



Teacher Created Resources®

WRITING

LESSONS

Grades
3-4





Begin a Story with a Sound Word

Writers sometimes use sound words at the beginning of a story to grab the reader's attention. A sound word imitates the sound an object makes.

Sound Words

roar drip buzz meow crack smash crunch ring
boom beep squeak snap hiss crash creak pop

Independently Write an opening paragraph that begins with a sound word.

A. Choose a sound word to begin a story. Use any sound word of your choice or find a word from the list above. Don't choose a sound word that you have used before.

I chose the word _____ because _____
_____.

B. Write down things, people, or animals that make the sound of the word you chose.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

C. Write opening sentences for two of the topics in the above list.

1. _____ ! _____
2. _____ ! _____

D. Select the best opening sentence for your paragraph. Write an opening paragraph with your topic using the sound word you chose. Your sound must always make sense with the topic you are writing about.

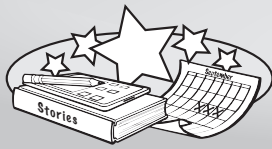
_____ ! _____

Check Your Work

Does the sound word make sense with the topic?

Does the sound word catch the attention of the reader?

Whole Group Share your paragraph with the class.



Begin a Story with a Question

A writer can begin a story with a question to trigger the reader's interest and curiosity. Starting with a question will have the reader wondering what will happen next.

Independently Write an opening paragraph using any question of your choice or find a question from the list below.

List of Questions

Where did I go wrong?	<i>Think — Did you get a bad grade or make a mistake?</i>
Did I win or lose?	<i>Think — Was it a race or a science fair project?</i>
What should I do?	<i>Think — How could you solve a problem?</i>
Why didn't I listen?	<i>Think — Did you get in trouble?</i>
Is this really happening?	<i>Think — Did you see something strange?</i>

A. Write the question you will use to begin your paragraph.

B. Now make a list of events to include in the paragraph. The events should be written in the order they will happen in the paragraph.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 4. _____ |

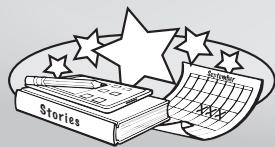
C. Write an opening paragraph, beginning with the question and including the events above. Your question should have the reader wondering, "What's next?" Don't forget to use a question mark at the end of your sentence.

Check Your Work

Will the opening question spark the interest of the reader?

Do your details support the opening question?

Whole Group Share your question opener with the class.



Begin a Story with Dialogue

Dialogue is the exact words that a character is thinking or saying. Dialogue can be funny, serious, or inspirational. Starting a story with dialogue sparks the reader's interest.

Dialogue Words

whispered	screamed	exclaimed	announced	replied
laughed	screeched	yelled	explained	cried
answered	repeated	shouted	gasped	sighed

Dialogue Examples

"What was that?" the crowd gasped. Think — Did a spaceship just land?

I cried, "We're on our way!" Think — Are you going on vacation?

"Watch out," shouted the lifeguard. Think — Was there a shark in the ocean?

I exclaimed, "We have arrived!" Think — Did you want to be noticed?

Independently Begin a paragraph with dialogue.

A. Choose dialogue to begin a paragraph you will write. Use any dialogue of your choice or use dialogue from the examples above. Place quotation marks before and after what the character is saying.

B. Why did you choose that dialogue?

I chose that dialogue because _____

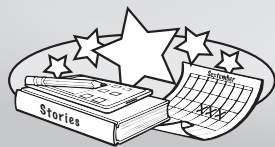
C. Write an opening paragraph beginning with the dialogue. Don't forget to put quotation marks before and after the exact words of the character.

Check Your Work

Will the dialogue get the attention of the reader?

Can you picture the character saying the dialogue?

Whole Group Share your dialogue with the class.



Begin a Story with Setting

The setting of a story tells when and where the story takes place. Writers use settings to open stories in order to set the mood and to place the reader immediately in the story.

Remember: A preposition is a word that tells time or place.

