

Top Score Writing's

BASIC ESSAY WRITING MINI-UNIT



THIS FREE
1st GRADE
RESOURCE
INCLUDES:

☐	teacher guide
	completed examples
☐	planning sheets
	student activities
	editing checklist
☐	progress monitoring
	rubric



- This mini-unit is intended to be completed over six weeks. It will require approximately three 20-minute writing blocks per week. Please view this short informational video before beginning: <http://tsw.moe/mini1st>
- The objective of this mini-unit is for students to begin to learn how to write a basic, organized essay. They will learn to organize their ideas in response to non-text-based expository writing tasks. These prompts will require them to explain something about themselves to the reader. Students will generate ideas through pictures, plan their responses using an outline, and organize their thoughts into a structured multi-paragraph essay. These carefully selected lessons focus on teaching students how to construct a thoughtful, organized response. This is the foundation of quality essay writing. Students are often most successful in learning these foundational writing skills while writing about engaging topics that are relevant to their daily lives and personally meaningful. They are then able to transfer their understanding of essay writing to text-based writing tasks.
- In this mini-unit, we have included an example prompt, plan, and essay for teachers to use as a guide while modeling. There are also five student activities. We encourage teachers to incorporate a variety of modeled, shared, guided, and independent writing experiences in their instruction as they deem appropriate based on students' current writing levels. Some first-grade classrooms may find it appropriate to do only shared writing, while other classrooms may be ready to dive right into independent writing. Students' self-confidence as writers grows when they can see how much they have improved. Through positive experiences, a love of writing and increased motivation and engagement will emerge. You will be amazed to see how much growth can happen in just a few writing activities.
- In our full curriculum, our entire foundational writing (non-text-based expository) unit is comprised of over 12 lessons and activities. Once students master these foundational skills, the curriculum continues with units focused on text-based expository, informative, argumentative, opinion, and narrative writing. We have included the Table of Contents for our complete curriculum of over 40+ activities at the end of the "Teacher Packet." We invite you to review the sequence of lessons and imagine the continued growth your students would experience beyond the five activities in this mini-unit.
- At Top Score Writing, we believe one of the secrets to creating successful writers is monitoring their understanding on a day-to-day basis so teachers can *quickly* and *easily* make instructional decisions. Included in this mini-unit, you will find an "Informal Assessment Checklist." Here, you will be able to record students' understanding each step of the way. At a glance, you will know your class trends and each student's exact strengths and weaknesses.





We suggest utilizing one activity per week with students.

Teachers should create a variety of writing experiences, such as modeled, shared, guided, and independent writing throughout the six weeks.

Below are examples of ways to utilize the activities:

Week 1

- Lesson 1 Model Planning - pages 9 and 10
- Lesson 2 Model Writing - pages 12 and 13
- Lesson 3 Model Editing and Revising - page 13

Week 2

- Lesson 4 Model Planning – page 14
- Lesson 5 Model Writing – page 15
- Lesson 6 Model Editing and Revising – page 15

Week 3

- Lesson 7 Shared Planning - page 16
- Lesson 8 Shared Writing - page 17
- Lesson 9 Shared Editing and Revising - page 17

Week 4

- Lesson 10 Guided Planning - page 18
- Lesson 11 Guided Writing - page 19
- Lesson 12 Guided Editing and Revising - page 19

Week 5

- Lesson 13 Guided Planning - page 20
- Lesson 14 Guided Writing - page 21
- Lesson 15 Guided Editing and Revising - page 21

Week 6

- Lesson 16 Independent Planning – page 22
- Lesson 17 Independent Writing - page 23
- Lesson 18 Independent Editing and Revising - page 23





1. Teacher Packet - Print one copy to guide your instruction.
2. Student Portfolio - Print a copy for each child in your class.
This contains all the materials they will need for the entire mini-unit.

RUBRIC

- Included is the Unit 1 Phase 1 Non-Text-Based Expository Writing Rubric developed by Top Score Writing.
- Top Score Writing's first-grade curriculum provides rubrics for each genre of writing. With developmentally appropriate rubrics for the younger grades, schools can implement a consistent scoring system. This allows for accurate tracking and progress monitoring of all students.
- Using this rubric, students can earn a maximum of 12 points per essay. These 12 points will be earned in three categories: Purpose-Structure, Development, and Language. Students can earn 1-4 points per category.
- The rubric is not a checklist. The response does not have to contain all the characteristics of a score point to receive that score. The essay will receive the score that it "most represents." For example, if a response contains more characteristics of a 3 in Development than a 4, it will receive a 3 for that category.



