



## Beliefs and Experiences





## Beliefs and Experiences



Most really engaging pieces of writing have something from each hand.



## Student Chart for Brainstorming “Bank Experiences”

Someone who made a difference in your life	Something important you lost	A time that someone hurt you, or you hurt someone	Something unexpected that happened	An important memory	A favorite memory	Something you'll never forget



## ■ STUDENT TOPIC LISTS

When asked to list things they could write a lot about, high school students suggested:

- the trauma of the emergency room
- the heartache of breaking up
- the fun of playing volleyball
- the heartbreak of losing someone
- the delay of the inevitable
- the joy of love
- the drama of friendship
- the instinct of survival
- the excitement of winning
- the fury of hatred
- the mystery of life
- the loneliness of being away
- the sadness of death
- the love of bubblegum
- the joy of writing
- the thrill of flying
- the confusion of life
- the horror of darkness
- the smell of an old book
- the excitement of new experiences
- the trauma of being lost
- the excitement of summer
- the sorrow of war
- the tragedy of time
- the shame of eating alone
- the stupidity of adults
- the fear of war in Iraq
- the melancholy of secrets
- flower pens
- bottle rockets
- Frisbees
- chocolate labs
- blue eyes
- license plates
- white t-shirts
- muddy tires
- braided bracelets
- ballpoint pens
- cowboy hats
- Superman
- planets
- red balloons
- diaries
- flip flops
- lollipops
- crocodiles
- hospital beds
- money
- paint ball
- guitar strings
- rocking chairs
- tortillas
- church
- waffles
- beaches
- monkeys
- golf clubs
- hairspray
- tractors
- confetti
- diamonds
- sunshine
- wax
- pie



## ■ STUDENT TOPIC LISTS (*continued*)

Fourth grade students suggested:

- horses
- monkeys
- dogs
- puppies
- flowers
- my own world
- my own horse
- fire
- vacations
- my teacher
- my friends
- my mom and dad
- my school
- someone special to me
- movies
- water
- my baby raccoon
- football
- basketball
- baseball
- the Army
- math
- NFL
- robots
- chickens
- United States
- national anthem
- money
- drawing
- history
- Indiana Jones
- school
- airplanes
- pizza
- my house
- ghosts
- a haunted house
- my cousin
- oceans
- lakes
- mountains

They also listed these “Stories I’d Like to Write”:

- My Most Horrible Birthday (disasters)
- It Came from the Closet (scary)
- Frankenpizza (funny)
- A Diamond Robbery (mystery)
- A Fly’s Life (nature)
- The Adventures of Bob (adventure)



## ■ QUICKLISTS FOR OTHER GENRES

### Information Quicklist

3 things about the sky/planets/space you wish you knew:

1. How long will the sun burn?
2. Is there life out there?
3. Will we ever be space travelers?

3 things that are a danger to people:

1. Alcohol
2. Fast cars
3. Tornadoes

3 things that you wonder about bugs:

1. Do they have feelings?
2. Do they bond with their children?
3. Do they ever feel stressed out?

3 things that could make you sick:

1. Not wearing coats when it's cold
2. Being unfit
3. Not washing your hands

3 things that can make you healthier:

1. Exercise
2. Having friends
3. Eating right

3 things you know how to do:

3 things you know how to make:

3 things that have happened in your town in the past:

### Persuasive Quicklist

3 customs/habits/rules at school you'd change:

1. Get rid of school uniforms

2. Make night school an option

3. Let students request teacher/parent conferences

3 customs/habits/rules in the community you'd change:

1. Enforce speed limits
2. Add sidewalks
3. Add a rec center in every neighborhood

3 customs/habits/rules in your country you'd change:

1. Build bullet trains between cities
2. Outlaw disposable food containers
3. Lower the voting age

3 customs/habits/rules in your world you'd change:

1. Get rid of light pollution
2. Get rid of war
3. End hunger

3 things you've bought in the last few months that gave you problems:

