

Just Write

with

Details & Elaboration

(Grades 2 - 8)

Kathryn Robinson

Real-World Writing
that
students
understand & love

www.writemath.com

Where Writing 'Counts'®

Published by



WriteMath Enterprises, Inc.
3113 Lithia Pinecrest Rd.
Valrico, FL. 33596
(813) 657-3896

The student pages in this publication are designed to be used with appropriate duplicating equipment to reproduce copies for classroom use only. WriteMath Enterprises grants permission to classroom teachers only to reproduce these student sheets for students in one class per year per book purchased by the school or the teacher him/herself.

Copyright © 2007 WriteMath Enterprises, Inc.
All rights reserved Printed in the U.S.A.

- I dedicate this book to **Sandy Bollett** for her years of dedicated service and assistance in the publishing business. Thank you for all that you do.

- I would also like to express my thanks to **Taylor Anne Francis** and **Alana Grace Francis** for their assistance during all of our WriteMath Enterprises conferences.

This book is published by WriteMath Enterprises, Inc.

ISBN: 978-1-931970-33-4

Graphics from: Corel Draw 12 (Corel Corporation) and Microsoft Publisher
The student pages in this publication are designed to be used with appropriate duplicating equipment to reproduce copies for classroom use only. WriteMath Enterprises grants permission to classroom teachers who have purchased this book to reproduce these student sheets.

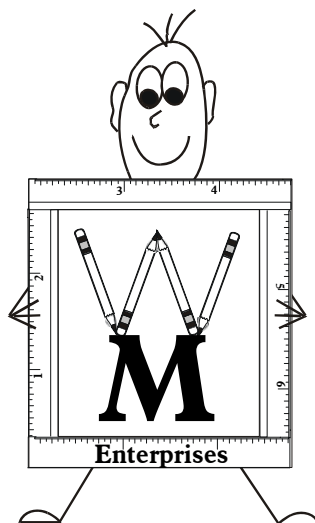
Copyright © 2007 WriteMath Enterprises, Inc.

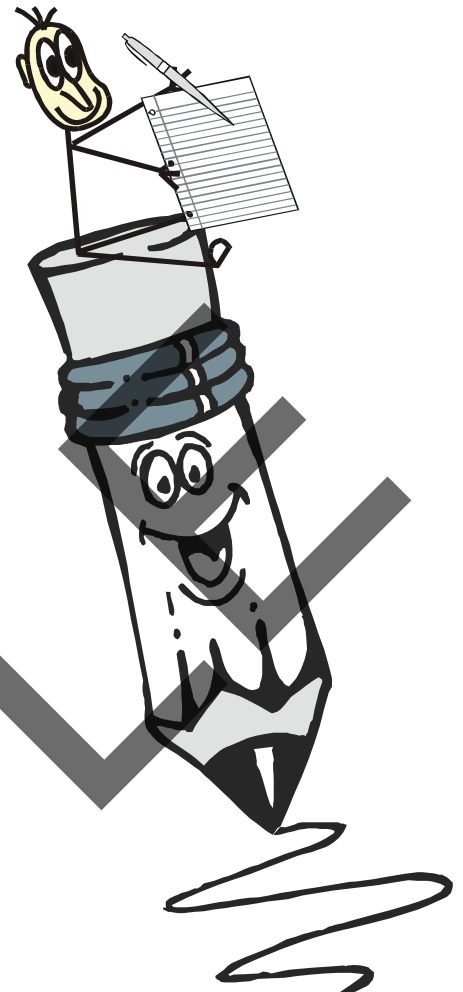
About the Author

- **Kathryn Robinson** has taught elementary level school children for the last 20+ years in widely diverse cultural and challenging international settings in the United States, Germany, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Due to the paucity of Math and Language Arts materials in Bangladesh, Kathy wrote *Just Turn and Share Math Centers* and day-by-day writing lessons for use in her international classroom. Settling in the Florida Suncoast area in 1994, Kathy uses these centers and writing lessons as an adjunct activity for day-to-day classroom, textbook-based lessons. *Just Turn and Share Math Centers Series* and the *Just Write: Writing Series* lessons continue to challenge, invigorate, and motivate students in the classroom.

Highlights of Kathy's career

- College of St Elizabeth – BA (Elementary Education)
- College of St Elizabeth – BA (French)
- Cameron University – Masters in Behavioral Sciences (Special Education)
- Teacher – New Jersey, Germany, Oklahoma, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Florida
- P.E.P. Writes co-author
- PTA President, American International School
- UCF Project Central Participant
- ESOL Instructor – Hillsborough County
- FIN Multiple Intelligences Workshop Presenter
- Florida Writes Workshop Presenter
- Conducts over 200 workshops a year
- Presenter at IRA , NCTM, and SDR conferences across the United States and Canada





“Let’s Write!”

Writing...

...is a beautiful way to express our thoughts. Watching young writers dabble in the art of writing is truly an awesome experience. My goal to help students of all ages and abilities generate a deep love for writing by experiencing their craft in a motivating and exciting environment. No child should ever entertain the thought that they cannot write. As teachers and mind molders, we constantly search for instructional strategies and methods that suit the needs of the ever-developing writer. We may not have found and designed a method of instruction that meets every writer’s needs – but as educators, we continue to try to do so. This book was designed to simply take our ‘writers’ one step closer to the true purpose of writing – understanding our inner thoughts.

