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Elementary Reading/Language Arts C & I
Lesson Plan Format for Guided Reading Lesson and Read Write Think Aloud Lesson

Standards:

Virginia Standards of Learning

- 4.4 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fiction.
 - f) Identify sensory words.
- 4.7 The student will write effective narratives, poems, and explanations.
 - c) Organize writing to convey a central idea.
 - e) Utilize elements of style, including word choice and sentence variation.
- 4.8 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure.
 - f) Incorporate adjectives and adverbs.

IRA/NCTE Standards

- 6 Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.

Intended Audience: This lesson will be taught to a fourth grade general education class at Poquoson Elementary School. There are no gifted or special education students in the classroom. Students will have previous class experience writing to a prompt and creatively writing from class writing workshops and journal activities.

Behavioral Objectives: As a whole group, students will listen to the read aloud story *Mailing May* and orally respond to questions during the reading. Given a modeled demonstration of writing with description, the students will be able to use descriptive language in their writing, specifically using adjectives and adverbs within their narratives. Student will write focusing on word choice to create a descriptive narrative. Students will share their writing with a partner and provide feedback on the partner's creation.

Materials, Time, Space: There are twenty-four students in Mrs. McKay's fourth grade classroom. They sit in desk groups of four and all are able to see the board from their seats. The lesson requires a copy of the read aloud story *Mailing May* by Michael O. Tunnell, a blank overhead sheet, overhead projector and screen, a wet erase marker, blank loose leaf paper for each student, a pencil for each student, and desks to write on. Students will remain at their desks during the read aloud. The teacher will circulate around the room during the reading, ensuring that the students can see the images in the story. The lesson and writing period will last approximately forty-five minutes with twelve minutes spent reading the story and thinking aloud, eight minutes spent modeling the writing and giving instructions, twenty minutes spent writing, and five minutes spent sharing stories with a partner and with the class.

The Lesson Proper

Introduction: Before beginning to read the story to the class, the teacher will introduce the story. The introduction will be similar to this example, "*Mailing May* is a story about a young girl whose parents can not afford to send her to visit her grandmother. In order to solve the problem, they devise a plan to mail her there. While I read this story I would like you to listen and remember some of the words used in the story that make you feel as though you are really experiencing it. I may stop and ask you to identify some of the descriptive details in the story that helped you imagine the story. Now, let us see if May makes it to her grandmother's house." Next the teacher will begin the story by focusing on the inside cover that shows a snapshot of

May, a snapshot of Grandma, and a train on a trestle. While reading, the teacher will use expression and tone of voice to show the different characters. Additionally, the teacher will pause to check for students' comprehension of the text and to ask students for descriptive details regarding the setting of the story as well as to make predictions about the story. For example, when May enters the post office she "stood taking in the funny smells" so the teacher should ask the students to identify the funny smells (glue, canvas bags, and oiled wooden floors) after reading through the page. These details really help the reader feel as though they are in the post office.

Content Focus: After reading the story, the teacher will provide a model of writing with description. Students will be writing to the prompt "If I could be mailed anywhere, I would be mailed to..." To model the writing, the teacher will use the overhead projector, so that the students can see the example. The model will have simple sentences, and the teacher will ask for student assistance in providing details in the story. For example, the sample would read "If I were to be mailed anywhere, I would be mailed to Florida. I would visit the state to see my grandparents. When I first arrive my grandmother will make me cookies. Later that afternoon we'll walk along the beach with the water lapping at our toes." The students will help identify areas within the writing that could provide a better mental picture of the setting, characters, and events within the story, such as providing the city in Florida, the type of weather, the age of the grandparents, a description of the cookies, and information about the beach will strengthen the story. The final model would be something like this, "If I could be mailed anywhere, I would be mailed to *Fernandina Beach*, Florida. In the *warm sunny* state I would visit my *elderly* grandparents. When I first arrive, my *smiling* grandmother will make *gooey chocolate chip* cookies for me. Later that afternoon we'll walk along the *soft sandy* beach with the *salty ocean spray* lapping at our toes." The initial sample for the students will be choppy and should include gaps and spelling issues. This way the students will have a model that shows them a draft is not perfect. Students should be informed that if they do not know how to spell something they should circle it in the draft and continue writing.

