

Important Concepts . . .

Preview Review



Language Arts

Grade 8

W3 - Lesson 3: Essay Writing

Important Concepts of Grade 8 Language Arts

W1 - Lesson 1	Literary Techniques
W1 - Lesson 2	Poetic Elements
W1 - Lesson 3	Literary Techniques and Advertising
W1 - Lesson 4	Media and Technology
W1 - Quiz	
W2 - Lesson 1	Short Story Elements I
W2 - Lesson 2	Short Story Elements II
W2 - Lesson 3	Narrative Paragraphs
W2 - Lesson 4	Descriptive and Expository Paragraphs
W2 - Quiz	
W3 - Lesson 1	Explanatory Writing
W3 - Lesson 2	Persuasive Writing
W3 - Lesson 3	Essay Writing
W3 - Lesson 4	Persuasive Essay Writing
W3 - Quiz	

Materials Required

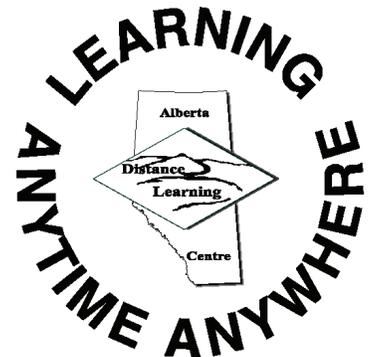
Textbooks:

1. *ResourceLines 7/8*
2. *SightLines 8*

Language Arts Grade 8
Version 5
Preview/Review W3 - Lesson 3

Publisher: Alberta Distance Learning Centre
Author and In-house Teacher: Cheryl Frose

Project Coordinator: Dennis McCarthy
Preview/Review Publishing Coordinating Team: Nina Johnson,
Laura Renkema, and Donna Silgard



The Alberta Distance Learning Centre has an Internet site that you may find useful. The address is as follows: <http://www.adlc.ca>

The use of the Internet is optional. Exploring the electronic information superhighway can be educational and entertaining. However, be aware that these computer networks are not censored. Students may unintentionally or purposely find articles on the Internet that may be offensive or inappropriate. As well, the sources of information are not always cited and the content may not be accurate. Therefore, students may wish to confirm facts with a second source.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Copyright © 2007, by Alberta Distance Learning Centre, 4601-63 Avenue, Barrhead, Alberta, Canada, T7N 1P4. Additional copies may be obtained from the Alberta Distance Learning Centre.

No part of this courseware may be reproduced or transmitted in any form, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying (unless otherwise indicated), recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of Alberta Distance Learning Centre.

Every effort has been made both to provide proper acknowledgement of the original source and to comply with copyright law. If cases are identified where this effort has been unsuccessful, please notify Alberta Distance Learning Centre so that appropriate corrective action can be taken.

IT IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED TO COPY ANY PART OF THESE MATERIALS UNDER THE TERMS OF A LICENCE FROM A COLLECTIVE OR A LICENSING BODY.

Preview/Review Concepts for Grade Eight Language Arts



***W3 - Lesson 3:
Essay Writing***

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, you should

- understand the structure of an essay
- understand the relationship between a paragraph and an essay

GLOSSARY

body - the paragraphs that make up the main part of the essay; also called **supporting paragraphs**

concluding paragraph - the paragraph that summarizes the essay

introductory paragraph - the paragraph that introduces the essay

outline - a summary showing the organization of a piece of writing

personal essay - an essay written about a personal feeling or opinion

persuasive essay - a personal essay that attempts to convince the reader of a particular opinion or idea

W3 - Lesson 3: Essay Writing

Colon

Colons are used in five main ways:

1. to introduce a question or a related statement after an independent clause
 - Sally had only one thing on her mind: would she pass the test.
2. to begin a list of items at the end of a sentence (Its purpose is to direct the reader's attention.)
 - Please bring the following to our year end party: juice, hotdogs, buns, and fresh fruit.
3. after the greeting in a business letter
 - Dear Madam:
4. in numerals used to express time (Use the colon to separate the hours and minutes.)
 - 8:20 a.m.
5. after each speaker's name when writing conversation in drama form
 - Mrs. Smith: Where are you going?
 - Mr. Smith: You don't need to know.

Activity 1

Rewrite each of the following sentences and place a colon in the correct place.

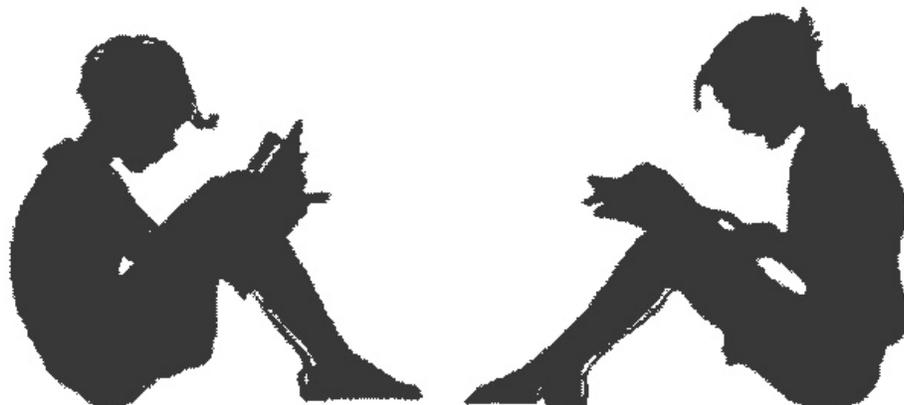
1. The bus was scheduled to leave at 300, but it didn't leave until 430.

2. We laughed when we discovered the problem the cord wasn't plugged in.

3. For your math test on Monday, you will need to study five topics fractions, decimals, volume, surface area and perimeter.