Prepositions

above	beneath	under	by	to	over
at	around	in	across	behind	before
below	on	against	between	up	about

Opening Sentences

After the carnival, Kubair and his friends decided to walk home.

Beyond the parking lot, Alexis saw the finish line.

During the test, the fire alarm started to blare.

Beneath my bed, I saw something strange.

Independently Write an opening paragraph using a setting sentence.

A. Choose a setting opener from the box or create one to begin your paragraph.

B. Make a list of events to include in the paragraph. The events should be written in the order they will appear in the paragraph.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 4. _____ |

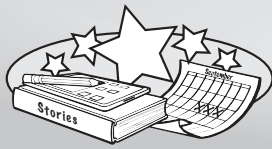
C. Write an opening paragraph with the setting opener and the events from above. The opening sentence should place the reader immediately in the story.

Check Your Work

Can you visualize the character in the setting?

Does the setting create a mood for the reader?

Whole Group Share your opening sentence with the class.



Connect Beginning Ideas

Transitional words and phrases are used at the beginning of the second paragraph to connect the opening paragraph to the events that follow. Transitions show the sequence in a story, enabling the reader to follow and make sense of the events.

Beginning Transitional Words and Phrases

first	to start with	now	originally
first of all	to begin with	once	for one thing
at first	in the beginning	initially	before

Independently Write a second paragraph with a transition.

A. Read the opening paragraph. Then think about what could happen next.

Bam! Brandon threw his textbooks on the table. In class that day, his teacher had assigned a five-page, typed report. The worst part about the whole thing was that it was due the following Friday.

B. Choose a transitional word or phrase to begin the next paragraph and write it here. Use the list of beginning transitional words to help you.

D. Make a list of events to include in the paragraph. The events should be written in the order they will appear in the paragraph.

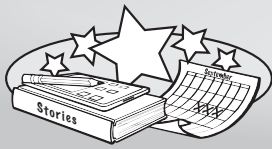
- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 4. _____ |

E. Write the second paragraph beginning with the sentence that you chose and the events you listed.

Check Your Work

Are your ideas flowing from one paragraph to the next?

Whole Group Share your transition sentence with the class.



Close a Story with a Memory

A writer can end a story with a memory to remind the reader of important earlier events. The reader will have a lasting impression of the story when it ends with a memory.

Memory Words and Phrases

always remember	recall	never forget	reminds me
looking back	remind	brings to mind	think of
memorable	unforgettable	call to mind	remember

Memory Closings

What happened today will always remind me of how lucky I am.
 Being chosen to be the captain of my team was very memorable.
 It was an unforgettable day at the amusement park.
 I will always remember the time I hit a home run to win the game.
 Crystal will have a wonderful memory of her first day of school.

Independently Write a closing paragraph, ending it with a memory. You may use any of the memory closings above or write your own using the list of memory words and phrases. The closing should be about something special and memorable.

A. Write the memory closing sentence for your paragraph.

B. Now make a list of events to include in the paragraph. The events should be written in the order they will happen in the paragraph.

1. _____

3. _____

2. _____

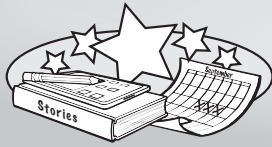
4. _____

C. Write an ending paragraph with the memory closing and events you wrote above. Remember to begin with a transitional word or phrase, such as *finally*, *at last*, *in conclusion*, or *in the end*.

Check Your Work

Will the ending be memorable?

Whole Group Share your memory closing with the class.



Close a Story with a Decision

A writer can end a story with a decision based on a lesson that was learned. A decision at the end of a story gives the reader a chance to agree or disagree with the choice that was made.

Independently Write a closing paragraph that ends with a decision. You may write your own using the list of decision words and phrases or use any of the decision closings below.

Decision Words and Phrases

resolve	made up my mind	this time	after what happened
determine	because of that	I will never	from now on
concluded	therefore, I decided	I will always	as a result

Decision Closings

Therefore, I decided to play soccer instead of hockey...