1. Crest toothpaste—tube is hard to squeeze
2. Black sweater—button came off
3. DVD—skipped the first time we played it

3 people who should get awards for something:

1. Giacomo Leone—most curious person
2. Johnny Ponce—most patient person
3. Dixie Shoopman—most wonderful mother



## ■ QUICKLISTS FOR OTHER GENRES (*continued*)

### Literary Quicklist

A moment when a character changed:

1. The wolf's death
2. The first little pig's admiration for pig 3

A moment when a character tried to solve a problem:

1. When pig 3 took in pig 1 and pig 2

A moment when a character suffered:

1. Pig 2 during huffing and puffing
2. Wolf sliding into hot water

A moment when a character felt confused:

1. The moment the straw started to blow away
2. When the brick house didn't collapse

A moment when a character noticed a problem:

1. Pigs 1 and 2 when their houses started to collapse
2. When the wolf felt heat

A moment when a character tried to change something:

1. When pig 1 tried to talk pig 3 into building a faster house
2. When pig 3 tried to talk pig 1 into building a stronger house

### Connecting Life Experiences to Life Truths

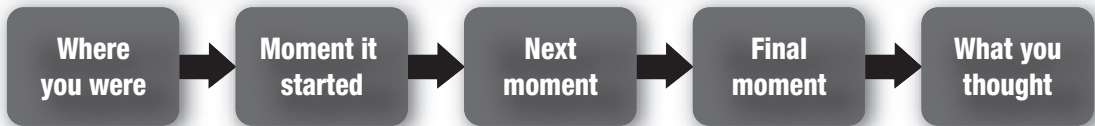
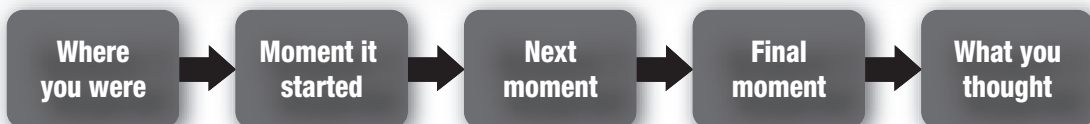
Students need time to reflect on their experiences to understand why the experiences stand out in their memories, what makes them important, and what they learned or how they changed as a result. The graphic organizer on page 148 gives students a way to sort through those experiences and understand their impact on themselves and others.



## Connecting Life Experiences to Life Truths

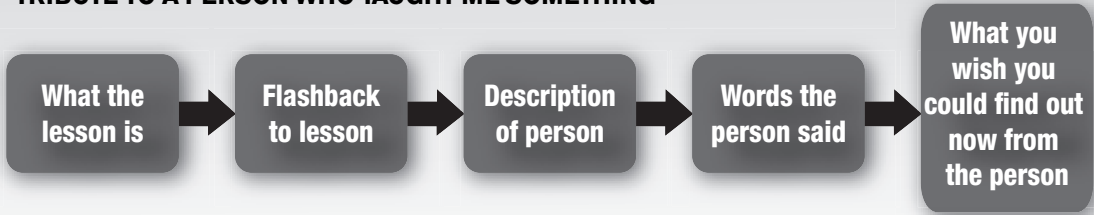
LIFE TRUTHS ▼	LIFE EXPERIENCES ►						
	Family	Friends	Unexpected or Unusual	Sports/ Hobbies	Problems/ Change	Injury/Death	Traditions
It was hard to learn							
I had to make a difficult choice							
I made a serious mistake							
I wish I hadn't done it							
Someone had a positive influence on my life							
I had a positive influence on someone's life							
Life taught me a lesson							
It was important for me to accept responsibility							
I didn't see it coming							
It was important to me to be open to new ideas							
Where I was (my surroundings) affected my life							
It was important for me to accept someone for who they are							
I'm responsible for finding my own "happy ending"							
A favorite person/ place/time							
One experience can have the power to affect my life in a positive way							



