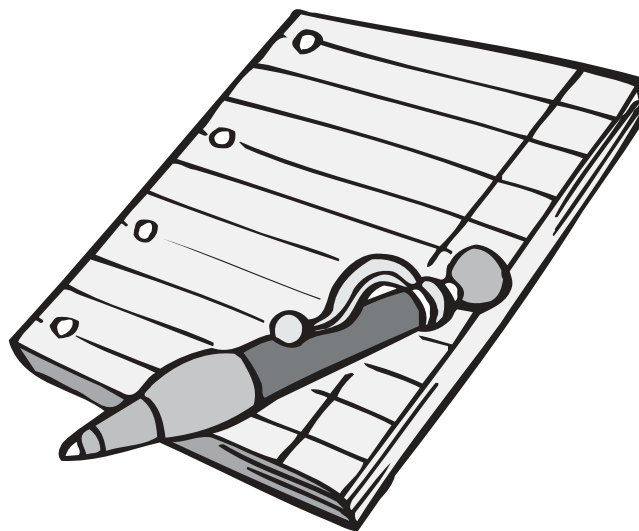


Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Revising and Rewriting	10
Technical Writing.	44
Expository Writing.	55
Personal Essays	67
Essays of Opinion	73
Descriptive Writing	91
Letter Writing.	105
Writing for Speaking	121
Appendix	132



