

# Top Score Writing's

## BASIC ESSAY WRITING MINI-UNIT

NEW 2025  
EDITION

THIS FREE  
1<sup>st</sup> GRADE  
RESOURCE  
INCLUDES:

LESSON PLANS

PLANNING SHEETS

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

EXEMPLAR

RUBRIC

PROGRESS MONITORING

PACING GUIDE





- This mini-unit is intended to be completed over six weeks. It will require approximately three 20-minute writing blocks per week.
- Instruction follows the Gradual Release of Responsibility Framework. This progression ensures students receive the appropriate level of support at each stage of their development.
  - Weeks 1 & 2: Modeled-Shared Writing
  - Weeks 3 & 4: Guided Writing
  - Weeks 5 & 6: Independent Writing

To support instruction, step-by-step lesson plans are included for each phase of writing.

- The objective of this mini-unit is for students to begin to learn how to write a basic, organized essay. Students 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 sample 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 personally meaningful and relevant to their daily lives. They are then able to transfer their understanding of essay writing to text-based writing tasks.
- 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 includes 10 weekly activities. Once students master these foundational skills, the curriculum continues with units focused on text-based expository-informative, text-based 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 six 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 that teachers can *quickly* and *easily* make instructional decisions. Included in this mini-unit, you will find a Rubric and an Informal Assessment Checklist. Here, you will be able to record students' understanding at each step of the way. At a glance, you will know your class trends and each student's exact strengths and weaknesses.



To foster consistency and meaningful practice, we recommend scheduling three 20-minute writing blocks per week. Over the course of these three weekly writing blocks, teachers and students will work together to complete one writing activity. This pacing ensures sufficient time for discussion, participation, and instructive feedback.

### Week 1

Use the Sample Modeled-Shared Writing Activity to complete Activity 1. This sample includes step-by-step instructions for all three daily writing lessons.

- Day 1 Planning
- Day 2 Writing
- Day 3 Editing and Revising

### Week 2

Repeat the modeled-shared writing process to complete Activity 2.

- Day 1 Planning
- Day 2 Writing
- Day 3 Editing and Revising

### Week 3

Use the Sample Guided Writing Activity to complete Activity 4. This sample includes step-by-step instructions for all three daily writing lessons.

- Day 1 Planning
- Day 2 Writing
- Day 3 Writing + Editing and Revising

### Week 4

Repeat the guided writing process to complete Activity 5.

- Day 1 Planning
- Day 2 Writing
- Day 3 Writing + Editing and Revising





## Week 5

Use the Sample Independent Writing Activity to complete Activity 8. This sample includes step-by-step instructions for all three daily writing lessons.

- Day 1 Planning
- Day 2 Writing
- Day 3 Writing + Editing and Revising

## Week 6

Repeat the independent writing process to complete Activity 9.

- Day 1 Planning
- Day 2 Writing
- Day 3 Editing and Revising



Teacher Packet: Print one copy to guide your instruction.

Student Portfolio: Print a copy for each child in your class. This contains all the materials they will need for the entire mini-unit.

# EXEMPLAR

An exemplar serves as a clear model of high-quality writing that meets the lesson's learning goals. They are included for each genre of writing in the Top Score curriculum to help young writers understand what good writing looks like and how to create it themselves. Their purpose is to:

- Demonstrate what a finished piece should look and sound like in terms of structure, detail, and language.
- Guide skill development by showing specific writing techniques (e.g., using descriptive words, organizing ideas) that students are learning.
- Support comprehension by giving students a concrete reference to compare against their work, making expectations less abstract.
- Inspire creativity and encourage students by showing that strong writing is achievable, while sparking their own ideas.

## Activity 1

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**PLANNING: IRC PICTURE OUTLINE**Prompt: *Write to explain about your favorite animal.*

| WORD          | PICTURE                                                                                            |
|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I _____ dog   |                 |
| R1 _____ Cute |  eyes<br>tail |
| R2 _____ play |  fast<br>fetch |
| C _____ dog   |               |

**Activity 1**  
**Boxed Paper**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Prompt: **Write to explain about your favorite animal.**

I My favorite animal is a dog.

R1 First, dogs are my favorite animal  
because they are cute. Some dogs have  
big bulgy eyes. Other dogs have curly  
tails.

Activity 1  
Boxed Paper

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

R2 Second, it is fun to play games with dogs. My dog likes to play fetch with a tennis ball. She runs so fast when she is chasing it down!

C Dogs are the best animals in the world!

☐ I re-read my sentences.☐ I used transition words.☐ I wrote details.☐ I used capital letters and punctuation correctly.



# RUBRIC

- Included is the Section 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.



**SECTION 1**  
**DEVELOPING FOUNDATIONAL WRITING SKILLS**  
**NON-TEXT-BASED WRITING**  
**RUBRIC**

| <b>Score Point</b>           | <b>Purpose, Organization and Structure</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Support and Elaboration</b>                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Language and Conventions</b>                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4<br>Exemplary               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 clearly indented paragraphs</li> <li>• 1-sentence introduction</li> <li>• 1-sentence conclusion</li> <li>• Topic sentence in each middle paragraph</li> <li>• Essay consistently focused on the central idea</li> <li>• Consistently uses transitions</li> </ul>                                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each middle paragraph has 2+ supporting detail(s)</li> <li>• Support sentences are specific</li> </ul>                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistent command of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</li> </ul>                                          |
| 3<br>Proficient              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear organizational structure but may not indent each paragraph</li> <li>• 1-sentence introduction</li> <li>• 1-sentence conclusion</li> <li>• Topic sentences present but may be only partially complete</li> <li>• Essay mostly focused on the central idea</li> <li>• Uses some transitions</li> </ul>             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most middle paragraphs have 1+ supporting detail(s)</li> <li>• Support sentences are mostly specific details or examples but may be general at times</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are mostly correct</li> </ul>                                             |
| 2<br>Approaching Proficiency | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistent organizational structure</li> <li>• Introduction and conclusion present but repetitive, simplistic, ineffective, or brief</li> <li>• Topic sentences attempted but ineffective or confusing</li> <li>• Essay insufficiently focused on the central idea</li> <li>• Transitions are ineffective</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support absent or lacking</li> <li>• Support unrelated or confusing</li> </ul>                                                                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inconsistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</li> </ul>                                            |
| 1<br>In Need of Development  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No organizational structure</li> <li>• Introduction and conclusion missing, unrelated to the central idea, or confusing</li> <li>• Topic sentences missing or unrelated to paragraphs</li> <li>• Central idea absent, demonstrating a lack of awareness of the task</li> <li>• No transitions</li> </ul>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Middle paragraphs do not have any supporting details</li> </ul>                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A great deal of a variety of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling errors that often obscure meaning</li> </ul> |

\*To receive a score in all categories, the response must be in English, of a sufficient length, and address the prompt.

# 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 on your observations.
- The information recorded on this checklist can be used to monitor students' progress, form skill groups, and facilitate differentiated instruction.



