

SPECTRUM[®]

Writing

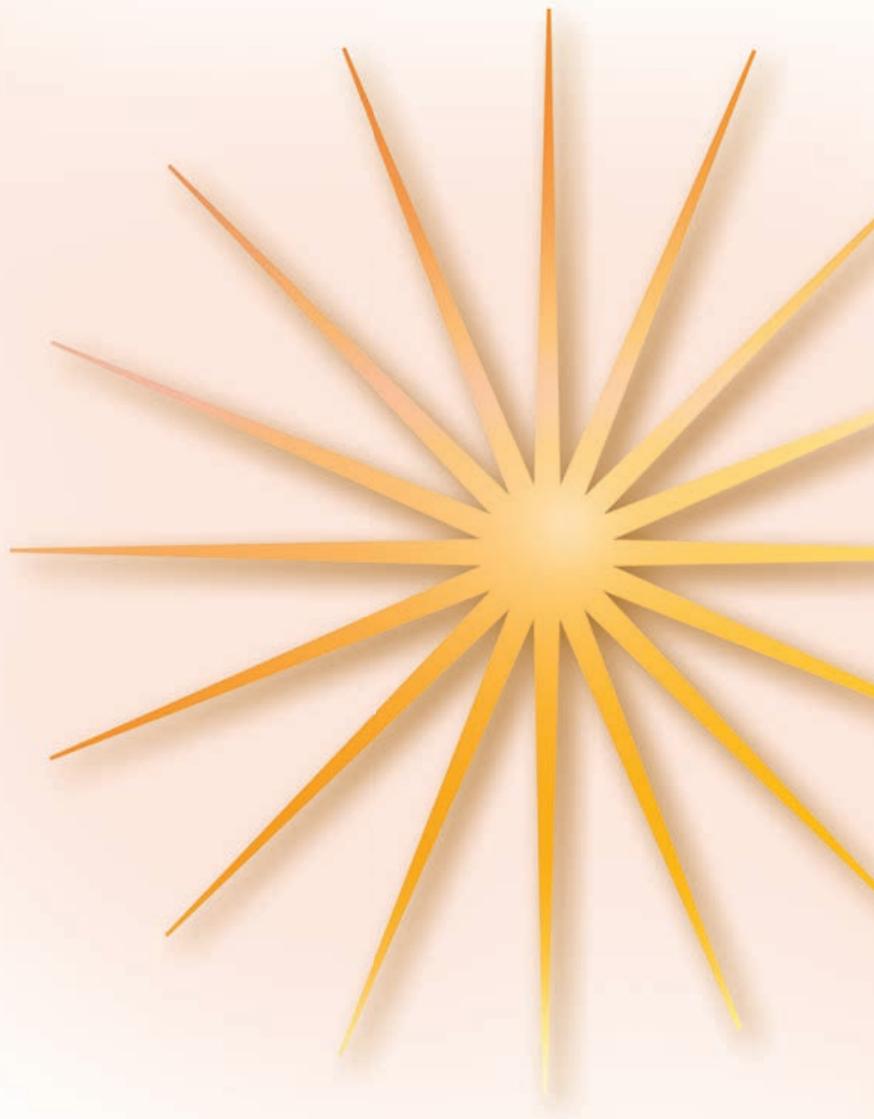
GRADE

6



Focused Practice for Writing Mastery

- **Writing a story**
- **Writing to inform**
- **Writing an argument**
- **Using the writing process**
- **Writer's Handbook**



Lesson 1 The Writing Process

Writers follow a plan when they write. They take certain steps, which make up the writing process. Following these five steps leads to better writing.

Step 1: Prewrite

This could also be called the “thinking and discovering” stage. Writers might choose a topic, or they might list everything they know about a topic already chosen. They might write down what they need to learn about a topic. Some also organize their ideas by making a chart or diagram.

Step 2: Draft

Writers put their ideas on paper. This first draft should contain sentences and paragraphs. Good writers follow their prewriting ideas while writing the draft. There might be spelling and grammar mistakes in this draft. There might even be mistakes in facts or ideas and how they are organized. That’s okay; there are three more steps.

Step 3: Revise

Writers change or fix their first draft. They move ideas around, put them in a different order, or add new ones. They make sure they used clear words and the sentences flow smoothly together. This is also the time to take out ideas that are not on topic.

Step 4: Proofread

Writers usually write a neat, new copy. Then, they look again to make sure everything is correct. They look especially for capital letters, end marks, punctuation, and misspelled words.

