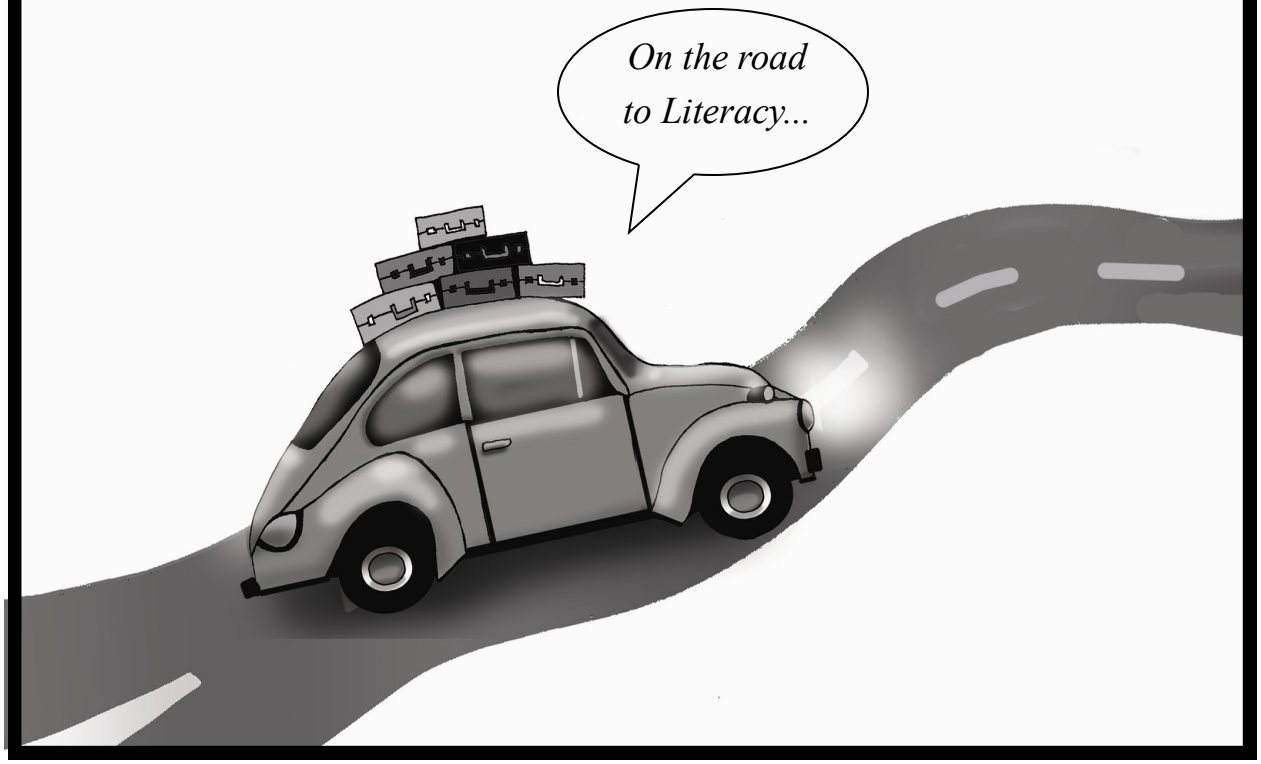
Composition

The student will develop and apply the writing process to communicate in writing for a variety of purposes and audiences.



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Practice All Steps of the Writing Process

One stop on the road to literacy…

LEVEL 4 WC1

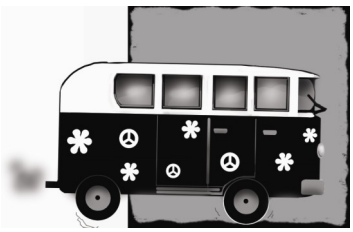
The Outcome

The student will practice all steps of the writing process.

Why Go There?

Explain to your student that good writing usually involves following a process that allows for brainstorming, creating a first draft, revising, and editing before it reaches the final step of publishing.