[illegible]

**SECTION 1**  
**DEVELOPING FOUNDATIONAL WRITING SKILLS**  
**NON-TEXT-BASED WRITING**  
**INFORMAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST DIRECTIONS**

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

# LESSON PLANS & STUDENT ACTIVITIES





# SECTION 1

## **Sample Modeled/Shared Writing Activity**

**DAY 1: PLANNING USING AN OUTLINE***(15-20 minutes)**Note: All of the examples in this lesson plan are based on Activity 1.***Materials:**

- ✦ IRC Picture Outline

**Lesson:**

1. Display the Activity 1 IRC Picture Outline and read the prompt aloud:

Prompt: ***Write to explain about your favorite animal.***

2. Think aloud as a writer:

“Hmm, let me think about what this prompt is asking me to do. It says to *write to explain*—that tells me I’m going to be giving information or reasons about something. Then it says *your favorite animal*. That tells me the topic—I am going to write about an animal I really like!”

3. Explain the writing task:

“Every good piece of writing should have a clear focus, and this prompt tells me exactly what my essay should be focused on—my favorite animal. My whole essay needs to be about that topic, and it should explain clearly why I love that animal so much.”

4. Emphasize the writing task and purpose:

“The prompt helps us decide our purpose for writing. Here, it’s to explain, not tell a story. It’s really important when we write to keep the purpose and task in mind.”

5. Model brainstorming several options:

“Now I need to think of some animals I like. Let me just brainstorm some ideas—dogs, cats, horses, dolphins, elephants. I’m just getting all my ideas out of my mind—no wrong answers here! Who can share one of their favorite animals?” Allow students to share ideas.

6. Think aloud - choosing a central idea:

“Which one of these would be best to write about? Hmm...I love dolphins, but I don’t know that much about them. Cats are cute, but I think I have the most to say about dogs. I know a lot about them, and I could easily explain why I like them. So I’m going to choose ‘dog’ as my favorite animal.”



Since my whole essay is going to be about dogs, I know that dogs are the central idea of my essay. The central idea is like the main idea of an essay.

7. Introduce the IRC Picture Outline:

“Now I’m going to make a plan. A plan is like a map you would follow if you took a trip. It helps me figure out what I want to say before I start writing. Before I write, I will decide what I want to write about first, second, third, and last. Writers use plans to stay organized.”

8. Show the blank IRC Picture Outline:

Section 1 • Activity 1
Top Score Writing – Grade 1

Activity 1

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

PLANNING: IRC PICTURE OUTLINE

Prompt: Write to explain about your favorite animal.

| WORD     | PICTURE |
|----------|---------|
| I _____  |         |
| R1 _____ |         |
| R2 _____ |         |
| C _____  |         |

58 Top Score Writing, Inc. © 2025-2030. No part of this document may be reproduced without written consent from the author.

“This is called an IRC Picture Outline. Each part of this outline will become its own paragraph in my essay. ‘I’ stands for introduction. R1 stands for reason 1, and R2 stands for reason 2. These two paragraphs will each discuss a reason why dogs are my favorite animal. ‘C’ stands for conclusion.”

**\*Teacher note:** Using the “IRC Outline” anchor chart in Section 5 as a guide, create an anchor chart with students.

9. Model filling out the “I” and “C”:

“My whole essay is about how a dog is my favorite animal, so I’ll write dog next to the ‘I’ for the introduction and again next to the ‘C’ for the conclusion. I’m not writing full sentences here—just one or two words is enough to remind me what I will write about in these paragraphs.”

I: *dog*

R1:

R2:

C: *dog*

10. Brainstorm reasons:

“Now I need to think about why I like dogs. Let me brainstorm some ideas:

They’re cute

They play games

They’re friendly

They can be trained

They protect you

I’ve got lots of ideas! Who else can think of a reason why they like dogs?”

11. Think aloud to select R1 and R2:

“I’m going to pick two of these reasons to include in my essay. I want to pick reasons that I have a lot to write about. I think I’ll choose they’re cute and they play games. Those are my strongest reasons, and I can give details about both of them.”

12. Write on the IRC Picture Outline:

I: *dog*

R1: *cute*

R2: *play games*

C: *dog*

13. Emphasize planning versus writing:

“Remember, on a planning outline, we don’t use full sentences. A plan is just a guide. These words will help us remember what to write about in each paragraph.”

14. Model drawing pictures:

“Now I’m going to draw little pictures to help me remember my ideas.”

In the picture box next to “I,” draw a dog.

Next to R1, draw a cute dog.

“I am going to add two details to my picture about what would make a dog so cute. I will add big, bulgy eyes and a curly tail to my dog picture. The details I am adding to my picture will be details I add to my writing later.”

Next to R2, draw a dog playing.

“What details can I add to my picture of a dog playing?”

Let students share ideas and select two to add to the picture. For example, add a tennis ball to show dogs love to chase balls and arrows to show the dog is running fast. Later, when you write the R2 paragraph, you will use the two details from the picture to add two details to the paragraph.

Next to “C,” draw a dog again.

“These pictures are part of my plan, too—they help me visualize my writing.”

15. Wrap up and set up for the next step:

Ask students:

- Why do writers plan?
- What does each part of the IRC Picture Outline stand for?

“Next, we’ll take our IRC Picture Outline and begin turning each part into a sentence and eventually into a paragraph!”

**DAY 2: WRITING A FOUR-PARAGRAPH ESSAY***(15-20 minutes)**Note: All of the examples in this lesson plan are based on Activity 1.***Materials:**

- ✦ Completed IRC Picture Outline
- ✦ Blank boxed paper

**Lesson:**

1. Introduce boxed paper:

Display the Activity 1 Boxed Paper.

“Writers, today we’re going to use this special writing paper. It’s called boxed paper because it has a box to write each paragraph in. We are going to write a four-paragraph essay, so there are four boxes on this paper.”

2. Define what a paragraph is:

“A paragraph is a group of sentences that go together because they tell about the same idea. Each paragraph has a job. Essays are made up of paragraphs, and we’re going to write at least one sentence in each paragraph today.”

3. Introduce vocabulary:

“Let’s look at our boxes. The first box is labeled ‘I’—that means introduction. The next is R1—that’s our first reason. The third is R2—that’s our second reason. The R1 and R2 paragraphs are called the body paragraphs. The last box is ‘C’—that’s our conclusion.”

4. Connect to planning:

“We’re going to use our IRC Picture Outline to help us remember what to write in each paragraph. Watch how each word or picture on the plan turns into a sentence on the boxed paper.”

5. Display the IRC Picture Outline and boxed paper side by side:

“Let’s start with our introduction. We will write it in the ‘I’ box. On our outline, we wrote the word dog next to ‘I.’ That’s the central idea—what the whole essay is about.”

6. Model writing the introduction sentence:

Write: *My favorite animal is a dog.*

7. Think aloud while teaching conventions:

“Before I write, I need to indent—that means I move the first sentence in a paragraph over a little to show the reader that I am starting a new paragraph. I start my sentence with a capital letter and end it with a punctuation mark.”

8. Introduce the terms—*topic sentence* and *transition*:

“The first sentence in a body paragraph is called a *topic sentence*. A topic sentence tells the reader what the paragraph is going to be about.”

“A topic sentence also includes a transition. A *transition* helps the reader move from one paragraph to the next. It helps your writing flow and sound organized. Let’s make a topic sentence anchor chart we can refer to in the future.”

**\*Teacher note:** Using the “Transitions 1” and “Transitions 2” anchor charts in Section 5 as a guide, create anchor charts with students.