Step 5: Publish

Finally, writers make a final copy that has no mistakes. They are now ready to share their writing. That might mean mailing a letter, turning in a report, or posting a story on a Web site.

Lesson 1 The Writing Process

What does the writing process look like? Chase used the writing process to write a paragraph about Sacagawea. His writing steps below are out of order. Label each step with a number and the name of the step.

Step ____: _____

Sacagawea was about 19 years old when she began traveling with Lewis and Clark on their great expedition. Her husband, a French fur trader named Charbonneau, had been hired as an interpreter. Though Sacagawea was "only a woman" and had a baby, she went along. Historians agree that Sacagawea's role in negotiating with her own Shoshone people aided the expedition a great deal, so, it is Sacagawea, not her husband, who becomes a hero.

Step ____: _____

Sacagawea was about 19 years old when she began traveling with Lewis and Clark on their great expedition. Her husband, a French fur trader named Charbonneau, had been hired as an interpreter. Though Sacagawea was "only a woman" and had a baby, she went along. Historians agree that Sacagawea's role in negotiating with her own Shoshone people helped ensure the success of the expedition. So, it is Sacagawea, not her husband, who becomes a hero.

Step ____: _____

Shoshone
with Lewis and Clark, starting in 1805
carried her baby
husband, Charbonneau, interpreter
about 1786 to 1812

Step ____: _____

Sacagawea was about 19 years old, when she went with Lewis and Clark on their great expedition. Her husband, a French fur trader, named Charbonneau, had been hired as an interpreter. Though Sacagawea was "only a woman" and had a baby, she went along. Historians agree that Sacagawea's role in negotiating with her own Shoshone people aided the expedition a great deal, so, it is Sacagawea, not her husband, who becomes a hero.

Step ____: _____

Sacagawea was about 19 years old, when she went with Lewis and Clark on their great expedition. Her husband, named Charbonneau, had been hired as an interpreter. Though Sacagawea was "only a woman" and had a baby, she went along. Historians agree that Sacagawea's role in talking to her own Shoshone people aided the expedition a great deal, so, it is Sacagawea, not her husband, who becomes a hero.

Lesson 2 Purposes for Writing

When you are in school, you write assignments for your teachers. Beyond completing a school assignment, though, there are several basic purposes, or reasons, for writing. In general, they are as follows:

- to entertain
- to persuade
- to explain
- to inform

Writers use many forms of writing, such as friendly letters, reports, news articles, book reviews, and poems. For one form of writing, there might be different purposes. Here are some examples.

Form of Writing	Possible Purposes
Personal narrative	To entertain, to explain
Story	To entertain
Friendly letter	To entertain, to persuade, to explain, to inform
Business letter	To inform, to persuade
Instructions	To explain
Letter to the editor	To inform, to persuade
News article	To inform, to entertain, to explain

Writers may combine purposes in one form of writing. For example, an article about knitting might be both entertaining and informative.

Below is a list of written products. Write what you think the purpose of each item is—to entertain, persuade, explain, and/or inform.

Written Products

a news article about a train wreck

a personal narrative about a tragic incident

a story about a girl and her dog

a business letter about a faulty product

Purposes for Writing

Lesson 3 Audience

When a children's author sits down to write a story, does he write a 112-page book? Of course not. His audience would not be interested in such a long book. A children's author must think about his audience and write especially for them.



Does the president of a company have to think about her audience if she is writing a memo to her employees? They are adults; they can understand anything. Right? Wrong. If she is going to keep their interest and get her message across, she needs to think about her audience just as much as the children's author had to think about his.



Writers need to consider these questions every time they write.

- What will my audience enjoy?
- What are they interested in?
- What will make them want to keep on reading?
- What do they already know?
- What will they understand?

Mr. Elkins, the gym teacher, has to go to a meeting tomorrow. He has written a set of instructions for the substitute teacher. Mr. Elkins knows that the substitute teacher has never taught a gym class before. Read the paragraph. Think about whether Mr. Elkins kept his audience in mind.

After warm-ups, send the kids for two laps. Then, pick teams and have the fourth- and fifth-graders play dodge ball. The third-graders should play freeze tag. Set up all six centers for the first- and second-graders. Put the ball-bouncing center on the opposite side of the gym from the balancing center. Thanks and have a great day!

Lesson 4 Write a Paragraph

Here is what you know about paragraphs.

