

SPECTRUM[®]

Writing

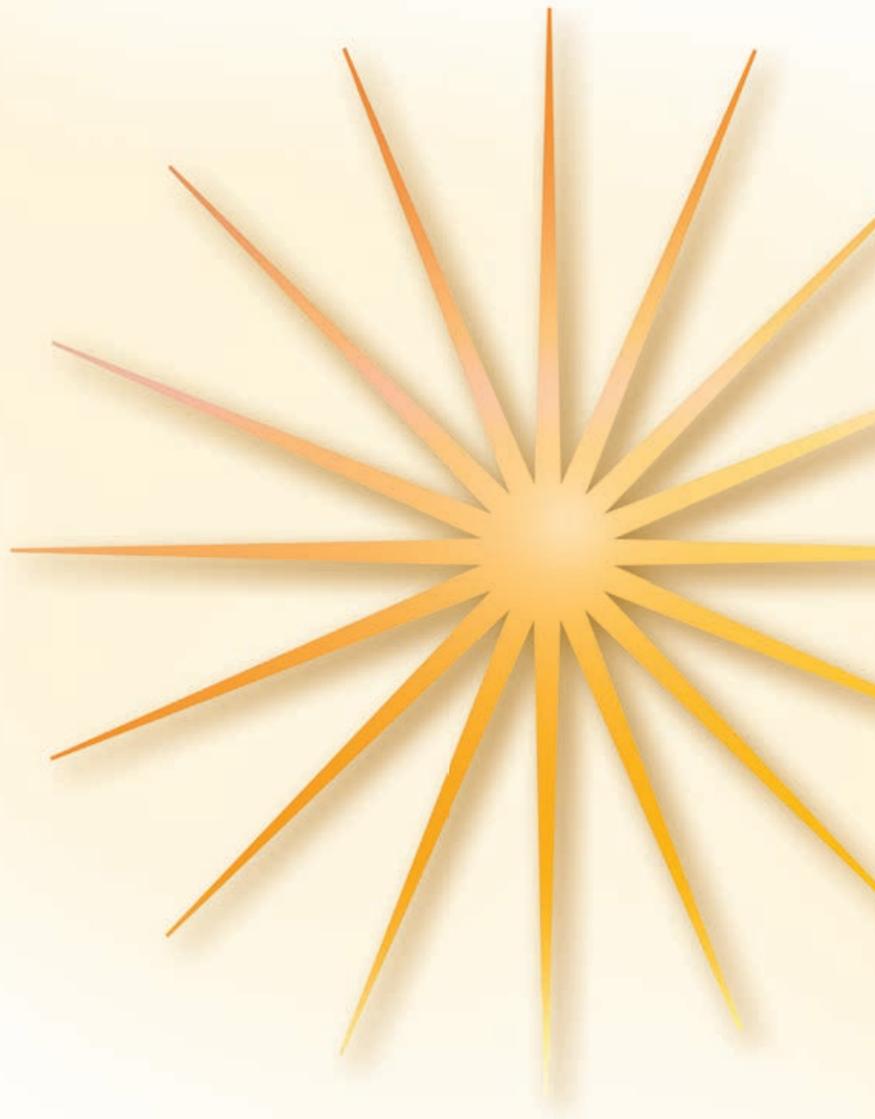
GRADE

4



Focused Practice for Writing Mastery

- Writing a story
- Writing to inform
- Writing an opinion
- Using the writing process
- Writer's Handbook



Lesson 1 Why Do We Write?

In general, there are four purposes for writing:

- to entertain
- to explain
- to persuade
- to inform

Writers use many forms of writing, such as friendly letters, reports, news articles, book reviews, and poems. Here are the purposes for writing, along with the forms of writing that writers usually use.

Purpose for Writing	Forms of Writing
To entertain	stories, poems, plays, personal accounts or narratives, humorous articles, friendly letters
To persuade	letters to the editor, business letters
To explain	how-to instructions
To inform	reports, news articles, book reviews, personal accounts, friendly or business letters

Writers may combine purposes in one form of writing. For example, a writer may both entertain and inform in a news article about hedgehogs.