“On our IRC Picture Outline, R1 is our first reason, so I’m going to write the transition *First* next to R1 on our plan to remind us to use that transition in our topic sentence.”

9. Model writing a topic sentence for R1:

“On our plan, next to R1, we wrote *cute*. That’s the first reason dogs are our favorite animal. We are now going to write one sentence about that reason in the R1 box.”

Write in the R1 box: *First, dogs are my favorite animal because they are very cute.*

“I started with a capital letter, I indented again, and I ended with a period. This is a topic sentence because it tells what this paragraph will be about—dogs being cute!”

“Who can tell me what the transition is in this topic sentence?”

After students identify “First” as the transition, highlight it in the sentence.

R1 topic sentence: **First**, *dogs are my favorite animal because they are very cute.*

**\*Teacher note:** Using the “Topic Sentence” anchor chart in Section 5 as a guide, create an anchor chart with students.

10. Model adding supporting details to the R1 paragraph:

“In the picture next to R1 on our plan, we added two details. We drew a dog with big, bulgy eyes. We also drew a curly tail on our dog. We can use these details on our picture to write details in our paragraph.”

“I am going to write a sentence about dogs’ eyes:” *Some dogs have big, bulgy eyes.*

“Now I am going to write another detail sentence about dogs’ tails:” *Other dogs have curly tails.*

Think aloud:

“I’m using the details from my picture to add detail sentences. This helps the reader imagine exactly what I mean when I say cute.”

11. Read the complete R1 paragraph aloud to students. Explicitly identify the topic sentence and two supporting details.

*“First, dogs are my favorite animal because they are very cute. Some dogs have big, bulgy eyes. Other dogs have curly tails.”*

12. Model writing a topic sentence for R2:

“Next, we will move on to the R2 paragraph. On our plan, it says *play games* next to R2. I am going to write a complete topic sentence in the R2 box about how dogs can play games.”

For R2, think aloud with a non-example:

“Hmm... what if I write, *To begin with*, it is fun to play games with dogs. Oh, wait—that’s confusing because this is my second reason, not my first one. I should write: *Second*, it is fun to play games with dogs.”

Write the R2 topic sentence: *Second, it is fun to play games with dogs.*

“Who can tell me what the transition is in this topic sentence?”

After students identify *Second* as the transition, highlight it in the sentence.

R2 topic sentence: **Second**, *it is fun to play games with dogs.*

13. Model adding supporting details to the R2 paragraph:

“In the picture next to R2 on our plan, we added two details. We drew a dog playing fetch with a tennis ball. We also drew arrows to show that dogs can run fast.”

“I am going to add a detail sentence to the R2 paragraph about dogs playing fetch.” *My dog likes to play fetch with a tennis ball.*

“Now I am going to write another detail sentence for R2 about how fast dogs can run.” *She runs so fast when she is chasing it down!*

Explain the why:

“Adding details helps the reader picture what is written. That’s called visualizing. Writers add details to make their writing clear, fun, and interesting!”

14. Read the complete R2 paragraph aloud to students. Explicitly identify the topic sentence and two supporting details.

*Second, it is fun to play games with dogs. My dog likes to play fetch with a tennis ball. She runs so fast when she is chasing it down!*

15. Model the conclusion paragraph:

“Now it’s time to end our essay. Our plan has *dog* next to ‘C.’ We want to restate our central idea—but we don’t want to copy the same sentence we wrote in the introduction.”

Think aloud:

“In the introduction, I wrote, ‘My favorite animal is a dog.’ I want to say the same thing in a different way.”

Write in the “C” box: *Dogs are the best animals in the world!*

16. Explain the conclusion:

“A conclusion wraps up the essay and reminds the reader of the central idea. We restate the central idea in a fresh way. Do you see how I changed the words, but it means the same thing?”

17. Wrap up and set up for the next step:

Ask students:

- What’s a topic sentence?
- What does it mean to indent?
- How do supporting details make our writing better?
- How did I use my planning outline to help me?

“Next, we will go back and fix our writing by checking our sentences, making sure we used capital letters and periods, and adding words to make our writing even better.”

**DAY 3: EDITING AND REVISING WITH A CHECKLIST***(15-20 minutes)**Note: All of the examples in this lesson plan are based on Activity 1.***Materials:**

- ✦ Completed IRC Picture Outline
- ✦ Completed essay

**Lesson:**

1. Define key terms:

“Writers, today we’re going to learn how to edit and revise our writing. When we revise, we look at our ideas to make them better or clearer. When we edit, we fix mistakes like missing punctuation or incorrect capitalization.”

2. Explain the purpose:

“Editing and revising help to make our writing easier to read. This shows that we care about our work and want the reader to understand what we’re saying. All authors go back and fix things before their writing is finished!”

3. Display the previously written essay:

Point out the checklist at the bottom of the page and explain how it is useful.

“An editing checklist helps writers remember what to look for when re-reading their work so they can fix mistakes and make their writing clearer.”

4. Re-read the essay and check for the first editing task: *I re-read my sentences.*

“Let’s start with the first box, the introduction. I’m going to read my sentence aloud.”

*My favorite animal is a dog.*

“That sounds right—I understand it. Now let me check R1.”

Continue checking the remaining sentences in the essay. Model revising any sentences that are unclear or confusing.

5. Check for the next editing task: *I wrote details.*

“Let’s read our R1 paragraph. I will read it aloud.”



*First, dogs are my favorite animal because they are very cute. Some dogs have big, bulgy eyes. Other dogs have curly tails.*

“Hmmm... that sounds okay, but I could make it clearer. I’ll change it to:”

*First, dogs are my favorite animal because they are very cute. Some dogs have big, bulgy eyes **that look like they are going to fall out of their heads**. Others have **long**, curly tails.*

“That helps the reader picture what I mean. That’s revising—making an idea better!”

Read the R2 paragraph aloud and model revising as necessary.

6. Check for the next editing task: *I used transition words.*

“Let me check my topic sentences. R1 says:

*First, dogs are my favorite animal because they are very cute.*

Yes, that’s a good transition for R1.”

Display a non-example of an R2 topic sentence. For example:

“R2 says: *To kick off, it is fun to play games with dogs.*”

“Wait—that’s not right. *To kick off* is for the first reason. I’ll fix it to say: *Second, it is fun to play games with dogs.* Now it makes sense. That’s both revising and editing!”

7. Check for the next editing task: *I used capital letters and punctuation correctly.*

“Now I’m going to look at the start of every sentence—do they all begin with a capital letter? Let me check... yes, they do! Does each sentence end with a period? Hmm... this one is missing a period! I’ll add it now. Fixing punctuation is editing!”

8. Wrap up:

Ask students:

- What does it mean to edit and revise your writing?
- How can revising your writing make it better?

Activity 1

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PLANNING: IRC PICTURE OUTLINE

Prompt: *Write to explain about your favorite animal.*

| WORD     | PICTURE |
|----------|---------|
| I _____  |         |
| R1 _____ |         |
| R2 _____ |         |
| C _____  |         |

**Activity 1**  
**Boxed Paper**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Prompt: ***Write to explain about your favorite animal.*****I****R1**

Activity 1  
Boxed Paper

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

R2

C

☐ I re-read my sentences.

☐ I wrote details.

☐ I used transition words.