How To Get There



Materials: pages 146-150

Directions:

Introduce your student to the writing process by inviting her to write a story about something that has happened to her. Follow the steps as outlined on pages 146-150.

When making your lesson plans, make time each session to work on the composition.

Here are a few points to keep in mind:

- Remember, the goal for your student is to express herself, not to complete a grammatically perfect composition. Don't work on spelling and punctuation until the editing stage, which is near the end of the process.
- Not all compositions have to be finished. If your student loses interest in a piece before it's finished, put it aside and encourage her to start another.
- Write a story of your own, so you can go through the process together.
- Have fun with it!

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STEP 1

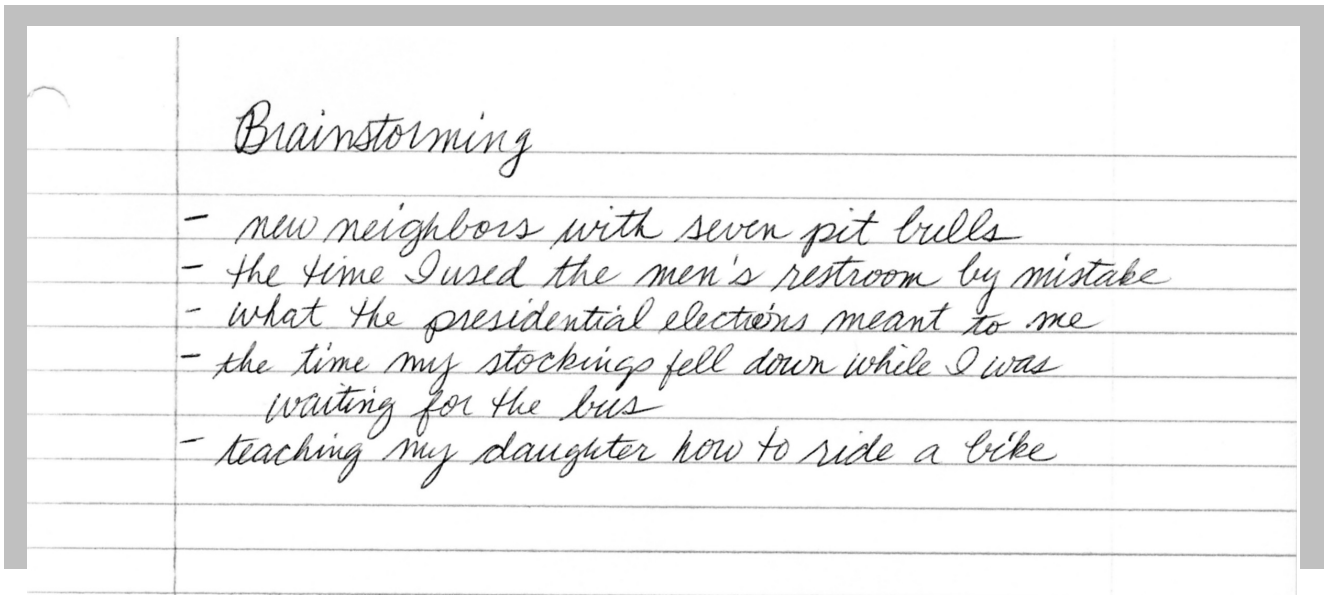
Brainstorming and Pre-Writing

Tell your student that brainstorming is an important first step in getting ready to write. Explain that this is the time to narrow down the topic: think about it, talk about it, and decide if it's the one to write about at this time.

To get started writing, invite your student to jot down ideas for a short story.

If she is having difficulty generating ideas, give her suggestions about topics or experiences you've heard her passionate about. Invite her to make a list and talk about each. Then have her choose one to write about.

Sample



Brainstorming

- new neighbors with seven pit bulls
- the time I used the men's restroom by mistake
- what the presidential elections meant to me
- the time my stockings fell down while I was waiting for the bus
- teaching my daughter how to ride a bike

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STEP 2

Drafting

Now your student has gotten an idea for a story, it's time to write.