- Kathryn Robinson

Contents

Line ‘Em Up.....	10
Detail, Details, Details	12
Team Details	14
Cross Out.....	16
Properly Detailed	19
T-N-T	22
Wipe Out.....	30
Concentric Circles.....	33
Detail Football.....	35
Paint Your Details.....	37
Natural Details.....	38
Pass the Tassel.....	39
Picture It	42
Beads, Beads, Beads.....	43
Bump & Shout	47
Spice It Up	54
Cut & Paste	62
Highlight & Write	74

Details & Elaboration	6
Picture Add-On	79
Let's Go to the Movies.....	97
Elaboration (expository)	103
Narrative Elaboration	151

These activities support:

- ☺ Just Write All Year Long: Kindergarten
- ☺ Just Write All Year Long: Grade One
- ☺ Just Write All Year Long: Grade Two
- ☺ Just Write All Year Long: Grade Three Part One: Expository
- ☺ Just Write All Year Long: Grade Three Part Two: Narrative
- ☺ Just Write Expository: Grades 4-6
- ☺ Just Write Narrative: Grades 4-6



For more information:

WriteMath Enterprises, Inc.
 3113 Lithia Pinecrest Rd.
 Valrico, FL. 33596
 (813) 657 – 3896

website: **www.writemath.com**

Just Write:

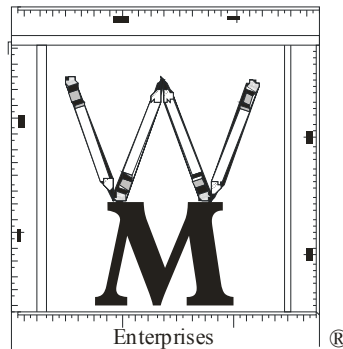
with

Details & Elaboration

Grades 2 - 8

by

Kathryn Robinson



WriteMath Enterprises, Inc.
www.writemath.com

Welcome

to

Just Write:

with

Details & Elaboration



Let's fine-tune our writing!!!

All of WriteMath Enterprises' Just Write writing curriculum books were designed to guide developing writers to become accomplished writers. These daily suggestions, ideas, and lessons have been carefully designed and implemented at every elementary grade level to guide and motivate students into improving their writing. It is simply a guide, a plan, a skeleton, if you like, of writing instruction.

Just Write: with Details & Elaboration supports all of the Just Write writing series material. These activities and lessons will improve the quality of writing that students have attained through direct instruction and experiencing the craft of writing. Not only will your students learn to love writing, they will beg for more writing time.

When young writers work, they usually struggle to remain fluent, spell words, include punctuation, be grammatically correct, and use precise language. Students are also expected to write in the correct genre, implement and follow a plan, minimize off-topic information, add details, and elaborate all of their ideas. Last but not least, we expect them to include voice and develop a sense of style.

Your writers need to fine-tune their skills. This book is packed with writing ideas and activities that have proven enjoyable and successful with students striving to improve their writing technique. I often employ these activities on Fridays, when students are tired and ready for the weekend. They enjoy participating in anything that is perceived as a ‘game’ - or an ‘educational activity’, as educators customarily call them. Each and every ‘game’ was created based on an educational objective. These writing lessons improve precise language, clarify details, or promote elaboration. Many of the detail games can be conducted in a matter of 20-30 minutes. Use them at the end of the day, a few minutes before or after lunch, and even as homework.

I believe that students learn best while implementing the brain-based strategies of movement, music, and interaction. By working with a partner, sharing ideas, and reading quality models, your writers will grow closer to becoming accomplished authors. Even though most students do not believe they were ‘born to write’, they must acquire this life-enhancing skill. A writer can be successful in any line of work. Music not only makes us happy but the rhythm and beat make concepts easier to learn. I play classical music in the background while we play games. Wordless music can maintain focus throughout a task. Many of the games involve playing music to rotate students around the room. In other games, music is the main element of the activity. Many tasks that students endure throughout the school day require that they sit in a desk. The fidgeter, the tapper, the child that is in constant motion will give you his/her undivided attention throughout a lesson if he/she knows that movement will be possible. Most everyone loves getting up and moving around as the day drones on. Music, movement, and interaction will serve to engage every learner in one way or another.

Through music that motivates movement, activities that have writing improvement as a focal point, and interaction, this book will prove an invaluable tool for increasing the potential of your developing authors. In other words, open the book, fire up the creativity in your students, and....

Just Write!

Line 'em Up!

