
Three Literacy Lesson Plans

Reading and writing are necessary skills for student success. Here are three literacy lesson plans that emphasize the connection between reading and writing. Give one of the following lessons a spin and support students in improving their writing skills by teaching them to write with the perspective of the reader in mind.

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#1

Transitions Connect Ideas

Grade Levels: 6-12

Content Area: ELA

Lesson Duration: ~2 days

Grade Level Standards:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5 - Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4 - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4 - Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Lesson Objective(s): (What should students be able to do at the conclusion of your lesson?)

Classify transitions according to purpose and function

Select appropriate transitions to show connections among ideas

Apply transitions to areas of a text to enhance comprehension, fluency, and connections of ideas

Prior Assessment: (Why are you doing this lesson?)

Using Revision Assistant reports or another formative assessment, measure student readiness and/or performance levels in the domain of Organization. These levels will determine students' entry points into this activity and corresponding areas of growth.

Purpose: (How will this benefit students?)

Students will expand their knowledge and use of transitions as a literary tool to enhance comprehension, fluency, and connections of ideas in written and oral communication.

Materials/Resources: (What do you need to teach the lesson?)

Revision Assistant exemplars scoring highly in Organization (in preferred genre, across grade-levels, with transitions removed)

List of transitions (teacher provided)

Assessment: (What specific assessment will you use to determine student success of the lesson? This should correlate directly to the objective.)

Develop the materials and insert link here?

Formative assessment of each student's correct selection and placement of appropriate transitions throughout example essays

Instructional Sequence (Include time allotted for each section)	Time
<p>Anticipatory Set: (How will you activate background knowledge?)</p> <p>Ask students to give examples of ways that writers show the progression of time in literature or informational text. Capture student responses on the board (ex. "They'll say 'the next day' to signal changes in time" or 'Writers use words like 'first, next, then' to show sequence").</p> <p>Ask students what effects those words have on the readers (ex. "They help you follow the story" or "They let you know when time has changed").</p>	5 Mins
<p>Introduction:</p> <p>Transition words help readers follow ideas and see how they relate to one another. (Display: Transitions enhance the writer's fluency and connections between sentences and ideas, and the reader's ability to follow and comprehend them.)</p> <p>There are several transition words and phrases to show the relationships between your ideas, and using them will help you communicate to your audience more effectively. First, let's review some common transitions and their functions.</p>	2 Mins

Body of Lesson	Time
<p>Part 1:</p> <p>Provide list of transitions. Ask students to classify them into categories by similar function (showing time, cause and effect, comparison, contrast, etc.).</p> <p>Circulate the room to ensure students are demonstrating an awareness of each transition's function in their grouping patterns.</p> <p>Review lists and category titles. Students will make adjustments to personal copies as necessary (they will need this resource for the next part of the lesson).</p>	15-20 Mins
<p>Part 2:</p> <p>Now that you have a better understanding of common transitional phrases and their functions, let's see how they work within an essay to make it stronger.</p> <p>Provide students with Revision Assistant exemplars (with the transitions removed).</p> <p>Read the essay aloud (to your partner). Then work together to identify sentences where adding a transition would help the reader follow its ideas or see the connection between them. Consider the function of the transition and be sure to select one that fits the purpose of the sentence.</p> <p>Encourage students to read aloud the completed essay to their partner to ensure fluency and clarity of ideas.</p>	15-20 Mins

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<p>Check for Understanding:</p> <p>Circulate the room to ensure students are identifying sentences in need of transitions and selecting appropriate examples to complete the ideas.</p> <p>Have students meet in groups who shared their materials and compare their choices in transitions and placement. Students may adjust choices as desired.</p> <p>Review each example essay, having students read aloud the essay and filling in the chosen transitions (on display). Discuss the function of transitions, alternative choices, and how the presence of these phrases enhanced the reader's understanding.</p> <p>Share the original exemplar essay and compare. Which choices were more effective or preferred and why?</p>	15-20 Mins
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<p>Closure: (A brief summary of the lesson objective)</p> <p>Identify use cases for transitions (Where, why, and for what purposes were transitions used?)</p> <p>Introducing and explaining evidence, connecting a sequence of events or related ideas, transitioning from one idea or paragraph to the next</p> <p>Showing time, cause and effect, concession, etc.</p> <p>Discuss how transitions affect the reader's comprehension (How did the finished essay differ from the original? How was it different to read? How was it different to listen to/follow along?)</p>
<p>Next Steps: (How will students practice skills? What will you do next?)</p> <p>Students will review their own essays and (using the transitions list as a resource) add transitions to improve the comprehension, fluency, and connections of ideas.</p> <p>Have students score exemplar essays in Organization against the rubric criteria. Then have them score their own revised essays and compare.</p>