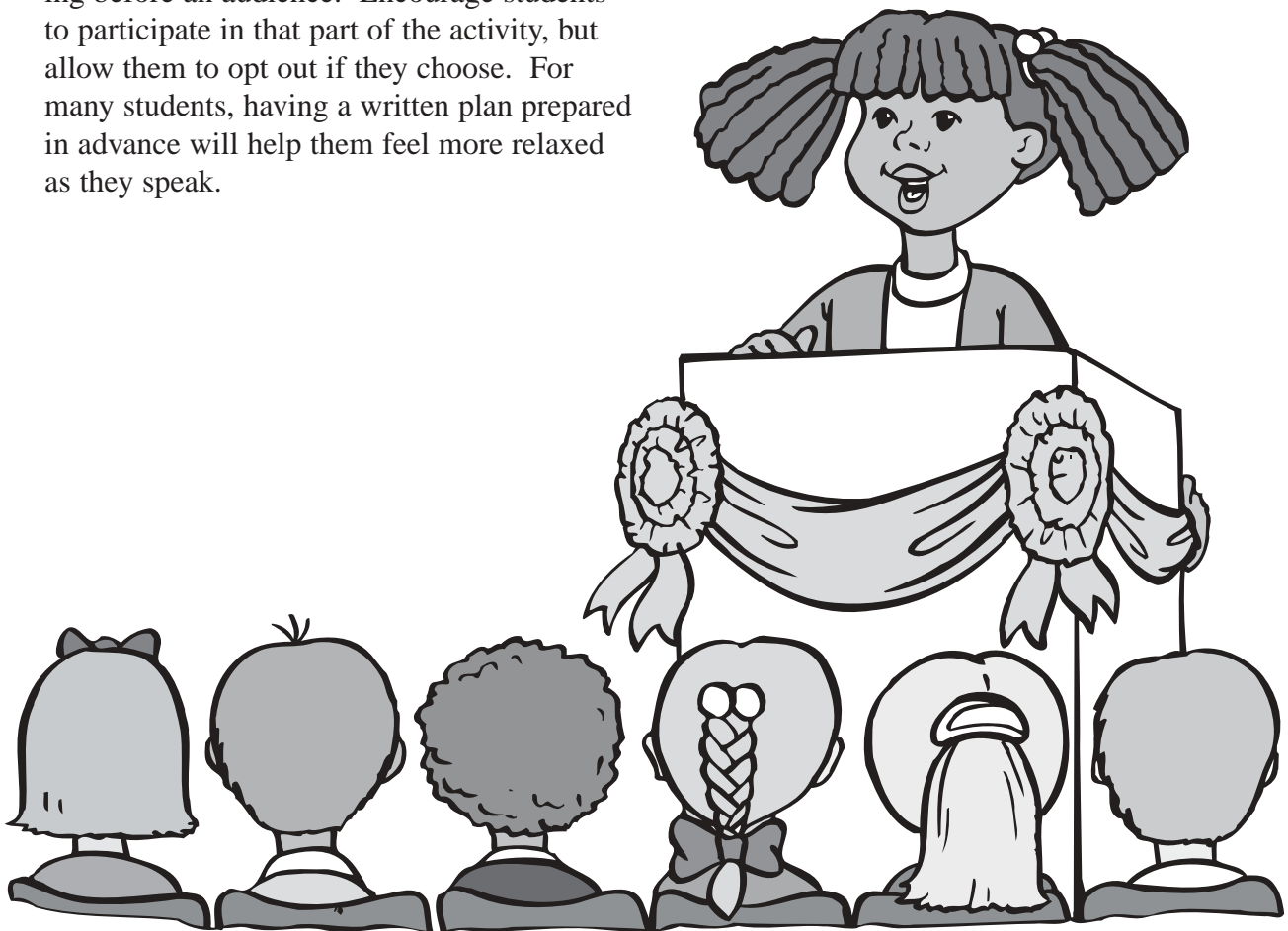
Writing for Speaking

Teacher Instructions

The activities in this section will give students practice in both writing and speaking. They may also be used when students need a break from some of the more demanding, academically oriented activities in *21st Century Writing*. They are not intended as a series of consecutive lessons; nor do they have to be presented in any particular order. Use them with your class when the time seems right.

Some students may feel uncomfortable speaking before an audience. Encourage students to participate in that part of the activity, but allow them to opt out if they choose. For many students, having a written plan prepared in advance will help them feel more relaxed as they speak.

For those students who are willing, try videotaping their talks. Viewing these tapes can be tremendously useful as students work to improve the quality of their presentations. Play back the video to give them direct feedback without their having to hear—and perhaps defend themselves from—critical comments from peers. You may even want to send the tapes home so parents can see what their children have accomplished in class.



Student Exercise S-3

Script Writing: Create a Conversation

Let's write a conversation for two people to present. You'll write it in the form of a script, like a short play.

Here's a short example:

Shakita: Mom, what's for dinner?

Mrs. Venable: Carrot casserole with tofu chunks. Your favorite!

Shakita: Again! But we had that yesterday.

Mrs. Venable: I know. But you liked it so much I decided to heat up the leftovers for tonight.

Shakita: Oh, great! Leftover carrot goo.

Mrs. Venable: Don't get smart, young lady! Lots of children would love to have some of Mrs. Venable's famous carrot casserole.

Shakita: I know, Mom. Sorry.

Mrs. Venable: Go wash up. Dinner's in five minutes.

Try to make your script sound like an actual conversation. Remember, people don't always speak in complete sentences. Sometimes they interrupt one another. Use partial sentences and phrases to make the dialogue sound real.

Here's an exercise for practice. Write a conversation between two imaginary people about one of the following topics:

- ✍ Which singing group they like the best.
- ✍ Which basketball star (or football star, etc.) is the best athlete.
- ✍ What is their favorite food, or their favorite place to eat.
- ✍ Where they plan to go to high school.
- ✍ Or, choose another topic instead.

Your script should have at least five different sentences for each speaker. After you've finished writing, find a partner and read your dialogue aloud. Do the words sound realistic?

Revise your writing to make it sound like two real people talking to one another. Then, produce a final copy of your script. When everyone is ready, perform your conversation for the class.

Dear Teacher or Parent,

Writing skills are more important than ever. Most of the information flashing around our planet at the speed of light still originates as written words. New technologies have created a world in which more printed material is being published than ever before. People still want to express themselves through essays, stories, poems and plays. And no matter what career we choose, virtually all of us must communicate and record our efforts in writing—even if our words are stored and transmitted electronically. Clearly, 21st century students still need to become competent writers.

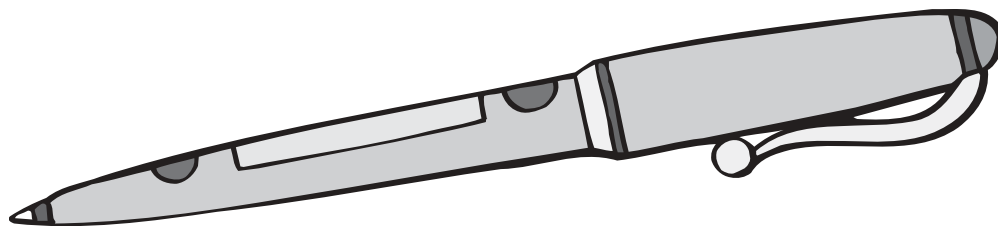
Writing is a craft. Using the raw materials of our language—words, sentence structure and logic—writers work to form well-designed, aesthetically pleasing compositions. And, like any craft, the quality of a person's work improves with practice. The only way to improve one's writing skills is to write. The activities in *21st Century Writing* are intended to help students develop their craftsmanship and their sense that writing can be a satisfying means of self-expression.