Invite your student to write on whatever paper suits her fancy—lined or unlined, white or pastel, full-sheet or half.

Encourage her to skip lines.

Let her know that spelling and punctuation are not important at this point. Assure her that corrections come later, but at this stage what is important is to get thoughts down on paper.

Sample

I should have known there would be trouble when our neighbors moved into the house down the street. When I saw the seven pit bulls. They keept all there blinds closed and don't talk to anybody. But the teen age boy. There are two adult pits - one male and one female - and there litter of five pups. One of the neighborhood boys told me that the male dog ~~ts~~ was friendly until you tried to walk away. Then it was scary.

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STEP 3

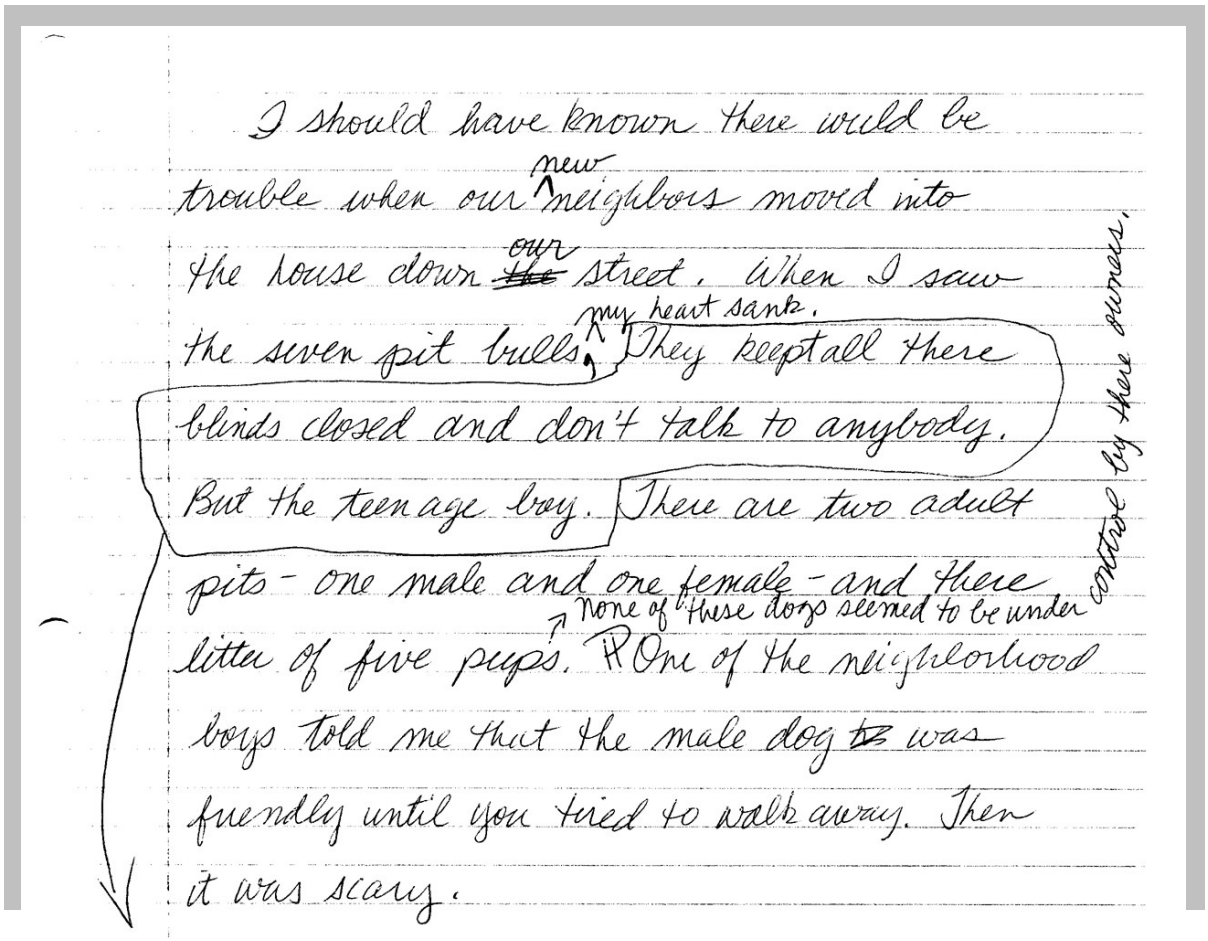
Revising

Now that the story is on paper, it's time for content revision. *(It's still not time to check spelling and punctuation!)*