Here are some writing assignments that Mrs. May's students have completed this year. Write what you think the purpose of each assignment was—to entertain, persuade, explain, or inform.

Assignment

a letter to the editor about school uniforms

a story with talking animals

an article about a class project

instructions for using the class computers

Purpose for Writing

Lesson 2 For Whom Do We Write?

When a band performs a concert, an audience listens. The band director chooses music that the audience will enjoy. For example, the band would not play very serious music for an audience full of children or “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” for a group of grandparents.



When a writer writes, an audience reads. A writer needs to think just like a band director does. Ask these questions.

What will my audience enjoy?
 What are they interested in?
 What will make them want to keep on reading (or listening)?
 What will they understand?

Listed below are some possible audiences. What might they be interested in reading about? Choose topics from the box and match them up with a possible audience. Some topics might match with more than one audience.

Writing Topics	
<p style="text-align: center;">your last soccer game</p> <p style="text-align: center;">a report on school lunches</p> <p style="text-align: center;">instructions for a computer game</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">a book report</p> <p style="text-align: center;">an account of a field trip</p>

friend or classmate: _____

parent: _____

grandparent: _____

teacher: _____

principal: _____

Lesson 3 What Is the Writing Process?

Good writing starts with a plan. Good writers take certain steps, which make up the writing process. Following these five steps leads to better writing.

Step 1: Prewrite

Think of this as the time to discover and plan. Writers might choose a topic, or they might list everything they know about a topic already chosen. They might write down what they need to learn about a topic. Writers might make lists that contain sentences, words, or even pictures. Some writers might make a chart or table and begin to put their ideas in order.

Step 2: Draft

Writers put their ideas on paper. This first draft should contain sentences and paragraphs. Good writers keep their prewriting ideas nearby. There will be mistakes in this draft, and that's okay.

Step 3: Revise

Writers change or fix their first draft. They move ideas around, put them in a different order, or add information. They make sure they used clear words that really show what they mean. This is also the time to take out ideas that are not on topic.

Step 4: Proofread

Writers usually write a neat, new copy. Then, they look again to make sure everything is correct. They look especially for capital letters, end marks, and words that are not spelled correctly.

Step 5: Publish

Finally, writers make a final copy that has no mistakes. They are now ready to share their writing. There are many ways for writers to publish their work.

Lesson 3 What Is the Writing Process?

What does the writing process look like? Harlan used the writing process to write a paragraph about recess. His writing steps, below, are out of order. Label each step with a number and the name of the step.

Step _____ : _____

The students at Weston Elementary need more recess. Lunch recess is only 20 mintes long. My dad read an artical about recess. Some people think that if we had another recess in the afternoon, we would pay better attention in class.

Step _____ : _____

We need more recess. Lunch recess is only 20 mintes long. Some people think that if we had another recess in the afternoon, we would pay better attention in class. My dad read an artical about it.

The students at Weston Elementary

Step _____ : _____

We need more recess. Lunch recess is only 20 mintes long. Some people think that if we had another recess in the afternoon, we would pay better attention in class. My dad read an artical about it.

Step _____ : _____

lunch recess should be longer
need afternoon recess
pay attention in class

Step _____ : _____

The students at Weston Elementary need more recess. Lunch recess is only 20 minutes long. My dad read an article about recess. Some people think that if we had another recess in the afternoon, we would pay better attention in class.

Lesson 4 Use Vivid Verbs and Precise Nouns

Here is what you already know about verbs and nouns.

- A **verb** is an action word. *Jump, read, and turn* are examples of verbs.
- A **noun** names a person, place, thing, or idea. For example, *sister, barn, fireplace, and honesty* are nouns.

When writing, choose the best words to say what you want to say. Verbs and nouns are the key. If you choose them well, they will take you far.

A descriptive verb creates a picture in the reader's mind. It doesn't just tell what the action is, it really describes the action.

Here is an example.