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Accommodations/Differentiation: (How did you modify the lesson to meet the needs of all students?)

Adjust the lists of transitions

- Below grade-level: Reduce scope of list and/or advanced language examples; provide on grade-level category titles with definitions as needed
- On grade-level: Provide more advanced category titles with definitions; group transition examples in pairs or trios
- Above grade-level: Remove all group titles and ask students to determine categories; separate all transitions individually

Adjust Exemplar essays

- Provide below-, on-, and above-grade-level exemplar essays to appropriate students
- Below grade-level: Present essay as a Cloze worksheet with visual blanks for missing transitions
- On grade-level: Present essay with transitions (and spacing) removed, so that the edited sentences begin with the first word capitalized, even if grammatically incorrect.
- Above grade-level: Present essay with sentences missing transitions revised into grammatically correct sentences (to make their detection more challenging)

#2

“Talking to” Your Source Texts

Grade Levels: 6-12

Content Area: ELA

Lesson Duration: 40-55 Mins

Grade Level Standards: (Standards have been generalized for use across grades 6-12.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.1 - Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2 - Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3 - Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4 - Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5 - Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Lesson Objective(s): (What should students be able to do at the conclusion of your lesson?)

After viewing a modelled version of annotation and then participating in a “we do” section, the students will be able to annotate, or “talk to,” a source text from a Revision Assistant prompt.

Prior Assessment: (Why are you doing this lesson?)

Students need to be able to effectively read and respond to Revision Assistant prompts. In order to encourage in-depth reading and writing, students can be taught to use an annotation, or “talking to” the text,” process. This process will inherently increase the detail with which students read, and will also allow them to better understand the source texts, and thus choose better evidence to include in their Revision Assistant essays.

Purpose: (How will this benefit students?)

Effective annotation of source texts will allow students to better understand what they are reading, while also better preparing them to effectively respond to Revision Assistant writing prompts.

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<p>Materials/Resources: (What do you need to teach the lesson?)</p> <p>Source-based Revision Assistant prompt pdf Projection or large-scale display capability Printed copies of source text for students Pens, pencils, highlighters</p>
<p>Assessment: (What specific assessment will you use to determine student success of the lesson? This should correlate directly to the objective.)</p> <p>Formative assessment during “we do” portion of demonstration Formative assessment of student annotation during student practice portion of class period</p>

Instructional Sequence (Include time allotted for each section)	Time
<p>Anticipatory Set: (How will you activate background knowledge?)</p> <p>Ask students to describe the ways that they typically interact with the source texts in Revision Assistant prompts.</p> <p>Record students’ descriptions of their interactions on the board. Responses may include things like: “I just read it,” “I try to summarize at the end,” or “I highlight things that I think might be important.”</p> <p>Discuss whether these approaches have been effective in helping students fully understand these source texts, and therefore</p>	5-10 Mins
<p>Introduction:</p> <p>Introduce students to a new strategy that, with some practice, should prove to be much more effective in helping them understand the texts that they are reading and also more effectively respond to the writing prompt--Annotating, or “Talking to” the Text.</p> <p>Explain that this strategy for textual interaction will allow students to directly “mark” their papers to display the thinking that their brains are doing during the reading process.</p> <p>Explain to students that today you will be using the following system to “talk to” or interact with the source text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circle words that are unfamiliar or confusing. • Underline or highlight information that seems to be important or meaningful. • Square sections that you have a question about. Write your question near the square. • Make notes near text that you can clarify, or reword, for yourself. <p>Summarize the section at the end of each paragraph. (Note to teachers: This system is flexible. Feel free to create a set of defined rules that works best for you and your students.)</p>	5-10 Mins