Comments:

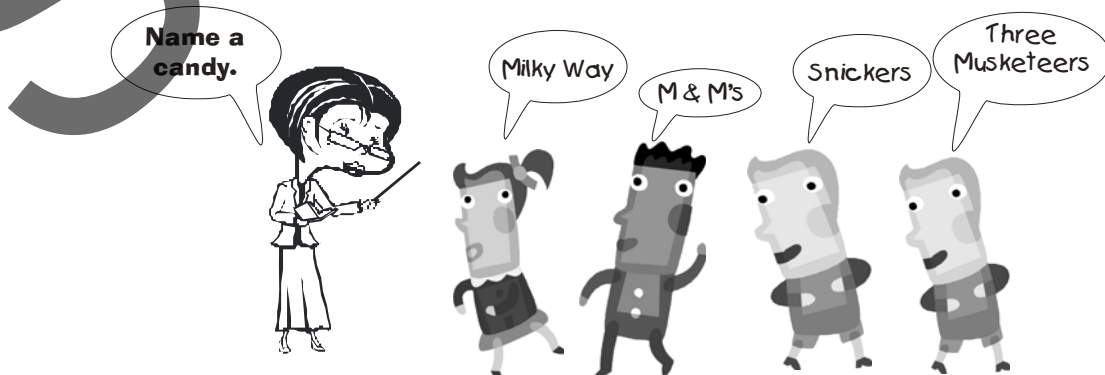
Details are specific words that develop a picture in the mind of the reader. Students tend to write generic words in their writing. This activity is simple and is best practiced 2-5 days per week. It takes less than 5 minutes, yet it keeps precise terms at the tip of their tongue,

Supplies:

Students

Topic

1. At the beginning of the week, make students aware of the topic for the week. For example, "Students we will be lining up by naming types of candy this week:"
2. Assign students the task of bringing in newspaper ads, magazine pictures, or grocery store cutouts with the picture of some candy bars on them. These pictures can then be glued in their writing notebooks as a resource for detailed writing at a later time..
3. When it is time to line up to go to lunch, music class, art class, or physical education, students that can name a specific example of the topic are chosen to line up first.
4. Students that repeat a previously named candy bar will go to the end of the line, but they may line up if they vary something about the candy bar. For example, Milky Way chocolate bar with peanuts. Creativity is allowed at all times..



Line 'em Up! Topics

1. candy bars
2. types of cars
3. grocery store
4. department stores
5. sodas
6. pet foods
7. cereals
8. toys
9. friends
10. teachers
11. cities
12. beaches
13. parks
14. streets
15. flowers
16. types of gum
17. books
18. birds
19. states
20. countries
21. airlines
22. hotels
23. types of snakes
24. types of pets
25. types of dogs
26. brands of soaps
27. brands of televisions
28. songs
29. board games
30. outdoor games
31. pizza restaurants
32. vacation places
33. brands of snacks
34. brands of ice creams
35. amusement parks
36. rollercoasters
37. rides at an amusement park
38. games at an amusement park
39. fast food restaurants
40. brands of sneakers/shoes
41. football/sports teams
42. football/sports players
43. sporting events (*e.g. Superbowl*)
44. coaches
45. stadiums
46. carnivals/county fairs
47. specific types of zoo animals
48. countries other than your own
49. doctors
50. shopping areas
51. store departments
52. newspapers
53. magazines
54. school subjects
55. movies
56. cartoon characters
57. Principals
58. actors/actresses
59. Presidents
60. Senators
61. singers
62. movie stars
63. cousins
64. aunts/uncles
65. types of bikes
66. meals on a menu
67. brands of cookies
68. sandwiches
69. famous buildings
70. museums
71. companies
72. birds
73. reptiles
74. school names
75. fruits
76. vegetables
77. holidays
78. times of day
79. characters from a novel
80. chores
81. fancy restaurants
82. science tools
83. two-name colors (*e.g. sky blue*)
84. nursery rhymes
85. trees
86. forest creatures
87. national parks
88. telephone numbers
89. addresses
90. bugs

Details, Details, Details...

Comments:

Details are specific words that develop a picture in the mind of the reader. Students tend to use generic words in their writing. For example: He put the *things* in the drawer. Students should be specific in their writing: Mark put his *socks* in the drawer. This activity helps them realize the types of words that represent details.

Supplies:

Details, Details, Details cards on overhead transparency (See page 13)

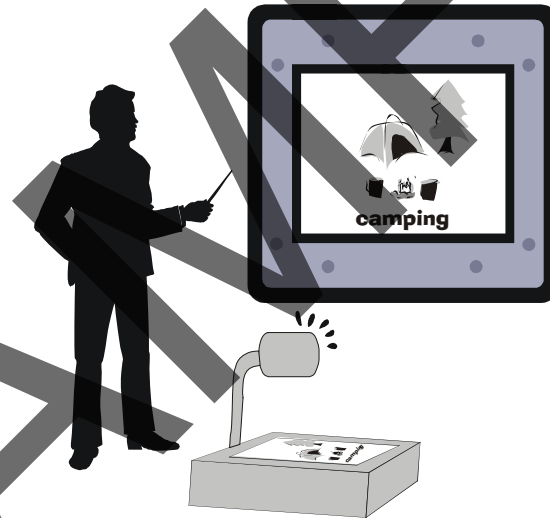
Overhead projector

Timer/stopwatch

Paper per student

Pencil per student

1. Place category on the overhead. (See page 13)



2. Allow students one minute to write as many nouns and verbs related to the category as possible.
3. Students share their list of details with the class. Classmates verify that all words listed are nouns and verbs.
4. Student with the highest score wins the round.

Details, Details, Details Cards

birthday party	things at the zoo
things in a desert	food
football	board game parts
building tools	things at a park
surfing	playground

Team Details...

