

Mini-lesson: Topic and Concluding Sentences

Materials

- Reading and Writing Portfolio
- Chart paper
- Colored card stock cut into sentence strips (5–7 strips per student)
- Colored paper for pockets
- Index cards
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- *Main Ideas and Details* activity sheet (from previous lesson)
- *Topic and Concluding Sentences Graphic Organizer*, page 42

Overview

Students will assemble a paragraph by organizing their ideas using sentence strips; they will learn various ways to start a paragraph with an interesting topic sentence and then write a parallel sentence as a concluding statement. Students will collect interesting topic and concluding sentences and add them to their Reading and Writing Portfolios.

Planning

Have enough sentence strips available for every student to have five to seven each. Use one color for the topic and closing sentence strips, and a different color for the details sentence strips. Cut colored paper into squares that will fit into the Reading and Writing Portfolio.

Procedure

Modeling

1. Have students refer to their *Main Ideas and Details* activity sheets. Review the types of details students used to describe their topics: definitions and descriptions, causes and effects, and comparisons. Have students circle or highlight the topic, as they will use this same topic for the following activity.
2. Distribute copies of the *Topic and Concluding Sentences Graphic Organizer* to students. In the top left box, ask students to write their topic from the previous lesson.
3. Have students look at Box 1, “Proper Noun.” On chart paper, ask students to help you co-construct a definition of a proper noun. Have students brainstorm examples of proper nouns and then write the definition of a proper noun in their own words on their graphic organizers. Ask students to write a topic sentence about their topic that starts with a proper noun.
4. Have students look at Box 2, “Verb.” On chart paper, ask students to help you co-construct a definition of a verb. Have students brainstorm examples of verbs, and then write the definition in their own words on their graphic organizers. Ask students to write a sentence about their topic that starts with a verb.
5. Repeat step 3 for Box 3, “Adjective.”

Guided Practice

6. Tell students to refer to the *Main Ideas and Details* activity sheet. Have them write each of their detail sentences, one per sentence strip.
7. Give students a few minutes to organize their detail sentences by moving their sentences around. Ask students to try different orders until they find the one that they think makes the most sense. Ask students to explain their choice on the graphic organizer.
8. Tell them to choose one sentence from the graphic organizer to be their topic sentence and to write that sentence on one of the two remaining sentence strips. Have them place this strip above the details.
9. Ask students to evaluate if their paragraph makes sense by turning to a partner to read aloud. Students may decide to reorder their sentences after discussion with a peer.
10. When students are pleased with their paragraphs, tell them they still need a concluding sentence. The concluding sentence must match the topic sentence. For example, if the topic sentence started with a verb, then the concluding sentence should also start with a verb. The verb should be a synonym of the first verb. In other words, the concluding sentence should not be the same sentence as the topic. Help students restate the topic sentence, not repeat it using Box 4.

Independent Practice

11. Give students time to write out their paragraphs, either on paper or using a computer.
12. Have students glue two colored squares into their Reading and Writing Portfolios to serve as pockets. Tell them to label one pocket “Topic Sentences” and the other pocket “Concluding Sentences.”
13. Have students interview at least three other peers and copy their topic and concluding sentences onto index cards. Have them circle and identify whether the sentence started with proper nouns, verbs, or adjectives. Ask students to keep the sentences in the pockets.
14. Tell students that as they read nonfiction text, they can collect interesting topic sentences and concluding sentences and write them on index cards to keep in the pockets. Encourage them to circle and identify the first words of these sentences. These will serve as references for future writing projects.

Extension

Post interesting topic and concluding sentences on a poster in the room, and encourage students to add sentences to the class collection. Students can use any sentence from the class collection or their own collections as model topic and concluding sentences when they write.

Formative Assessment

If students struggle with...	Consider practicing these prerequisite skills:
recognizing verbs, proper nouns, adjectives	parts of speech, grammar rules, and language conventions