Direct your student to read her composition to herself and change the content where needed. Then invite her to read it aloud to you. Is there a clear beginning, middle, and end? Do events happen in a logical order? Is everything clearly stated? Does it need more interesting language? Have her read and reread, aloud or to herself, until it feels finished to her.

Let your student know that neatness isn't important at this point. Have her use an arrow to show where a sentence is to be moved to and encourage her to cross out words and insert new ones as shown below.

Sample


I should have known there would be trouble when our new neighbors moved into the house down ~~the~~ our street. When I saw the seven pit bulls, my heart sank. They kept all there blinds closed and don't talk to anybody. But the teenage boy. There are two adult pits - one male and one female - and there litter of five pups. None of these dogs seemed to be under control by there owners. One of the neighborhood boys told me that the male dog ~~to~~ was friendly until you tried to walk away. Then it was scary.

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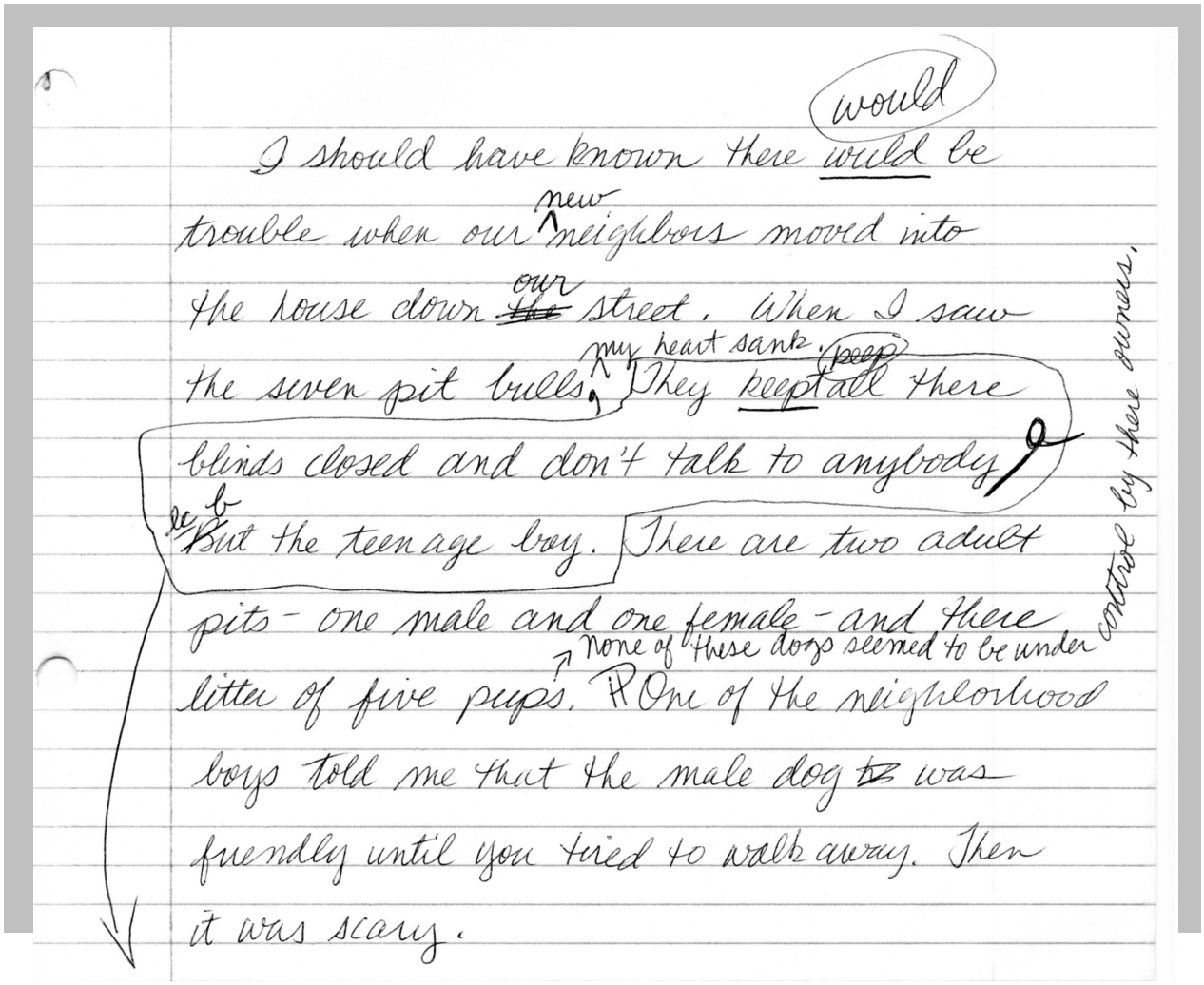
STEP 4

