



Seven
Steps
To
Writing
Success

Narrative

Mitchell High School

Seven Steps to Writing Success: Narrative

This unit is to run concurrently with the Year 8 Term 1 unit of work. This may mean the original unit has to be extended to accommodate the time used for “Seven Steps to Writing Success”.

The majority of “Seven Steps to Writing Success” lessons are 10 to 15 minutes at the beginning of each lesson. Some are whole lessons.

The “Seven Steps to Writing Success” folder is available in the English staffroom.

Resources

This folder contains the units lesson outlines and some example activities.

Some of the referenced videos are available in the - shared staff data>Teachers>English folder>Seven Steps folder on the school desk top.

EACH STUDENT REQUIRES A WRITING BOOK WHICH WILL BE PROVIDED FOR THEIR EDITED WORK. THIS IS THEIR **SEVEN STEPS TO WRITING** BOOK

THEY WILL ALSO BE GIVEN A PLASTIC FOLDER FOR THEIR DRAFT WORK

PLEASE RETAIN ALL FOLDERS AND BOOKS FOR STUDENTS RATHER THAN ALLOWING THEM TO TAKE THESE BOOKS HOME

NOTE: This resource was compiled by Jennifer Starink.

Introduction

SHOULD BE A SANDWICH UNIT:

LESSON ONE (whole lesson):

1. Introducing metalanguage: pebble, brick, boulder, sizzling starts, backfill, authorial, secretarial (editing)
2. Revisit traditional story structure – linear is limiting and can become pedestrian (introduction, complication, resolution).
3. Story graph creates action, interest, engagement. Discuss potential.
4. Watch commercial to identify different sections.
 - a. 2012 PASSAT COMMERCIAL
 - b. PEBBLES: Darth Vader reaching for several objects. Doesn't work.
 - c. BRICK: sandwich being passed by mother. Visual disappointment.
 - d. BOULDER: the car. Longer sequence to heighten tension. Then the surprise when Darth Vader achieves something.
5. Think of examples for yourself as part of surrendering control to students.
6. Authorial voice only. Secretarial voice is for editing which will be treated later.

LESSON TWO (20 min):

1. Reminder of the previous lesson.
2. Filling in the entire graph: sizzling start with action, backfill with who what why etc.
3. Page 6 graph - excitement.
4. Page 10 definitions. (explanation of backfill)
5. Page 11 (examples)
6. Page 12 (before and after)
7. Introduce – action/sound/dialogue – 5 senses; See/Hear/say.
8. What actually happens to develop storyline, time frame etc.

STEP ONE: Sizzling Start

LESSON THREE (20 min):

1. Sizzling Start intro: 30 sec to grab attention.
2. Activity: page 12 do example before and after.
9. Activity of sizzling start e.g. food fight as a verbal class activity concentrating on what do we hear, what do we see, what did we say (as prompts)?

LESSON FOUR (20 min):

1. Revisit what we see, hear, say about the food fight.
2. Write the sizzling start for the food fight.
3. Define different approaches to sizzling start. Dialogue, Sound, Action.
4. Connect to say, hear, see.

LESSON FIVE, SIX, SEVEN (20 min each):

1. Dialogue, Sound, Action. Provide three sizzling start topics per lesson. Choose one approach each lesson. Explain.
2. Students to choose and write two sizzling starts per lesson.
3. Share various examples in between.
4. Options:
 - a. You're in the reality show from hell.
 - b. Ghosts really do exist.
 - c. The birthday party where everything goes wrong.
 - d. There is a tree in the school yard that eats kids.
 - e. Disco disaster.
 - f. The day I found a hundred dollar note.
 - g. The train was late.
 - h. Holiday in the snow.
 - i. My visit to grandma.
5. One of the lessons can be a three word start. Three words on a paper, swap with a friend and create a sizzling start incorporating all three words.

LESSON EIGHT (20 min):

1. Students to choose favourite sizzling start and attempt the two other approaches (Dialogue, Sound, Action). To be done individually.
2. Share various examples and discuss variations in approaches.

LESSON NINE (20 min):

1. Secretarial hat: provide a sizzling start to edit as a class. Focus on grammar, punctuation and spelling.
2. Students to do their own, share with someone else.
- 3.

LESSON TEN (20 min):

1. Sizzling starts not only act to grab attention, but to also provide backfill. Provide example and highlight to the class what, where, how.