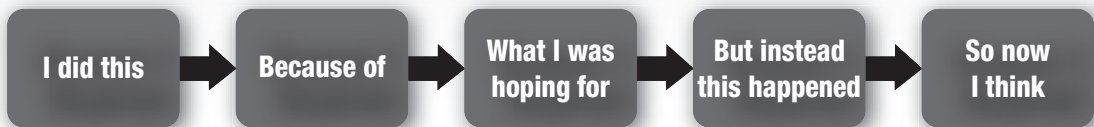
**A MEMORY****THE STORY OF MY THINKING****EVOLUTION OF A TERM (WORD OR PHRASE IN THE PROMPT)****DISCOVERING A LIE**



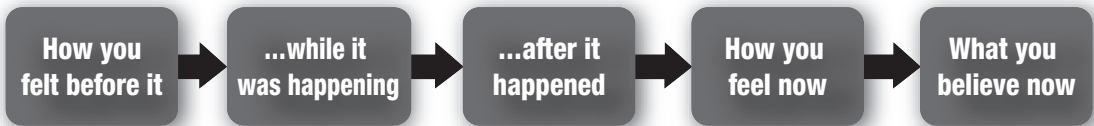
### TRIBUTE TO A PERSON WHO TAUGHT ME SOMETHING



### BACKFIRE



### METAMORPHOSIS

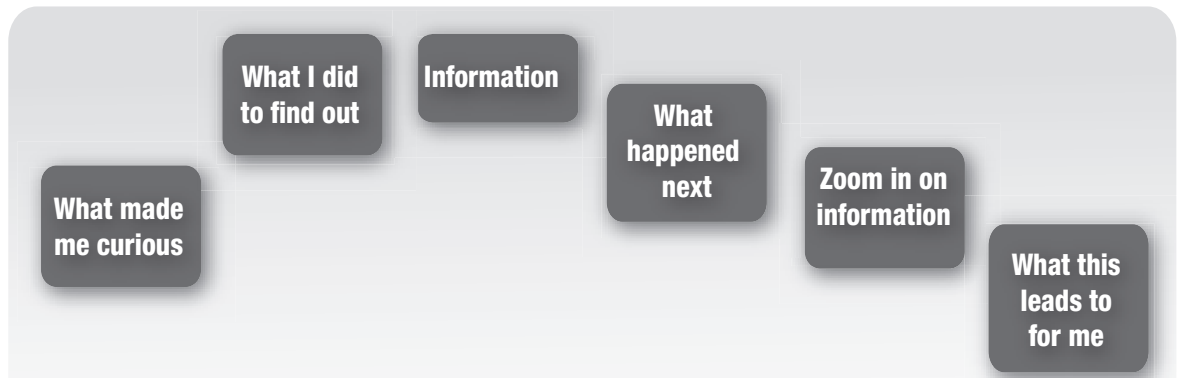


### CAUSE AND EFFECT

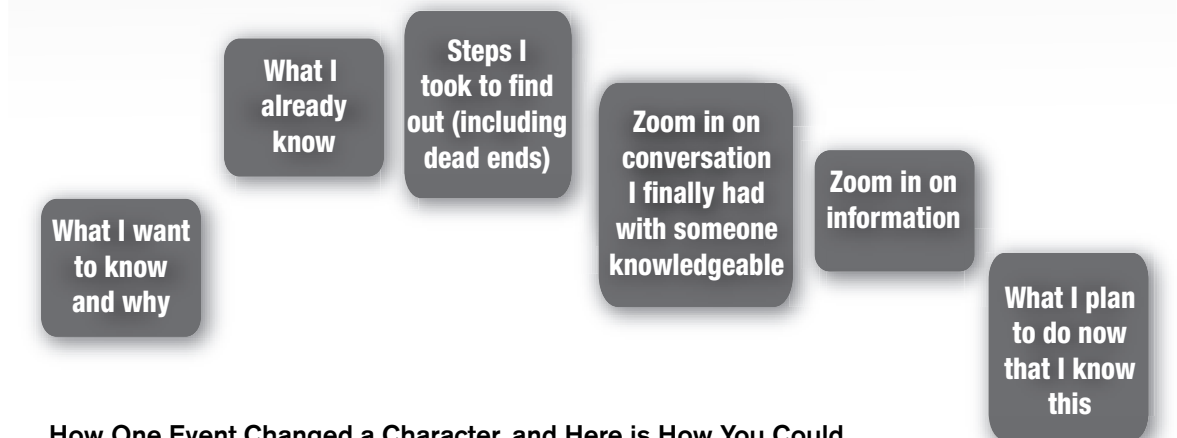




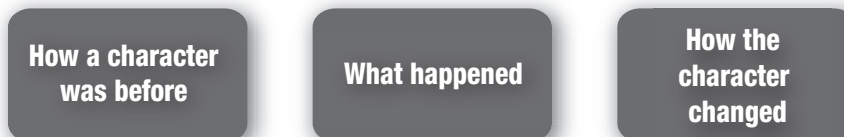