Editing

Now that the content of the story is how your student wants it, it's time to correct spelling and punctuation. It's also time to decide just how much correcting to do.

Invite your student to underline the words she thinks may be misspelled and the punctuation she is unsure of. Then correct only those. Make a note of consistent errors that you can teach in a lesson at another time.

Sample


I should have known there would be trouble when our new neighbors moved into the house down ~~the~~ our street. When I saw the seven pit bulls, my heart sank. They keep all there blinds closed and don't talk to anybody. But the teenage boy. There are two adult pits - one male and one female - and there litter of five pups. None of these dogs seemed to be under control by there owners. One of the neighborhood boys told me that the male dog ~~is~~ was friendly until you tried to walk away. Then it was scary.

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STEP 5

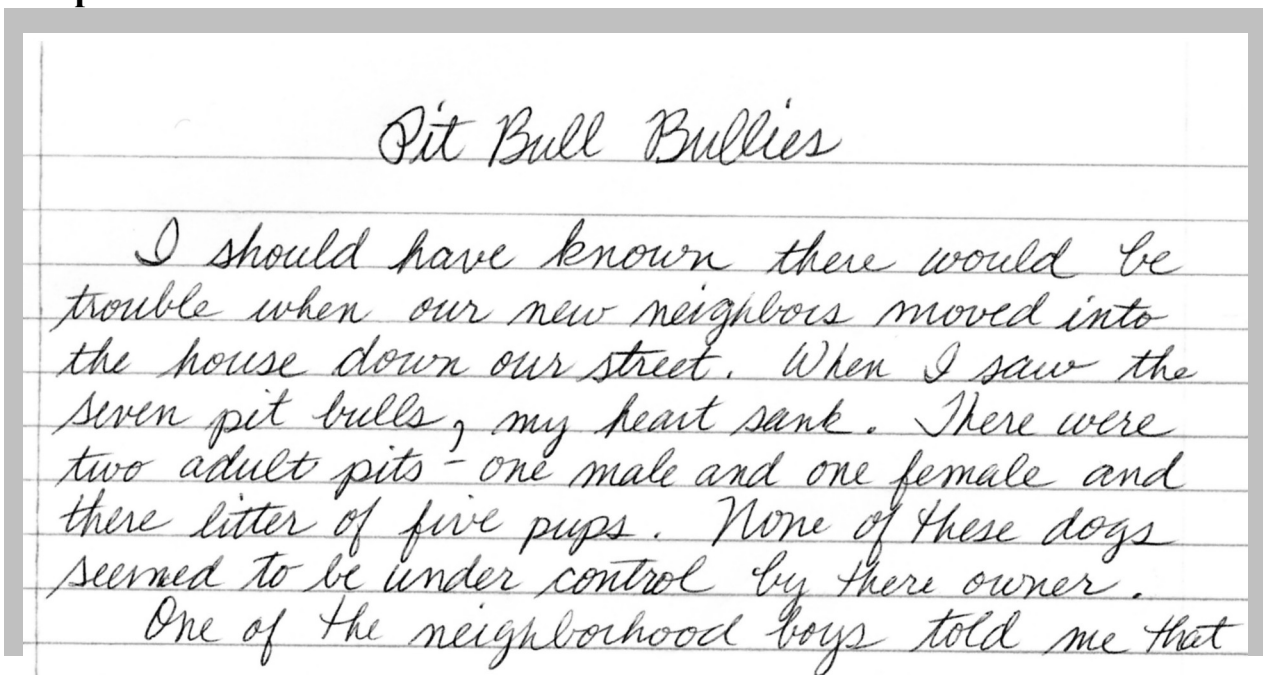
Publishing

After all that work, it's time for your student to share her story!

Have your student rewrite her story neatly or type it up on the computer and print it out.

Encourage her to share it with friends and family.

Sample



Pit Bull Bullies

I should have known there would be trouble when our new neighbors moved into the house down our street. When I saw the seven pit bulls, my heart sank. There were two adult pits - one male and one female and there litter of five pups. None of these dogs seemed to be under control by there owner.

One of the neighborhood boys told me that

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Write Procedural Paragraphs

One stop on the road to literacy…

LEVEL 4
WC2

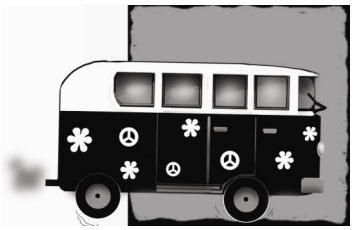
The Outcome

The student will write correctly constructed paragraphs describing a process, such as how to make, build, or fix something.

Why Go There?

Explain to your student that a good writer knows how to explain the steps to complete a task.

How To Get There



Materials: page 152