- A paragraph is a group of sentences that are all about the same topic.
- Each sentence in a paragraph stays on topic.
- The main idea of a paragraph is what the paragraph is all about.
- A paragraph's main idea is usually stated in a topic sentence. The topic sentence may fall anywhere in the paragraph.
- The first line of a paragraph is indented.
- Writers must consider the audience for which they are writing.

What is your idea of a perfect summer day? What would the weather be like? What would you do? Where would you be? List some details that would be part of your perfect summer day.

Details:

Review your list. Think about the order in which you want to present your details in a paragraph. If you wish, number them. Then, draft a paragraph about your idea of a perfect summer day.

Lesson 4 Write a Paragraph

Read through your paragraph. Ask yourself these questions. If necessary, make changes to your paragraph.

Questions to Ask About a Paragraph

Does the topic sentence express the main idea?
 Does each sentence support the topic sentence?
 Does each sentence express a complete thought?
 Are the ideas and words in the paragraph appropriate for the audience?
 Is the first line indented?

Now that you have thought about the content, or meaning, of your paragraph, proofread it for errors. Read through it several times, looking for a certain kind of error each time. Use this checklist.

___ spelling ___ end marks
 ___ capitalization ___ punctuation

Now, rewrite your paragraph. Use your neatest handwriting and make sure there are no errors in the final copy.

Lesson 5 Main Ideas and Details

A paragraph has a main idea. The main idea is what the paragraph is all about. In most paragraphs, the main idea is actually stated in the paragraph. That statement is called the *topic sentence*. A topic sentence may be anywhere in a paragraph, but most often it is either the first sentence or the last.

In the paragraph below, the topic sentence is the first sentence. Write it below.

My grandmother is one of those people who has her holiday shopping done by September. She picks out gifts when she and Grandpa travel. She also goes to local stores when they have sales during the summer. In December, when we're all feeling too busy, Grandma is at home baking cookies.

The other sentences include details that support, or tell about, the main idea. Write two details from the paragraph.



Lesson 5 Main Ideas and Details

Not all paragraphs have a topic sentence. Sometimes, writers leave it out. The paragraph still has a main idea, but the writer chooses not to state the main idea in the paragraph. That means the main idea is implied. Here is an example.



All of the stores were crowded yesterday. They weren't necessarily full of people, though. Everywhere I went, there were special displays. I guess they figure that if you trip over the display, you're more likely to buy something. That's not how it worked for me. I was so annoyed that I cut my shopping trip short and went for a walk in the park.

What is the main idea of the paragraph above?

How do you feel about shopping? Choose one of these sentences as a topic sentence for a paragraph:

I hate shopping.

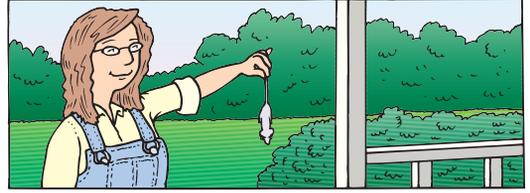
I like shopping, but only for myself.

I would like to be a professional shopper.

Now, write a paragraph in which you support your main idea with details. Remember to choose just one topic sentence. Decide whether you will put it at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the paragraph.

Lesson 6 Staying on Topic

Here is a good paragraph. It starts out with a topic sentence. Then, each sentence gives details about, or supports, the topic sentence.



Many people say they would rather not live in a city, but few people actually make the move to the country. In a recent survey, 66% of the adults polled said they longed for a rural lifestyle. However, only about 2% of those people said they had actually taken steps toward such a move. Steps they had taken included searching for real estate and inquiring about job opportunities in rural communities.

The following paragraph contains a sentence that is not on topic. Read the paragraph and underline the topic sentence. Draw a line through the sentence that does not support the topic sentence. Then, list two details that do support the topic sentence.

For a city kid, country life can be a little alarming. I learned that on a recent visit to see my aunt and uncle. As we pulled up in front of their house, a possum crossed the driveway. I let out a yell. I thought it was a huge rat! Possums are not even in the same family as rats. After we all settled down from that, my aunt's cat deposited a dead mouse on the doorstep. Aunt Terry calmly picked it up by the tail and tossed it into the bushes.

Detail: _____

Detail: _____

Now, write your own paragraph about an experience you have had in the country or outdoors. Remember to stay on topic. Stick to one main idea and make sure that all of your detail sentences support that main idea. When you are finished, underline your topic sentence.