Although the activities in *21st Century Writing* are presented in a series of separate chapters, we don't expect teachers to proceed directly through the curriculum in the order of presentation. Use the activities in the order that best meets the needs of your students.

Sincerely,



Paul Fleisher, Donna Fout and Mary Ann Ready



Revising and Rewriting

Teacher Instructions

A Good Writer CARES (Student Exercises R-1 through R-8)

Teaching the CARES acronym will give students a structure to help them revise their work (Change, Add, Rearrange, Eliminate, Standardize). There is at least one exercise for each of the five processes. Exercise R-8 gives students the opportunity to apply all five actions as they create revision problems for classmates to solve.

You may want to make copies of the CARES poster to put on your bulletin board to remind students of the CARES processes.

Writers' Workshop (Student Exercise R-9)

Give each student a copy of these guidelines before you have them exchange their writings with each other for feedback.

You may also want to give students practice giving feedback using some sample student work before they use their own writings in a workshop setting. Build a file of sample student work, with names blacked out, that your students can use for practice. Or team up with another teacher, and exchange anonymous copies of student work for each class to read and edit.

You may need to explain the ideas of voice and tone. *Voice* is the idea that a writer's work shows individuality—that the personality of the writer is reflected in his or her words. (This is a different meaning of the word *voice* from that found in exercise R-15.)

Tone means “the appropriate emotional content.” If the writer is angry, or sad about something, that should show in the sound of his or her words. If the writer is trying to be humorous, the choice of words and rhythms of the sentences should suit that mood.

Revising: Vivid Verbs and Specific Nouns (Student Exercises R-10 through R-13)

Using interesting, precise nouns and verbs is the best way to create lively, descriptive writing. Writing that relies too heavily on adjectives and adverbs for description sounds unnatural and forced.

Use these exercises if your students' writing uses ordinary, vague, anemic nouns and verbs instead of more interesting, specific, precise ones.

Student Exercise R-1

A Good Writer CARES

No writing is finished after one draft. To make it great, you have to revise it. Revising is not just checking spelling and recopying. You have to find every place where you can make your writing better, and change what you've written. Professional writers revise over and over again. Every word must be exactly right before a writer decides a story, poem or article is finished.

If you are going to do your best writing, you'll have to revise, too. Before you turn in an assignment, read over what you've written. Make improvements. It's the ONLY way to write something that is truly your best work.

Here's an easy guide to help you remember what to do when you revise. Just remember the word CARES. Every good writer CARES for his or her writing.

CARES stands for:

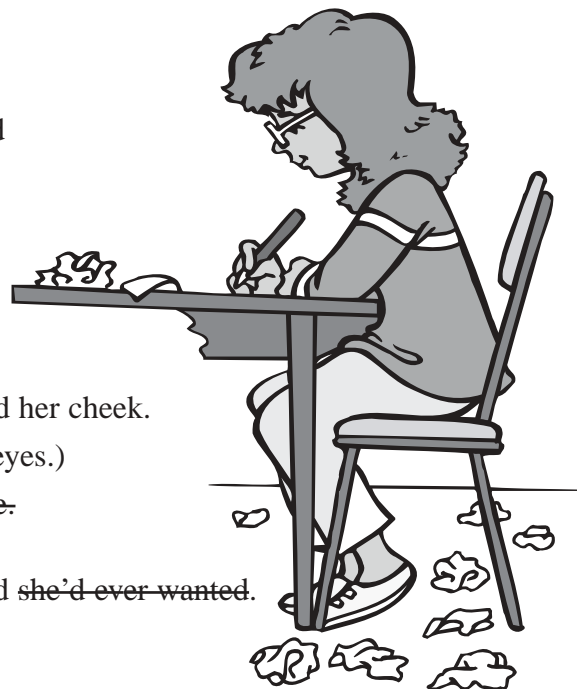
Change—a word you've written to a clearer, more precise word

Add—new ideas and details

Rearrange—the order of your words, sentences or paragraphs

Eliminate—unnecessary words or ideas

Standardize—spelling, grammar and punctuation



Here is an example of each step.