Comments:

Students learn from peers whenever they play a game or do a cooperative activity. Teamwork can eliminate competitiveness of individual competitions. Allowing the highest scoring team player's score to represent the team's overall score eliminates the pressure or embarrassment of a single team member's weakness in a particular area.

Supplies:

Details, Details, Details cards on overhead transparency (See page 15)

Overhead projector

Timer/stopwatch

Paper per student

Pencil per student

1. Place category on the overhead. (See page 15)
2. Allow students one minute to write as many nouns and verbs related to the category as possible.
3. Students share their detail lists with their team. Team checks to verify that all words listed are nouns and verbs.
4. Players count their individually listed 'details'.
5. Team totals the individual scores to obtain their 'team' score. This allows the students to share their details with the team.



Team Details Topic Ideas

Summer things	things in a garage
annoying things	baseball
Flea market	music class
dangerous things	mountains
clothing	Thanksgiving

cross cut...

Comments:

Students tend to think along familiar lines. They use the same pre-learned categories. For example, if the category is animals, they list details such as cat, dog, bird, etc.. The following activity helps them think “outside of the box”. They realize that everyone will be writing “cat, dog, bird, etc.” so they reach back in their ‘fields of experience’ for words that no one else will consider. The sharing of these words will widen their horizons and assimilate new ideas.

Supplies:

Topic cards on overhead transparency (*See page 18*)
Overhead projector
Timer/stopwatch
Paper per student
Pencil per student

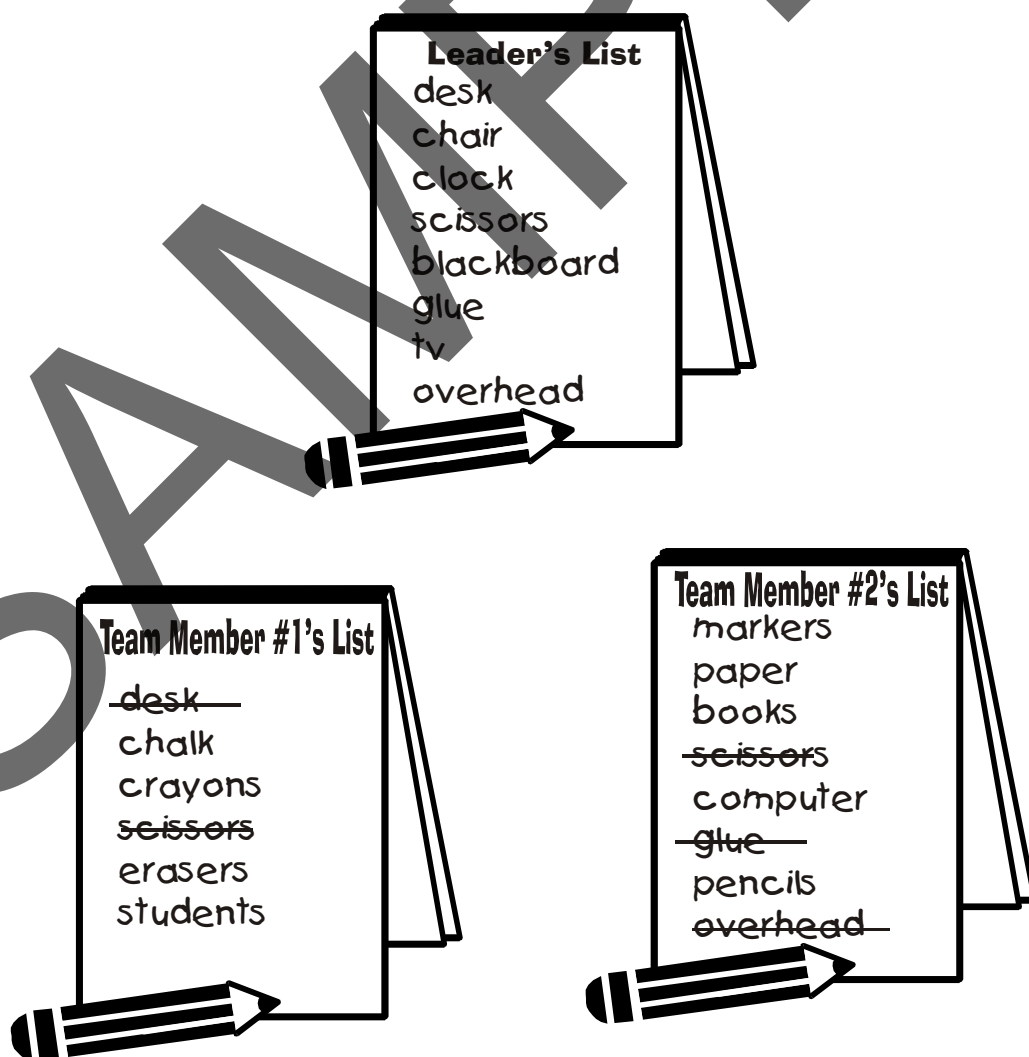
1. Place one topic card on the overhead. (*See page 18*)
2. Allow students one minute to write as many nouns and verbs related to the category as possible.
3. Assemble students into teams of 3-4 players.
4. Team leader shares his/her list of details with their team.
5. Team members cross out the words on their own list that the leader lists. For example, if the leader has the word “lion” on his/her list of animals, team members with the word “lion” on their list will cross out the word “lion” on their list.
6. Another member announces the words on their list that are not crossed out. During this time, other team members (excluding the leader) cross out duplicate words on their lists.