## Expository, I-Search, and Literary Analysis Text Structures



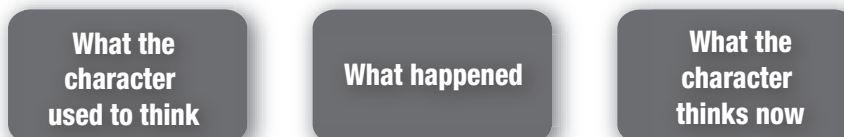
Ken Macrorie's I-Search paper takes students on a journey with a path something like this:



How One Event Changed a Character, and Here is How You Could Tweak It Further for Literary Analysis

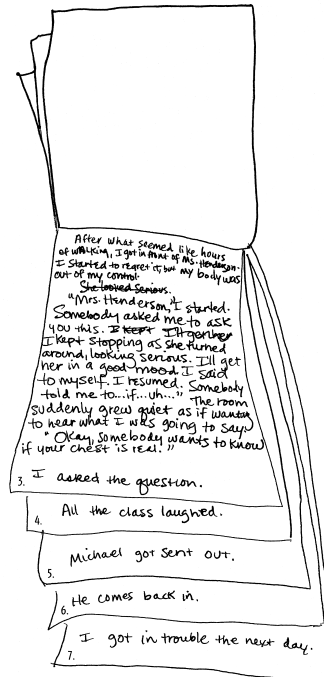
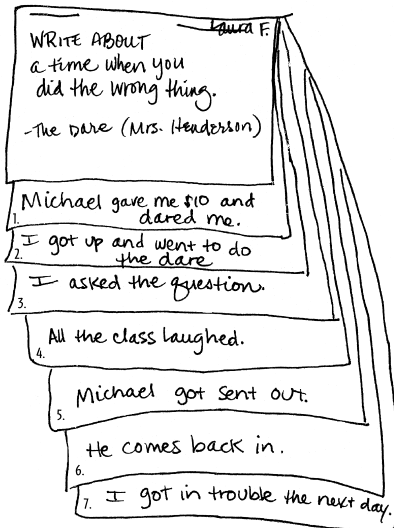
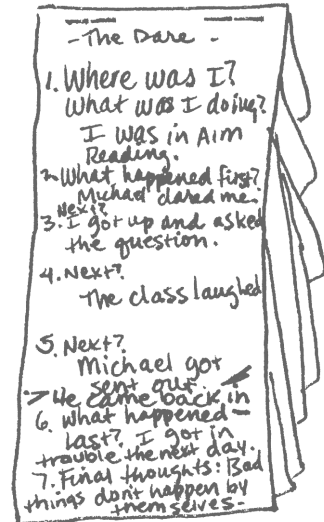
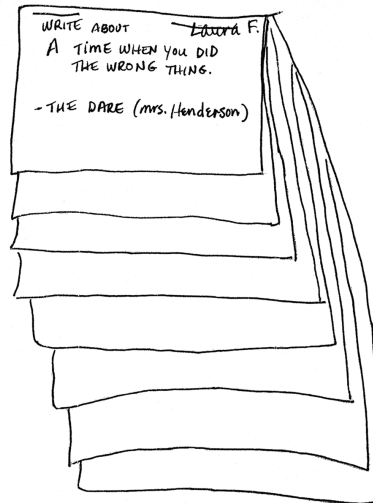
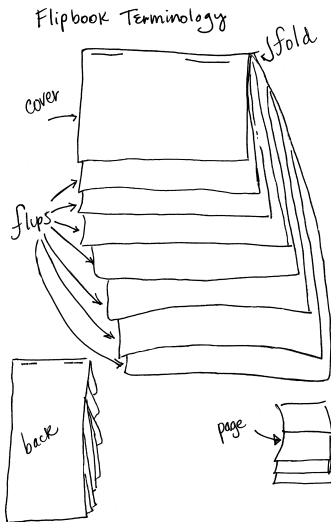