Change: Sue ~~laughed~~ giggled when the ~~dog's~~ puppy's tail touched her cheek.

Add: The puppy was (tiny and) brown. (He had big, friendly eyes.)

Rearrange: ~~Sue had never seen such a cuddly, cute dog in all her life.~~
He was the cutest, cuddliest dog she had ever seen.

Eliminate: She wanted the dog more than anything else in the world ~~she'd ever wanted.~~

Standardize: Please ~~lets~~ let's take him home, " Sue ~~beged~~ begged.

When a writer CARES, it makes a big difference. Your writing will be better!

----- Fold the top of your paper down to this line.-----

Can you remember what the letters in CARE stand for? Let's see. Remember, each one is something you should do when you revise your writing.

C stands for _____

A stands for _____

R stands for _____

E stands for _____

S stands for _____

Student Exercise R-2

A Good Writer CARES

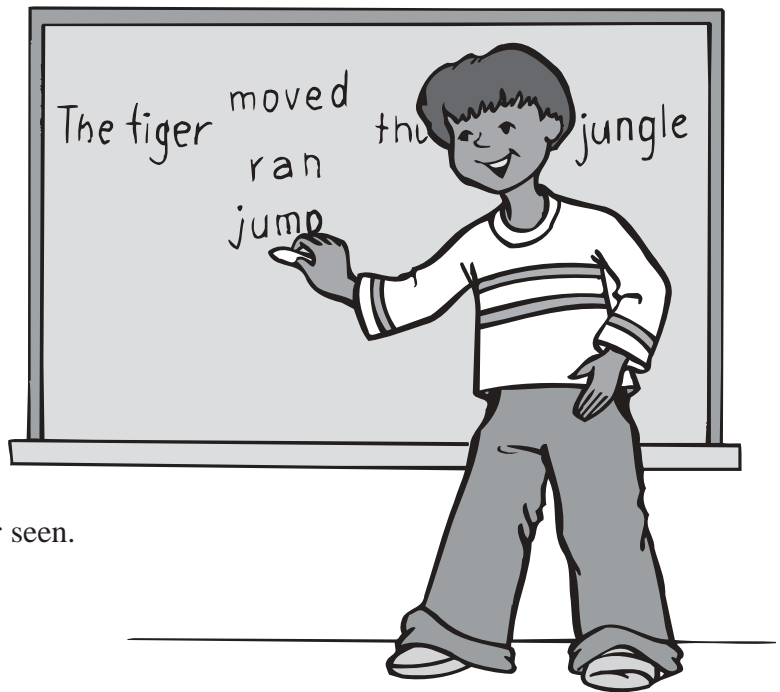
The C in CARES stands for CHANGE.

There can be many different ways to say any one idea. A good writer tries to find the best way. For example, suppose a character in your story looked out a window. You might want to change that word to *stared*, *peeked*, *peered*, *glared* or *glanced*. It would all depend on what was happening in the story. Each word would give your story a slightly different meaning, so it's important to choose just the right one.

After you've written your first draft, read it over carefully. Look for words or phrases that should be changed—changed to make your writing more interesting, or to say what you mean more exactly.

Let's practice changing some words. In each sentence below, change the word(s) in bold to make the sentence more precise and exciting.

1. Bob **ran** up the path to his house.
2. "I never want to see you again," Jill **said**.
3. The **animal** howled at the moon.
4. "Aren't you finished yet?" David **said**.
5. Mr. Edwards turned his car onto the **road**.
6. **I don't like** your new haircut.
7. The tiger **moved** through the jungle.
8. It was the strangest **thing** my family had ever seen.
9. That certainly is a **big** box.
10. "**Wow**," Cynthia shouted.



For these sentences, find one or more words that you want to change. Make each sentence more interesting, more specific or more descriptive.

1. The fire began to burn out of control. _____
2. "I don't believe you one bit," Nancy said. _____
3. Mr. White came into the room with an interesting machine. _____
4. The tall, strong athlete ran around the track. _____
5. She heard a scary sound that came from somewhere in the dark woods. _____

Revising and Rewriting Practice 1

The following story excerpt needs editing. Change words to be more vivid and specific. Add details. Rearrange sentences that are out of order. Eliminate unnecessary words and ideas, and standardize all errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.