UNIT 1
NON-TEXT-BASED EXPOSITORY
RUBRIC

Score Point	Purpose/Structure	Development	Language
4	• 4 clearly indented paragraphs • 2-sentence introduction • 2-sentence conclusion • Topic sentence in each middle paragraph • Essay consistently focused on the central idea • Consistently uses transitions	• Each middle paragraph has 1+ supporting detail(s) • Support sentences are specific	• Consistent command of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
3	• Clear organizational structure but may not indent each paragraph • 1-sentence introduction • 1-sentence conclusion • Topic sentences present but may be only partially complete • Essay mostly focused on the central idea • Uses some transitions	• Most middle paragraphs have 1+ supporting detail(s) • Support sentences are mostly specific details or examples but may be general at times	• Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are mostly correct
2	• Inconsistent organizational structure • Introduction and conclusion present but repetitive, simplistic, ineffective, or brief • Topic sentences attempted but ineffective or confusing • Essay insufficiently focused on the central idea • Transitions are ineffective	• Support absent or lacking • Support unrelated or confusing	• Inconsistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
1	• No organizational structure • Introduction and conclusion missing, unrelated to the central idea, or confusing • Topic sentences missing or unrelated to paragraphs • Central idea absent, demonstrating a lack of awareness of the task • No transitions	• Middle paragraphs do not have any supporting details	• A great deal of a variety of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors that often obscure meaning

INFORMAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

- Use this spreadsheet to record observations as students write.
- Across the top of the checklist are the skills that may be included in students' essays. For each skill, put an X if the student did not demonstrate mastery.
- Record which skills or parts of an essay students are struggling with and hold quick mini-conferences based upon your observations.
- The information recorded on this checklist can be used to monitor students' progress, form skill groups, and facilitate differentiated instruction.



[illegible]



Unit 1 Phase 1: Developing Foundational Writing Skills Through Non-Text-Based Writing

Goals: Students will learn to organize their ideas by planning with an IRC Picture Outline. Students will be introduced to planning and essay vocabulary. Students will indent while writing one sentence per paragraph. Each sentence should begin with a capital letter and end with correct punctuation.

Vocabulary:

- planning
- IRC Picture Outline
- introduction, body paragraphs & conclusion
- indent
- topic sentence

Planning Paper



Name: _____ Date: _____

PLANNING: IRC PICTURE OUTLINE

Prompt: _____

Word	Picture
I _____	
R1 _____	
R2 _____	
C _____	

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Writing Paper



Phase 1 Paper

Name: _____ Date: _____

Prompt: _____

I _____

R1 _____

R2 _____

C _____

☐ I re-read my sentence to make sure it makes sense.
☐ I used capital letters correctly.
☐ I used punctuation correctly.

Top Score Writing, Inc 2022 (c)



Unit 1 Phase 1: Developing Foundational Writing Skills Through Non-Text-Based Writing

Planning:

- **Discussion:** Explain that before students start writing their essays it is helpful for them to spend a few minutes thinking about what they want to write about. Introduce the vocabulary word “planning” and discuss how before they begin writing, good writers will create a plan for their essays. This is when they decide what they want to write about in each paragraph. Planning helps writers to organize their ideas and make sure they write about them in a way that will make sense to the reader. Explain how a writing plan is similar to a map they would use to guide them on a trip.
- **IRC Picture Outline:** Display the blank IRC Picture Outline page and explain that each part of the outline will become a paragraph in their essays. Discuss what paragraph each part of the outline represents.
 - I = introduction
 - R1 = reason 1
 - R2 = reason 2
 - C = conclusion
- **Model:** Explain that students will only write 1-2 words next to each part of their outline. Display the IRC Picture Outline Example and read the prompt aloud. Using the IRC Picture Outline Example Answer Key as a guide, brainstorm different types of animals with students and the reasons why students like them. Model writing the name of one animal next to “I” and “C.” Write one-word reasons next to R1 and R2.