4. Dear Sir

5. Sign in front of the coffee shop help wanted.



Personal Essay

Writing a **personal essay** allows you to write about yourself, to share your personal experience, ideas, and opinions. The tone of the personal essay is less formal than some other forms of writing. You may use the vocabulary and skills that are most effective for you.

Concepts and Examples

This example of a **personal essay** was written by a Grade 8 student. While you read it, see if you can label or give a describing word for each of the parts and/or paragraphs.

(Title) **A Frightening Experience**

(1) Cows are known as calm, docile creatures that eat grass and moo contentedly. It is possible to get them angered as my friend and I realized one day.

(2) It all happened years ago when my friend and I were young and foolish. We were bored as the summer wore on, so we decided to go and bother the cows in the pasture. Now, the cows weren't bothering a soul as they munched on the pasture grass. We decided to try to disturb their tranquillity, so we began pitching rocks at them.

(3) One of the rocks managed to hit a mean-looking bull right square between the eyes. He glared, snorted, dug his heels into the ground, then charged us. The other cows stopped staring at us and followed the bull.

(4) My friend yelled, "Run!" We turned and dashed toward the fence, like pigs to the trough. It seemed so far away as we raced towards it. Upon reaching the fence, we scrambled over the barbed wire, tearing our clothes and scratching our hands and legs.

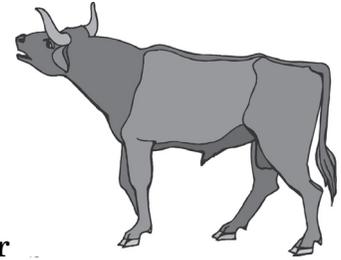
(5) That day we learned a valuable lesson. Don't bother someone who isn't bothering you.

Analysis

(Title) **A Frightening Experience** The title comes first in this structure. It helps to keep the writer focused on the topic, and it explains to the reader what is in the essay.

(1) **Introductory Paragraph** This part arouses the reader's interest by making the reader want to read on, in this case to find out why the cows were angered.

2)/(3)/(4) **Body of the essay.** This area of the personal essay includes the story. The writer is supporting the title, and he or she is regaling the reader with your story.



(5) **Conclusion.** This last bit is small in this example, isn't it? One tiny sentence. However, never underestimate the power of one sentence. This one is packed with the thorn of experience; the writer shares the wisdom gained, letting the reader in on the joke. This makes readers feel that they, too, have experienced this episode.

Activity 2

Write one sentence that could entice or hook a reader. This is your introduction, your topic sentence.

Persuasion

Not all personal essays must be revealing or confessional. Some of the most effective essays people write are designed towards persuading their audience about a particular opinion or idea.

Have you ever tried to change someone's mind or get him or her to do a particular thing? When you try to persuade someone, you must try to prove that what you are saying is true or has some merit.

To do this you must have facts to support what you are saying. ("Because everyone else can!" really isn't a very strong or smart argument.) Your facts must be reasonable and convincing as well.

Be aware of your reader or the person you want to convince. You would not use the same tactics on your little brother or sister that you use on your best friend or on your teacher.

Activity 3

Comparing two things or people helps us understand more about each. Read the following comparative passages. **Circle** the similarities and **underline** the differences or contrasts.

- a. My two favourite holidays, Canada Day and Thanksgiving, seem very different at first glance. Canada Day falls in the heat of summer while Thanksgiving comes just as the weather is beginning to get cold. Canada Day is celebrated only in Canada while Thanksgiving is also celebrated elsewhere. However, both holidays mean my parents don't have to work. In addition, my aunts, uncles, and cousins gather at our house for each holiday. Finally, special foods make both days a treat.

- b. All kinds of games are fun for me, but in a contest between board games and video games, board games win, hands down. Of course, you need skill and strategy to win either type of game. However, to win video games, you also have to have good hand-eye coordination. Board games depend more on the sharpness of your mind. Personally, I would much rather move carved chess or checkers pieces on a board, than wield a joystick and watch animated figures on a screen.

- c. My best friend and I have a lot in common. We both like talking on the phone, going to the movies, and buying clothes. However, no one would mistake us for identical twins. She is thin while I am more plump. She is shy and I am outgoing. Finally, she loves to watch television while I love to read.

Activity 4

In one sentence, write one issue or topic that you feel very strongly about. You may have to brainstorm to do this.

When you prepare to write a persuasive essay, you must first gather all the facts or details that you will use in your argument. Plan an outline of supporting details that you will use to support your argument.

When you have organized your material, you are ready to write your persuasive essay.

Remember the basic elements of an essay:

- A **title** helps to introduce and define the topic.
- Paragraph #1 is an **introductory paragraph** that defines and limits the topic.
- Paragraphs #2, #3, and #4 are **supporting paragraphs** that are related to the introductory paragraph.
- Paragraph #5 is a **concluding paragraph** to wrap up the discussion.

Activity 5

Personal Essay Outline

In the next lesson, you will write a five-paragraph personal essay on a topic of your choosing. You may choose the topic you identified in Activity 4 of this lesson, use one of the topics listed below, or select another topic of your own.

Possible topics:

- too much homework
- school uniforms
- advantages of technology
- my favourite animal

Ask yourself:

- What, exactly, is my opinion about this subject?
- Why is this important? How would this affect me and other people?
- What pieces of evidence can I give to support my position?
- What will others say against my idea?
- How can I defend my idea?
- Which of my pieces of evidence is the strongest? (Remember, you learned that you should put your strongest argument last in persuasive writing.)
- Which argument is weakest? Is there something else I could use instead?

Learning Log

Take time to reflect on and record your learning process for this lesson.

1. What do I know now about preparing to write a personal essay?

2. What questions about personal essays do I still have?

3. How could I improve my essay planning?



