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Introduction

Each book in the *Power Practice*™ series contains dozens of ready-to-use activity pages to provide students with skill practice. Use the fun activities to supplement and enhance what you are already teaching in your classroom. Give an activity page to students as independent class work, or send the pages home as homework to reinforce skills taught in class. An answer key is included at the end of each book to provide verification of student responses.

The activity pages in *Traits of Good Writing Grades 6–8* provide an ideal way to enhance students' writing skills. The book features activities that target six important traits of writing: Ideas and Content, Organization, Voice, Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, and Conventions. These fun and challenging activities give students many opportunities to practice each writing skill in a meaningful way.

As students learn to recognize the traits of good writing, they will brainstorm and develop topics, develop and organize their thoughts and ideas, and then put their writing skills into practice. Students will gain confidence in their writing ability as they enhance grammar and usage skills and gain an awareness of how word choice and sentence development influence their writing. As your young authors establish a style and voice of their own, they will be well on their way to becoming successful and competent writers.

Use these ready-to-go activities to “recharge” skill review and give students the power to succeed!

In the News

STRONG STORY BEGINNINGS

Newspaper articles should begin with a strong lead or opening statement. The lead summarizes the main points of the news story in one or two sentences. News writers often develop the lead by asking themselves the questions *who*, *what*, *why*, *where*, *when*, and *how*. They then put the answers to these questions—or at least the important questions—into the opening of the story.

Read each news article lead. Write **S** on the line if you think the lead is strong. Write **W** if you think the lead is weak.

- _____ 1 Student body president Mindy Oaks told classmates Thursday that the senior fund was broke and the class trip was in jeopardy of being canceled.
- _____ 2 In this article you will find out how the car in the accident drove over the curb and into the house.
- _____ 3 Someone found the fish dead when they arrived at school. The fish belonged to Mr. Sennet. He is the fifth grade teacher. The power went out last night, so that might have been the problem.
- _____ 4 A girl's mountain bike, a helmet, and a tire pump were stolen early Monday morning from the garage of Helen Rodgers, according to Police Chief Albert Miller. The equipment was valued at more than three hundred dollars.
- _____ 5 Coach Carter said the girls played hard. It is too bad that they didn't win. The soccer team only scored one goal yesterday. The team only lost one other game this year. The other team scored four goals. That makes them the girl's soccer team with the most wins in one year.

Look at the leads you identified as strong. Why do you think they were effective in arousing the interest of the reader?

Choose one lead that you felt was NOT effective. Rewrite it to make it effective.

Get the Point!

THESIS STATEMENTS

The **thesis** of an essay states the main points. It helps the reader know what to expect in the passage. The thesis statement presents the main purpose of the writing and sets up the organization of what is to come.

Underline the thesis statement in each paragraph. List the main points from the thesis.

- 1 Many students struggle to keep up with their homework. Some become too involved with other activities, such as spending time with friends, talking on the phone, watching television, or playing video games. Learning how to set priorities, avoid distractions, and create a reward system will help students improve their homework management skills.

What are the three main points of the thesis statement?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

- 2 Kindness is an important and valuable character trait. It makes a person attractive and people generally want to be friends with those who treat them well. You can demonstrate kindness by asking people how they are doing, listening to what they tell you, and thinking of creative ways to help others.

What are the three main points of the thesis statement?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

- 3 Recycling is good for the Earth. Every community needs to have a quality recycling program in place. Creating a recycling program requires carefully analyzing the community's needs, sharing information with all community members, and providing support for people as they begin to recycle in their homes and businesses.

What are the three main points of the thesis statement?

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____

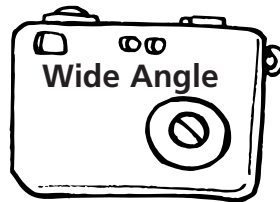
Wide Angle and Close-Up

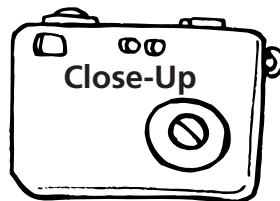
ORGANIZING INFORMATION

Try organizing your writing ideas by focusing on the wide angle shot (big, first-impression details) and then moving to the close-ups (smaller, more intricate details).

Read the details about the room. Categorize each detail as wide angle or close-up. Write each sentence in the correct category.

- A. The bright, lively room was painted a brilliant yellow.
- B. The yellow eraser on the tip of my pencil reminded me of a sunflower.
- C. I could see the dust that had collected between the floor tiles.
- D. I noticed the smell of baking bread all around the room.
- E. The furniture was arranged on the edges of the room, leaving a large space in the middle.
- F. The sunlight sent a warm glow over all the people in the room.
- G. A piece of writing paper peeked out of one closed desk.
- H. A spider had built a web in the corner near the window.





Magnetic Writing

SEQUENCING INFORMATION

How-to writing includes step-by-step procedures. Specific direction words, such as *up, down, left, right*, and number words are important for clarity. Transitional words, such as *first, next, and then*, are important to establish sequence. How-to writing is direct with simple word choice.

Read the journal entry written by a scientist. Translate the list of steps from her science experiment into a paragraph that can be included in a science textbook. You will need to use direction and transitional words to make the paragraph clear.

How to Make Paper Clips Dance

Supplies:

- 4-inch steel bolt
- Nut to fit bolt
- 6.5 feet of bell wire
- two #6 dry cell batteries
- 20 paper clips

Directions:

1. Put nut on bolt end.
2. Beginning 12 inches in on the wire, wrap wire tightly around bolt from the head down.
3. Wrap until you reach the nut.
4. Continue wrapping up and down to achieve three to four layers of wire.
5. Attach an end of wire to one of the posts on top of dry cell battery.
6. Pile paper clips on table.
7. Have assistant touch other end of wire to second terminal while you hold bolt end over paper clips.
8. Watch paper clips “dance.”

Hobby City

CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Paragraphs that describe how someone does something must be written in chronological order so that the reader can track the writer's ideas.

Number each set of sentences so that each set could become a logically ordered paragraph.



The Writer

- _____ At the conference she learned tips about how to get organized, how to write query letters, and how to write book proposals.
- _____ Beverly always wanted to be a writer.
- _____ Within a few years, she was a published writer!
- _____ First, she kept a journal to practice recording her thoughts, ideas, and observations.
- _____ Second, she went to a writer's conference.
- _____ Then, she began to practice her new skills.



The Gardener

- _____ She repeated the steps for all seven terra cotta pots and then beautifully arranged the pots in her garden patio.
- _____ After this, she dug a hole in the center of the soil and gently placed one of the flowers in the hole.
- _____ Deborah drove to Garden Center and purchased soil, flowers, and terra cotta pots.
- _____ She then drove home and put on her gloves and work clothes.
- _____ Then, she filled the pot almost full with soil.
- _____ She carefully filled the rest of the hole with soil and then gingerly watered the flower.
- _____ She carefully lay gravel at the bottom of each pot for proper water drainage.



The Remote Control Pilot

- _____ "Building this plane was a lot of fun!"
- _____ Geoff drove to Hobby Shack.
- _____ Once he finished the wings, he glued the wings to the fuselage.
- _____ Once there, he purchased glue, bolsa wood, Styrofoam, and plastic sheets.
- _____ He drove home to build his remote control airplane.
- _____ After building the fuselage out of bolsa wood, he began to work on the wings.
- _____ For one of the finishing touches, Geoff used a tiny iron to melt the plastic over the bolsa wood, creating a very light, effective aircraft.
- _____ "I'm almost finished," Geoff called out.