

Intro to Essay Writing

Summary

In this lesson I will introduce how essays are organized. Students will highlight/label the parts of sample essays. Students will use small, color-coded sentence strips to write their own essays over the course of the 3 days.

Main Core Tie

English Language Arts Grade 5

[Writing Standard 1 a.](#)

Time Frame

3 class periods of 45 minutes each

Group Size

Small Groups

Life Skills

Thinking & Reasoning, Communication, Employability

Materials

- sample essays
- pink, yellow, and green highlighters
- red, yellow, and green strips of paper for writing
- Essay Organization Infographic
- tape

Background for Teachers

Teachers should have already taught basic paragraph writing skills. Teachers should have a good grasp on the writing process and editing student papers.

Student Prior Knowledge

Students should know how to write a complete sentence. They should understand the parts of a paragraph: topic sentence, details, and conclusion sentence.

Intended Learning Outcomes

With some guidance, students will be able to create an essay and visualize the organization of an essay.

Instructional Procedures

First, without words show some sample traffic signals and see if students can name what they mean.

Present the Essay Organization Infographic. Teach students: "Go, give your topic. Slow down, give your reason. Stop, give your details."

Model how to mark (highlight) essay "parts": topics, reasons, and details.

Divide students into groups of 6. Each group will receive a copy of the infographic and 6 different sample essays (one for each child to highlight in red (pink), yellow, and green).

When students are finished highlighting their own essays, they will present to the 6-group. The group will decide if the essay is marked correctly or if revision is required.

Once students have justified their highlighting to their groups, you will brainstorm and choose a topic about which to write a persuasive essay as a class.

Distribute 3 yellow "reason" strips to each student. Students will write one "reason" in a complete sentence on each of their 3 strips. The teacher will guide students as needed. When a sentence is incomplete or does not give a sufficient reason, the teacher will simply take the incorrect reason sentence and give that student a new sentence strip.

Once students have completed their three reasons, have a few students share.

Next, students will choose one of their three "reasons" about which to "stop and give details."

Explain each detail goes on a separate sentence strip. The more details, the more supported the "reason" will be. (In other words, most of your essay should be red.)

Again, the teacher will take up ineffective sentences and have the student restart on clean red (or pink) strips. When the yellow "reason" sentence is sufficiently supported (3-10 red, or pink, strips), the teacher will distribute clear tape to tape the paragraph together. Then the student may pull out the next yellow "reason" and repeat the process.

Students should complete yellow "reasons" and red "details" and have them taped before the next class.

Now that the body paragraphs (reasons and details) are complete, students will work on the green intro and conclusion paragraphs (or "topic").

When all paragraphs are complete, the strips are all taped together. Transitions may be added at this point.

Student work is shared, displayed, and graded with a rubric.

Strategies for Diverse Learners

As the class is working, the teacher may provide more one-on-one guidance to struggling students.

Extensions

You may have students highlight their own essays in the future using the green topic, yellow reason, red details pattern.

Assessment Plan

Student learning will be assessed through their finished essay. The essay may be graded using the rubric below.

Rubrics

[6+1 Trait ® Writing Rubric](#)

Authors

[Karen Redmon](#)