

***TECHNOLOGY IN THE EARLY ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM  
FINAL PROJECT***

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**Title:** Beginning Essay Writing

**Subjects:** Language Arts

**Grade Levels:** 7-8

**Description:** The objective of this lesson plan is to teach students in grades 7 and 8 beginning essay writing skills using the computer, internet, library, and word processor. The students will write an essay and be evaluated by a rubric.

**Faith Integration:** I am currently working with students that are not Seventh-day Adventists. Therefore, when I have an opportunity I will share my faith with these young people I am tutoring. If this were a Seventh-day Adventist classroom I would share with the students the wonder of the written word and that the Lord had essays and writing put in place to communicate with His people. They, too, have an opportunity to make a difference through their written words.

**Curriculum**

**Benchmarks:** Basic operations and concepts: Students demonstrate a sound understanding of the nature and operation of technology systems. Students are proficient in the use of technology. (NETS 1)

Technology productivity tools: Students use technology tools to enhance learning, increase productivity and promote creativity. Students use productivity tools to collaborate in constructing technology-enhanced models, prepare publications and produce other creative works. (NETS 3)

Technology research tools: Students use technology to locate, evaluate and collect information from a variety of sources. Students use technology tools to process data and report results. Students evaluate and select new information resources and technological innovations based on the appropriateness for specific tasks. (NETS 5)

**Materials:** Computer and printer  
Internet access  
Word processor program such as Word or WordPerfect  
Paper  
Pencil  
Resources: Students will find and look at the following different types; books, magazines, encyclopedia, atlas, almanac, newspaper and internet web sites.  
Worksheets: Resource evaluation and Web Diagram

**Websites:** <http://www.mystworld.com/youngwriter>  
<http://web2.airmail.net/def>  
<http://hssd.k12.sd.us/hsms/mswrite.htm>

**Teacher Preparation:**

- ? Demonstrate use/function of a web browser
- ? Review various online search engines and search procedures
- ? Familiarize themselves with the different sections of the lesson; topic selection, resources, web diagram, etc. so they can explain the different points of the essay lesson
- ? Worksheet on resource evaluation and web diagrams zeroxed
- ? Demonstrate how to save and retrieve an essay to a folder on the computer

**Student Preparation:**

- ? Students will have minimum keyboarding skills of 15 words per minute
- ? Students will understand use of web browser and search engines
- ? Students will know where and how to find different resources on their topic through books, magazines, encyclopedias, newspapers, etc.
- ? Students will participate with the various discussions and sharing their homework about different parts of an essay

***Activities/***

**Procedures**

To peak student interest in an anticipatory way: The students will begin by exploring the following internet publishing venues for young people:

<http://www.mystworld.com/youngwriter>  
<http://web2.airmail.net/def>  
<http://hssd.k12.sd.us/hsms/mswrite.htm>

***Topic Selection:***

Begin by brainstorming topics. Have the students write down as many topics as they can that interest them. The main idea is to keep their ideas flowing and not stop to evaluate them. To do this have the students turn on their computer, but have the monitor turned off. Have them type in as many ideas for topics as they can over a 5 to 10 minute period. Another way to do this would be to have them type on the computer, with the monitor on, but using a font that is unrecognizable like wingdings, etc. After they have brainstormed for a while have them now look at what they have written either by turning the computer monitor on or high lighting what they wrote in wingdings, etc. and changing the font to something recognizable. Have them evaluate the purpose of the topics they wrote. They should ask themselves whether their paper would:  
Persuade people concerning something,  
Educate people about something,  
Explain how to do something.  
Have them also ask themselves if their topic is too broad. Now have them choose one topic to write about.

***Resources:***

Explain and brainstorm with the students what type of resources they can use to help them write their essay.

***Books***

***Magazines***

***Encyclopedia***

***Atlas***

***Almanac***

***Newspaper***

***Internet Web Site***

Have the students over the next week find as many resources as they can and read about the topic that they have selected have them fill out the worksheet concerning resources.