7. Game continues until all team members have shared their details with the team. During each round, the team members that have previously shared their details DO NOT cross anything out on their list. (If each member crosses out the appropriate words, this should not be a problem.)
8. Teams total the individual non-crossed out items for a team total.

Hint:

This activity not only causes students to expand their thinking but also eliminates the desire to copy.

Main Idea: classroom



Cross Out Topic Ideas

needed for a car	babies like...
garage sales	hockey
bugs	Grandma's house
traffic accidents	Halloween
fast things	gymnastics

2. Students share their favorite types of animals.
3. With a partner, each student will brainstorm reasons that he/she likes a particular animal.
4. After deciding upon a favorite animal, students write the name of the animal after the word 'like' at the beginning of the paragraph.

Topic: Explain why you like a particular type of animal.

One reason that I like my Persian cat

5. In the box on the left-hand side of the page, students write a specific reason that they like this particular animal (*In the example below: playing fake-out with a mouse and his cat*). Suggest that students choose something that the animal does or something that they do with the animal. Developing writers will often write that they like a particular animal because he is cute or is friendly. These words are very difficult to elaborate and maintain accuracy.

Topic: Explain why you like a particular type of animal.

One reason that I like my Persian cat

fake out mouse

6. Display a model of a well-developed idea. (e.g. *The elaboration sample of playing with my Persian cat*)

Topic: Explain why you like a particular type of animal.

One reason that I like a Persian cat is that I can play the game Fake-Out Mouse with I him. In this game you get a fake stuffed mouse. It's better if it squeaks to keep the cat's attention during the game. You then just pretend to throw it across the room. My cat cat usually runs after it and spends about 5 to 10 minutes looking under tables, squeezing behind chairs, and even jumping up on the back of the sofa to peek behind the pillows before running back to see if it could be still in my hands. If my cat doesn't run for it and looks up at me, I give him the mouse as a reward for knowing that it was a trick. The game is not only fun but it teaches your cat to anticipate prey.

fake
out
mouse

7. Indicating the box on the left-hand side, point out that this particular writer should be elaborating only the information in this box. (e.g.: This writer likes to play *Fake-Out-Mouse* with her cat.)
8. Read the paragraph and decide whether the writer remained on topic or not.
9. Reread the first two sentences in the writing. The writer's words like "Fake-Out Mouse" are precise details.
10. Explain that the writer included at least four precise details that built a picture for the reader.

11. Students highlight the precise vocabulary and share the specific details that the writer used in the description.

Topic: Explain why you like a particular type of animal.

One reason that I like a Persian cat is that I can play the game Fake-Out Mouse with him. In this game, you get a fake stuffed mouse. It's better if it squeaks loudly to keep your cat's attention during the game. You then

fake
out
mouse

- fake stuffed mouse
- squeaks loudly
- cat's attention
- during the game

12. Reading through the remainder of the paragraph, students highlight the details the writer included to illustrate his paragraph's main idea.

Topic: Explain why you like a particular type of animal.

One reason that I like a Persian cat is that I can play the game Fake-Out Mouse with him. In this game, you get a fake stuffed mouse. It's better if it squeaks loudly to keep your cat's attention during the game. You then pretend to throw it across the room. My cat usually darts after it and spends about 5-10 minutes looking under tables, squeezing behind chairs, and even jumping up on the back of the sofa to peek behind the pillows before running back to see if it could be still in my hands. If my cat doesn't run for it and looks up at me, I give him the mouse as a reward for knowing that it was a trick. The game is not only fun but it teaches your cat to anticipate prey.

fake
out
mouse

Students should identify 15-20 details in the remaining portion of the paragraph, such as:

- pretend to throw
- across the room
- darts
- about 5-10 minutes
- looking under tables
- squeezing behind chairs
- jumping
- back of the sofa
- peek
- behind the pillows
- running back
- still in my hands
- give him the mouse
- as a reward
- it was a trick
- not only fun but
- teaches your cat
- to anticipate prey

13. This activity is more interesting when played as a game. Students have two to three minutes to elaborate the detail that they have written in the box (e.g. *Fake-Out Mouse*). Point out that the sample refers to the ‘Fake-out mouse’, so students may not use this as their detail to elaborate because it is copyrighted. This will allow writers to refer back to the model without copying it.