Directions:

Describe procedural writing as a set of instructions on how to complete a task.

Show your student the sample paragraph on page 152.

Point out

- how the first paragraph tells for whom the directions are written and why or when they should be used
- how the following paragraphs give the directions in a logical order with commands.
- how the words such as *first, then, next, before,* and *after* help sequence the procedure

Invite your student to write a set of instructions on how to complete a task. The task needs to be building, fixing, or operating something your student knows well.

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Procedural Paragraph

How to Check a Book Out

The library is a great place to visit once you know how to check out books. Being able to check out books allows you to read books at home and not just when you're in the library. Also, you'll be able to get several books on different topics, so you have a variety of reading material. If you're uncertain as to how to check out books, the steps are outlined below.

First, find a book. If you have a book in mind, locate it. If you have trouble finding it, ask a librarian to help you. If you don't know what you want to read, look around the library to see what you find.

Then, when you have a book, go to the check out desk. Have your library card in hand.

At this point, you have two options. One, you can check yourself out. To do this, first approach the hand held scanner and scan the number on the back of your card. Next, locate the scanner number on your book and scan it. Then tap the end button on the computer screen and take your receipt. Before you put your receipt away, check the due date of the books.

Your second option is to wait in line and have a librarian check you out. Present your card to her. First she'll scan the back of your card and then scan your book. She'll tell you when your books are due and offer you a receipt.

The final step is to take your book home! Just a few easy steps and you can travel the many worlds found in books.