Richard made up his mind to throw away the things he did not need...

From now on, Helen will listen to her teacher...

A. Write the decision closing for your paragraph.

Why do you think this is the best decision closing?

I think this is the best closing because _____.

B. Now make a list of events to include in the paragraph. The events should be written in the order they will happen in the paragraph.

1. _____

3. _____

2. _____

4. _____

C. Write an ending paragraph with the decision closing you chose and the events you listed. Remember to begin your closing paragraph with a transitional word or phrase, such as *finally*, *at last*, *in conclusion*, or *in the end*.

Check Your Work

Did you remember to begin your closing paragraph with a transitional word or phrase?

Whole Group Share your decision closing with the class.



Close a Story with a Wish

A writer can choose to end a story with a wish so the character can look forward to something meaningful. A wish at the closing of a story has the reader looking forward to a happy ending.

Wish Words and Phrases

my dream	I wish	hopefully	I want	in my daydreams
I hope I get	if only I	I am hopeful	imagine	look forward to
wish for	I hope	my desire	I intend	with any luck

Wish Closings

Someday, I wish I could have a pet.
 I intend to get all As on my next report card.
 With any luck, my class will win Field Day.
 My goal is to be a better friend.

Independently Write a closing paragraph that ends with a wish.

A. Write the wish closing for your paragraph. You may use any of the wish closings above or write your own wish closing using the list of wish sentences.

B. Now make a list of events to include in the paragraph.

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 3. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 4. _____ |

C. Write an ending paragraph with the wish closing you chose and the events you listed. The closing should be a wish that a character would make for the future. Remember to begin your closing paragraph with a transitional word or phrase, such as *finally*, *at last*, *in conclusion*, or *in the end*.

Check Your Work

Does your wish have the reader looking forward to a happy ending for the character?

Did you begin your closing paragraph with a transition?

Whole Group Share your wish with the class.



Close a Story with a Feeling

When you express happiness or sadness you are showing your feelings. A writer can close a story with a feeling so that the reader understands the emotions of the characters at the end of the story.

Feeling Words

curious	embarrassed	brave	lucky	scared
angry	proud	afraid	furious	happy
sad	shy	guilty	impatient	nervous
delighted	upset	confused	silly	excited

Feeling Closings

Devin was very confused by what his friend had done.

Matthew was embarrassed about what had happened at the game.

Dyana felt brave because she had confronted the bully.

Arriving so late to the surprise party made Jason feel ridiculous.

Independently Write a closing paragraph that ends with a feeling.

A. Write the feeling closing for your paragraph. You may use any of the feeling closings above or write your own using the list of feeling words and phrases.

B. Now make a list of events to include in the paragraph. The events should be written in the order they will happen in the paragraph.

1. _____ 3. _____

2. _____ 4. _____

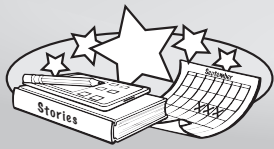
C. Write an ending paragraph with the feeling closing you chose and the events you listed. Remember to begin your closing paragraph with a transitional word or phrase.

Check Your Work

Does your closing express the character's feelings?

Did you begin your closing paragraph with a transition?

Whole Group Share your feeling closing with the class.



Story Ideas



Can't think of an idea for a story? Try one of these.

You could write about...

giving a special gift to someone
having a dream
being president
going fishing
a play date with your friend
being a hero
your favorite school activity
becoming a rock star
creating a new game
a family holiday
a day at an amusement park
a favorite TV character
an alien encounter
giving advice to a friend
your favorite book
becoming famous
being a character in a book
planning a party
something you really want to do
being in an earthquake
an argument with a friend

a favorite vacation
a snowy day
a sick day from school
buying the perfect gift
your worst vacation
being an astronaut
being the principal
inventing something
going to camp
going to the beach
finding money
learning something new
performing in a play
a huge hole appearing in your yard
being the star in a show
a talking plant
winning a prize
a hike in the woods
breaking something
a mysterious sight in the sky