Class Example of sizzling start:		
Who	What	Why
Who are involved? Characters	What is happening? Action and event	Why is this happening? Cause of action and event

2. Students to use own edited piece to fill in the same table.

STEP TWO: Tightening Tension

LESSON ELEVEN (20 min):

1. Highlight importance of tension i.e. 20 min out of an hour and a half hour film
2. Watch *Jurassic Park Kitchen Scene*. Refer to graph. Revisit pebbles, brick, boulder. Although door is open, escape is not easy; action is layered to create tension
3. Fill out graph independently.
4. Explain that more time is given to the big boulder than the little pebbles (which is illustrated on the graph - wider for boulder).
5. Must believe that the character may fail - heightens tension.
6. Options:
 - a. Nik Willenda – *Grand Canyon*
 - b. *Master Chef, The Voice, X Factor*
 - c. Any *Bond* film

LESSON TWELVE (20 min):

1. Explain: Filling enough detail in the scene so the reader feels like they are there. Use craft technique such as five senses and feelings.
2. Volcano activity page 13. Table on white board: what do you see, hear, touch, smell, taste and feeling.
3. Focus on double adjectives to get the necessary vocabulary.

See Question and distinguish between what is intended and what is delivered. Single to double adjectives Shadows, movements, objects.	Hear
Touch	Smell
Taste	Feeling

4. Exemplar on page 13 on skiing to show the value of heightened detail to create atmosphere. Students may watch news clips of volcano eruptions so they may view the full experience. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aQtkoLxqUNQ> on file in Seven steps folder.

LESSON THIRTEEN and FOURTEEN (20 min each):

1. Students get into groups of three and then fill out their own table for new topic using double adjectives. A3 paper and textas and scaffold table for walking through a graveyard topic.

2. Scaffold paragraph. Don't have to use all descriptors, may use I heard, I saw, I felt as sentence starters. Use conjunctions, double adjectives and/or connectives to link descriptors.
3. Example: *I heard dragging footsteps on the gravel path and short high-pitched screams. Then I saw an empty grave with my name on it. Suddenly I felt a skeletal hand on my shoulder. I could smell the putrid stench of rotting flesh. I screamed, 'Ahhh!' I was petrified.*
4. Give students options:
 - a. Parachute jump
 - b. Murder scene
 - c. Storm at sea
 - d. Rock concert
5. Start anywhere you want, write a paragraph using five senses and feelings from the above table.
6. Edit

LESSON FIFTEEN and SIXTEEN (20 min):

1. Choose one other option each lesson and repeat process.
2. **Ensure group work is just to brainstorm ideas for table. Paragraph will be completed independently.**
3. Students to choose favourite piece(from the 6) and carefully edit it and copy it into their Seven Steps Writing books.

STEP THREE: Planning for Success

LESSON SEVENTEEN (20 min):

Note for teacher to connect STEPs as a logical progression through skills:

1. Now you have some writing skills, we can now utilise these crafts to create a story.
2. Keep authorial and secretarial voices separate.
3. Give technical instructions first (remind students of their writing crafts – see below)Top tips for kids:
 - a. Brainstorm. For every ten ideas, there is only one good one.
 - b. Remind students of story graphs use the sizzling start then backfill.
 - c. Build up tension and a long scene.
 - d. Know your ending before you start the story. If you don't know how it's going to end, you won't know how to build tension.
 - e. Your first idea is often your worst idea.
4. Visually graph a story, by providing snapshots of scenes and placing them in order on the narrative graph.

LESSON EIGHTEEN (20 min):

1. TEN WAYS TO TACKLE TOPIC
2. Teacher **models** with the topic as 'Jump': 'The day your sister dares you to jump of the roof,' 'Jump for joy', 'A leap of faith'. Student to assist with brainstorm as teacher release. *Overview only*

<p>Idea: 10 ideas (X 10) From a bridge Over a river Out of a plane At the Olympics Off the cliff With one leg Van Halen song</p>	<p>Problems: Ten problems (X10) Pick four to rank in order of tension. Rank the problems to create the pebbles, brick and boulders. Off a cliff: Pool at the bottom off the cliff Rope snaps Broken leg - brick Tree in the way - pebble Crocodile in the water– boulder</p>
<p>Setting: X 10 Island Grand canyon Blue mountains River in south America/Africa Amazon Papua new guinea Characters: X 10 Boys scout Head-hunter Dare-devil</p>	<p>Ending: X 10 Cast on leg knocks out crocodile Bird distracts crocodile Bungee bounces back up Hippo kills crocodile Gets stuck in the tree Kill crocodile and make new shoes</p>

LESSON NINETEEN (20 min+):

1. Group work on A3: three students – one is a scribe.
2. Topics: gold, risk, the key, fly.

Idea: X 10	Problems: X 10 Pick four to rank in order of tension.
Setting: X 10 Characters: X 10	Ending: X 10

3. Choose one then brainstorm four problems. If you can't find four problems, go back and choose another topic.
4. Do the same for the rest of the quadrants.
5. Rank the problems to create the pebbles, brick and boulders.
6. Place onto the story graph and share.
7. Scribe moves to the next group and verbally tells story – with notes.