Or...The Story of a Character's Thinking





## Sample Pages of a Flipbook





## Revision Stations

### REVISION STATION 1: SNAPSHOT CHALLENGE

1. Look at your sentence.
2. Imagine that you're looking at a photograph (or snapshot) taken at that moment.
3. Use words to describe everything you can see in the snapshot.

### REVISION STATION 2: SENSES CHALLENGE

1. Look at your sentence.
2. Write details to show every one of the senses:
  - What did you see?                      → What did you feel?
  - What did you hear?                    → What did you taste?
  - What did you smell?

### REVISION STATION 3: THOUGHTSHOT CHALLENGE

1. Look at your sentence.
2. Imagine that people could hear everything you were thinking at that moment.
3. Write down everything that went through your head, everything you thought right then.

### REVISION STATION 4: DIALOGUE CHALLENGE

1. Look at your sentence.
2. Imagine all of the conversation that went on at that moment.
3. Write down everything everyone said.

### REVISION STATION 5: BA-DA-BING CHALLENGE

1. Look at your sentence.
2. Write one Ba-da-bing sentence for that moment, with these three parts:



Where your feet were right then



What your eye saw right then



What you thought right then



## Cause and Effect (If . . . Then . . .)

CAUSE: You didn't use the flipbook correctly

IF...

THEN...

You don't put the sequence of events **with actions**,  
(*not thoughts or feelings*)  
on your flips to organize your writing.

Your writing will become  
more and more vague  
and repetitive.  
You'll run out of anything to say.

You don't write  
"Where am I? What am I doing?"  
on the **first flip**  
so that when you begin writing, your  
**FEET ARE ON THE GROUND**  
inside the experience.

You don't know how to start,  
so your first paragraph is often  
vague and confusing.  
Then, you have a hard time  
getting started with writing  
the experience.

You don't set up your flipbook  
so that, page by page,  
you are *showing*  
what happened *next*—so that you  
can also show how you *reacted*  
to what happened next.

Your writing, by the third or fourth flip,  
will start to repeat.  
Since nothing new is happening,  
there's no new reaction . . .  
so you repeat what you've  
already said.

Before you started filling out  
the flipbook, you don't **figure out**  
and **write down**  
—on the **FRONT COVER**—  
what your **point** is  
for writing about *this* experience.

Your writing has no *focus*,  
no *undercurrent* of  
*purpose*, to guide it.  
After reading it, one could ask:  
**"Point? So what?  
Who's to care?"**

You convince yourself that  
the flipbook is a waste of your time.  
You set it up half-heartedly  
to please the teacher.

Your half-hearted flipbook leads to  
half-hearted writing that  
wanders confusingly  
from sentence to sentence.

EFFECT: Your writing becomes unfocused, confusing, vague, and repetitive.  
In a word: boring.