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<p>Body of Lesson:</p> <p>Model the process of “talking to” the text for your students. Have them follow along, while also marking their own papers to begin learning to process.</p> <p>Project a portion of a source text for the whole class to view. Provide students with a printed version of this same portion of text. (It is suggested to begin with only a portion of the text, rather than the whole text, so as not to overwhelm students in the beginning.)</p> <p>Beginning with the title of the source text, model your thinking aloud for your students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this title make you think of? • Do you have any questions about this title? • Can you make any connections with this title? • What predictions can you make from this title? <p>On your projected source text, write down your thoughts using the system defined above so students can see what your annotations look like.</p> <p>Move next to any images that are included in the portion of the source text that you are using.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this image make you think of? • Do you have any questions about this image? • Can you make any connections with this image? • What predictions can you make from this image? • How can you connect this image to the title? <p>On your projected source text, write down your thoughts using the system defined above so students can see what your annotations look like.</p> <p>Now begin to read the actual text of the source. Proceed sentence-by-sentence, often stopping at individual words, when necessary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does this word or sentence make you think of? • Do you have any questions about this word or sentence? • Can you make any connections with this word or sentence? • What predictions can you make from this sentence? • How can you connect this sentence to the title and image? <p>On your projected source text, write down your thoughts using the system defined above so students can see what your annotations look like.</p> <p>At this point, feel free to begin eliciting assistance from your students. Gradually transition into a “we do” portion of this demonstration, asking students how they would mark the source text, and allowing them to mark their thoughts on the displayed version of the text.</p>	<p>20-30 Mins</p>
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<p>Check for Understanding:</p> <p>After completing a section of the source text with students, ask students to try the next sentence or two on their own. Circulate the classroom while they work to address any questions or concerns.</p> <p>When students have finished with the sentence or two of individual annotation, ask students to find a partner or small group with which to share their annotations. Then come back together as a whole class to review what they came up with. Ask for volunteers to “think aloud” their annotations while adding them to the displayed version of the source text.</p> <p>Be sure to discuss other possibilities for annotation as well. Remind students that they won’t all create the same annotations every time.</p>	<p>10-15 Mins</p>
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<p>Closure: (A brief summary of the lesson objective)</p> <p>Review the purpose and necessity for annotation of source texts with students. Discuss ways that they feel this could improve their reading of Revision Assistant prompt sources and writing of Revision Assistant essays.</p>
<p>Next Steps: (How will students practice skills? What will you do next?)</p> <p>Continue to foster this new annotation, or “talking to” the text, process. Each time you use a source-based Revision Assistant prompt, allow students time to practice their annotation skills, then using those annotations to help them craft effective responses to the Revision Assistant prompt.</p> <p>In a later lesson, begin to connect these annotations to the Revision Assistant writing prompt associated with the source texts that you are using. Demonstrate to students how their annotations can help them better plan their essays, as well as help them to choose better evidence with which to support their claims.</p>

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Accommodations/Differentiation: (How did you modify the lesson to meet the needs of all students?)

Create a key or legend card for students with the defined rules for annotation on it. This will allow students to refer to this key and, in turn, use the correct system that you define for them at all times. (Ex: Circle words that are confusing, highlight things that seem important, etc.)

Allow extended time for modelling or “we do” sections to enhance student comfort and understanding of this new process. Note: Younger grades and/or struggling learners may need more modelling and “we do” practice before being asked to annotate on their own.

Allow students to work in small groups or with partners during the beginning stages of using this process. This will allow students to increase their comfort level with this process before using it on their own.

Provide students who require advance copies of notes with a pre-annotated version of the source text. This will allow those students to be aware of what you are about to do during your demonstration, and will also give them a succinct copy of your notes for them to reference at a later date.

