

How to Use This Book . . .

The activities in this book provide an excellent source of reading and writing practice for elementary students. The pages can be used as drill reinforcement or as independent instructional material and are designed to help motivate students to learn through a variety of exercises. The activities in this book are grouped by skill; these skills may overlap more than one grade level and should be used in ways that best meet each student’s needs. The reproducibles are created so that a student can work with a minimum of supervision in a classroom or at home. Answer keys have been provided in the back of the book.



EXTRA! EXTRA! When you see this symbol, be sure to check out the “extra” extension activity provided.

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A Declaration of War—and of Independence

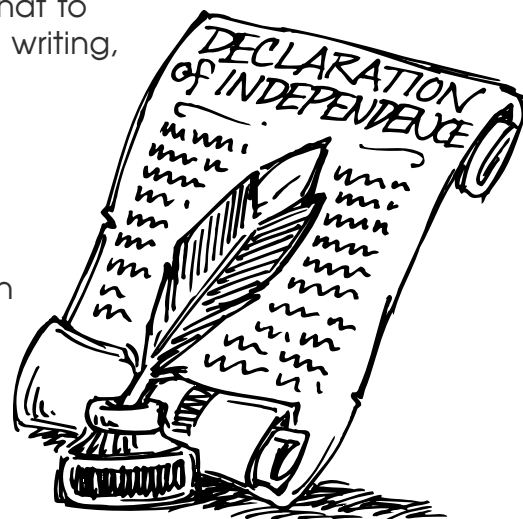
War or peace? The colonists were divided on the question of whether to go to war with Britain. Debates raged for weeks at the Second Continental Congress. Finally on June 7, 1776, Richard Lee of Virginia proposed this resolution: “The United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states.”

The Congress agreed and appointed a committee of five men to write a declaration based on Lee’s proposal. They included four lawyers—Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston—plus Benjamin Franklin, a printer, inventor, scientist and diplomat.

Each member of the committee expressed ideas of what to include in the document. Thomas Jefferson did the actual writing, a task which took 17 days.

When Jefferson finished, members of the Continental Congress discussed the document for three days. They made changes. One paragraph Jefferson wrote about the abolition of slavery was deleted from the final version. Finally, on July 4, 1776, they voted to adopt the Declaration of Independence.

The Continental Congress decided to have an official copy printed in ornamental script on parchment. The 56 members of the Congress signed this copy on August 2, 1776.



When Benjamin Franklin signed his name, he stated, “We must all hang together, or surely we shall all hang separately.”

1. What do you think Franklin meant by that?

2. Why do you think this document was called the birth certificate of a new nation?

3. When was the Declaration of Independence signed? _____

4. How many men were on the committee? _____

5. What occupation did four of the men have in common? _____

6. The author’s purpose is:

_____ to entertain _____ to inform _____ to persuade

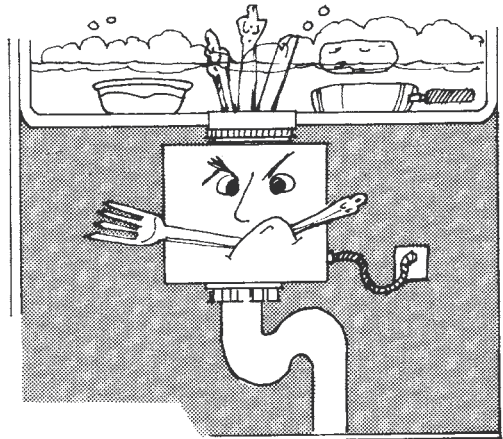
How Do You Figure It?

A *figure of speech* is a device that allows a writer to get an idea across to the reader easily and effectively. Here are the definitions of three common and useful figures of speech.

Hyperbole—a gross exaggeration. Example: I went dancing last night, and when I woke up, my feet were killing me.

Personification—giving human qualities or characteristics to inanimate objects. Example: The garbage disposal chewed up my good silverware.

Simile—a direct comparison between two unlike objects using like or as. Example: A house without books is like a room without windows.



Create some attention-getting, or original hyperboles.

1. That TV is so loud that _____
2. I am so hungry that _____
3. I have so much homework that _____

Complete the following sentences by adding verbs that usually refer to people, thereby creating personifications.

1. Your report card _____ well of you.
2. The theater seat _____ when the obese man sat down.
3. My homework _____ to me from my bedroom.



Turn the following phrases into original similes.

1. Watching television is like _____
2. Penny is as nosy as _____
3. Failing a math test is as _____

Similes enliven a writer's work. Sometimes, however, writers misuse their similes, and the images they present do not make sense. In the following paragraph, there are eleven incorrect similes. On another paper, rewrite the story, replacing the italicized words with different ones to create vivid, original images that are also suitable to the story.

Although Kim Sun was nearly six years old, he had never before seen his grandmother. Today they were going to meet for the first time. As the old woman approached him, Kim Sun carefully studied her and every action she made. The woman walked as *slowly* as snow. Her face seemed as *soft* as car tires, and her eyes were blue *like dust*. She seemed very old—*like a windowpane*—but her smile was as *young* as a table. When the old woman held out her arms, Kim Sun wanted to run into them *like a tank*, but he couldn't move. He was riveted *like a bowling ball* to a spot three feet from his grandmother. The woman understood the fear the little boy felt, and she lifted him tenderly, *like a salt shaker* and hugged him tightly. Kim Sun's eyes began to shine *like oranges*, and he giggled. In his grandmother's arms, he felt as *light* as hailstones and as *tall* as rain.