14. Writers highlight the words that they consider precise language. It is always interesting to note which words developing writers think are above-grade-level. Sometimes they consider words like ‘beautiful’ and ‘terrific’ above grade level because they spelled them correctly. Through repeated modeling and sharing, writers develop a sense of which vocabulary words improve their writing.
15. While a student shares his/her writing individually, the teacher awards points by dropping a marble or an M & M chocolate candy in a plastic cup for every above-grade-level or precise expression. The noise of the object hitting the cup is an auditory reminder of the words that the teacher considered great details. The total number of points for the writer is equal to the number of marbles or M & M’s in the cup.
16. Team sharing is an alternate sharing technique. Each team member reads their paper aloud to their own team. One team member is the point person. As each team member shares their writing aloud, the point person awards points to them. Another writer can score the point person’s writing during their sharing. After choosing a winning paragraph, the team’s detail winner represents their group against all of the other groups in the class.
17. During team sharing, the teacher scores each team representative’s writing by dropping marbles or M & M’s in a plastic cup. The class writer with the most marbles or points is the winner or the *King* or *Queen of Detail*.
18. This activity can be conducted in small groups of 6-8 students. In this small group, everyone shares and there will be time for another round of writing.
19. As soon as each student share his/her writing, the teacher questions the writer as to whether he/she could add another round of information to this idea or are they finished with this aspect of the main idea.

- 20. If a writer has more information to continue the writing, he/she will simply add these ideas to his writing when the group continues another 2-3-minute round of writing.
- 21. If the writer seems to have exhausted his/her ideas on this aspect of the main idea, the writer draws another box off to the left side of the paragraph.

fake out mouse

One reason that I like a Persian cat is that I can play the game Fake-Out Mouse with I him. In this game you get a fake stuffed mouse. It's better if it squeaks to keep the cat's attention during the game. You then just pretend to throw it across the room. My cat cat usually runs after it and spends about 5 to 10 minutes looking under tables, squeezing behind chairs, and even jumping up on the back of the sofa to peek behind the pillows before running back to see if it could be still in my hands. If my cat doesn't run for it and looks up at me, I give him the mouse as a reward for knowing that it was a trick. The game is not only fun but it teaches your cat to anticipate prey.

- 22. With the assistance of the teacher, or independently, students write a new detail which they feel they can elaborate in the new box. It is very important that the student share the concept that he/she will be elaborating during the next round. In this way, the teacher can assist the writer with his/her ideas and ensure that the student is still focused on the main idea. (e.g. in this case, playing a game with the Persian cat.)

fake out mouse

One reason that I like a Persian cat is that I can play the game Fake-Out Mouse with I him. In this game you get a fake stuffed mouse. It's better if it squeaks to keep the cat's attention during the game. You then just pretend to throw it across the room. My cat cat usually runs after it and spends about 5 to 10 minutes looking under tables, squeezing behind chairs, and even jumping up on the back of the sofa to peek behind the pillows before running back to see if it could be still in my hands. If my cat doesn't run for it and looks up at me, I give him the mouse as a reward for knowing that it was a trick. The game is not only fun but it teaches your cat to anticipate prey.

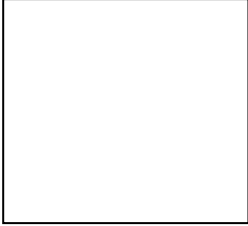
catch the string

23. Writers that are adding another aspect of the main idea must be reminded to include a transitional phrase as they move on to make the reader aware of the switch to a new area. Since the writer is in the middle of the paragraph, only short phrases are usually required (*i.e.: also, even, besides, etc.*).
24. The teacher times the group during another 2-3 minutes of elaboration. Once again, writers share the new information for points. The sharing between rounds acts as modeling of good ideas and assists developing writers with ideas for their own topic.
25. This small group situation is an excellent chance for the teacher to write along with students. I recommend that teachers share last and allow students to count their details. At the end of the teacher's sharing, students often enjoy pointing out some particularly great expressions that the teacher included in their writing.
26. Once students have practiced this activity several times, it can become a short and important homework element. Elaborated paragraphs can be shared as a game during a Friday writing lesson.



Topic: Explain why you do/don't like babysitting

One reason that I do/don't like babysitting is



A series of horizontal lines for writing the response.

SAMPLE

Narrative

E-l-a-b-o-r-a-t-i-o-n

Comments:

The following activities were designed to solely assist narrative elaboration and consists of exercises to improve descriptions of action, characters, or setting.

Supplies:

- A copy of one elaboration page for every writer (*See pages 158 – end*)
- Highlighter
- Pencil per writer
- Timer
- Marble/M & M’s
- Plastic cup

1. Distribute a narrative elaboration page per student. (e.g. *Write about an adventure with a door.*) These short elaborations were designed as personal narratives. Each student in the class will write as if this is their own story.

Topic: Write about an adventure with a door

Monday January 11th was no ordinary Monday – it was the strangest day of my life.

I was strolling down Floral Avenue on my way to pick up Chris and head onto school. Just as I crossed Main Street, the house at 2302 Floral Avenue caught my eye. I had walked by this house at least a hundred times and never noticed how unusual the front door appeared.