## Student Self-Check Flipbook

### Self-Check: These Are the ABSOLUTE Requirements

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ 1. I wrote the prompt down on the cover.
- \_\_\_ 2. I made a list of at least five experiences that show this.
- \_\_\_ 3. I wrote down what experience I chose to write about at the top of the back page.
- \_\_\_ 4. This planning lasted only fifteen to thirty minutes. No longer.
- \_\_\_ 5. I listed the things that happened (kernel essay) on the back of my flipbook.
- \_\_\_ 6. I moved that list to the flips on the front.
- \_\_\_ 7. I wrote *Where am I? What am I doing?* at the top of the first page . . . ONLY.
- \_\_\_ 8. I answered these two questions clearly before I wrote anything else on the first inside page.
- \_\_\_ 9. I am writing SIX OR MORE sentences on each inside page in TRIPLE SLOW MOTION, carefully connecting experience to the prompt.

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## Student Self-Check Flipbook Final Copy

### Self-Check: These Are the ABSOLUTE Requirements

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ 1. I am writing my final copy in pencil.
- \_\_\_ 2. I started writing on the first line.
- \_\_\_ 3. I am indenting each time I start a new page on the flipbook.
- \_\_\_ 4. With dialogue, when I change speakers, I am changing paragraphs.
- \_\_\_ 5. I am using quotation marks with dialogue.
- \_\_\_ 6. I am capitalizing the first words of quotations.
- \_\_\_ 7. I am not skipping a blank line between paragraphs.
- \_\_\_ 8. My handwriting is small, neat, and easily readable.
- \_\_\_ 9. I am not gapping between words.
- \_\_\_ 10. I am not forgetting to space between all my words.
- \_\_\_ 11. I am putting periods at the end of all my sentences.
- \_\_\_ 12. I am capitalizing people's names.
- \_\_\_ 13. I am capitalizing the word "I."
- \_\_\_ 14. I am writing as neatly on the back as I did on the front.
- \_\_\_ 15. My truism RELATES TO *THE PROMPT*.

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## Scoring Guide

<p><b>Score Point 1</b></p> <p>Because of the way you have written this, it is too hard to read and clearly understand. There are problems with punctuation, spelling, proper grammar, and so on. There is also a problem with you repeating the same thing too much. It's hard to tell that you read the prompt and are focused on what it says.</p> <p>I didn't get the feeling, as I read your paper, that you really cared whether you did a good job writing or not. Let's work on that.</p>	<p><b>Score Point 2</b></p> <p>I can usually follow and understand the experience you are writing about—although there are places where I got lost. There are too many problems with run-ons, capitalization, and spelling.</p> <p>There are also problems with repeating and with this sounding more like a list of what happened instead of an explanation and showing of it. I often needed to reread and try to figure out what you had written . . . or what you had probably meant to write.</p>	<p><b>Score Point 3</b></p> <p>Your paper was basically clear from beginning to end. While there were some problems with correct punctuation and spelling, these did not keep me from being able to easily read and understand what you wrote. You shared your reactions and thoughts consistently. Some observations were uniquely exceptional. Your ending was clear and appropriate to your focus. If you had proofread (more) carefully, most of the errors could have been corrected.</p>	<p><b>Score Point 4</b></p> <p>Your writing captured me from the beginning. Where you were, I was. What you saw, I saw. What you thought and felt, I could understand and identify with. Your language skills added both clarity and meaning to your writing.</p> <p>My first thought when I finished reading your paper was, "Wow! I hope I can have a copy of this!" Thank you for taking the time and effort to produce writing of this quality.</p>
<p><b>Score Point 1</b></p> <p>Because of the way you have written this, it is too hard to read and clearly understand. There are problems with punctuation, spelling, proper grammar, and so on. There is also a problem with you repeating the same thing too much. It's hard to tell that you read the prompt and are focused on what it says.</p> <p>I didn't get the feeling, as I read your paper, that you really cared whether you did a good job writing or not. Let's work on that.</p>	<p><b>Score Point 2</b></p> <p>I can usually follow and understand the experience you are writing about—although there are places where I got lost. There are too many problems with run-ons, capitalization, and spelling.</p> <p>There are also problems with repeating and with this sounding more like a list of what happened instead of an explanation and showing of it. I often needed to reread and try to figure out what you had written . . . or what you had probably meant to write.</p>	<p><b>Score Point 3</b></p> <p>Your paper was basically clear from beginning to end. While there were some problems with correct punctuation and spelling, these did not keep me from being able to easily read and understand what you wrote. You shared your reactions and thoughts consistently. Some observations were uniquely exceptional. Your ending was clear and appropriate to your focus. If you had proofread (more) carefully, most of the errors could have been corrected.</p>	<p><b>Score Point 4</b></p> <p>Your writing captured me from the beginning. Where you were, I was. What you saw, I saw. What you thought and felt, I could understand and identify with. Your language skills added both clarity and meaning to your writing.</p> <p>My first thought when I finished reading your paper was, "Wow! I hope I can have a copy of this!" Thank you for taking the time and effort to produce writing of this quality.</p>