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Write a Personal Opinion Letter to an Editor

One stop on the road to literacy…

LEVEL 4 WC3

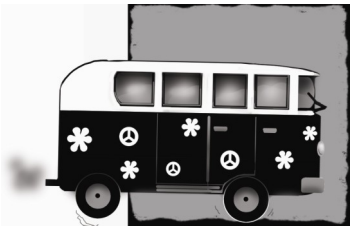
The Outcome

The student will compose a three-paragraphed, personal opinion letter to a newspaper editor.

Why Go There?

Explain to your student that a good writer knows how to use different formats to make his point. When writing a personal opinion letter to an editor, a good writer knows the guidelines that will increase the chances of his letter being read.

How To Get There



Materials: page 154

Directions:

Invite your student to write a personal opinion letter to the editor of a newspaper on a topic recently in the news.

Have your student:

Decide why the letter is being written.

Research any facts needed to strengthen all arguments.

Make a list of the important points to make.

Neatly write the letter in the style of a personal business letter. Refer to the sample letter on page 154.

Start off by stating his opinion. Give reasons or examples, such as *"I feel this was because…"*

Follow up with paragraphs that support his argument.

Keep his tone professional.

Close with a thank you to the editor.

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Ms. Jamie Elder
655 Booth Street
Lakelands, Pennsylvania 08265
May 19, 2011
Re: School Closings

Miss Lucy Garretson
The Town Courier
199 Treehaven Crt.
Lakelands, Pennsylvania 08265

Dear Miss Garretson,

I am writing in response to the recent newspaper article titled "Closing Local School Saves Thousands". While your newspaper does a good job in reporting some of the fiscal facts of this case, they do not report the whole story and I feel like this is not fair. First of all, closing this school impacts 257 students that currently attend school there. These students will have to change schools. This will be a huge transition for these youngsters. In addition, this group of children will be divided into three separate groups and merged into three different schools. Many of these children will be separated from school friends they known for several years.

Another missing piece of the story is some of the costs of closing this school. The children attending this school will need to travel farther to their new school. Some children that walked to this school will now need to be bussed to the new school. This requires fuel, additional bus drivers, and buses to transport. This cost was not discussed in your article. While I do think your story made some good points, especially when it reported about how expensive is it to run the school with only some classrooms being used, I do feel that you did not completely explore this story. Please consider doing more research on this complex issue and write another story with more information. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Ms. Jamie Elder

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Write a Summary

One stop on the road to literacy…

LEVEL 4
WC4

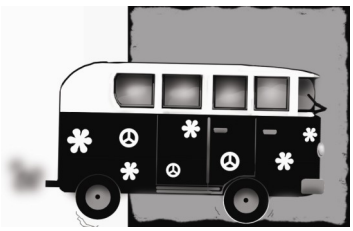
The Outcome

The student will write a summary of an article or story.

Why Go There?

Explain to your student that, when writing a summary, good writers follow a process to insure readers will understand the points being made.

How To Get There



Encourage your student to write a summary of a story or article that he has read recently. Have your student follow the process described below.*

- **Look** for what the writer is saying by reading the article carefully. Make no notes.
- **After reading,** write one sentence that contains the point of the article.
- **Skim** the article and underline the author's main point. Does it agree with what you've written? If not, correct your sentence.
- **Reread** the article, underlining phrases that contain the main points. You may need to go through the article a second time.
- **Write** your composition using the writing process explained on pages 145-50. Express only the author's points—not your personal opinion.

*Adapted from "Process for Writing a Summary." 1997. January 23, 2009.<<leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/summary.html>>

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Write an Essay

One stop on the road to literacy…

LEVEL 4
WC5

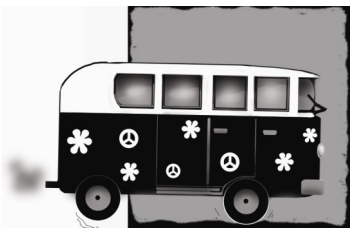
The Outcome

With assistance, the student will compose an essay that includes an introductory paragraph, supporting body paragraphs, and a conclusion.