☐ I used capital letters and punctuation correctly.

Activity 2

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 _____  |         |

Activity 2  
Boxed Paper

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

I \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

R1 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 2**  
**Boxed Paper**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**R2**

Handwriting practice lines for the letter R2. The box contains 10 sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle dashed, bottom) for writing practice.

**C**

Handwriting practice lines for the letter C. The box contains 10 sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle dashed, bottom) for writing practice.

☐ I re-read my sentences.☐ I used transition words.☐ I wrote details.☐ I used capital letters and punctuation correctly.



# SECTION 1

## **Sample Guided Practice Writing Activity**



**DAY 1: PLANNING USING AN OUTLINE***(15-20 minutes)**Note: All of the examples in this lesson plan are based on Activity 4.***Materials:**

- ✦ IRC Picture Outline

1. Display the Activity 4 IRC Picture Outline and read the prompt aloud:

Prompt: **Write to explain about your favorite book character.**

“Let’s read the prompt together. What are we being asked to do?”

Allow students to share their ideas and then share the purpose for writing.

“We’re going to write an essay to explain to the reader who our favorite book character is. We will give information about why we like them.”

2. Review the purpose of planning:

“Good writers create a plan for their essay before they begin to write. A plan helps you stay on topic and know what you’re going to say in each part of your essay.”

“What kind of plan will we make for this prompt?”

Allow students to raise their hands and answer.

“That’s right! We will use an IRC Picture Outline.”

3. Review the IRC Picture Outline:

Pass out the Activity 4 IRC Picture Outline.

“Let’s review the “IRC Outline” anchor chart that we previously created. Each letter stands for a paragraph of your essay. Let’s review what paragraph each letter represents.”

I = Introduction

R1 = Reason 1

R2 = Reason 2

C = Conclusion

“Before we begin to write, we will brainstorm ideas. Then we will use this plan to organize the topics we want to write about.”

4. Brainstorm book characters together:

“I’m going to think about some characters I like: Junie B. Jones, Harry Potter, Pete the Cat...”

“Now you think of your favorites! Raise your hand and share your favorite book characters.”

Record responses on the board or create an anchor chart.

5. Select a central idea:

“Now we each need to choose just one character to write an essay about. We can each choose a different character! The character you choose will become the central idea of your essay.”

“I’m choosing Junie B. Jones, so I’ll write her name next to ‘I’ and again next to ‘C’ on my plan.”

I: *Junie B. Jones*

R1:

R2:

C: *Junie B. Jones*

“Each of you will now pick one character to write about. Pick the one you know the most about. Write the character’s name next to ‘I’ and ‘C’ on your IRC Picture Outline.”

6. Guide students to brainstorm reasons to write about for R1 and R2:

“I like Junie B. because she’s funny, she gets into trouble, and she’s brave.”

“Think about your favorite character. Why do you like that character? Let’s brainstorm together.”

Give time for students to brainstorm reasons they like their book character. Allow students to share ideas and discuss them as a class.

7. Guide students to choose their two strongest reasons:

“I’m going to pick my two strongest reasons: she’s funny and she’s brave. Those are the reasons I can explain with good details. I will write them on my IRC Picture Outline.”

Write *funny* next to R1 and *brave* next to R2 on your plan.

I: *Junie B. Jones*

R1: *funny*

R2: *brave*

C: *Junie B. Jones*

“Now, you pick your two strongest reasons. Out of all the reasons you’ve thought of, which ones do you have the most to say about? Write one next to R1 and one next to R2 on your outline.”

Circulate the room and support students as they complete their IRC Picture Outlines.

“Remember, this is just a plan, not your full essay. You only need to write one or two words next to R1 and R2—not full sentences.”

8. Guide students to draw pictures on their plans:

“Now we will add pictures to our planning outline to help us think of details to include in our writing. In the ‘I’ box, I’ll draw Junie B. Jones with her glasses.”

“For R1, I’ll draw her doing something funny. I remember a book where she brought a hamster into class for show and tell; that part made me laugh so hard! For my R1 picture, I will draw her sitting at a desk in school, and then I will add two details to my picture. I will draw the hamster on her desk. I will also draw the brown paper bag she carried him in.”

“For R2, I’ll draw a picture of Junie B. Jones being brave. In one book, she stood up to a bully at recess who was making fun of her hair bow. For my R2 picture, I will draw her with one hand on her bow and one hand waving at the boy.

“Now draw a simple picture for each part of your outline.”

I: Draw your character

R1: Draw something showing your first reason

R2: Draw something showing your second reason

C: Draw your character again

“Think of two details you can add to the R1 and R2 pictures that will help you remember what to write. These pictures will help you when we start writing!”

9. Partner or share time (Optional):

Have students turn and talk to their peers or share with the class.

Ask students:

- Who did you choose?
- What are your two reasons?
- What did you draw?

10. Wrap up and set up for the next step:

Ask students:

- What does IRC stand for?
- Why do writers make a plan before they write?

“Next time, we’ll take our IRC outline and turn each part into a full paragraph!”

**DAY 2: WRITING A FOUR-PARAGRAPH ESSAY PART 1***(15-20 minutes)**Note: All of the examples in this lesson plan are based on Activity 4.***Materials:**

- ✦ Completed IRC Picture Outline
- ✦ Blank boxed paper

**Lesson:**

1. Review the boxed paper format:

Pass out the Activity 4 Boxed Paper.

“Writers, you’ve already seen this special paper—who remembers what we call it?”

Allow students to respond.

“Exactly! Why do we call it boxed paper?”

Guide students to answer: Because it has four boxes, one for each paragraph.

“Right! And how many paragraphs will we write in our essay?”

Allow students to answer: Four!

2. Display the IRC Picture Outline and boxed paper side by side:

Display the completed IRC Picture Outline about Junie B. Jones and a blank sheet of boxed paper.

“Let’s review—what is a paragraph?”

Encourage answers like: A group of sentences that go together or sentences about the same idea.

“Perfect! Each paragraph has a job. Look at your boxed paper. What does each letter stand for?”

Call on students to help label each box aloud:

I = Introduction

R1 = Reason 1

R2 = Reason 2

C = Conclusion

“That’s right! If we look at the IRC Picture Outline about Junie B. Jones, we will see that the same letters appear on our plan as on the boxed paper.

“What I wrote next to ‘I’ on my plan is what I will write about in my ‘I’ paragraph box.”

“What I wrote next to R1 on my plan is what I will write about in my R1 paragraph box.”

“What did I write about next to R2 on my plan?”

Allow students to respond.

“That’s right! *Brave*. Who knows what I will write about in the R2 box?”

Allow students to respond.

“Yes, I will write all about how Junie B. Jones is brave.”

“Next to ‘C’ on my plan, I wrote *Junie B. Jones*. In the conclusion box, I will summarize what my essay was about—my favorite character, Junie B. Jones!”

“Take out the IRC Picture Outline that you completed during our last lesson.”

“Point to your ‘I’ on your plan—what did you write or draw there?”

Allow students to respond: Their favorite book character.

“Now look at your R1 and R2 on your plan; what did you write here?”

Guide students to answer: Reasons that explain why they like their character so much.