After modeling the writing, the teacher will explain to the students that they are now going to create their own descriptive narrative. The students will receive directions to address the topic/prompt "If I were to be mailed anywhere, I would be mailed to..." by answering key questions in their story. These key questions include where they are being mailed, why they are going, and what they will see. Their word choice and use of details to provide sensory details is the main focus of the writing. During the writing process, the teacher will pause to read a sample of the student's work that uses descriptive language.

Next students will share their writing with their shoulder partner. The partner will be asked to read through the story and provide feedback for the student. If there are gaps in the story, then the shoulder partner will point out where more details are needed.

Closure: After students have shared their descriptions with a partner, they will have time to make additions to their draft. Finally, students will be given time to share their stories with the class. A couple of students' writings will be read aloud by the teacher to demonstrate their effective use of descriptive language. The class will identify the words that helped them picture the place and the events in the story. Finally, the class will discuss how descriptive language helps readers create mental images and illustrators create actual pictures for books.

Evaluation:

Formative: In order to ensure students are understanding the story and the topic of descriptive language, oral questions will be used throughout the lesson. During the writing session, the

teacher will circulate around the room conferencing with students as they write to check for their use of descriptions within their writing.

Summative: The writing drafts will be used to assess students' use of descriptive language. The importance in the writing is not the length, but that details were given within the writing.

Background Information: This lesson focuses on developing the descriptive writing skills of the students. Using descriptive language, including adjectives and adverbs, strengthens the narratives that the young writers create. The use of sensory details allows readers to feel as though they are actually experiencing the story.

Reflection

I was extremely nervous about doing this lesson. I had never taught a lesson to a fourth grade class, and I had never met any of the students in Mrs. McKay's class. In order to get to know the students a little bit before jumping into the lesson, I went to the classroom before school started. This way I was able to help greet the students as they arrived. The lesson started immediately after the morning announcements. When I started to introduce the story, one girl said that she had read the story in her reader in third grade. I was unsure how many other students had read it, so I put in a detail that even if the students had heard it before they would probably find something new in the story with reading through it again. This was especially true because the students were being asked to focus on descriptive details in the story.

As I read the story, I walked around the room to change the perspective that students had on the illustrations and to ensure that each cluster of desks had the opportunity to see the illustrations close up. The students followed me as I moved and I felt like moving around helped gauge whether the students were listening and focused on the reading. During the reading, I paused to ask students what they thought would happen in the story and what descriptions they remembered for the post office, for the type of packages that could be mailed, and what scenery May saw during the train ride. The students raised their hands to respond to my questions, which allowed me to practice with their names. At the end of the story, I asked the class whether they thought the story was real. The majority of the class indicated that they thought it was fictional, however the one girl who had read it before remembered that it was based on a true story. I read a portion of the author's note to the class, so they would have some of the details of the story.

Next I moved into modeling the writing activity. In my practicum experience, I had not had to use an overhead projector until this lesson. Needless to say, I was not gifted with focusing the image, directing the projection on the screen, and writing on the sheet. I wrote a couple of sentences that lacked descriptive language then asked the students to help me fill in descriptive information. Next the students created their own drafts addressing the prompt. As they wrote, Mrs. McKay and I walked around the room doing mini-conferences to assess the students' understanding of directions and to gauge their writing ability. After most of the students had a good start on their story, I chose Christian's story as a sample of using descriptive language and shared a couple of sentences with the class. Next the class shared their drafts with their shoulder partner for feedback and help with elaboration. They had time to make some additions and changes. Finally, I closed the lesson by sharing Tom's story about the Amazonian Rainforest. The students commented on some of the details that stood out in his story.

I feel that this lesson worked well, but I definitely want to practice using the overhead projector before another lesson. Additionally, I could tell the students were engaged throughout the reading and writing process, but I do not think that all of the students wrote to their potential. Some stories were short and lacked descriptions. In the future, I would have modeled more effectively. Perhaps by brainstorming lists of details with the class before they began to write.