Explain how to evaluate resources. Ask the following questions while reviewing information:

Does the author have any expertise on this subject?

How current is the information?

Does the author have a particular view or bias?

Does an institution or company with a good reputation publish this article?

Is the web site I am looking at reliable?

They can evaluate websites by looking at the extensions for the web address. Example:

.edu = universities or educational sites

.org = organizations

.com, .net, .biz, .tv, .cc, .ws, .bz are all for commercial or personal web sites.

## **Assign worksheet on resource evaluation**

### ***Web diagram:***

Review and discuss their assigned worksheet.

Now introduce subtopics by brainstorming about their main topic and what they have learned from their reading. They can do this by creating web diagrams.

They should begin their diagram with a circle in the middle of their page. Inside the circle they should write their topic. From the circle they should draw three or four lines out into the rest of the page. At the end of these lines draw circles. In each of these circles have the students write ideas they learned from reading different resources about their topic. From these circles draw more lines and connect them with circles. Inside these last circles have the students write the facts that they will use to support these ideas they learned from their reading. Have them fill out the worksheet on Web diagram.

### **Assign Web Diagram Worksheet**

### ***Thesis statement:***

Begin to explain what a thesis is: The thesis sentence provides the subject and direction of an essay. Give several examples: Animal crackers are the perfect fast-food snack, because of their size, convenient packaging and entertainment value. The point of this essay is that animal crackers are a good snack. In the body of this essay the readers will expect to read about animal cracker size, packaging and entertainment value. Another example would be: When considering a pet for a child, I recommend a hamster, dog, or cat. The reader understands that the point of what they are reading is what type of pets to buy for a child. The following paragraphs of this essay will talk about a hamster, dog and cat. It will be easy for the reader to follow the arguments the writer will use to prove that these are the best choices for pets. Assign the students to give 3 examples of thesis statements from things they read . . . example: from the paper, internet article, magazine, book. Then they are to

write a draft of a thesis statement for the topic they have previously chosen.

***Body of essay:***

Review the student's thesis statements and go over their examples with them. Now that they have written their thesis statement they can go over the body of their essay. You can explain that each main idea that they put in their circle diagram becomes one of the body paragraphs. The structure will look something like this:

A. (first idea from thesis statement)

1. (supporting detail)
2. (supporting detail)
3. (supporting detail)
4. (concluding/transition statement)

B. (second idea from thesis statement)

1. (supporting detail)
2. (supporting detail)
3. (supporting detail)
4. (concluding/transition statement)

C. (third idea from thesis statement)

1. (supporting detail)
2. (supporting detail)
3. (supporting detail)
4. (concluding/transition statement)

Have the students complete a similar outline for the topic they have already chosen using parts of the web diagram they have already done.

***Introduction:***

Review with the students the outline for the body of their essay. Talk about how an introductory paragraph gives an overview of what their essay is about and how it must convince readers that their topic is worthy of some consideration. Introductions need to capture the readers' attention, establish the purpose of the essay and guide the readers to the main topic or thesis statement. Introductions need an attention grabber called a hook. A hook could be

some piece of startling information about your topic. The students could use an anecdote – story that illustrates your point. It is important to make the anecdote relevant to your topic. A dialogue can also be used to grab the attention of the reader. Or a few sentences of summary information can bring your reader to your thesis statement. Follow the “hook” with a bridge that leads your reader from the hook to your thesis statement. Here is an example of an introduction: Climbing a mountain can be fun, but can also be dangerous. Many people have had difficulty while climbing mountains. I have experienced hypothermia, sunstroke and sore muscles while climbing mountains. The attention grabber is, “climbing mountains can be dangerous.” The bridge would be, “Many people have had difficulty while climbing mountains.” And of course the thesis statement is, “I have experienced hypothermia, sun stroke and sore muscles while climbing mountains. Have the students write an introduction to the topics they have chosen for their essays.