3. Model writing the introduction sentence:

“Let’s start with the introduction paragraph. On my outline, I wrote *Junie B. Jones* next to the ‘I’ for introduction. That tells me what the central idea is. The central idea is what my whole essay is about.”

Think aloud while teaching conventions.

“Before I write, I indent—that means I move the first sentence in a paragraph over a little to show the reader that I am starting a new paragraph. I start my sentence with a capital letter and end it with a punctuation mark.”

In the ‘T’ box, write: *My favorite book character is Junie B. Jones.*

4. Guide students to write their introduction sentence:

“Look at the character you wrote next to ‘T’ on your plan. Put your finger on the ‘T’ box on your paper. Write an introduction sentence in the box. Remember to include your character’s name and words from the prompt. I will leave my example sentence displayed for you to look at if you need help.”

Circulate the room and support students as they write.

**\*Teacher note:** For struggling or below-level writers, please utilize the paragraph template modification in Section 5.

5. Model writing an R1 topic sentence that includes a transition:

“The first sentence in each body paragraph is a topic sentence. It tells the reader what the paragraph will be about. A topic sentence also uses a transition—a word like *First* or *Second*—to help the writing flow.”

“On my plan, I wrote funny for R1. I’ll start with the transition *First* and write my topic sentence. Since this is the first sentence in my R1 paragraph, I will indent, which means I will start my sentence two finger spaces from the left.”

Write: *First, Junie B. Jones is very funny.*

6. Guide students to write their R1 topic sentence:

“Now you will each write your own topic sentence for R1. Put your finger on the R1 box. You will begin this topic sentence with a transition. What transition did I use for R1?”

“That’s right, *First*. Then what did I write?”

Allow students to respond.

“Yes, I wrote my character’s name and the first reason I like her—because she is funny.”

“Now you will write your topic sentence for R1. Begin by indenting. Move your pencil over about two finger spaces from the left before starting your first word. I will leave my example sentence displayed for you to look at if you need help.”

Circulate the room and support students as they write.

7. Model adding supporting details to your R1 paragraph:

“On my plan, next to R1, I drew Junie B. Jones at school. I added two details to my picture. I drew her with a hamster on her desk. I also drew the brown bag that she used to carry the hamster to school. I can use the two details in my picture to write two detail sentences.”

*Write: One time, she brought her hamster to school for show and tell. Her class laughed when the hamster crawled out of a paper lunch bag.*

8. Guide students to write their R1 supporting details:

“Put your finger on the picture you drew next to R1. Look at the two details you added to your picture. Writers add details so that the reader can picture what is written. You are now going to write one sentence about each detail. I will walk around and help you as you write.”

Circulate around the room and support students as they write their detail sentences.

**\*Teacher note:** Beginning writers may not yet be ready to add details to their writing. It is perfectly acceptable to adjust expectations for certain students in your class. For some students, a great goal is simply to write a topic sentence for each paragraph. Later in the year, as they grow and develop as writers, you can increase expectations and begin to require one or two details per middle paragraph.

Sample beginning writer R1 paragraph:

*First, Junie B. Jones is very funny.*

Sample on or above grade-level writer R1 paragraph:

*First, Junie B. Jones is very funny. One time, she brought her hamster to school for show and tell. Her class laughed when the hamster crawled out of a paper lunch bag.*

9. Wrap up and set up for the next step.

Ask students:

- How did our planning outline help us write?

“Next time, we’ll finish our essay, and then we will go back and check our writing. We’ll fix our sentences, check for capital letters and periods, and add more interesting words!”

## DAY 3: WRITING A FOUR-PARAGRAPH ESSAY PART 2 EDITING AND REVISING WITH A CHECKLIST

(15-20 minutes)

*Note: All of the examples in this lesson plan are based on Activity 4.*

### Materials:

- ✦ Completed IRC Picture Outline
- ✦ Boxed paper

### Lesson:

1. Review the introduction and R1 paragraph written in the previous lesson:

“In our last lesson, we began writing our favorite character essay.”

Display the boxed paper you completed during the previous lesson. Read the “I” and R1 paragraphs aloud to students.

I

*My favorite book character is Junie B. Jones.*

R1

*First, Junie B. Jones is very funny. One time, she brought her hamster to school for show and tell. Her class laughed when the hamster crawled out of a paper lunch bag.*

“You also began writing your favorite character essay. Today we will finish our essays by writing our R2 and conclusion paragraphs. Then we will edit and revise them!”

2. Model writing an R2 topic sentence that includes a transition:

“On my outline, I wrote *brave* for R2. To start my R2 paragraph, I will write a topic sentence. I will use the transition *Second* since this is the second reason I love Junie B. Jones.”

“I can’t forget that since this is the first sentence in my R2 paragraph, I must indent—start my sentence two finger spaces from the left.”

Write: *Second, Junie B. Jones is my favorite character because she is brave.*

3. Guide students to write their R2 topic sentence:

“Now you will each write your own topic sentence for R2. Put your finger on the R2 box. You will begin this topic sentence with a transition. What transition did I use for R2?”



“That’s right, *Second*. Then what did I write?”

“Yes, I wrote my character’s name and the second reason I like her—because she is brave. Brave is the reason I wrote next to R2.”

“Now you will write your topic sentence for R2. Begin by indenting. Move your pencil over about two finger spaces from the left before starting your first word. I will leave my example sentence displayed for you to look at if you need help.”

Circulate the room and support students as they write.

4. Model adding supporting details to your R2 paragraph:

“On my plan, I drew Junie B. Jones at recess. She has a hand on her hair bow because a boy is making fun of it. She is using her other hand to wave at him. These details help the reader imagine why she’s brave.

Write: *In one story, a boy was making fun of Junie’s hair bow. He was really mean, but she yelled at him to stop.*

5. Guide students to write their R2 supporting details:

“Put your finger on the picture you drew next to R2. Look at the two details you added to your picture. Writers add details so that the reader can picture what is written. You are now going to write one sentence about each detail. I will walk around and help you as you write.”

Circulate around the room and support students as they write their detail sentences.

**\*Teacher note:** Beginning writers may not yet be ready to add details to their writing. It is perfectly acceptable to adjust expectations for certain students in your class. For some students, a great goal is simply to write a topic sentence for each paragraph. Later in the year, as they grow and develop as writers, you can increase expectations and begin to require one or two details per middle paragraph.

Sample beginning writer R2 paragraph:

*Second, Junie B. Jones is my favorite character because she is brave.*

Sample on or above grade level writer R2 paragraph:

*Second, Junie B. Jones is my favorite character because she is brave. In one story, a boy was making fun of Junie’s hair bow. He was really mean, but she yelled at him to stop.*

6. Model writing the conclusion paragraph:

“Let’s wrap up our essay. The conclusion restates the central idea and finishes the essay. In my introduction, I wrote, *‘My favorite book character is Junie B. Jones.’* I want to say the same thing in my conclusion but in a new way.”

Write: *Junie B. Jones is the best book character.*

7. Guide students to write their conclusion paragraph:

“Look at what you wrote next to ‘C’ on your plan. It is the central idea of your essay—what the whole thing is about! Put your finger on the ‘C’ box on your writing paper. You are going to write a conclusion sentence in this box. Remember, remind the reader who your favorite character is. But don’t copy your introduction sentence—use different words.”

Circulate the room and support students as they write.