For advanced learners, continue to provide modelling and “we do” portions of lesson, but upon asking students to work on their own, ask them to tackle larger portions of the text at a time, encouraging students to dig deeper than simply surface-level annotations.

#3

Understanding Plot as a Reader AND a Writer

Grade Levels: 6-12

Content Area: ELA

Lesson Duration: 3 class periods of 45-55 minutes

Grade Level Standards: (Standards have been generalized for use across grades 6-12.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.2 - Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3 - Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5 - Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.1 - Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3 - Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

Lesson Objective(s): (What should students be able to do at the conclusion of your lesson?)

After demonstrating understanding of the stages of plot development by diagramming key events in literature, students will apply this same understanding to a narrative essay and ultimately transfer their knowledge to their own narrative writing.

Prior Assessment: (Why are you doing this lesson?)

Students need to be able to effectively develop a narrative. To help students understand the essential narrative element of plot, students should be able to connect this to their experience as a reader. Prior to this lesson, students should have begun drafting their own narratives in response to one of the narrative prompts in Revision Assistant. In order to complete all stages of this series of lessons, the lesson is best used for one of the narrative prompts for which student exemplar essays are available.

Purpose: (How will this benefit students?)

Understanding and identifying the stages of plot development will provide students with a deeper comprehension of texts while also supporting their understanding of critical components of an effective narrative, from a writing perspective.

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Materials/Resources: (What do you need to teach the lesson?)

Blank Plot Diagram (multiple) or Interactive Plot Diagram (online)

Optional: Laptops or individual devices for students

Projection or large-scale display capability

Printed copies of children’s story or fairytale (multiple versions, depending on number of practice opportunities) text for students

Pens, pencils, highlighters

Revision Assistant access, with narrative prompt

Exemplar essay (Developing) for chosen prompt

Assignment Report for student progress on Revision Assistant narrative prompt

Assessment: (What specific assessment will you use to determine student success of the lesson? This should correlate directly to the objective.)

Use the “Check for Understanding” at the end of Day One and Day Two as a Formative assessment to determine whether students are understanding the stages of plot development and are able to apply those understandings to reading comprehension and written composition of a narrative

Informal formative assessment of student understanding during class discussions

Student progress on their revised narratives, in particular on the “Plot and Ideas” trait, as scored in Revision Assistant

Instructional Sequence (Include time allotted for each section)	Time
<p>Anticipatory Set: (How will you activate background knowledge?)</p> <p>Ask students to describe the ways that they typically interact with the source texts in Revision Assistant prompts.</p> <p>Record students’ descriptions of their interactions on the board. Responses may include things like: “I just read it,” “I try to summarize at the end,” or “I highlight things that I think might be important.”</p> <p>Discuss whether these approaches have been effective in helping students fully understand these source texts, and therefore</p>	10-12 Mins