Why Go There?

Explain to your student that a good writer knows how to write a good essay.

How To Get There



Materials: page 155

Directions:

Have your student write an essay using the five paragraph format* outlined below. See the sample on page 155.

Paragraph One—Clearly introduce the reader to the topic. It contains three subtopics that will be developed in the essay. The paragraph ends with a transitional word, phrase, or sentence.

Paragraphs Two through Four—Each of these paragraphs is similarly constructed. Each begins or ends with a transitional word, phrase, or sentence. Each contains one of the subtopics mentioned in the introductory paragraph which is supported by at least three supporting sentences.

Paragraph Five—This paragraph restates the topic and the three supporting subtopics.

*"The Five Paragraph Essay." January 23, 2009. <<www.geocities.com/sho/Atrium/1437/index.html>>

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Banning Telephone Use

In the past ten years, cell phone usage has sky-rocketed with more people than not owning one. Now there are an estimated 80 million people who use wireless phones, and 85 percent of these people use their phones while driving. Although cell-phone usage while driving may seem like a good idea, statistics show that it's a safety hazard. Over 25 percent of traffic accidents are contributed to drivers being distracted while talking on a cell-phone. People are four to five times more likely to have an accident while using a cell phone than those people who do not. I believe that people shouldn't use cell phones while driving because their usage causes mental, visual, and auditory distractions which are potentially fatal for not only the cell-phone user, but also for pedestrians and other drivers.

Cell-phone use while driving is mentally distracting because it inhibits a person from being fully aware of his surroundings. While speaking on the phone, the driver must focus on what the other person is saying and focus less on the road. Research shows that humans are not mentally capable of safely multi-tasking in this manner. Furthermore, a person could be distracted by important news. Dangerous as they are, mental diversions are just one of the distractions that can occur when a person drives and talks on a cell phone at the same time.

While talking on the cell phone, a driver can also be visually distracted. This occurs when a cell phone rings and the driver looks for the phone while continuing to drive. Also, in order to text or dial, a driver must take his eyes off the road. Even if only for a few short seconds, the driver loses sight of the road and traffic patterns and can drift off the road or into another lane.

Additionally, listening on the phone can be a dangerous distraction for a driver. Drivers talking on a cell phone are most likely only listening to the person on the other end. This distraction can keep the driver from hearing a car coming up beside him. It can also cause a driver to miss the sound of horns and sirens.

In conclusion, I believe that cell phone use while driving should be banned. Mental, visual, and auditory distractions that occur while driving and talking on a cell phone at the same time lead to dangerous road conditions for not only the driver, but pedestrians and other motorists.

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Use Word Processing Tools on the Computer

One stop on the road to literacy…

LEVEL 4
WC6

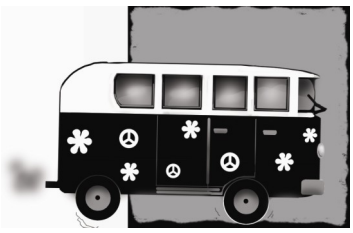
The Outcome

The student will use word processing tools when composing on the computer.

Why Go There?

Explain to your student that when a good writer composes on the computer, she uses computer tools to aid the writing process. Also, explain to your student that she may want to use a computer to create a resume or cover letter, or fill out a job application.

How To Get There



Teach the following basic computer skills:

Using Microsoft Word (2000, 2003, 2007)

- Creating a document
- Saving a document
- Using functions such as cut/paste
- Using the spelling and grammar check features
- Inserting a header and footer
- Using other Microsoft programs such as Power Point and Excel

Using the Internet:

- Surfing the Internet
- Using a search engine
- Setting up an e-mail account
- Sending and receiving e-mail
- E-mail etiquette

Some simple tutorials on these subjects are offered by GCF Learn Free and are found at www.gclearnfree.org.

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