**\*Teacher note:** For struggling or below-level writers, please utilize the paragraph template modification in Section 5.

8. Review the editing checklist at the bottom of the boxed paper:

“Writers, now that we have finished our essays, we are going to edit and revise our writing to make sure our ideas are clear and easy to understand. When we edit and revise, we also fix mistakes like missing punctuation or lowercase letters.”

**\*Teacher note:** Using the “Review-Reflect-Revise” anchor chart in Section 5 as a guide, create an anchor chart with students.

Point out the checklist at the bottom of the page and explain how it is useful.

“An editing checklist helps writers remember what to look for when re-reading their work so they can fix mistakes and make their writing clearer.”

9. Guide students to check for the first editing task: *I re-read my sentences.*

“Let’s look at the first editing task. It says, “I re-read my sentences.” This means I need to re-read my essay and see if any sentences are unclear. If I see a mistake like this, I need to add or change words to make the sentence make sense. I will begin by reading my introduction sentence.”

Display an example introduction sentence that is unclear, like the example below.

*My favorite book is Junie B. Jones.*

“That sounds pretty good, but I think I see a mistake. The prompt told me to write about my favorite book character. I didn’t use the word *character* in my introductory sentence. The reader may be confused about whether Junie B. is my favorite book or character. I can revise this sentence to make it clear!”

Revise the sentence to include the word character.

*My favorite book **character** is Junie B. Jones.*

“Now it is your turn! Re-read your essay. Add or change words if a sentence is confusing.”

Circulate the room and support students as they edit and revise their writing.

10. Guide students to check for the editing task: *I wrote details.*

“We can include supporting details in our body paragraphs, R1 and R2. Let’s read our R1 paragraph and see if we included details to help the reader picture how funny Junie B. Jones is.

*First, Junie B. Jones is very funny. One time, she brought her hamster to school for show and tell. Her class laughed when the hamster crawled out of a paper lunch bag.*

“Hmmm... that sounds okay, but I could make it even better. I’ll change it to:”

*First, Junie B. Jones is very funny. One time, she brought her **tan and white** hamster to school for show and tell. Her class laughed when the hamster **quickly** crawled out of a **brown** paper lunch bag.*

“That helps the reader picture what I mean. That’s revising—making an idea better!”

“Now it is your turn! Re-read your R1 and R2 paragraphs to check if you included details. See if you can add one or two.”

Circulate the room and support students as they edit and revise their writing.

11. Guide students to check for the editing task: *I used transition words.*

“Let me check my topic sentences. R1 says:

*First, Junie B. Jones is very funny.*

“Yes, first is a good transition word for R1.”

“What if my R1 sentence said:”

*Second, Junie B. Jones is very funny.*

“Would that be a good transition for R1?”

Allow students to respond. Guide them to see that *Second* is not an appropriate transition for the first body paragraph. Challenge them to explain why!

“Now it is your turn! Re-read your R1 and R2 topic sentences to check if you included the right transition word.”

“R1 should begin with the transition *First*. R2 should begin with the transition *Second*.”

Write the transition words on the board for students to refer to. Circulate the room and support students as they edit and revise their writing.

12. Guide students to check for the editing task: *I used capital letters and punctuation correctly.*

“Now I’m going to look at the start of every sentence—do they all start with a capital letter? Let me check. I am also going to look at the end of each sentence—do they all end with a punctuation mark? If not, I can add one!”

Display an example introduction sentence that is missing a capital letter at the beginning of the sentence and a punctuation mark at the end. Model editing and revising these errors.

Before editing and revising:

*my favorite book character is Junie B. Jones*

After editing and revising:

**M***y favorite book character is Junie B. Jones.*

“Now it is your turn! Re-read your sentences. Check that every sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a punctuation mark. If you forgot one, then add it.”

13. Wrap up:

Ask students:

- How can editing and revising your writing make it better?

Activity 4

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 _____  |         |

## Activity 4

### Boxed Paper

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

**Activity 4**  
**Boxed Paper**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**R2**

Handwriting practice lines for the letter R2. The box contains 10 sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle dashed, bottom) for writing practice.

**C**

Handwriting practice lines for the letter C. The box contains 10 sets of three horizontal lines (top, middle dashed, bottom) for writing practice.

☐ I re-read my sentences.☐ I used transition words.☐ I wrote details.☐ I used capital letters and punctuation correctly.

Activity 5

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 _____  |         |



**Activity 5**  
**Boxed Paper**

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**

Activity 5  
Boxed Paper

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

R2

C

☐ I re-read my sentences.

☐ I wrote details.

☐ I used transition words.

☐ I used capital letters and punctuation correctly.



# SECTION 1

## **Sample Independent Practice Writing Activity**

**DAY 1: PLANNING USING AN OUTLINE***(15-20 minutes)**Note: All of the examples in this lesson plan are based on Activity 8.***Materials:**

- ♦ IRC Picture Outline

**Lesson:**

1. Set your purpose for writing:

“We’ve practiced how to plan for an essay using the IRC Picture Outline. Today you’re going to show what you know by doing your own!”

Pass out the Activity 8 IRC Picture Outline to each student. Read the prompt aloud.

Prompt: ***Think about a place you love to visit. Explain why this place is so amazing.***

“Who knows what you will be writing about for this prompt?”

Allow students to respond.

“That’s right, you will be writing an essay about your favorite place. You won’t be writing about lots of places you like; you will pick just one place. You will then write about two reasons you like this place so much.”

“Before you begin to plan, think about some places YOU love to visit? Who can share a place they think is really amazing?”

Allow a few students to respond.

“Excellent! Now that you’ve all thought of a few ideas, it is time for each of you to pick the place you like to go the most. That place will be the central idea of your essay.”

2. Review the IRC Picture Outline:

Using the “IRC Outline” anchor chart, quickly review each part of the outline:

I = Introduction

R1 = Reason 1

R2 = Reason 2

C = Conclusion

“Remember, you also want to draw a picture for each part of your plan. Try to add two details to your R1 and R2 pictures. Later, you can use these picture details in your writing.”

3. Planning with the IRC Picture Outline:

Students will complete their IRC Picture Outline independently. Circulate the room and assist as necessary.

Support students who need help generating reasons.

Prompt students with questions like:

- What makes this place so special?
- What do you do there that you love?

Encourage them to:

- Draw a picture for each part of their plan (I, R1, R2, and C).
- Add details and/or labels to drawings.

4. Partner or share time (Optional):

Have students turn and talk or share with the class their favorite place to visit and the reasons why.

**DAY 2: WRITING A FOUR-PARAGRAPH ESSAY PART 1***(15-20 minutes)**Note: All of the examples in this lesson plan are based on Activity 8.***Materials:**

- Completed IRC Picture Outline
- Blank boxed paper

**Lesson:**

1. Review the IRC Picture Outline:

“During our last lesson, you made a plan using the IRC Picture Outline. Today you’re going to use that plan to begin writing your essay all by yourself!”

Re-read the prompt together and remind students of the purpose of their essay: to share their favorite place and explain why this place is amazing.

2. Review the structure of an essay:

Pass out the Activity 8 Boxed Paper.

“Today you will begin writing your essay. You should try to write at least your ‘I’ and R1 paragraphs. The next time we write, you will finish your essay.”