Unit 1 Phase 1: Developing Foundational Writing Skills Through Non-Text-Based Writing

Writing:

- **Discussion:** Explain that an essay is made up of several paragraphs and that each paragraph has a special purpose. Discuss the vocabulary words “introduction,” “body paragraphs” and “conclusion.”
- **Phase 1 Paper:** Display the blank Phase 1 Paper and show students how each paragraph is labeled and has a box around it. Compare the IRC Picture Outline to the Phase 1 Paper and point out to students that they will write about what they wrote next to “I” on the outline in the “I” box. Repeat the same process for “R1,” “R2,” and “C.”
- **Model:** While referring to the IRC Picture Outline that you completed with students, model writing a complete sentence in the “I” box that states the controlling idea of the whole essay. Think aloud as you begin the sentence with a capital letter and end the sentence with the appropriate punctuation mark. Show students how you indent the sentence before writing the first word. Introduce/define the vocabulary words “indent” and “topic sentence.” Model writing a complete sentence in the “R1” box about the “R1” reason on the outline; repeat the same process for “R2.” Write a complete sentence in the “C” box that focuses on the controlling idea of the essay. You may use the Phase 1 Example Essay to guide you while modeling.
- **Editing:** After writing one sentence in each paragraph, model rereading and editing using the editing checklist on the bottom of the paper.



Name: _____

Date: _____

PLANNING: IRC PICTURE OUTLINE

Prompt: Write to explain about your favorite animal.

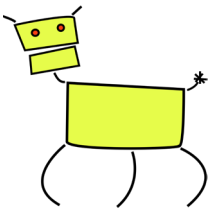
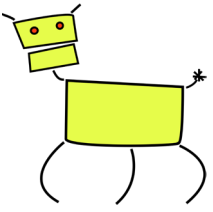
Word	Picture
I _____	
R1 _____	
R2 _____	
C _____	



Unit 1 Phase 1: Example IRC Picture Outline

Prompt: Write to explain about your favorite animal.

Completed Plan:

	Word	Picture
I	dog	
R1	cute	
R2	play games	
C	dog	



Name: _____

Date: _____

Prompt: Write to explain about your favorite animal.

I _____

R1 _____

R2 _____

C _____

- ☐ I re-read my sentence to make sure it makes sense.
- ☐ I used capital letters correctly.
- ☐ I used punctuation correctly.



Unit 1 Phase 1: Essay Example

Prompt: Write to explain about your favorite animal.

I My favorite animal is a dog.

R1 They are very cute.

R2 It is fun to play lots of different games with dogs.

C Dogs are my favorite animal.



I re-read my sentence to make sure it makes sense.



I used capital letters correctly.



I used punctuation correctly.



Name: _____

Date: _____

PLANNING: IRC PICTURE OUTLINE

Prompt: Think about your favorite toy or game. Now explain why this toy or game is your favorite.

Word	Picture
I _____	
R1 _____	
R2 _____	
C _____	



Name: _____

Date: _____

Prompt: Think about your favorite toy or game. Now explain why this toy or game is your favorite.

I _____

R1 _____

R2 _____

C _____

- ☐ I re-read my sentence to make sure it makes sense.
- ☐ I used capital letters correctly.
- ☐ I used punctuation correctly.



Name: _____

Date: _____

PLANNING: IRC PICTURE OUTLINE

Prompt: Think about someone who is special to you. Now explain why this person is so special.

Word	Picture
I _____	
R1 _____	
R2 _____	
C _____	



Name: _____

Date: _____

Prompt: Think about someone who is special to you. Now explain why this person is so special.

I _____

R1 _____

R2 _____

C _____

- ☐ I re-read my sentence to make sure it makes sense.
- ☐ I used capital letters correctly.
- ☐ I used punctuation correctly.



Name: _____

Date: _____

PLANNING: IRC PICTURE OUTLINE

Prompt: Think about your favorite sport. Now explain why this sport is your favorite.

Word	Picture
I _____	
R1 _____	
R2 _____	
C _____	



Name: _____

Date: _____

Prompt: Think about what sport is your favorite. Now explain why this sport is your favorite.

I _____

R1 _____

R2 _____

C _____

- ☐ I re-read my sentence to make sure it makes sense.
- ☐ I used capital letters correctly.
- ☐ I used punctuation correctly.



