

# Generating Ideas for Writing Using a Sketch Journal — Kindergarten

## Ohio Standards Connections

### **Writing Process**

**Benchmark A**  
Generate ideas for written compositions.  
(Grades Pre-Kindergarten - 2)

**Indicator 1**  
Generate writing ideas through discussions with others.  
(Grade Kindergarten)

**Indicator 2**  
Choose a topic for writing.  
(Grade Kindergarten)

### **Lesson Summary:**

*Students will use a Sketch Journal to symbolically represent, through drawing and/or writing, ideas from which to choose a topic for a dictated or written composition.*

**Estimated Duration:** 70 minutes broken down into short sessions.

### **Commentary:**

Children are experiential learners. For some, as they mature into adults, this preference can shift. For others, the preference persists. Whatever or whomever the case, it never totally disappears. It remains a powerful and attractive way to learn throughout life. This is one reason why this lesson has significance. It is based on the power of experiential learning and uses this power to introduce kindergartners to the world of writing and idea development. The research that supports instructing students in writing for authentic purposes is extensive. The more authentic the purpose, the more relevant or experiential the stimulus for writing will be. The more authentic the purpose, the greater the likelihood young writers will successfully develop their ideas.

This writing process lesson is about stimulating idea development in beginning writers, helping them internalize the abstract and helping them turn it into the concrete – written descriptions of the objects, events and places surrounding them.



Teachers who used this lesson during its field test found it most beneficial when used at the start of the school year. This is when the children will be the least acquainted with writing. A companion strength of the lesson is the way it guides the students into producing a journal that can serve as the perfect centerpiece for conversation among young writers – a centerpiece for idea development.

### **Pre-Assessment:**



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## **Other Related Ohio Standards**

### **Writing Applications**

#### **Benchmark A**

Compose writings that convey a clear message and include well-chosen details.

(Grades Pre-Kindergarten - 2)

#### **Indicator 1**

Dictate or write simple stories, using letters, words or pictures. (Grade Kindergarten)

#### **Indicator 4**

Dictate or write informal writings for various purposes. (Grade Kindergarten)

Given a direct experience and a discussion with others, the student generates three ideas and chooses one about which to draw a picture and dictate or write a composition.

### **Scoring Guidelines:**

3 = Student generates three ideas and chooses one as a topic for a dictated or written composition.

2 = Student generates two ideas and chooses one as a topic for a dictated or written composition.

1 = Student generates one idea and uses it as a topic for a dictated or written composition.

0 = Student generates no ideas and is unable to dictate or write a composition.

### **Post-Assessment:**

Given a direct experience and a discussion with others, the student will be able to generate three ideas and choose one about which to draw a picture and dictate or write a composition.

### **Scoring Guidelines:**

3 = Student generates three ideas and chooses one as a topic for a dictated or written composition.

2 = Student generates two ideas and chooses one as a topic for a dictated or written composition.

1 = Student generates one idea and uses it as a topic for a dictated or written composition.

0 = Student generates no ideas and is unable to dictate or write a composition.

### **Instructional Procedures:**

1. **Meeting Time #1** (15 minutes). Students gather together on the floor in a large group meeting area. Tell students that you want to write a letter tonight to a friend about the classroom. State that you cannot write about everything in the classroom and that you will need to look carefully at the classroom. State that you will need to draw some pictures and take some notes to help you remember what to put in the letter.
2. Take the students on an Idea Walk around the classroom. The students observe you as you model "thinking aloud". Draw quick primary sketches of areas and items of special interest using drawing paper attached to a clipboard. Ask students to note that you are only making a sketch, an outline and not a drawing with a lot of details. Ask students to help you with the spelling of some words, and use the students' approximations to encourage and affirm their efforts at independent transitional spelling.
3. Tell students that you are going to take the paper home and write a letter to your friend and will read the letter to the class the next day.
4. Tell students that they are going on an Idea Walk through the school playground. On their walk, they will be stopping periodically to draw

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pictures and write notes about anything that is interesting to them. They are to find at least three things of interest and sketch a picture of each. After this explanation, show the students an example of a Sketch Journal and inform them that a Sketch Journal has been prepared for each student. Tell them that students will find different things of interest on their Idea Walk. You could add, "Billy you might draw about the slide, but Jennifer might draw about the seesaw." Tell them that upon returning to the classroom they will talk about what they saw, use drawing paper to draw a more complete picture of one of their sketches and later dictate or write a story about it.