## The Fake Flipbook

Cover	Flip 2 What happened first?
Flip 1 Where was I? What was I doing?	Flip 3 What happened next?



## The Fake Flipbook (continued)

Flip 4 What happened next?	Flip 6 What happened next?
Flip 5 What happened next?	Flip 7 What was the last thing that happened? Final thoughts?



## Where's the BEEF?

**Elaboration—Where's the BEEF!!!!!!!!!!!!!!?**  
**(Brain, Ear, Eyes, Feet)**



*What would your brain be thinking?*



*What would you be hearing?*



*What would you see?*



*What are your feet doing?*

**Elaboration—Where's the BEEF!!!!!!!!!!!!!!?**  
**(Brain, Ear, Eyes, Feet)**



*Describe what your brain was thinking.*



*Describe what you would be hearing.*



*Describe what you would see.*



*Describe what your feet are doing.*

Have students place a copy of this handout in their writing journal and in their homework folder for a quick revising guide.

## F.I.T. Chart

**Topic** \_\_\_\_\_

**Prompt** \_\_\_\_\_

**Truism (Life Lesson)** \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]



## KISS Lesson Plan

### WEEK 1

<b>Monday</b>	Make class WRITER'S TOOLBOX chart	30 minutes
	Introductory TRUISMS lesson	30 minutes
<b>Tuesday</b>	Minilesson "The Bunny Escape" on sensory words	15 minutes
	Write a KERNEL ESSAY	45 minutes
<b>Wednesday</b>	Discuss more photos and truisms	10 minutes
	Write compositions	50 minutes
<b>Thursday</b>	GREAT BEGINNINGS, SPARKLING SENTENCES	15 minutes
	Write final copy, share with partner	45 minutes

### WEEK 2

<b>Monday</b>	Share and discuss TRUISMS	10 minutes
	Make QUICKLIST, fill out "A Memory" TEXT STRUCTURE	50 minutes
<b>Tuesday</b>	Minilesson "A Time to Help" on dialogue	15 minutes
	Write a rough draft of essay, skipping lines for revising	45 minutes
<b>Wednesday</b>	Introduce and share BA-DA-BING SENTENCES	15 minutes
	Write compositions, revising to add Ba-da-bing Sentences	45 minutes
<b>Thursday</b>	Read aloud two or three essays, compare Quicklists to common prompts	15 minutes
	Write, edit, and proofread final copy	45 minutes

### WEEK 3

<b>Monday</b>	Write a KERNEL ESSAY	20 minutes
	Transfer Kernel Essay to FLIPBOOK	40 minutes
<b>Tuesday</b>	Minilesson on "Ironing" on layering thinking	15 minutes
	Expand flipbook by writing inside pages	45 minutes
<b>Wednesday</b>	Minilesson on using REVISION STATIONS	20 minutes
	Rotate through Revision Stations	40 minutes
<b>Thursday</b>	Read aloud samples, post Sparkling Sentences	10 minutes
	Write final copy	50 minutes