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<p>Introduction/Day One:</p> <p>To help students apply their understanding of the stages of plot development, have students read a short children’s story or fairy tale, such as “Jack and the Beanstalk” or “Little Red Riding Hood.”</p> <p>As a class (or in small groups), have students brainstorm a list of the key events and then work together to arrange the events on the plot diagram, identifying the appropriate stage of plot development for each event.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OPTIONALLY: Teacher can record events (or have students record) on sentence strips and ask students to manipulate the events on plot diagram or utilize an interactive plot diagram online, such as one available on the Read - Write - Think website. <p>Check for Understanding: Have students complete the process independently with a new children’s story or fairy tale and a blank plot diagram. **NOTE: This activity will likely take more than 10 minutes to complete. Depending on school schedule and class length, teacher may want to allow for additional time to complete the activity, assign completion of this activity for homework, OR provide additional time at the start of the next lesson in order to complete.</p>	<p>20-30 Mins</p> <p>15-20 Mins</p> <p>10 Mins</p>
<p>Day Two:</p> <p>Warm-up/Journal: Have students respond to the following prompt in a short answer or journal entry. Have student volunteers share their ideas about the question. As a reader, how might mapping out the stages of plot development help you to understand the ideas or events in a narrative?</p> <p>Ask students to assume the role of an author (of one of the children’s stories previously discussed or another story previously studied). As a class, discuss how a plot diagram could be used to write a story or narrative. For additional clarification, you can incorporate a text like James Scott Bell’s “What is Plot, Anyway?” that explores the significance of plot in engaging readers.</p> <p>To help students understand how a plot diagram can be used to help build an interesting, effective storyline in a narrative, give students a copy of a Developing level exemplar (available here) for the narrative task they have previously started and a blank plot diagram. Have them work in groups to develop a list of the key events evident in the exemplar essay and then plot those events on the diagram. As a class, discuss what elements of the plot are developed in the student essay and which are missing. Have the students discuss the impact on the overall quality of the essay. (<i>Optionally</i>): At this point, you may want to compare the essay or plot diagram to the Plot and Development criteria of the rubric. **NOTE: The rubric for each narrative prompt can be found on the assignment page in the Revision Assistant Library.</p> <p>As a class, in small groups/pairs, or individually, have students work to fill in any missing components of the plot diagram and then use these to draft a revised and improved version of the exemplar essay. **NOTE: This activity could take longer than the allotted time to complete. Depending on school schedule and class length, teacher may want to allow for additional time to complete the activity, assign completion of this activity for homework, OR provide additional time at the start of the next lesson in order to complete.</p>	<p>8-10 Mins</p> <p>10-15 Mins</p> <p>20-30 Mins</p> <p>20-30 Mins</p>

<p>Check for Understanding:</p> <p>Exit Ticket: Have students respond to the following prompt in a short answer or journal entry.</p> <p>As a writer, how might mapping out the stages of plot develop help you to write a more effective or interesting story?</p>	<p>8-10 Mins</p>
<p>Day Three:</p> <p>Warm-up/Journal: Have students respond to the following prompt in a short answer or journal entry. Have student volunteers share their ideas about the question and discuss as a class.</p> <p>Ask students to consider how using the plot development stages as a writer is similar to/different from how they use the plot development stages as a reader.</p> <p>Have students return to their own previously started narratives. With a blank plot diagram, have students “deconstruct” their existing drafts on the plot diagram and identify any missing or incomplete phases of plot development in their own writing. On the plot diagram, they can work to develop missing components.</p> <p>After students have deconstructed and revised on the plot diagram, have students return to the writing process and continuing drafting, using the Signal Check feature to receive ongoing feedback. **NOTE: The length of time for this component of the process will vary depending on student needs and number of revisions planned for this stage of work. Teacher should structure this using a writer’s workshop or other writing process structure appropriate for the class/ program.</p>	<p>8-10 Mins</p> <p>30-60 Mins</p> <p>30-60 Mins</p>

<p>Closure: (A brief summary of the lesson objective)</p> <p>Review the purpose and necessity for developing plot, both as a reader and as a writer. Ask students to consider whether they think a tool like a plot diagram is more effective in supporting their reading comprehension or in supporting their growth as writers of their own narratives. Also, ask them to consider how using the plot diagram might help them to pre-write/ plan their next narrative.</p>
<p>Next Steps: (How will students practice skills? What will you do next?)</p> <p>Continue to use the plot diagram structure to support reading comprehension and pre-writing in the narrative genre.</p> <p>Students can use the plot diagram as a prewriting tool for other narratives they may develop.</p>

Accommodations/Differentiation: (How did you modify the lesson to meet the needs of all students?)

Provide a word bank with the names of the stages of plot development or even a glossary of the terms.

Provide additional practice at any stage of the students' learning with additional children's stories or multiple exemplar deconstruction, as needed.

Incorporate additional modelling sections with teacher-led "think-alouds" of the plot diagramming process in additional children stories or with the student exemplar essays to enhance student understanding, application, and transfer of this new learning.

Allow students to work in small groups or with partners during the beginning stages of using this process. This will allow students to increase their comfort level with this process before using it on their own.

Consider breaking texts into chunks to help students who may struggle with reading a full text in a single session. Chunking the text into smaller segments and inserting more frequent review/discussion may help struggling students manage. As students gain more comfort, have them begin to work more independently.