“Let’s review how you write the introduction. Put your finger on the ‘I’ box. In the introduction, you state the central idea of your essay. That means you must name your favorite place. Remember to write a complete sentence. Begin with a capital letter and then end with a punctuation mark.”

“Let’s review how to write the R1 and R2 paragraphs. Put your finger on the R1 box. Who remembers what these paragraphs begin with?”

Guide students to respond with a transition and topic sentence.

“Excellent, then what do you write about?”

Students should respond that they should include details about each reason. Remind them that they have two details in their pictures. They can write a sentence about each of these picture details.

### 3. Writing “I” and R1:

Students will begin writing their essays independently. Circulate the room and assist as necessary.

Prompt students with questions like:

- Did you write about the reasons on your plan?
- Did you write about the details in your pictures?
- Can you read this part to me? Does this make sense? Can you add anything to this sentence to make it even better?

Encourage them to:

- Write in complete sentences.
- Use their plan to guide them.
- Use the details in their pictures. Remind them to write about these details in their R1 and R2 paragraphs.
- Stretch out words they don’t know how to spell and write the sounds they hear, or use Word Walls or other classroom resources. Spelling doesn’t have to be perfect!
- Begin each sentence with a capital letter and end each sentence with a punctuation mark.
- Refer to anchor charts.

**\*Teacher note:** For struggling or below-level writers, please utilize the paragraph template modification in Section 5.

### 4. Partner or share time (Optional):

Invite 2–3 students to read their essays aloud to the class.

## DAY 3: WRITING A FOUR-PARAGRAPH ESSAY PART 2

### EDITING AND REVISING WITH A CHECKLIST

(15-20 minutes)

*Note: All of the examples in this lesson plan are based on Activity 8.*

#### Materials:

- Completed IRC Picture Outline
- Boxed paper

#### Lesson:

1. Guide students to review their IRC Picture Outlines and essays:

“In our last lesson, you began writing your essay about your favorite place. Re-read your essay now.”

“Remember, the purpose of this essay is to share your favorite place with the reader and explain why your favorite place is amazing.”

2. Review the structure of an essay:

“Today you will finish writing your essay. You will continue writing your body paragraphs, R1 and R2, and then write the conclusion.”

“Let’s review how to write the R1 and R2 paragraphs. These paragraphs begin with a topic sentence that includes a transition. Put your finger on the R2 box. Who can give me an example of a topic sentence for R2?”

Allow students to respond. An example of a complete topic sentence for R2 would be:

Second, my favorite place is \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.

“After you write a topic sentence, you include details about your reason. Remember to look at your pictures for ideas!”

“The last paragraph in your essay is your conclusion. Put your finger on the ‘C’ box. In the conclusion, you restate your central idea. In this essay, you will restate your favorite place. Don’t just copy your introduction! Name your place in a different way.”

3. Writing R2 and “C”:

Students will finish writing their essays independently. Circulate the room and assist as necessary.



Prompt students with questions like:

- Did you use both your reasons?
- Can you read this part to me?

Encourage them to:

- Write in complete sentences.
- Use their plan to guide them.
- Use the details in their pictures. Remind them to write about these details in their R1 and R2 paragraphs.
- Stretch out words they don't know how to spell and write the sounds they hear, or use Word Walls or other classroom resources. Spelling doesn't have to be perfect!
- Begin each sentence with a capital letter and end each sentence with a punctuation mark.

4. Review the editing checklist:

“For the last five minutes of writing time, you are going to re-read your essay and check for mistakes. Use your checklist at the bottom to help you. If you find a mistake, go ahead and fix it! Let's make our essays the best they can be.”

Activity 8

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PLANNING: IRC PICTURE OUTLINE

Prompt: *Think about a place that you love to visit. Explain why this place is so amazing.*

| WORD     | PICTURE |
|----------|---------|
| I _____  |         |
| R1 _____ |         |
| R2 _____ |         |
| C _____  |         |

Activity 8  
Boxed Paper

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Prompt: **Think about a place that you love to visit. Explain why this place is so amazing.**

I \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

R1 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Activity 8**  
**Boxed Paper**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**R2**

Handwriting practice lines for the letter R2. The box contains 10 sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid) for tracing and writing practice.

**C**

Handwriting practice lines for the letter C. The box contains 10 sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid) for tracing and writing practice.

☐ I re-read my sentences.☐ I used transition words.☐ I wrote details.☐ I used capital letters and punctuation correctly.

Activity 9

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PLANNING: IRC PICTURE OUTLINE

Prompt: *Many classrooms have class jobs. Think about the class job you like the most. Explain why this job is your favorite.*

| WORD     | PICTURE |
|----------|---------|
| I _____  |         |
| R1 _____ |         |
| R2 _____ |         |
| C _____  |         |

**Activity 9**  
**Boxed Paper**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Prompt: ***Many classrooms have class jobs. Think about the class job you like the most. Explain why this job is your favorite.***

**I****R1**

Activity 9  
Boxed Paper

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

R2

C

☐ I re-read my sentences.

☐ I wrote details.

☐ I used transition words.

☐ I used capital letters and punctuation correctly.



Table of Contents

What’s Included ..... 8-9

Instructional Approach ..... 10-11

SECTION 1: Developing Foundational Essay Writing Skills  
(Non-Text-Based Writing)

Snapshot ..... 15

Pacing Guide ..... 17-20

Exemplar ..... 21-23

Modeled/Shared Writing Activity ..... 25

    Day 1 Planning ..... 26-29

    Day 2 Writing..... 30-33

    Day 3 Editing and Revising ..... 34-35

Guided Practice Writing Activity ..... 37

    Day 1 Planning ..... 38-40

    Day 2 Writing Part 1 ..... 41-44

    Day 3 Writing Part 2 and Editing and Revising ..... 45-49

Independent Practice Writing Activity ..... 51

    Day 1 Planning ..... 52-53

    Day 2 Writing Part 1 ..... 54-55

    Day 3 Writing Part 2 and Editing and Revising ..... 56-57

Activity 1 ..... 60-62

Activity 2 ..... 63-65

Activity 3 ..... 66-68

Activity 4 ..... 69-71

Activity 5 ..... 72-74

Activity 6 ..... 75-77

Activity 7 ..... 78-80

Activity 8 ..... 81-83

Activity 9 ..... 84-86

Test..... 87-89

Assessment Resources ..... 91-96



**SECTION 2: Text-Based Informative/Expository Writing**

|                                                     |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Snapshot .....                                      | 98      |
| Pacing Guide .....                                  | 99-102  |
| Exemplar .....                                      | 103-105 |
| Modeled/Shared Writing Activity .....               | 107     |
| Day 1 Planning .....                                | 108-112 |
| Day 2 Writing.....                                  | 113-117 |
| Day 3 Editing and Revising .....                    | 118-120 |
| Guided Practice Writing Activity .....              | 121     |
| Day 1 Planning .....                                | 122-125 |
| Day 2 Writing Part 1 .....                          | 126-130 |
| Day 3 Writing Part 2 and Editing and Revising ..... | 131-135 |
| Independent Practice Writing Activity .....         | 137     |
| Day 1 Planning .....                                | 138-139 |
| Day 2 Writing Part 1 .....                          | 140-141 |
| Day 3 Writing Part 2 and Editing and Revising ..... | 142-143 |
| Activity 11 .....                                   | 146-148 |
| Activity 12 .....                                   | 149-151 |
| Activity 13 .....                                   | 152-154 |
| Activity 14 .....                                   | 155-157 |
| Activity 15 .....                                   | 158-160 |
| Activity 16 .....                                   | 161-163 |
| Activity 17 .....                                   | 164-166 |
| Activity 18 .....                                   | 167-169 |
| Activity 19 .....                                   | 170-172 |
| Test.....                                           | 173-175 |
| Assessment Resources .....                          | 177-182 |