### WEEK 4

<b>Monday</b>	Minilesson "Mittens" on blending sentence functions	20 minutes
	Write Kernel Essay, use "The Story of My Thinking" structure	40 minutes
<b>Tuesday</b>	Share and discuss TRUISMS	10 minutes
	Minilesson on Common Mistakes, finish rough draft	50 minutes
<b>Wednesday</b>	Model using Let's Get F.I.T. chart	15 minutes
	Copy rough draft onto F.I.T. chart	45 minutes
<b>Thursday</b>	Minilessons The Final Copy	10 minutes
	Write final copy, proofread	50 minutes
<b>Friday</b>	CELEBRATION!	60 minutes



# Writer's Toolbox



## Similes

...a hotel that looked like a palace in one of those royalty movies! (Desiree M.)



## Bada-bings

When I stepped into the classroom and noticed that Angela's desk was empty, I wondered what happened. (Raymond C.)



## Dialogue

"What's that big net for, Jamie?" I curiously asked.

"Lulu is loose somewhere in the store."  
(Anna M.)



## Sparkling Sentences

It's hard because I think one thing and then another. (Julio T.)

Haha, get that nine to five, baby bro.  
(Carlos T.)



## Truisms

You don't always have to have the best to make you feel whole inside. (Dustin H.)



## Minilessons

Anna Matthias, *The Bunny Escape*, p. 130

### Type of Minilesson: Sensory Words

Writers don't use every strategy they know all the time. They pick and choose whatever works best for each situation.

Anna treats her readers to a masterful flurry of noise, not from beginning to end, but just when the story truly gets noisy.

#### ACTIVITY:

- Read the piece.
- Highlight the words and phrases that bring sounds to a reader's imaginary ear. Notice where those words and phrases are concentrated.

*Examples:* thrash, squeaking, squawking, screeching, crowing, whistling, whispered.

**CHALLENGE:** Find (or build) a moment in your own writing where there's a sensory flurry. Add enough sensory words so that a reader's imaginary senses feel it.

Noah Alonzo, *A Time to Help: Little Hero*, p. 132

### Type of Minilesson: Dialogue Limitation

Writers combine dialogue with action.

Noah gracefully combines speech between two people with action all around both.

#### ACTIVITY:

Look at the fourth paragraph. Here's Noah's pattern:

Speech—speaker 1

Speech—speaker 2

Action

Speech—speaker 1

Action

**CHALLENGE:** Try inserting a pattern just like that into your own writing.





## Minilessons

Uriel Garcia, *Ironing*, p. 133

### Type of Minilesson: Layering Thinking

Writers let us inside their heads, telling us their thoughts as events happen.

Uriel uses remarkable inner speech, adding layers of thinking to his actions.

#### ACTIVITY:

Find a simple action sentence in your writing.

Ask yourself these questions, weaving the answers into your writing:

What was I wondering?

What did I think would happen?

What were the only things I knew right then?

For a second, what did I think?

Read Uriel's third paragraph to see where the questions come from.

**CHALLENGE:** Try using mental questions like these on your next piece.

Megan Weimorts, *Mittens*, p. 135

### Type of Minilesson: Blending Sentence Functions

To tell a story, writers use mixtures of speaking, thinking, viewing, and doing.

Megan skillfully blends these four kinds of writing in her piece, leaving readers perfectly clear about the whole memory.

#### ACTIVITY:

- This highlighting can be done by groups.

Yellow: everything the narrator thought

Blue: everything the narrator saw

Pink: everything that anyone said

Green: all the action (not counting thinking or talking)

Share and compare what you notice.

**CHALLENGE:** Highlight something you've written in the same way, just to take a look at your own patterns.