5. Idea Walk (20 minutes). Escort students outdoors to the playground.
6. Distribute Sketch Journals with a student's name written on each one and a pencil to each student.
7. On their journey through the school playground, stop the students at different locations and give them opportunities to sketch and write about what they see. Remind them that they are gathering ideas that they will use in their story.
8. Meeting Time #2 (20 minutes). Upon returning to the classroom, invite students to sit on the floor in the large meeting area.
9. One by one, give each student the opportunity to look through his/her Sketch Journal and choose a page to share with the other students.
10. Have each student share with the class. (When sharing, invite students to stand near you at the front of the room.) Ask each student to talk about three things on the playground that he/she put in the Sketch Journal and to choose just one thing about which he/she will make a more complete drawing and dictate or write a story. Ask the student to explain why he/she chose that to draw and write about. (For instance, a student might say, "I'm going to draw about the swings because my favorite thing is to swing high and close my eyes." Or a student might say, "Swings remind me of the time I went to the park with my grandpa and he pushed me up high on the swings.")
11. Tell students that they are going to draw and dictate or write a story about what they saw. Mention they can also dictate or write about other ideas that came to them as they went on the Idea Walk, like the student's memory of the time he was at the park with his grandpa.
12. Work Time (15 minutes). Ask students to return to their tables. Distribute drawing paper and utensils (i.e., colored pencils, colored felt-tip pens, crayons) and ask students to make their drawings.
13. Upon completion of their drawings, have students write or dictate to an adult (teacher/aide/parent volunteer) a sentence or two about their drawing. The adult then writes each dictation at the bottom of the student's drawing. The adult and the student read the dictation or writing.
14. Collect students' drawings and compile them into a class book to be placed in the Library Center.
15. Encourage students to save and add to their Sketch Journals. This will continue to give the students a wealth of ideas for future dictation or writing.

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## **Differentiated Instructional Support:**

Instruction is differentiated according to learner needs, to help all learners either meet the intent of the specified indicator(s) or, if the indicator is already met, to advance beyond the specified indicator(s).

- For the student who generates no ideas and is unable to dictate or write a composition, ask the student at the conclusion of the next two school days to name three things he/she liked doing at school that day; to pick the one he or she liked the best and to tell why. Then tell the student to take the Sketch Journal home and draw a picture of his or her three objects or ideas of interest, circling the one he or she likes the best. Upon returning to school, ask the student to tell you about the circled picture. Ask the student to dictate a sentence about the picture that you write in the Sketch Journal and the student "reads".
- For the student who generates three ideas and chooses one as a topic for a dictated or written composition, ask him or her to draw a picture that includes an elaboration of the three sketches completed on the Idea Walk. The student then dictates to an adult (teacher, aide or parent volunteer) a sentence or two about each picture. The adult and student read the dictation together.

## **Extension:**

Upon returning from a field trip (i.e., post office, zoo or supermarket) or a school concert or program, students use their Sketch Journals to sketch a picture of three objects or ideas they liked best. Students select one picture to turn into a more elaborate drawing and about which to write or dictate a sentence or two.

## **Homework Options and Home Connections:**

Inform parents or guardians that there are many ways they can help their children learn to write. Provide parents with the following list of suggestions:

- Have your child work alongside you when you are writing letters or shopping lists, filling out forms or helping siblings with their homework. Talk to your child about the writing you are doing.
- Point out writing at the shops, in the advertising that arrives in your letterbox, on road signs or at your child's favorite fast-food restaurant, and talk about this print.
- Encourage your child to add his/her "bit," ... to the letters you write to relatives. If a relative puts in a "kiddy message" in the reply, don't just read it to the child. Show the child the written message.
- When you leave messages for the family, perhaps with magnetic letters on the fridge door, let your child help you make them.

From *Writing Begins At Home: Preparing Children for Writing Before They Go to School* by Marie Clay. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann Publishers, 1987, p.50.

## **Materials/Resources Needed:**

*For the teacher:* A clipboard and paper.

*For the students:* Pencils, Sketch Journals (one per student) constructed from six sheets of drawing paper stapled together with each student's name written on the front cover.



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