

Teaching with Picture-Prompted Writing: Sample Mini-Lesson

Picture-prompted writing is a core CraftPlus strategy. Any K-8 teacher can use pictures to prompt any type of writing demonstration (modeled, shared, interactive, parallel, or guided writing). Students use picture prompts for practice-writing and assessed pieces.

For both practice pieces and assessed pieces, primary grade-children prefer photos cut from magazines and glued to their papers. Students in grades 3-8 can use pictures cut from magazines or numbered, reusable photocard collections for practice and assessment.

This sample picture-prompted writing mini-lesson sequence for Strong Verbs walks you through a lesson. It follows the CraftPlus Mini-Lesson sequence explained earlier in Section 1 of the CraftPlus Curriculum Guide. Use this as a guide, not a script.

Materials:

- Examples of the Target Skill taken from literature read earlier during class.
- CraftPlus Photocard Library or teacher-made photocards.
- Chart paper or overhead transparency and markers.
- Pencils and student writing paper. (See the CD included in the Curriculum Guide for computer-generated greenbar paper master.)

Strong Verbs

Initial Mini-Lesson

(Some suggested questions and asides to students are in italics.)

Introduce the Concept (Awareness)

Introduce students to the selected Target Skill by pointing out how various authors have used it.

- Take a few minutes to review examples of Target Skills-writing craft in books read earlier to the students. *Listen for strong verbs as I reread passages from some familiar books. Show me a 'thumbs up' when you hear a strong verb.*
- Discuss with students how the Target Skill enhances writing. Encourage students to share how an author helped them visualize. *Good writers help their readers to visualize. Strong verbs are one of a writer's most powerful imagery tools. They help your reader see what you are writing about.*

Try It Out Orally

- Use the pre-selected pictures to practice the Target Skill out loud. Invite the students to signal a 'thumbs up' when they hear the Target Skill and a 'thumbs down' when it is not demonstrated.
- After a few examples, distribute the pictures and have the students practice using the focus Target Skill out loud with a partner or in small groups. (In K-1, it's usually most effective to keep the students in a single group that tries out the Target Skill on a few teacher-selected pictures. Make sure students voice complete thoughts when they respond to a picture prompt.)
- Encourage the students to use the Target Skill with several different pictures. Ask students to select a favorite example and bring the picture back to the whole group. As students share examples, you can make a class chart listing what the students share.

AFTER Mini-lesson – Practice and Application

At their seats during independent writing, suggest that they try out using strong verbs in the writing they are working on. *Why not try using some strong verbs in the piece you are working on today? .*

Follow-Up Mini-Lesson-Written Demonstration – Picture-Prompted Writing

Review the Target Skill from the previous day's lesson. *Why is it important for you as a writer to write with strong verbs? How does it help your reader?*

Try It Out In Writing

Use modeled writing the first time you introduce picture-prompted writing. After students are familiar with picture-prompted writing for Target Skills-practice you can use other forms of writing demonstrations such as shared writing or parallel writing.

- Begin modeled writing. Think aloud as you select a picture to write about in your modeled writing. *Let's see. I'm going to use strong verbs in my writing today. I need to select a picture that I know something about and that shows action.* Then show a couple of pictures and think aloud to model how they reason out whether they will work or not.
- At the top of your paper, draw a target and identify the Target Skill on which you are focusing. [[Write down the picture's number if you are using purchased photocards. Write your Target Skill sentences while your students watch. Think aloud as you write. Model-write to match the ability of your students. When you have finished, reread your piece to the class, asking them to signal 'thumbs-up' each time they hear the Target Skill used.
- Review how you selected the picture you used for your model. Model that you asked two questions as you searched for a picture: :
 1. Do I know enough about what's happening in the picture to write about it?
 2. Is it a good picture for the Target Skill?

After students have selected a photo provide time for oral practice with self selected pictures. Students who are having difficulty applying the Target Skill may work with you in a small group for further instruction and practice during independent writing time.

AFTER Mini-lesson – Practice and Application

- Students take the pictures with them to their seats and begin writing. Circulate around the room, conferring with students as needed. Observe how many students seem to be successfully using the Target Skill.
- Meet with a small group of students for additional instruction and practice.
- Wrap up today's writing workshop by pointing out a few of the good things you noticed students doing. Remind students that they will all have a chance to share their pieces during the next writing workshop.

Follow-Up Mini-Lesson - Student Examples from Picture Prompted Writing

Review the Target Skill if you noticed several students were having difficulty applying it in their independent writing. Provide an opportunity for students to check their pieces for the writing craft and revise for the Target Skill before continuing. Peer conferences can be very effective for older students.

More Models – Share more examples illustrating the Target Skill, adding each new example to the chart.

- Giving a writer time to share his piece and get a response from the audience is a very important part of practice with Target Skills. You can structure sharing and response in whole groups, in teacher-directed small groups, in student-led small groups, or in pairs. For the youngest writers in kindergarten and first grade, sharing and response is generally most effective when it is teacher-led.
- Add student's examples of Target Skill-use to class chart.

Assessment Mini-Lesson

Apply Target Skill in Writing

- Teacher selects a picture and model-writes for Target Skill at her students' writing level (Initial, Developing, Fluent, and Fluent Plus). Think aloud as you write and revise for Target Skill use.

AFTER Mini-lesson--Assessment

- Students demonstrate use of the Target Skill in assigned picture-prompted writing. (See the CraftPlus rubric for single or multiple Target Skills to assess writing at the end of this section)

Record Target Skill use for individual students. See "CraftPlus Supporting Templates and Forms" in Section 3 of the CraftPlus Curriculum Guide.

- Grades K-5: *Student Assessment Record of Target Skill Application.*
- Grades 4-5: choose *Student Assessment Record of Target Skill Application* or *Student Assessment of Target Skills by Genre Block: Class Roster.*
- Middle-School Grades: *Student Assessment Record of Target Skills by Genre Block: Class Roster.*