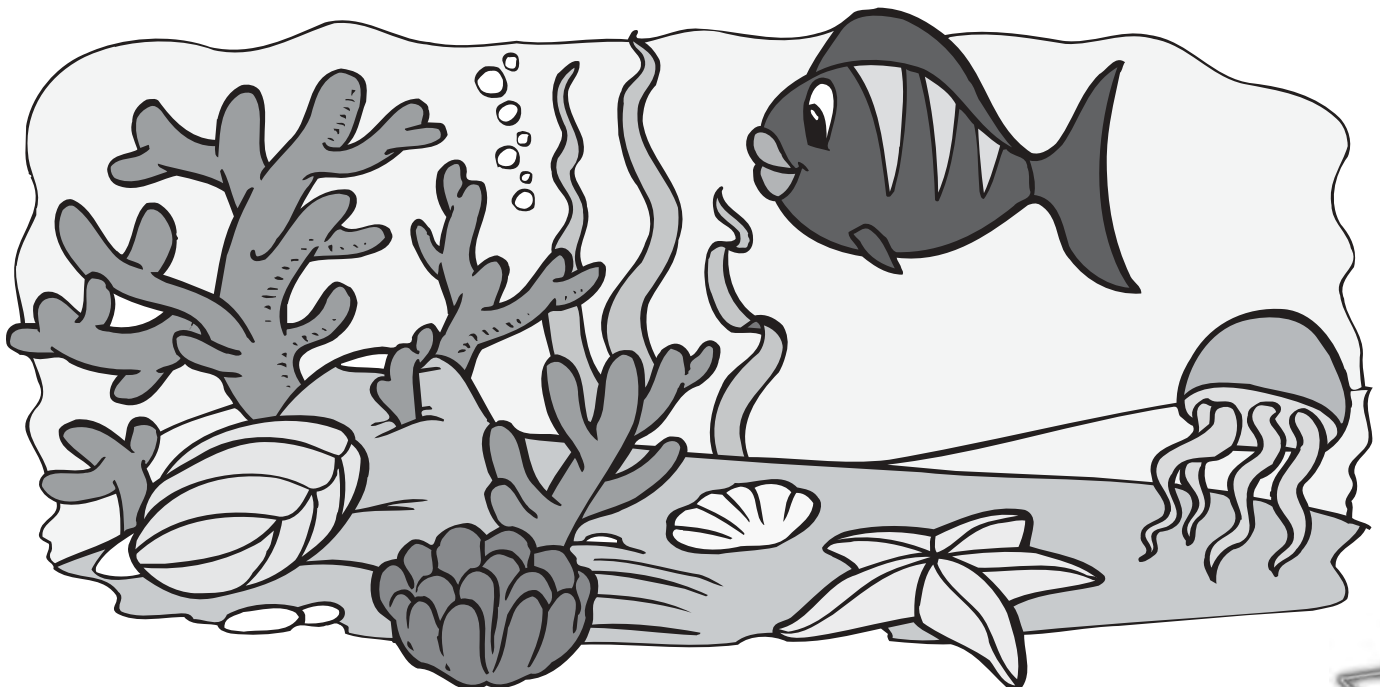
Island Formation

Islands form in a number of different ways. Many islands are volcanic in origin. Undersea volcanos pour out huge amounts of larva, forming undersea mountains that may eventually rise above the surface of the ocean. The Hawaiian Islands and Iceland are both two examples of islands that formed in this way.

Other islands are formed by the growth of coral. Corals are small animals related to jellyfish. They have stinging tentacles that they use to capture pray from the waters around them. Unlike jellyfish, corals live in huge colonies attached to a solid surface. They must live in shallow water, because each animal has special algae—called zooxanthellae—that grow inside it. The algae need sunlight to grow. Zooxanthellae produce much of the food that corals need to survive.

Each coral animal builds a small limestone cups in which it lives. When it dies, the limestone is left behind! Other corals grow on top of it. Over many years, corals build up great reefs. If sea level drops, these reefs are exposed, they become limestone islands. The Bahamas and the Florida keys were created in this way.

Other islands are produced as wind and waves pile up mounds of sand in coastal shallow waters. These barrier islands start as underwater sandbars that waves create in shallow offshore waters. The Island gathers more and more sand carried by the wind and waves. Gradually, the waves may build the sandbar into a new island. Grasses and other plants take root. The plants help hold the sand in place, and create wind-breaks that capture even more sand. Changes in sea level and great storms can also expose or drown barrier islands. Miami beach, the Outer Banks in North Carolina and Atlantic City, New jersey are all barrier islands.



