

Introduction

Welcome to the *Writing Intervention Kit for High School!* We know that the teaching of writing is often replete with frustration: helping students master complicated skills, dealing with student motivation, grading those papers, putting it all together. The strain of balancing these tasks can be overwhelming. The purpose of the *Writing Intervention Kit* is to help ease the daunting demands of teaching writing and to offer supportive instruction that helps students improve their writing skills. The *Writing Intervention Kit* provides a sequential, systematic approach to writing instruction, complete with weekly and daily lesson plans, writing models, and a variety of resources.

The *Writing Intervention Kit* is designed as a catch-up course for high school students. Many students need a little more time to master the writing process and the skills of expository writing. These students may also need explicit teaching in order to learn specific writing skills. The *Writing Intervention Kit* meets these needs and provides a semester-long, inclusive course. In addition, the *Writing Intervention Kit* can be used as a preparatory course for students in grades 9-12, providing focused instruction that is relevant to all academic writing, test preparation, and research writing. The *Writing Intervention Kit* is therefore well suited as the curriculum for a writing intervention class or as a support in a literacy intervention block or a language arts class.

The *Writing Intervention Kit* concentrates on the elements of effective expository composition. Through step-by-step instruction and an emphasis on the writing process, the *Writing Intervention Kit* helps students write expository papers that are clear, focused, well organized, well supported, and engaging. Activities include intensive instruction, modeling, guided practice, scaffolding, and support for students' independent practice of expository writing skills. In addition, the *Writing Intervention Kit* incorporates time for teacher-directed, small-group work and review. Each day of instruction follows a consistent pattern, yet there are a variety of activities and instructional approaches designed to meet student needs and increase student engagement.

The *Writing Intervention Kit's* 18 weeks of instruction (45- to 55-minute classes, five days/week) use a variety of books and resources and focus on specific Target Skills[®] and genres. The *Writing Intervention Kit* includes an overview of Target Skills, genres, and books; a weekly instructional overview; daily lesson plans; blackline masters of resources; rubrics used to assess papers; and a CD with reproducibles and student models (plans, rough drafts, and final drafts) used to teach specific skills and genres.

Target Skills and Genres Covered

Target Skills are covered through explicit instruction, modeling, and practice. Target Skills include the following:

- **Writing-Process Skills**
 1. Topic
 2. Thesis
 3. Pre-writing
 4. Organizing
 5. Drafting/planning
 6. Revising
 7. Crafting writing under pressure
 8. Self-reflection
- **Foundational Writing-Craft Skills**
 1. Transitions
 2. Paragraph structure
 3. Opening paragraphs/beginning techniques
 4. Topic sentences
 5. Support
 6. Closing paragraphs/ending techniques
 7. Author's purpose
 8. Argumentation
- **Elements of Voice**
 1. Diction
 2. Detail
 3. Imagery
 4. Syntax
 5. Tone
- **Conventions**
 1. Capitalization
 2. Punctuation
 3. Sentence correctness

Genres are all expository and are also taught through explicit instruction, modeling, and practice. Genres covered in the *Writing Intervention Kit* include

1. Description
2. Informational Expository: Explaining How
3. Informational Expository: Explaining Why
4. Comparison/Contrast
5. Opinion
6. Persuasion
7. Cause/Effect

Resources Included

There are six writing books that accompany the *Writing Intervention Kit*. These books are used to teach specific Target Skills and expository writing lessons. Directions for how and when to use the books are integrated into the *Writing Intervention Kit* lesson plans.

Books included in the *Writing Intervention Kit* are

1. *Caught'ya! Grammar with a Giggle*, Jane Bell Kiester
2. *Discovering Voice: Voice Lessons for Middle and High School*, Nancy Dean
3. *Listen to This*, Marcia S. Freeman
4. *Crafting Expository Papers*, Susan Koehler
5. *Crafting Comparison Papers*, Marcia S. Freeman
6. *Crafting Opinion and Persuasive Papers*, Tim Clifford

Other Components

Other resources include the **blackline masters** (BLM), **rubrics**, and **student models**. The BLM are reproducible charts, graphic organizers, forms, and other student handouts. The rubrics are reproducible guidelines for assessment, used by the teacher and the students. The student models are the work of a talented group of high school writers. Each model illustrates a particular skill, genre, or part of the writing process. Students learn to deconstruct the student models, analyze the strengths of the models, suggest improvements, and imitate attainable writing goals.