LESSON TWENTY (20 min):

1. Group work on A: three students – one is a scribe.
2. Topics: gold, risk, the key, fly – choose a different option from the previous lesson

Idea: X 10	Problems: X 10 Pick four to rank in order of tension.
Setting: X 10 Characters: X 10	Ending: X 10

3. **Independently** rank the problems to create the pebbles, brick and boulders.
4. Place onto own story graph and share within **their** group.

STEP FOUR – Dynamic Dialogue

LESSON TWENTY ONE (15 - 20 min):

Overview lesson – What is dialogue? What is the purpose of dialogue?

There are four levels of dialogue

1. Cliché
2. Fact
3. Opinion
4. Feelings

Brainstorm with students examples and definitions of each level and discuss / note in box.

Cliché “How are you?” “Fine.” “Hi.”	Fact “My name is Suzie, and I am 13 years old.”
Opinion “I think maths is boring. Another way to phrase (dynamic) “The <i>B</i> in algebra stands for boring.”	Feelings “My little brother is so annoying.” Another way to phrase (dynamic) “Having a little brother is like having a pet monkey.”

Highlight to the students that you would not use the first two levels of conversation as they are not dynamic

Dialogue does three things –

1. Makes the scene more dynamic
2. Reveals Character
3. Moves the plot

Example (page 14)

Lesson Twenty-two (20 mins)

Paper Fights

Remind students of how to write dialogue dynamically using opinions and feelings.

Paper Fights – (5 – 10 mins)

1. Students are in pairs (A and B)
2. Choose a topic
 - a. 'It only tastes a little bit burnt'
 - b. 'There is a hole in my pants'
3. Decide who you are going to be (examples):
 - a. Husband / Wife
 - b. Brother / Sister
 - c. Mother / Child
 - d. Friend / Friend
4. Instruct that there will be no speaking during activity.
5. Student A writes the topic at the top of the page (this is their first line of dialogue)
6. Student B takes the paper and replies with dynamic dialogue.
7. Continue conversation alternating between A and B (5-10 min)
8. Share responses within groups (3-4 pairs)

Lesson Twenty-three (15 min)

Repeat Paper Fights with another two topics

1. Students are in pairs (A and B)
2. Choose a topic
 - a. 'You spent \$200 on that'
 - b. 'I've told you three times already to empty the dishwasher'
3. Decide who you are going to be (examples):
 - a. Husband / Wife
 - b. Brother / Sister
 - c. Mother / Child
 - d. Friend / Friend
4. Instruct that there will be no speaking during activity.
5. Student A writes the topic at the top of the page (this is their first line of dialogue)
6. Student B takes the paper and replies with dynamic dialogue.
7. Continue conversation alternating between A and B (5-10 min)
8. Share responses within groups (3-4 pairs)

Lesson Twenty-four (50 min)

1. Change from authorial voice to secretarial voice and teach the conventions of dialogue.
2. Teach conventions and students to punctuate example.
3. See exemplar and Convention cheat sheet (in English resource folder).
4. Use best example from previous paper fight to edit using correct conventions.
5. Copy into Seven Steps Writing Book

Lesson Twenty-five (20 min)

1. Favourite movie quotes – students to give favourite lines from a film and that would be considered examples of dynamic dialogue.
2. Watch a 30 second clip (Check location, should be in Shared Staff Data). Students are given the dialogue with no speech conventions or mannerisms. Students to re-write using correct conventions and descriptors of how it's being said as well as actions.

STEP FIVE: Ban the Boring

Lesson Twenty-six (20 min)

1. Give examples from page 16.
2. Ban all mention of the three 'B's' in all your writing. This means bus trips (or car trips), Breakfast (or lunch or dinners) and Beds (I got up...or went home to bed). Unless, of course, you want to kill someone having breakfast in bed on a bus.
3. Films delete scenes that are worth \$50 000. Why? Because they don't move the plot forward.
4. Go through camp before and after example (page 16)

Lesson Twenty-seven (20 min)

1. Students given boring extract to change and make interesting.

Lesson Twenty-eight (20 min)

1. Badly Boring Challenge: Students have a competition to create the most boring piece of writing using an example of exciting writing. Complete activity in pairs.
2. Share with the class.

STEP SIX: Show Don't Tell

Lesson Twenty-nine (20 min)

1. Example lesson. Teacher to go through the importance of showing to convince.
2. Introduction to lesson; "It's a beautiful day I just can't see it" youtube.
3. Page 15: words don't convince, actions do.
4. Change your words, change your world. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F8bm2llxjU>

See P15 for examples

Lesson Thirty (20 min)

1. Use commercials to compare showing rather than telling and its affects.
 - a) Kmart versus Rivers Clothing. Videos in English resources.

