

Grade 6 ▶

Unit Four

PRE-INSTRUCTION CHECKLIST

MECHANICS	ACQUAINTANCE & ANALYSIS
<input type="checkbox"/> previously taught skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Narrative
	WRITING ON DEMAND
	<input type="checkbox"/> ongoing, all disciplines

PATTERN STATEMENT

How something is conveyed influences how it is received.

NOTES

This skill requires significant thinking and imagination. The writer must recognize places where a character is being described—where the reader is being told about the character—and transform those passages by making the character active in ways that reveal the same traits. For example, Rather than writing, “Mr. Fezner was cold when he was in the cellar,” the writer may write, “Mr. Fezner shivered as he opened the cellar door.” The writer must recognize where he is *telling* and transform such sections into *showing*. Showing generally provides the reader with a more exciting and interesting experience. How the writer conveys the information will influence how the reader responds. The first step in the revision skill, recognizing telling, may be the most difficult part for young writers. Be sure to demonstrate with several examples, especially in the CO-ap activities.

Narrative is a perfect genre for practicing this skill. Consider reading several examples of the genre to students and pointing out when and how the author shows what could have been less interestingly told. Several great illustrated books, such as *My Great Aunt Arizona* by Gloria Houston, *Mr. George Baker* by Amy Hest, and *Miss Rumphius* by Barbara Cooney, provide good examples.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

This skill will likely be new to students, even if they’ve been working in Writer’s Stylus for several years. The genre focus will be more familiar.

The pattern, How something is conveyed influences how it is received, can be illustrated by “arranging” to have several items delivered to the classroom while students are present to witness the delivery. Some items should arrive in a less-than-desirable way—e.g., a pizza that has been carried upside down during delivery, a new electronic toy that arrives without an essential piece, a CD or DVD that arrives cracked. Others should arrive in a way that generates excitement—e.g., tasty-looking and whole cookies, a new gizmo with all the required components (including batteries), a new book in “mint condition” (EX-ex). Have the students consider the various items and their delivery and respond to the following questions:

- Describe how each item arrived.
- What caused the differences?
- How did we respond to each item?
- What caused the differences?
- How could the items that did not arrive in an exciting form have been transported so that they were more exciting for us to receive?



Using the students' responses as a reference, suggest that two major ideas seem evident: how something was conveyed, and how something was received (EX-co). Use questioning to guide students to the pattern statement, *How something is conveyed influences how it is received* (EX-el). (NOTE: You may have to define convey for the students [to transport or carry to a place; to communicate], but it is a perfect term for the pattern.) Engage the students in identifying other illustrations of

the pattern. For example, a person who shares something willingly vs. a person who shares something grudgingly; a delivery of flowers carefully transported vs. flowers thrown into a van and dropped on the way to the door; bad news delivered by a gloating enemy vs. bad news delivered by a friend. Be sure the examples range from the concrete to the more abstract (EX-ap). Explain that the pattern can also be illustrated in writing. Proceed to the COmprehension strand.

REVISION SKILLS

SHOWING NOT TELLING			
Objective		Checklist	
With teacher prompting and support, student reviews the portrayal of characters within a narrative or biographical draft and identifies ways "characteristics" can be shown rather than stated and makes the desired revisions.		<input type="checkbox"/> Read the draft to identify sentences/paragraphs/sections that explain something. <input type="checkbox"/> Ask yourself if it is possible to show the same ideas through action or dialogue. If so, make the revisions that entrust the reader to reach appropriate conclusions.	
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing features no examples of stated character traits that would be better shown through the character's actions or dialogue. ▶ The narrative's characters are well-developed and possess consistent traits throughout the text. ▶ Revision may improve the narrative but issues of showing not telling have been effectively addressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing features no examples of stated character traits that would be better shown through the character's actions or dialogue. ▶ A few examples of showing a character's traits seem forced or inconsistent. ▶ Revisions would improve the narrative by maintaining consistency in the characters' traits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing features few examples of stated character traits that would be better shown through the character's actions or dialogue. ▶ Some examples of showing a character's traits seem forced or inconsistent. ▶ Revisions would improve the narrative by revealing the characters through more showing and less telling, and/or by maintaining consistency in the characters' traits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing features several examples of stated character traits that would be better shown through the character's actions or dialogue, AND/OR several examples of showing a character's traits seem forced or inconsistent. ▶ Revising the text so that the author does more showing and less telling would significantly improve the narrative.