He walked.

Look how changing the verb can change the sentence.

He shuffled. He marched.



Both of those sentences really tell you something. If someone shuffles, maybe he is sick, or maybe he doesn't want to go wherever he is going. If someone marches, maybe he is a soldier or just very determined.

Write about how someone moves, but do not use the words *walk* or *run*. Try to create different moods or different feelings with the verbs you choose.

Lesson 4 Use Vivid Verbs and Precise Nouns

A precise noun gives readers a better description than a general noun. For example, *car* is a general noun. But *sports car* would create a more precise, or specific, picture in readers' minds.

Here are some other general nouns. Can you think of more precise nouns to use instead of these?

people

shoe

tree

flower

building

Now, look at each sentence below. Each one contains a general noun. Rewrite the sentence and replace the general noun with a more precise noun. The first one is done for you.

The people ran around the track.

The joggers ran around the track.

The flower in the bouquet smelled sweet.

I peeked through the dirty window of the building.

Write a sentence about people talking, but do not use any of these words: *people*, *talk*, *say*, or *said*. Use a descriptive verb and a precise noun.

On Your Own

Look at sentences in one of your favorite books. Does the author use vivid verbs and precise nouns? Write a list of the vivid verbs you find.

Lesson 5 Find Your Active Voice

Usually, the subject of a sentence does the action. That is easy to see in this sentence:

Ellie *planted* a tree.

The verb in the sentence is an **active verb** because the subject does the action.

What about this sentence?

A tree *was planted*.



It has a subject and a predicate, so it is a sentence. *Tree* is the subject of the sentence. Does the tree do the action? No, the tree does not do the action, the tree “receives” the action. The verb, *was planted*, is a **passive verb** because the subject does not do the action.

Passive verbs are always two-part verbs. They always have a helping verb, *am, is, was, be, or been*, plus a main verb. That does not mean that whenever you see one of those helping verbs that the verb is passive.

Passive verb: Cher *was called* to the office.

Active verb: Cher *was calling* for help.

How can you tell the difference? Ask yourself these two questions:

What is the subject?

Is the subject doing the action?

If the answer to the second question is “yes,” then you have an active verb. If the answer is “no,” you have a passive verb.

Why does it matter? Sometimes, you have to use passive verbs when you write. Maybe you do not know who did the action, so you have to say, “The goal *was scored*.” Most of the time, however, your writing will be more clear and easier to read if you use active verbs.

Lesson 5 Find Your Active Voice

Compare these two paragraphs. One uses mostly active verbs and the other uses mostly passive verbs. Identify which is which.

A big job has been tackled by the fourth-graders at Braxton School. The old nature trail in the woods behind the school has been cleared out. Weeds were pulled by some students. Young trees were cut by others. The students are to be thanked for their hard work.

The fourth-graders at Braxton School tackled a big job. They cleared out the old nature trail in the woods behind the school. Some students pulled weeds. Others cut young trees. We thank the students for their hard work.

Underline the subject of each sentence below. Put an **X** next to each sentence that contains a passive verb.

_____ Jae was glad to pull weeds.

_____ Dandelions have very long roots.

_____ The pile of weeds was carted away.

_____ The trail was opened the next day.

Practice writing sentences with active verbs. First, look at the sentences above that have passive verbs. Rewrite one of those sentences with an active verb. If you need to, add a subject, such as *I* or *we*, to the sentence.

Now, write a new sentence about a tree. Use an active verb.

Lesson 1 Use Your Senses



If you were in this scene, you would learn about everything around you by using all five of your senses: sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. When you look at the picture, you have to imagine the sounds, smells, textures, and tastes.

When you write a description, you should also use all five of your senses, by using words that help readers use their senses.

Look again at the picture. What do you see? List some things here. Remember to help your reader see things, too. Do you see a tent, or a huge, striped tent?

What I see: _____

Now, use your other senses and write what you might hear, smell, touch, and taste in this scene.

What I hear: _____

What I smell: _____

What I touch: _____

What I taste: _____