**SECTION 3: Text-Based Opinion Writing**

|                                                     |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Snapshot .....                                      | 184     |
| Pacing Guide .....                                  | 185-188 |
| Exemplar .....                                      | 189-191 |
| Modeled/Shared Writing Activity .....               | 193     |
| Day 1 Planning .....                                | 194-198 |
| Day 2 Writing.....                                  | 199-203 |
| Day 3 Editing and Revising .....                    | 204-206 |
| Guided Practice Writing Activity .....              | 207     |
| Day 1 Planning .....                                | 208-212 |
| Day 2 Writing Part 1 .....                          | 213-217 |
| Day 3 Writing Part 2 and Editing and Revising ..... | 218-222 |
| Independent Practice Writing Activity .....         | 223     |
| Day 1 Planning .....                                | 224-225 |
| Day 2 Writing Part 1 .....                          | 226-227 |
| Day 3 Writing Part 2 and Editing and Revising ..... | 228-229 |
| Activity 21 .....                                   | 232-234 |
| Activity 22 .....                                   | 235-237 |

|                            |         |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Activity 23 .....          | 238-240 |
| Activity 24 .....          | 241-243 |
| Activity 25 .....          | 244-246 |
| Activity 26 .....          | 247-249 |
| Activity 27 .....          | 250-252 |
| Activity 28 .....          | 253-255 |
| Activity 29 .....          | 256-258 |
| Test.....                  | 259-261 |
| Assessment Resources ..... | 263-268 |

## **SECTION 4: Narrative Writing**

|                                                     |         |
|-----------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Snapshot .....                                      | 270     |
| Pacing Guide .....                                  | 271-274 |
| Exemplar .....                                      | 275-278 |
| Modeled/Shared Writing Activity .....               | 279     |
| Day 1 Planning .....                                | 280-283 |
| Day 2 Writing.....                                  | 284-286 |
| Day 3 Editing and Revising .....                    | 287-289 |
| Guided Practice Writing Activity .....              | 291     |
| Day 1 Planning .....                                | 292-295 |
| Day 2 Writing Part 1 .....                          | 296-299 |
| Day 3 Writing Part 2 and Editing and Revising ..... | 300-303 |
| Independent Practice Writing Activity .....         | 305     |
| Day 1 Planning .....                                | 306-307 |
| Day 2 Writing Part 1 .....                          | 308-309 |
| Day 3 Writing Part 2 and Editing and Revising ..... | 310-311 |
| Activity 31 .....                                   | 314-316 |
| Activity 32 .....                                   | 317-319 |
| Activity 33 .....                                   | 320-322 |
| Activity 34 .....                                   | 323-325 |
| Activity 35 .....                                   | 326-328 |
| Activity 36 .....                                   | 329-331 |
| Activity 37 .....                                   | 332-334 |
| Activity 38 .....                                   | 335-337 |
| Activity 39 .....                                   | 338-340 |
| Test.....                                           | 341-343 |
| Assessment Resources .....                          | 345-350 |

## **SECTION 5: Additional Resources and Strategies**

|                                                 |         |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Anchor Charts .....                             | 354-364 |
| Transitions List .....                          | 366-367 |
| Paragraph Templates .....                       | 370-378 |
| Blank Planning Outlines and Writing Paper ..... | 380-392 |
| Best Practices for Modeled/Shared Writing ..... | 394     |
| Best Practices for Guided Writing .....         | 395     |
| Best Practices for Independent Writing .....    | 396     |

## What's Included?

Welcome to the first-grade writing curriculum! This curriculum is designed to build confident, capable writers by introducing them immediately to the structure of essay writing. We start with non-text-based writing tasks that are personal, relevant, and developmentally appropriate for young learners. From the very beginning, students learn to construct basic, structured essays. This foundational framework helps students internalize the structure of writing while focusing on clarity, organization, and purpose.

As students progress through the curriculum, they are taught how to expand their writing by adding more support, detail, and, eventually, text evidence. They learn how to apply this structure to a variety of writing purposes, including expository/informative writing, opinion writing, and narrative writing. This gradual increase in expectations—paired with genre-specific instruction and Lexile-leveled text—supports growth and confidence, helping students become flexible, independent writers who understand both the form and the function of their writing.

### Instructional Resources

The first four sections of the curriculum each focus on one specific genre of writing. The instructional resources for each of these sections are the same.

#### Snapshot

Each writing section begins with a Snapshot, a quick and clear reference tool that includes:

- **Student writing goals** for that genre
- **Key instructional vocabulary** to use with students
- **Visuals of the graphic organizers** for planning and writing paper specific to that genre

Snapshots help teachers prepare with intention and ensure instructional consistency across classrooms.

#### Pacing Guide

Within each genre, students will progress through the Gradual Release of Responsibility Framework. At first, activities will be completed through teacher-led modeling, and then they will slowly transition toward full student independence. A detailed week-by-week pPacing Guide is provided for each section.

#### Exemplars

These represent what proficient student planning and writing can look like for each specific genre.

### Sample Writing Activities

To support instruction, each genre includes detailed, step-by-step Sample Writing Activities that model key stages of writing instruction. Each activity includes three lesson plans. The sample lesson plans are meant to help teachers envision what each stage—modeled, guided, and independent—might look like for that genre.

- **Modeled/Shared Writing Activity:** These lesson plans demonstrate how a teacher would explicitly model the planning, writing, and editing/revising process while soliciting ideas from students.
- **Guided Writing Activity:** These lesson plans show how a teacher would scaffold students' writing through the use of prompts, questioning, and structured support.
- **Independent Writing Activity:** These lesson plans provide an example of how students would apply what they've learned to independently complete a writing task.

### Writing Activities and Assessment

- **Activities:** Nine thoughtfully designed activities are included for each genre to reinforce targeted writing skills. Each activity will take three lessons to complete. Rather than introducing new procedures each day, these activities follow a consistent structure that allows students to focus on skill development and writing fluency. Practice and repetition provide students with multiple opportunities to internalize skills, build writing fluency, and gain confidence.
- **Test:** Each section ends with a test to allow teachers to accurately assess student growth and mastery.

### Assessment Resources

Each genre includes Assessment Resources to help teachers evaluate student progress, provide targeted feedback, and track growth over time. These include:

- **Genre-specific rubrics:** Aligned with the Top Score Writing rubrics used in Grades 2-12 to ensure a consistent scoring system across grade levels.
- **Informal Assessment Checklists:** Teacher-friendly tool for analyzing student writing to determine strengths and areas of weakness of both the class and individual students.
- **Conferencing Notes:** Designed to support effective student conferencing and personalized feedback.

These assessment tools support both formal evaluation and day-to-day instructional decisions, helping teachers drive student growth with clarity and consistency.