As I turned to walk up the sidewalk to the entrance, Chris rushed up to me and shouted, “ _____ ”

“ _____ ” I responded

Just then, the door creaked open very, very slowly. _____

2. Read the first two paragraphs with the students.
3. Discuss the concept that requires elaboration. For example, if the author uses an opinion in the story or focuses the reader's attention on a visual aspect of the scene, the reader expects a description to follow that creates a scene in the reader's mind. In this case the author claims that the door looked unusual to him/her. Therefore, a description of the door must follow to 'show' the reader what type of door the author considers "unusual".
4. Display a model of another student's well-developed idea. (e.g. The elaboration sample of *circus door*)

I was strolling down Floral Avenue on my way to pick up Chris and head onto school. Just as I crossed Main Street, the house at 2302 Floral Avenue caught my eye. I had walked by this house at least a hundred times and never noticed how **unusual** the **front door** appeared. It looked like it belonged on the front of a Birney Ring Circus museum entrance. The top of the door was lined with 20 tiny heads of lions. Each lion's mouth was opened wide as if it were going to devour the next visitor that dare to enter. Stretching along the sides of the door were rattle snakes lined up end to end slithering towards the floor. At the bottom stood a row of 11 elephants marching in unison. I had never seen a door like this in my whole life.

(e.g. The elaboration sample of unicorn door)

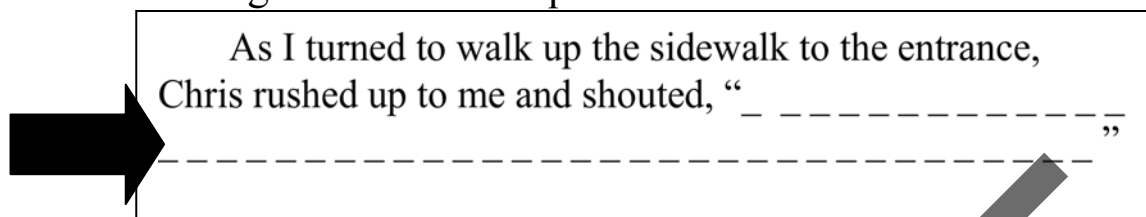
I was strolling down Floral Avenue on my way to pick up Chris and head onto school. Just as I crossed Main Street, the house at 2302 Floral Avenue caught my eye. I had walked by this house at least a hundred times and never noticed how **unusual** the **front door** appeared. The frame was edged in gold and along the right side grew a vine of soft flaring trumpet roses. In the center of the door was an oval window that filled the door from top to bottom. The bright morning Sun sparkled as it reflected off the head of unicorn that was etched into the glass. On the left side was a handle, shaped like a garden rake with its prongs twisted into the shape of a hook. I wondered who the new owner of this fairy-tale entrance could be.

5. Students point out the details that created a visual effect in this piece of writing.
6. Model highlighting the concept that the students will elaborate. (e.g. unusual...front door)

I was strolling down Floral Avenue on my way to pick up Chris and head onto school. Just as I crossed Main Street, the house at 2302 Floral Avenue caught my eye. I had walked by this house at least a hundred times and never noticed how **unusual** the **front door** appeared.

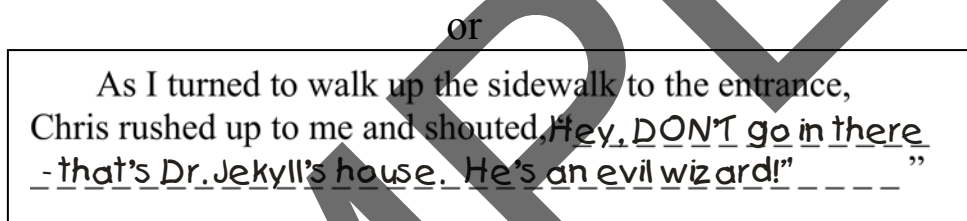
7. On their own page, each student will highlight the words that require elaboration.
8. I often tell my students that the authors of the sample paragraphs have ‘copyrighted’ their ideas, therefore, the class may not copy their ideas without permission. The term ‘copyrighted’ forces students to vary their ideas from the original author yet I am able to keep the sample displayed as a model.
9. The class then closes their eyes and creates a visual image of the type of ‘door’ that they would like to describe. Visual imagery is important in assisting writers with the printed aspect of their story.
10. At the teacher’s signal, students write a description and elaborate their ‘door’ within a 2-3 minute time frame.
11. Writers highlight the words that they consider precise language.
12. Was an individual student shares his/her writing, the teacher awards points by dropping a marble in a plastic cup for every above-grade-level or precise expression. The noise of the object hitting the cup is an auditory reminder of the words that the teacher considered great details. The total number of points for the writer is equal to the number of marbles in the cup.

13. After students have shared their writing, point to the next section of the writing that contains a quotation with dotted lines.



14. Students decide who is issuing the quote. (e.g.: *Chris* - This name can be a girl or boy's name.)

15. The class shares a couple of quotations that Chris might shout to 'me' (the author).
(e.g. "Have you ever seen anything like this before?")



16. As writers are completing their quote, they share a few examples of appropriate quotes.

17. The teacher then points out the second set of quotation marks with a solid line.



18. This line is short to force writers to include only dialogue that is brief and effective. Developing writers find it easier to include a lot of dialogue in their story rather than adding description and action. To limit the amount of dialogue in a short story, I confine my students to one exchange of dialogue per scene. For example, one character may speak, another character responds, and maybe the first character will say one last short quote. This is all the dialogue that they are allowed to include in any particular scene. This forces the young writer to use more descriptive writing in their story.