***Conclusion:***

Review the introductory paragraphs the students have written. Explain to them that a conclusion brings closure to their essay. They need to be sure not to restate their points in summary form, but not exactly as they’ve written it in the body of their paragraph. They can conclude their essay with an anecdote if they choose. A conclusion gives the reader a vision of the future/call to action or can leave the readers thinking. Now have the students write a conclusion to their essays.

***Revision:***

Review the conclusions that the students have written. Have the students review the structure of their paper. It should follow this type of outline:

- I. Introduction
  - A. (hook)
  - B. (bridge)
  - C. (thesis statement)
  
- II. Body
  - A. (first idea from thesis statement)
    1. (supporting detail)
    2. (supporting detail)
    3. (supporting detail)
    4. (concluding statement)
  - B. (second idea from thesis statement)
    1. (supporting detail)
    2. (supporting detail)

3. (supporting detail)
4. (concluding statement)

C. (third idea from thesis statement)

1. (supporting detail)
2. (supporting detail)
3. (supporting detail)
4. (concluding statement)

### III. Conclusion

Have the students read and reread their essays. This is a time to check for errors. Does their paper make sense? Set their paper aside for a few hours or a day or two and then reread their essay. Do their transition sentences flow smoothly? Words like therefore and however sometimes help with transitions. Have they run a spell check or grammar check? After they have gone over their essay a few times have them write the final draft and post it to <http://web2.airmail.net/def>

**Beginning Essay Writing Rubric**  
**6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade Basic Essay Rubric**

<b>QUALITY</b>				
<b>CRITERIA</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Web diagram	Organized, neat and includes both topics and subtopics that all relate 100% to a specific theme.	Web diagram that includes both topics and subtopics, but relates 75% or less of the time to the main theme.	Web diagram that includes both topics and subtopics, but relates 50% or less of the time to the main theme.	Disorganized web diagram, only main topics are included – no subtopics.
Introduction, Hook and Thesis Statement	Organized introduction that includes a clear “hook” and very clear thesis statement.	Organized introduction that includes a “hook” and partially relates to the thesis statement.	Disorganized introduction that does not relate to the thesis and does not include a “hook”.	Unclear introduction that does not include a hook and has a broad thesis statement.
Defining Your Purpose, Body of Essay	Paragraphs are organized, follow the thesis, and purpose, as well as including clear supporting evidence.	Paragraphs are organized, follow the thesis 75% of the time and they include supporting evidence.	Paragraphs are organized, follow the thesis only 25% of the time and do not include enough supporting evidence.	Paragraphs are disorganized, don’t follow the thesis, and do not fit the purpose of the essay.
Conclusion	Conclusion is clear, summarizes the body and fully relates to the thesis.	Conclusion is clear, summarizes the body, but does not fully relate to the thesis.	Conclusion is unclear, summarizes the body, but does not fully relate to the thesis.	Conclusion is unclear and does not summarize the body of the essay and does not relate to the thesis.
Conventions	There are no spelling, grammar or punctuation errors.	There are less than 5 spelling, grammar or punctuation errors.	There are less than 10 spelling, grammar or punctuation errors	The paper has more than 10 spelling, grammar or punctuation errors.
Resources	The paper has more than 5 resources and includes a structured bibliography.	The paper has less than 4 resources, includes a disorganized bibliography.	The paper has less than 2 resources and no bibliography.	The paper does not include a bibliography or resource list.

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

***Resource Evaluation***

What is your main topic?

List the written resources you examined. Be sure to include the title of the publication, publisher, date of publication and be sure to list the page numbers.