Technical Writing

Teacher Instructions

Technical Writing (Student Exercise T-1) *Can You Get There from Here?* (Student Exercise T-2)

You may want to introduce this activity by bringing in examples of poorly worded or confusing directions for use or assembly from various products. These poor examples will demonstrate how important clear technical writing is. Encourage students to search their own homes for additional examples to share with the class.

Make sure students have a copy of the score sheet (from the Appendix) before they begin their writing, so they know how they will be evaluated ahead of time.

When they have finished writing, ask several students to read their directions aloud. Specifically praise students who have written fully detailed instructions in a logical sequence. Make suggestions for improvement to those who have been insufficiently detailed, given instructions out of order or included unnecessary information. If possible, you may even send students into the hall to test their directions.

Use the Student Exercise T-2 to give students additional practice in writing precise, specific directions.

Additional Direction Writing Activity (no student worksheet)

Have students write another set of directions. You may wish to give them several different choices:

- a. Directions from their home to the school.
- b. Directions from their home to the nearest public library.
- c. Directions from school to the nearest public library.
- d. Directions from school to City Hall.
- e. Directions from home (or school) to their favorite shopping mall.
- f. Directions from the mall parking lot to their favorite store.

After students have finished writing their directions, have them exchange with a partner. Partners should give feedback on whether the directions are clear and understandable, whether all the necessary information is included and whether extra, unnecessary information has been added.

Students should then revise and rewrite a final copy of their directions.

Descriptive Writing

Teacher Instructions

Know Your Apple (no student worksheet)

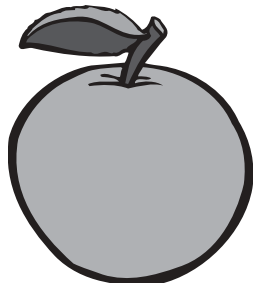
Materials

large bowl
apple (orange, walnut or banana, etc.) for
each student
large roll of paper

Each student takes an apple. Tell them they'll be able to eat the fruit, but not yet.

Have students spend about five minutes carefully examining and "getting to know" their apple. Guide them through the process. Have them look at size, shape, color variations, distinctive markings, etc. Make sure they look at the apple from all perspectives. You might even suggest they think of themselves as a spacecraft orbiting and studying their apple as if it were an asteroid or moon; or examining the apple as if it were a new life form never before found on Earth. They should pay careful attention to any characteristics that make their apple unique and different from all other apples. Soon they will have to pick it out of a crowd.

After students have studied their apples, collect them in the bowl. Unroll a section of paper on a table, and place all the apples on it. Then call students up to find and reclaim their apples, four to five students at a time. (The students will be surprised at how easy this is.)



Next, have each student write a clear, accurate and detailed description of his or her apple—one that will allow someone else to recognize it easily. If time allows, students should revise and write a final version of their description.

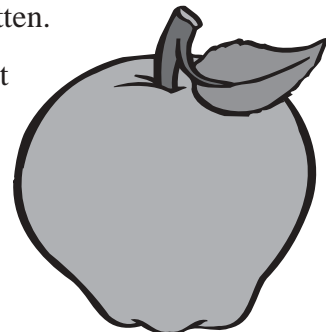
(If your class is larger than 10-12, divide into groups to complete the rest of this activity.)

Make enough numbered spaces on the paper for all the apples. Have students place their apples on one of the spaces when they finish their writing. (If possible, arrange your classroom so that other students won't see the apples as they are placed on the table.)

Once all the apples are on the table, have each student read his or her description. After each reading, everyone else should write down that student's name and the number of the apple they think has been described.

After everyone has had a chance to read, have each student identify his or her apple, and check to see how many others chose it correctly based on the description. The number of students that correctly identified each apple after listening to its description gives students feedback on how accurately their descriptions were written.

Now, students may eat their apples.



Student Exercise D-2

Mystery Box

Choose any ordinary, household object. Write a complete description of the object, without naming it:

What is it made of?

Describe its shape, color and size.

How is it used?

Where would it ordinarily be found?

Turn the information above into a well-organized descriptive paragraph. Remember not to name the object.

After everyone is finished writing, each student should read his or her paragraph to the class. After each reader is finished, everyone else writes down what they think the object is. Once everyone is finished reading, go back and check. The more people who identify your object correctly, the better your descriptive writing must be.