare the scores they assigned their own writing with scores they receive on a teacher evaluation. Rubrics provide objective statements about writing that help students analyze and reflect on their work with the goal of creating written selections that are more effective and engaging for readers.

Some activities ask students to research their topics. Refer to the following topic overview chart to plan and provide appropriate research resources.

► Topics Overview

Opinion/Argumentative	Module 1	Public Parks
Opinion/Argumentative	Module 2	New Transportation Technology
Informative/Explanatory	Module 3	Alternate Energy Sources
Informative/Explanatory	Module 4	Polar Change and Exploration
Narrative	Module 5	Drones
Narrative	Module 6	Weather-Related Experiences



Topic Sentences

➤ Objective

Students will learn characteristics of effective topic sentences, identify such sentences, and practice writing their own topic sentences.

➤ Introduction

Today we will talk about topic sentences, and you will identify topic sentences in sample paragraphs. Then you will select a topic and practice writing a topic sentence.

➤ Instruction

A topic sentence introduces what the paragraph will be about in an interesting way. The author clearly states his or her opinion about the topic. It is usually the first sentence, but not always. Interesting topic sentences catch the readers' attention and raise questions in their minds, drawing them in so they want to read more.

➤ Guided Practice

To identify the topic sentence in a paragraph, think about what the paragraph is about. Authors will also state an opinion, or what they think or believe about the topic. Distribute "Topic Sentences that Stand Out" (page 12) and different-colored highlighters. Work through the first example together as a class. Support students as they complete B and C on their own. What topics did the author(s) write about in their paragraphs?

➤ Independent Practice

Now you will have time to practice writing topic sentences. Distribute "My Opinion About Parks" (page 13). Think about what you will write about and your opinion of the topic.

➤ Review

Review the characteristics of an effective topic sentence (introduces topic, hooks the reader), using the sample paragraphs as examples. *What is unique about a topic sentence in an opinion piece?* (It states an opinion about the topic.)

➤ Closing

Today we identified topic sentences in sample paragraphs. You practiced writing topic sentences to introduce your opinion about parks.

➤ Answers

"Topic Sentences that Stand Out" (page 12):

A—*topic*: community parks; *stated opinion*: provide a great legacy

B—*topic*: Yosemite National Park; *stated opinion*: beautiful natural area that I want to visit


C—*topic*: Mt. Rushmore; *stated opinion*: the most unusual [park]

"My Opinion About Parks" (page 13): Check student writing for topic, statement of opinion, and topic sentence.

Name(s): _____

Topic Sentences that Stand Out

Read each paragraph and decide which sentence is the topic sentence. Highlight the part of the sentence that tells what the paragraph is about in one color. Use a different color to highlight the part of the sentence that states the author's opinion.

- A.** Community parks provide a great legacy for us. A city or county government may establish a local park. Land is set aside for public use and enjoyment. No one can build houses or businesses on the land. Parks preserve scenery and wildlife habitats, which are good for the environment. Visitors can view plants and animals in their natural state. It is healthy and relaxing for people to be outside in nature. Today thousands of people visit state and community parks. They participate in various activities, such as sightseeing and hiking. It's up to us to take care of this legacy. Then the next generation can also enjoy the beauty of our parks.
- B.** Yosemite National Park in California is a beautiful natural area that draws thousands of visitors each year, and one day I want to be one of them. Pictures of the park show beautiful scenery, including majestic rock cliffs and spectacular waterfalls. I imagine having a picnic and taking my own photographs of the sights. Perhaps I would even see wildlife! The activity I look forward to the most at Yosemite, though, is hiking one of the many trails in the park. This park appears to have something for everyone.
- 
- C.** My family has visited several parks, and Mt. Rushmore in South Dakota was one of the most unusual. This popular park has the faces of four presidents carved in stone cliffs. The carvings depict George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt. Visitors can learn about the creation of the sculptures and the tools the workers used. The most interesting part was standing on the mountain and looking out over the plains—40 miles in one direction!

Teacher Notes

A—Grade level: below; Lexile estimate: 730L

B—Grade level: appropriate; Lexile estimate: 820L

C—Grade level: appropriate; Lexile estimate: 890L

Name(s): _____

My Opinion About Parks

A topic sentence introduces the topic and states the author's opinion about it. To write a topic sentence, think of what the paragraph will be about. What is your opinion about the topic? Think about what you want to say about it.

➤ Part One

Read the list of suggested topics below. Select one that you have a definite opinion about. Then complete the sentences.

- the benefits of community parks
- a favorite park you have visited
- an unusual park you have seen or heard about
- activities you enjoy in a park
- your favorite type of park to visit
- why your community needs more parks
- how our parks could be improved



1. My paragraph will be about _____
(topic)

2. I want to say that _____
(opinion statement)

➤ Part Two

topic + opinion statement = topic sentence

Rewrite the two sentences you wrote in Part One as one interesting topic sentence.