The **weekly instructional overview** gives the Target Skills, genre, and basic outline of the week's instruction. Each day begins with a "bell ringer," an activity that sets the tone for the day and provides students with writing practice. The remaining instructional time is divided among whole-class instruction, practice time, group work, and independent work. The weekly instruction follows this general pattern:

Week: _____

Target Skill: _____

Genre: _____

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Bell ringer	Bell ringer	Bell ringer	Bell ringer	Bell ringer
Whole-class instruction	Group work with independent practice	Instruction through examining student-written models	Group work with independent practice	Teacher read-alouds and discussion
Practice	Whole-class instruction	Group work	Whole-class instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student read-alouds of their work• Write Rights• Wall of Respect

Daily lesson plans include all bell ringer topics; specific instructional procedures, materials, and strategies; and all writing prompts and assignments.

“Write Rights” and the Wall of Respect

The “Write Rights” and the Wall of Respect are essential elements of the *Writing Intervention Kit*. Both of these are designed to improve student motivation and achievement through recognition and specific praise. The “Write Rights” are student generated. As a student reads his or her work aloud or shares it in a group, the other students in the class take a single sticky note and write the student writer’s name and a brief, positive comment. The positive comment should be directed to the Target Skill or genre under consideration and should be clear and specific. Teachers will have to model the “Write Rights” in the beginning of the course, but students will improve in their ability to write a positive response and address particular skills and genres. Teachers should post the “Write Rights” in a consistent place in the room—for example, a bulletin board or a section of the classroom wall—and should review the “Write Rights” to be certain they are positive and specific (“good job” is not specific enough). Below are some examples of specific “Write Rights.” A list of model “Write Rights” is included with the blackline masters.

Jenny,

Your paper had lots of great detail. I can see why you like soccer better than football.

Vanessa,

The description of your dog covered in mud really helped me visualize the scene.

Juan,

I now understand your reasons for being a vegetarian.

The Wall of Respect is a place in the classroom for the teacher to display exemplary student work. Samples of well-written thesis statements, plans, rough drafts, and final drafts are all good candidates for the Wall of Respect. Because it is an honor for students to have their work on the Wall of Respect, teachers should select only one or two writing samples each week to display. This will concentrate attention and make the Wall of Respect more meaningful. Teachers should also use a highlighter to underscore the elements of the work they want to emphasize. For example, if the class is studying the use of detail to support an opinion, the teacher should highlight effectively used detail throughout the paper before posting it on the Wall of Respect. Teachers can also use the Wall of Respect to post “perfect” words that students use in their writing, insightful ideas that students raise in class discussions, and the names of students who contribute positively to the class that week.

Group Work

The *Writing Intervention Kit* uses structured group work to enhance instruction. To ensure focused and productive group activities, it is important to follow a few basic guidelines. First, keep the groups small—no more than four students in a group. This will limit the socializing time and help to keep students on task. Second, assign students to groups, balancing weaker and stronger writers. Students generally learn well from each other, and this balance will provide a system of support for weaker students and an opportunity to shine for stronger writers. Third, be very specific about the groups' tasks and train students to be successful in these tasks. Often teachers put students into groups, give an assignment, and expect the students to complete the assignment with no further preparation. Such group activities may quickly deteriorate and end with students chatting or being disruptive. It is better to take the time to model group tasks with the entire class before expecting students to perform group activities without direct teacher supervision. Students that understand what you expect and what they can gain will be more productive and task oriented. Finally, it is important to establish ground rules for the group work. Students should have a voice in establishing the ground rules, but you should encourage them to include rules such as these:

- No one dominates the conversation.
- Everyone has a turn to speak.
- Everyone listens until the speaker is finished.
- All ideas are thoughtfully considered.
- Everyone participates.

The *Writing Intervention Kit* will help your students write better expository papers. Serendipitously, the *Writing Intervention Kit* will help your students to become better readers. As students analyze good writing and struggle to write papers worthy of the “Wall of Respect,” they will learn to analyze text and be more careful readers. As teachers read aloud samples of exemplary writing, students will come to understand the tools of the writer and how to use those tools to comprehend and produce text.

I hope that the *Writing Intervention Kit* helps you guide your students as they improve their reading and writing skills. Your work is essential. Thank you for all you do!