Name: _____

Date: _____

PLANNING: IRC PICTURE OUTLINE

Prompt: Sometimes when you read a book, you learn about different characters. Think about one character you like and explain why you like this character so much.

Word	Picture
I _____	
R1 _____	
R2 _____	
C _____	



Name: _____

Date: _____

Prompt: Sometimes when you read a book, you learn about different characters. Think about one character you like and explain why you like this character so much.

I _____

R1 _____

R2 _____

C _____

- ☐ I re-read my sentence to make sure it makes sense.
- ☐ I used capital letters correctly.
- ☐ I used punctuation correctly.



Name: _____

Date: _____

PLANNING: IRC PICTURE OUTLINE

Prompt: Kids enjoy owning special things. Think about one item that is important to you and explain why it is your favorite.

Word	Picture
I _____	
R1 _____	
R2 _____	
C _____	



Name: _____

Date: _____

Prompt: Kids enjoy owning special things. Think about one item that is important to you and explain why it is your favorite.

I _____

R1 _____

R2 _____

C _____

- ☐ I re-read my sentence to make sure it makes sense.
- ☐ I used capital letters correctly.
- ☐ I used punctuation correctly.



Table of Contents

Unit 1 Phase 1 Developing Foundational Writing Skills Overview	5
Unit 1 Phase 1 Instruction	6-7
Unit 1 Phase 1 Plan – Blank	8
Unit 1 Phase 1 Plan – Example	9
Unit 1 Phase 1 Plan – Example Answer Key	10
Unit 1 Phase 1 Paper – Blank	11
Unit 1 Phase 1 Paper – Example	12
Unit 1 Phase 1 Paper – Example Essay	13
Activity 1	14-15
Activity 2	16-17
Activity 3	18-19
Activity 4	20-21
Activity 5	22-23
Unit 1 Phase 2 Expanding Foundational Writing Skills Overview	24
Unit 1 Phase 2 Instruction	25
Unit 1 Phase 2 Plan – Blank.....	26
Unit 1 Phase 2 Plan – Example	27
Unit 1 Phase 2 Plan – Example Answer Key	28
Unit 1 Phase 2 Paper – Blank	29
Unit 1 Phase 2 Paper – Example	30
Unit 1 Phase 2 Paper – Example Essay	31
Activity 6	32-33



Table of Contents

Activity 7	34-35
Activity 8	36-37
Activity 9	38-39
Activity 10	40-41
Unit 2 Text-Based Expository Writing Overview	42
Unit 2 Instruction	43-44
Unit 2 Plan – Blank.....	45
Unit 2 Plan – Example	46
Unit 2 Plan – Example Answer Key	47
Unit 2 Paper – Blank	48
Unit 2 Paper – Example	49
Unit 2 Paper – Example Essay	50
Activity 11	51-52
Activity 12	53-54
Activity 13	55-56
Activity 14	57-58
Activity 15	59-60
Activity 16	61-62
Activity 17	63-64
Activity 18	65-66
Activity 19	67-68
Activity 20	69-70



Table of Contents

Unit 3 Text-Based Argumentative/Opinion Writing Overview	71
Unit 3 Instruction	72-74
Unit 3 Plan – Blank	75
Unit 3 Plan – Example	76
Unit 3 Plan – Example Answer Key	77
Unit 3 Paper – Blank	78
Unit 3 Paper – Example	79
Unit 3 Paper – Example Essay	80
Activity 21	81-82
Activity 22	83-84
Activity 23	85-86
Activity 24	87-88
Activity 25	89-90
Activity 26	91-92
Activity 27	93-94
Activity 28	95-96
Activity 29	97-98
Activity 30	99-100
Unit 4 Narrative Writing Overview	101
Unit 4 Instruction	102-104
Unit 4 Plan- Blank	105
Unit 4 Plan- Example	106



Table of Contents

Unit 4 Plan – Example Answer Key	107
Unit 4 Paper – Blank	108-109
Unit 4 Paper – Example	110-111
Unit 4 Paper – Example Essay	112-113
Activity 31	114-116
Activity 32	117-119
Activity 33	120-122
Activity 34	123-125
Activity 35	126-128
Activity 36	129-131
Activity 37	132-134
Activity 38	135-137
Activity 39	138-140
Activity 40	141-143



Scan here to view a short video
explaining how to use these materials.