

How to Writing Unit of Study

for kindergarten & 1st grade

Lesson 1: Introduction

- One way to introduce this unit and get your students to start thinking about the steps in how to do or make something is to do a demonstration in your classroom.
- Bring in the materials to plant a flower - pot, dirt, shovel, a flower seed, watering can & water.
- First have the students guess what it is they think you will be doing with the items you brought in.
- Next, begin the steps to planting a flower, but stop after each step to draw simple pictures of what you are doing.
- Add numbers under your pictures so that students begin to see that there is a sequence to the process.
- If your students are ready, you can also write words or short sentences under your pictures as well.
- Our "What is How To Writing" anchor chart can be also be used to share with your class.

Lesson 2: Sequencing Cards

- To reinforce the idea of sequencing being an important part of how-to writing, use the sequence cards we created showing the steps to planting a flower as a review of lesson one.
- You can place them on your board with magnets out of order and have students help you to put them back in order or simply hand them out to four students and let your class help to move the students into the right positions.
- We have also created two other sets of sequencing cards you can use as well (building a snowman & brushing teeth).
- There are also smaller cards provided for each of these that you can use for center work or review if you wish.

Lesson 3: More Practice with Sequencing

- We have provided two graphic organizers that already contain pictures to show the steps in a process (how to make a cake & how to make an ice cream cone).
- Use these as a mini-lesson for the whole class asking for input from students to tell what is happening in the pictures as you write words or short sentences on the lines.
- You could also use these in a small group guided writing setting or even at a writing center for first graders.
- There are three new worksheets in this section. Children will cut and paste the pictures. When they finish, encourage them to practice telling their story to a friend.

Lesson 4: Choosing a Topic

- Your students might have great ideas for what they want to write about in their how-to piece, but others may need you to help them to narrow down topics.
- This lesson may be something you can skip depending upon your class or might also be something you use with individuals or small groups who might have difficulty choosing a topic.
- We have created a chart with list of age-appropriate topics for students to choose from.
- Share this with the class to spark ideas, also discussing other topics that might be good to write about. (Be sure to guide your class towards something that doesn't involve too many steps at this point.)
- Next, pass the chart out to those who need it and have them color the picture in the box for the topic they think they would like to write about.

Lesson 5: Planning the Writing

- For planning their how-to pieces, we have created five different graphic organizers for you to choose from. Some only have boxes to

draw pictures since that may be what some kindergarten writers are ready for. There are others that provide space for students to draw pictures and write words.

- We suggest that you model both types of these organizers with the planting a flower "how to" first and then let students work on their own with the topic they chose.
- As always, you will want to conference with your students as they write. One way to make things more manageable is to group students by the same writing topics as they begin their work.
- You can meet with each group to give guidance instead of trying to sit with individual students.

Lesson 6: Writing a "How To"

- For some students the planner may be all that they are capable of right now and that will be their final writing piece. For those who will be taking their writing from a draft (the organizing planners) to something that looks more like real writing, you might decide now is the time to introduce the anchor chart to review what should be included in their pieces.
- We have provided some various pages that look more like "real" writing in their presentation.

Lesson 7: Labeling Your Pictures

- As this unit might be the beginning of students' exposure to writing informational text, one idea you might want to stop and do is to show them how to label their pictures.
- We have provided one picture that goes along with the planting a flower demonstration and one that students can practice with at a center. Both labeling activities have a large black & white photo along with a word wall for them to use to help them label the pictures.
- Students can color the picture once they are done labeling and even trace over their labels with a black marker.

Lesson 8: Revision

- Though students at this age might just be ready for some beginning planning and writing, you might find that some are ready for a bit of revision. In the case of these students, we have provided a very beginning checklist so that they can begin to revise their writing by checking it against a list of criteria.
- You will most likely need to have a one-on-one conference for students to use this checklist and discuss whether each step was included in their writing. (You might also choose to forego the actual checklist and focus on one aspect of the writing that the student might be able to fix.)
- The key in this is to just know your writers well so that you be sure of what they are ready to accomplish.

Lesson 9: How-To Writing Celebration

- We always believe that a writing celebration is the perfect way to show off student writing, build confidence and end a writing unit.
- We suggest that you invite special adults or older students to come into the classroom.
- Pass out the Super Author certificates in front of everyone. Then students can partner up with visitors to share their writing.
- To make it extra special, finish the celebration with a special ice cream treat. Purchase or ask for donations of ice cream cones, ice cream, scoops, napkins and toppings (sprinkles, chocolate chips, etc.).
- Put up the poster "How to Make an Ice Cream Cone" and have the students and guests follow the steps on the poster to make an ice cream treat.