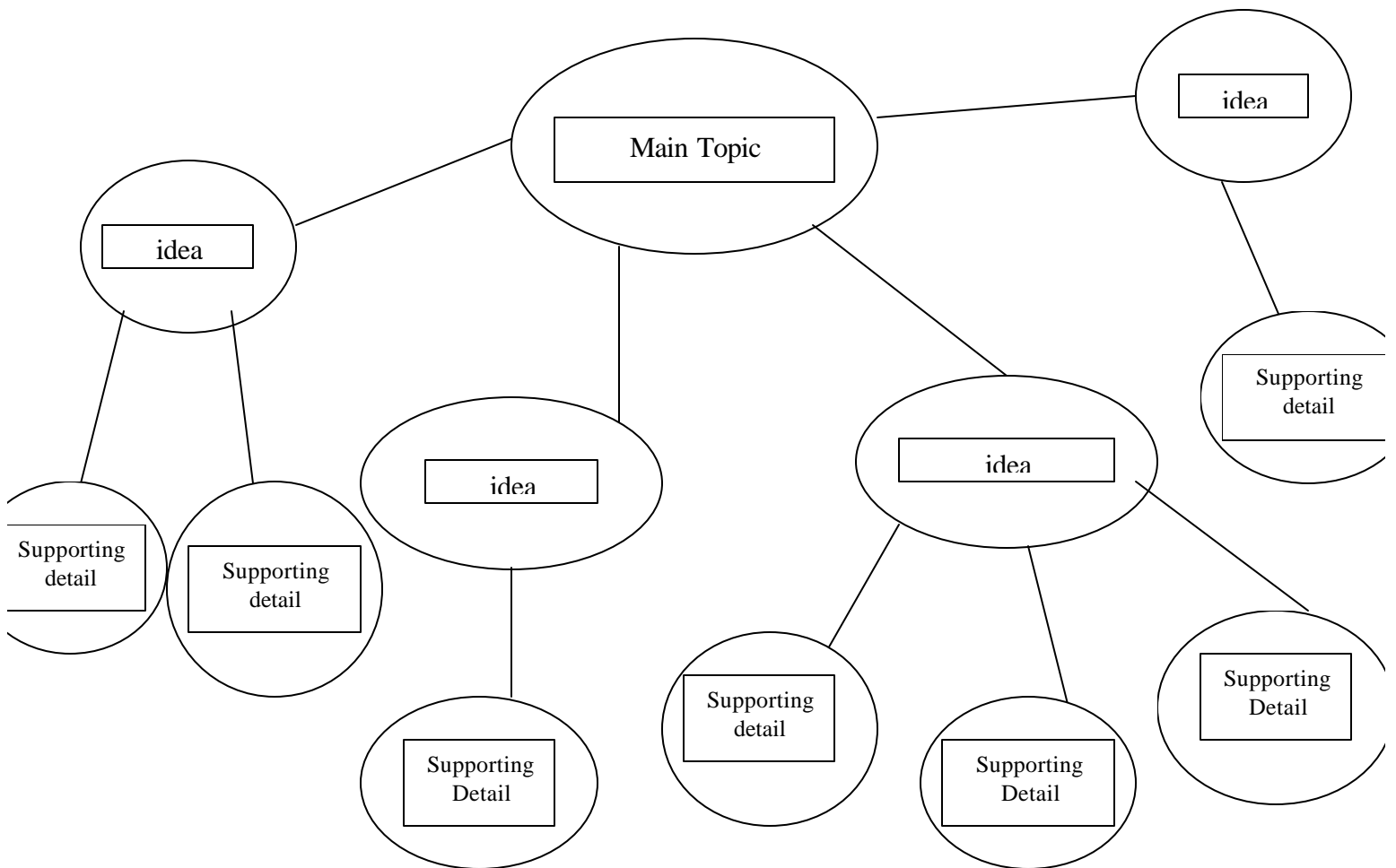
What facts did you get from these resources? You may use the back of this sheet to write the facts.

List the internet sources you read: <http://>  
How could you verify or prove that these internet facts are true?

What facts did you learn from the internet?

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

**Web Diagram**



Draw a similar diagram on the back of this sheet using the topic you have chosen, the ideas you have learned from your resources and the supporting details/facts for those ideas. Have fun drawing!

## ***Follow-up***

**Activity** Students will write another essay without as much teacher assistance and post on the web site: <http://web2airmail.net/def>