



Crafting Expository Papers

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Crafting Expository Papers guides the teacher of developing writers in grades 4-10 through five instructional steps that lead to well-crafted expository writing. Within each step, detailed lesson plans are infused with specific Target Skills, and optional lesson ideas are included in each section to support differentiated learning strategies. The lessons are built around the writing process, so that students are guided through pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing.

Crafting Expository Papers is part of a series which also includes *Crafting Comparison Papers* by Marcia S. Freeman and *Crafting Opinion and Persuasive Papers* by Tim Clifford. Writing wheels are available as student tools for each book. In 2008, the *Crafting Series* won the *Association of Educational Publishers'* Distinguished Achievement Award in the Professional Development category.

About the Study Guide

This guide is designed to facilitate professional development in a collegial book study atmosphere. Five professional development sessions include discussion points, guiding questions, workshop activities, and classroom applications. To create a successful professional development experience, consider the following tips:

- Before you begin, seek input about teacher schedules and preferences. Try to arrange your professional development so that participants will be able to attend every session.
- Schedule enough time between sessions so that the lessons in each chapter can be fully implemented in the classroom.
- Provide copies of *Crafting Expository Papers* for all participants. Meaningful application of the skills and activities discussed at each meeting depends upon access to the resource between meetings.
- Provide discussion questions ahead of time and encourage participants to read the material covered in each session prior to your meeting.
- At each meeting, allow for discussion before beginning the planned workshop activities. Teachers will learn by articulating their successes and challenges in implementing each part of the process.

Session One

Chapters 1 and 2 – *Introduction to Teaching Expository Writing and Step One - Details*

Guiding Quote:

“Teach students to begin planning for expository writing with details. Organization and structure will follow this important first step.” (p. 10)

Discussion Questions:

1. What *is* expository writing?
2. What are the five steps in the instructional sequence covered in this book?
3. Why are details of “primary importance” to expository writing?

Workshop Activity:

Lesson 5: Don’t Hit Your Reader over the Head

**Ahead of time: Photocopy and prepare Don’t Hit Your Reader over the Head activity cards found on page 98.*

1. Follow the lesson plan presented on page 19.
2. Discuss the value of details in creating clues for inference in well-crafted writing.
3. Look at the two assessment options presented on page 23. Teachers will select an assessment tool and self-assess their workshop activity pieces.
4. Review the types of details presented on page 88.

Classroom Implementation:

Read the lesson timeline presented on page 11. Survey the lessons presented on pages 12-22 and plan for instruction.

Looking Ahead:

Be prepared to discuss the successes and challenges of implementing these lessons. Encourage teachers to bring student samples to the next session to facilitate discussion.

Session Two

Chapter 3: *Step Two - Organization*

Guiding Quote:

“As students begin to use graphic organizers and arrange their details into related clumps of information, you must be sure they don’t forget the primary importance of details discussed in the previous chapter.” (p. 25)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the traditional structure of most expository writing? How does this structure help or hinder students?
2. What are the three instructional levels? As you consider your students, what would you identify as their instructional level(s)?
3. What are the two types of organization discussed in this chapter?

Workshop Activity:

Lesson 1: Clumping Details

**Ahead of time:* Select a general topic and gather sticky notes, index cards, and markers.

1. Follow the lesson plan presented on page 27.
2. Discuss the value of beginning with details before moving to a graphic organizer.
3. Look at the two assessment options presented on page 41. Teachers will select an assessment tool and self-assess their workshop activity pieces.
4. Survey the types of graphic organizers supplied on pages 89-92.

Classroom Implementation:

Read the lesson timeline presented on page 26. Survey the lessons presented on pages 27-40 and plan for instruction.

Looking Ahead:

Be prepared to discuss the successes and challenges of implementing these lessons. Encourage teachers to bring student samples to the next session to facilitate discussion.

Session Three

Chapter 4: *Step Three – Writing Expository Paragraphs*

Guiding Quote:

“As you continue to read, either in read-aloud scenarios or in content-area textbook selections, encourage students to use their knowledge of paragraph types and names in your discussions. By doing so, you will reinforce writing skills and provide structure for comprehending expository text.” (p. 44)

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the seven paragraph types covered in this chapter?
2. What is the traditional paragraph type that most students should have mastered at this point?
3. How can an understanding of various paragraph types reinforce reading comprehension?

Workshop Activity:

Lesson 4: Specific to General

**Ahead of time:* Select picture prompts to use in this activity.

1. Read aloud or display the deductive paragraph sample on page 52. Discuss the traditional paragraph structure of main idea followed by supporting details.
2. Follow the lesson plan presented on page 54.
3. Allow teachers to self-assess their paragraphs using the rubric presented on page 55.

Classroom Implementation:

Read the lesson timeline presented on page 45. Survey the lessons presented on pages 46-63 and plan for instruction.

Looking Ahead:

Be prepared to discuss the successes and challenges of implementing these lessons. Encourage teachers to bring student samples to the next session to facilitate discussion.

Session Four

Chapter 5: *Step Four – Writing an Expository Paper*

Guiding Quote:

“The teacher’s role changes in this step. You become more of a facilitator than an instructor. Class time becomes more student-centered and less teacher-directed.” (p. 65)

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some specific Target Skills that you can expect your students to apply during this step?
2. Which steps of the writing process will be addressed in these lessons?
3. How can the pieces created by students during these lessons inform subsequent instruction?

Workshop Activity:

Lesson 1: Listing and Clumping Details

**Ahead of time:* Select a prompt or a few prompt options from the list on page 97.

1. Review the steps, Target Skills, and types of graphic organizers covered during previous sessions.
2. Review the importance of beginning with details before moving to an organizational structure.
3. Complete Lesson 1 on page 67.

Classroom Implementation:

Read the lesson timeline presented on page 66. Survey the lessons presented on pages 67-70 and plan for instruction.

Looking Ahead:

Be prepared to discuss the successes and challenges of implementing these lessons. Encourage teachers to bring student samples to the next session to facilitate discussion.

Session Five

Chapter 6: *Step Five – Revision and Editing*

Guiding Quote:

“If someone else will be reading the piece, the writer must make sure it expresses ideas clearly, holds the readers’ attention, and is free of inaccuracies.”
(p. 73)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the value of using the term “your reader” during revision and editing conferences?
2. How can a focus on specific Target Skills help you structure your revision and editing process with students?
3. What should be your guiding principles in selecting which pieces should be taken through these final steps of the writing process?

Workshop Activity:

Lesson 2: Composing Skills

**Ahead of time:* Advise teachers to bring a copy of a student draft to this session. The draft selected should represent median performance. Supply highlighters and colored pens for revising.

1. Use copies of student drafts to complete Lesson 2 on page 77.
2. Discuss the value of using isolated Target Skills to guide revision and make the process more objective.
3. Reinforce the importance of the Response portion of the lesson. Response helps internalize concepts by allowing students articulate their revisions and by supporting learners through the use of student models.

Classroom Implementation:

Read the lesson timeline presented on page 75. Survey the lessons presented on pages 76-80 and plan for instruction.

Looking Ahead:

Develop a plan for sharing published work. Teachers may want to publish pieces in classroom collections; your school may want to create a display of published pieces; you may want to share pieces with parents through your school’s newsletter or your website.