19. Remind young writers that this dialogue is all part of a continuous story.
20. Writers then share their creations.
(e.g. “Never! It’s unbelievable!”)

or

“ So what! I’m not afraid of him! _____ ” I responded

21. Point out the line that follows the words “I responded”.

“ So what! I’m not afraid of him! _____ ” I responded

22. On this line, writers will add a description or action. This raises the level of the writing. To point out examples, ask students to open a chapter book that they have in their desk. They should search for a quotation with an expression that follows it.

For example...

- a. “Well, gotta be off,” said Harid, **who was having his hand wrung by Mrs. Weasley...**

(page 36,. Chapter 4, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* by J.K.Rowling)

- b. “Certainly not,” said Professor McGonagal, **raising her eyebrows.**

(page 119,. Chapter 7, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* by J.K.Rowling)

- c. “No,” said Harry, **getting into bed.**

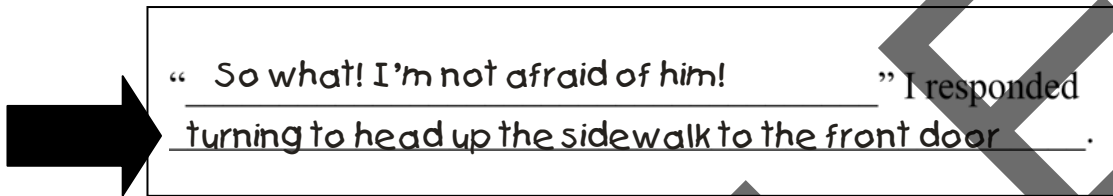
(page 174,. Chapter 10, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* by J.K.Rowling)

- d. “Enter,” said the old wizard in a feeble voice.

(page 245,. Chapter 13, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* by J.K.Rowling)

23. During this next round of writing, students add an appropriate short piece of description or action to their quotation.
(e.g. “Never! It’s unbelievable!” I responded in awe of this amazing piece of artistry.)

or



24. As students complete this portion of the task, they share their writing with the class.
25. If time allows, continue with the next portion of the writing. If not, leave this next section until another lesson or assign for homework and share on the following day. Their score should be awarded based on the use of precise vocabulary and detailed description of scenery or action.
26. The class reads the words at the beginning of the next paragraph.
27. Students discuss what they might want to describe occurring in this part of the event.

For example,

- Someone could be at the door and they will describe their unusual appearance.
- The door could swing open to display the entry way and they could describe it.
- Sound could begin emanating from the interior.
- Something could be materializing.
- Anything pleasant, scary, sad, etc. could happen.

28. This writing can be timed to continue the ‘activity’ or to keep the writers focused. Even after the timer stops, writers should be allowed to include additional information to the writing as they await their turn to share. Always provide positive support to any writer that edits his/her work as they are sharing. Positive reinforcement of editing behavior encourages good writing habits. Many developing writers are hesitant to share for fear of peer ridicule or making mistakes. Every writer makes mistakes. These mistakes prove that they are true writers.
29. Eager to continue their story, developing writers often jump ahead in time too quickly. The elaboration can contain dialogue but the event must have a good description so that the reader creates the exact same scene in his her mind.
30. It is important to display a poor example in which the writer did not elaborate the event with enough information.

For example...

Just then, the door creaked open very, very slowly. A
funny-looking man stepped out onto the porch. Chris
and I ran away.

Several pieces of information are missing...

- The writer stated that the man was “funny-looking” without showing the reader a picture of the man.
- What was the man doing?
- Was the man friendly? Mean? Scary?
- Why did the two children “run away”?

31. Beginning writers need to practice elaborating a few minutes of actual time into several sentences. A paragraph can be filled with simply a description of one scene or a simple action. Lack of practice with appropriate transitional phrases will also create a story that is jumpy or list-like and make a story's need for elaboration even greater. A writer can improve his/her writing and work on elaboration by keeping their story about 30 minutes to two hours of actual time. This short span of time will help a developing writer focus their thinking and create a more tightly focused piece of writing.
32. After practicing this activity several times with the teacher and the class, a specific page could make a great literacy center activity or a short and important homework assignment to share during Friday's writing lesson.

**Elaborate
Your Way
to
Better Writing!**

Topic: Write about an adventure with a door

Monday January 11th was no ordinary Monday – it was the strangest day of my life.

I was strolling down Floral Avenue on my way to pick up Chris and head onto school. Just as I crossed Main Street, the house at 2302 Floral Avenue caught my eye. I had walked by this house at least a hundred times and never noticed how unusual the front door appeared. _____

(Describe the door.)

As I turned to walk up the sidewalk to the entrance, Chris rushed up to me and shouted, “_____”

“_____” I responded

Just then, the door creaked open very, very slowly. _____

(Describe a person or the interior.)

Topic: Write about something that you built or made

One Saturday afternoon my friend Sam and I were lying on the beach watching some kids build a sandcastle with sand, water, shovels, and buckets. I decided that I wanted to make the best sandcastle on the beach.

I jumped up, kicking sand all over Sam, and said, “

-----”

“ _____ ” replied Sam _____

We began to clear an area close to the water for our sandcastle. _____

(Describe clearing the area.)

As I finished smoothing out the sand for the base of the castle, Chris reached for the shovel and began to dig. _____

(Describe one step in building the castle.)