Lesson Thirty-one (20 min)

1. Students act out activity 'Show me a secret' on page 26.
2. Brainstorm a list of emotions.
 - a. Happy
 - b. Sad
 - c. Frustrated
 - d. Selfish
 - e. Generous
 - f. Frightened
 - g. Jealous
 - h. Bored
 - i. Excited
3. Students guess the 'secret' (see P26) then to write out three actions/descriptions used to show that particular emotion. Remind students that they could use double adjectives to describe scene without using the key word.

Lesson Thirty-two (20 min)

1. Students to complete the activity 'Actions Speak louder than words'. (see P26)
2. Students to pick one of the following and think of THREE things they could do to show they are:
 - a. Generous
 - b. Terrible at music
 - c. Scared of dogs
 - d. Great at basketball
 - e. Allergic to peanuts
3. Repeat two more times with a time limit of three minutes for each.

Lesson Thirty-three

1. Challenge students to create a paragraph and invent their own meanings for the following words. If they have 'shown' it right, their readers should know exactly what each thing is!
 - a. I always wanted a neatsis.
 - b. Mum picked up the yanty and just looked at it.
 - c. The cat spat out the nimun in a real hurry.
 - d. I thought my brother would never give me a plancet.

3. Can show examples from Jabberwocky (Carrol), Truffula Tree (Dr. Seuss) Sploosh (Holes).

STEP SEVEN: Exciting Endings

Lesson Thirty-four (20 min)

1. Remind students of the story graph, don't start writing until you know the ending.

It's a really exciting story - four crooks plan to steal ten million dollars in diamonds. They have captured the brave kids investigating them and tied them up.

The parents search frantically, but the crooks have set a fire which is raging closer and closer to the terrified kids.

2. Now comes the ending...
 - a. And then I woke up, it was all a dream
 - b. They all lived happily ever after
 - c. Police rescue 101 (never seen police before)
 - d. BOOM, they all died
 - e. To be continued...
 - f. THE END.
3. Sound familiar? These are called the 'quick-fix' endings. A quick way out for the writer - but really annoying for the reader.
4. Endings are not something 'tacked on' at the finish, powerful endings are embedded in the very heart and fabric of the story.
5. Which means they are created in the PLANNING stage.
6. For the diamond thieves story the ending should come from the kids being brave or smart - not from the police or the parents rushing in to rescue them. Some ideas could be:-
 - a. **One of the kids is a gymnast, strong and supple. She wriggles out of the ropes tying them up and sets them all free.**
 - b. **Even with hands tied behind him, one kid manages to press '000' on his mobile phone and leaves the line open so the police can overhear everything and locate them.**

Lesson Thirty-five (20 min)

Select from the following activities depending on class and time frame:

Example one: The Ripple Effect

In groups of 6, one student thinks of one small thing they could do that's 'nice'. (e.g. Student 1: *I let my sister borrow my music CD.*) Student 2 plays the sister and says how this affected them. (*I took it to a friend's party. Everyone got up and danced and had a great time.*)

Student 3 adds on to the story. (*I was at the party, we were late leaving as we were dancing. On the way home we saw an accident. If we had been on time we would have been hit by the truck.*)

The game goes around the whole group – only there is a deadline. The last person in the ring has to make their act of kindness return some good to the first person. (That is, the story comes a 'full circle.') It's a great way to practise endings - and random acts of kindness.

Example two: Working Backwards

Sometimes writers pick up a line or a phrase that haunts them. Often it 'feels' like the last line of a story. Some writers even work backwards from that one line to create a whole novel.

Here are some last line endings. Get students to create and tell a story to match them.

- a. They put his picture on a stamp. He would have laughed like crazy at that.
- b. I'm not going to say sorry. Well, maybe . . .
- c. I waded through puddles and felt the mud squish through my toes. Lucky me.
- d. I walk to school now, it's safer that way.

Example three: Sticky Situations

This is a great way to encourage lateral thinking and also to find solutions to tricky story plots. Every morning for a week, organise students to form small groups. They will be thrown (in their imagination) into 'trapped' situations. These are the situations which often occur in stories and the writer has to find a way out. Students have to brainstorm together to figure out a solution. Here are some situation starters:

- a. One team member has broken a leg on a mountainside in thick fog.
- b. The group is trapped in a cellar with a locked door and no windows.
- c. One person has been bitten by a snake – the team is in the middle of the outback.
- d. The group is tied up in a warehouse just about to be demolished.

Lesson Thirty-six, Thirty-seven (50 min)

Templates (from pages 35-37) are used to brainstorm stories. The favourite will be then chosen to create a narrative by utilising the seven steps to writing success.

Lesson Thirty-eight

Editing lesson, write up story in Seven Steps writing book.