GENRE

NARRATIVE			
Definition		Objective	
<p>Though often used interchangeably with story, narrative presents a "slice of life," often related to an element of nature (e.g., Spring) or a person. It tells about something or someone in a creative way without the story element of plot. For example: <i>Great Grandma Frances loved the outdoors. "There's no place closer to heaven than a garden on a sunny day," she always told me. Even her clothing displayed her love of gardens. Flowers bloomed on her skirts, blouses, and even socks!</i></p> <p>Published examples include <i>My Great Aunt Arizona</i> by Gloria Houston and <i>Mr. George Baker</i> by Amy Hest.</p>		<p>With teacher prompting, student writes a narrative focused on a person, place, or event but without relating a story (i.e., does not include a problem, rising action, resolution, or other story-specific elements) (e.g., narrative about a grandmother in which the reader gains a sense of the person through the writer's characterization).</p>	
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing presents a narrative focused on a person, place, or event through a minimal story or without relating a story. Plot is not the focus. ▶ Text includes significant traits of the text's focus, giving the reader a feeling of knowing the text's subject deeply. ▶ Revision may make minor improvements to the narrative. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing presents a narrative focused on a person, place, or event through a minimal story or without relating a story. Plot is not the focus. ▶ Some, not all, selected traits highlighted by the writer reveal significant characteristics of the person, place, or event that is the text's focus. This gives the reader a feeling of somewhat knowing the text's subject. ▶ Revision could improve the narrative by highlighting or further developing significant traits of the main subject. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing presents a narrative focused on a person, place, or event through a minimal story or without relating a story. Plot is not the focus. ▶ Text lacks depth in its development of its subject. Traits that are highlighted fail to give the reader a feeling of knowing the person, place, or event that is the text's focus. ▶ Revision could improve the narrative by deepening development of the main subject. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing fails to present a narrative focused on a person, place, or event through a minimal story or without relating a story. ▶ Revising or further developing the text would significantly improve it as an example of narrative writing.

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FOURShowing Not
Telling

GENRE

Narrative

PRACTICE TEXT

Mr. Webster coaches my team in the Fast Break Basketball League.

He gets very excited about basketball practice. He likes to tell us stories about when he played basketball in college. I think he was a pretty good player. He wears clothes according to what day of the week it is. He wears orange socks.

Mr. Webster is not the reason I play basketball, but he certainly adds to the fun we have as a team. I think I'll go buy myself some orange socks.

A POSSIBLE REVISION

This is not THE correct revision, but one possibility. Accept any justifiable revisions.

Mr. Webster coaches my team in the Fast Break Basketball League.

When it's time for practice, Mr. Webster dances into the gym while singing some made-up song about basketball. Yesterday he sang, "We're here to dribble, pass, and shoot. Practicing our game will be quite a hoot. You're going to run around the whole gym. In fact, I will race you, and I bet I will win." All of this was set to the tune of song they are playing constantly on the radio. We laughed so hard that he did beat us on that lap around the gym!

After that short race, Mr. Webster had us sit down. "Team," he said, "I remember back when I played for the University of Basketonia. Our coach would make us practice our dribbling so much that we thought he was crazy. We would practice for so long our fingertips would go numb! But when we played in a game, we almost always handled the ball better than our opponents. Practice can sometimes seem like a lot of the same thing over and over, but it does make you a better player." Then he put on a little show, dribbling the ball around us as we tried to steal it away from him. He kept all of us from playing the thief.

Although he always seems excited about something, Mr. Webster is pretty boring when it comes to his wardrobe. He has a different sweatsuit for every day of the week. On Mondays, it's blue with stripes down the jacket sleeves. On Tuesdays, it's black with a basketball logo on the back. On Wednesdays, he goes with his brightest color, neon green with wide, yellow stripes down the sides. Thursdays and Fridays are calmer: dark red with a gray collar, and white with a blue, horizontal stripe across the chest. For games, Mr. Webster always wears black pants with a gray jacket and a necktie in our team colors, purple and gold. He says always dressing the same means he doesn't have to think about what to wear, and if he ever forgets what day it is, he just has to look in a mirror to remind himself.

There is one more thing that's interesting about how Mr. Webster dresses. He always wears bright orange socks, even with a coat and tie. "These are special socks," he says. "I wore these kind of socks in every basketball game I played. They don't make me a better player, but I always feel ready to play when I have them on."

Mr. Webster is not the reason I play basketball, but he certainly adds to the fun we have as a team. I think I'll go buy myself some orange socks.

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FOUR

Showing Not
Telling



GENRE

Narrative

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