

Grade 8 ▶

Unit One

PRE-INSTRUCTION CHECKLIST ●▲◆★ Initial exposure → Mastery; ■ Maintenance

MECHANICS	ACQUAINTANCE & ANALYSIS
Review as necessary to enable revision skill use	<input type="checkbox"/> Expository: Informative Report
	WRITING ON DEMAND
	<input type="checkbox"/> ongoing, all disciplines

REVISION SKILLS

Danglers
Definitions
Misplaced Modifiers
Overused Phrases
Paragraph Unit
Quotes & Attributions

GENRE FOCUS

Expository: Informative Report

NOTES

Unless this is the students' first year in the *Writer's Stylus* program, this unit should be a review of several previously mastered skills. By including these skills in the first unit, the teacher can continue holding students accountable for applying them to all writing assignments.

The idea and application of an author's voice is the new element of this unit. Writing that is authentic “rings true”—i.e., it maintains the character of the author's, or—in the case of fiction—the character's voice. The writing reads as if it would sound normal coming out of the writer's mouth. That does not mean that the writing is not polished, but that it is not ostentatious or unbelievable. Plan time to help students construct an understanding of author's voice and to practice on short writing assignments that possess the author's voice. Students may need multiple opportunities to find and use their own voices effectively.

PATTERN STATEMENT

Consistency increases credibility

ADDITIONAL NOTES

The pattern, *Consistency increases credibility*, can be illustrated through a non-example. Place the students into small groups. Explain that they will be interacting with a new individual one group at a time. They are to develop a description of this person based only on their interaction with him or her. Arrange for a student with a penchant for drama to portray the “new” person, but give the student a different personality to portray in each group. For example, when interacting with one group, the student could be a friendly, positive individual; then be a shy individual with another; a fidgety, nervous individual with another; and an obvious liar with another (EX-ex).

When the groups have developed their descriptions, have each share the results with the class. Then engage the students in discussing the following (EX-co):

- What differences are evident between the groups' descriptions.
- If all descriptions were accurate and true, what would you conclude about the “new” person? Why?
- Would you trust such an individual? Why or why not?

Continue to use questioning to guide students to recognize the pattern: *Consistency increases credibility* (EX-el). Then ask the students to identify other examples (or non-examples) of the pattern from their own experience (EX-ap).

8

grade

unit
ONE

REVISION
SKILLS

Danglers



Definitions



Misplaced
Modifiers



Overused
Phrases



Paragraph Unit



Quotes &
Attributions



GENRE

Expository:
Informative
Report

REVISION SKILLS

DANGLERS			
Objective		Checklist	
<p>Student independently identifies dangling phrases and revises the sentence to eliminate all danglers (e.g., <i>Walking to the bus stop, a squirrel stole my lunch</i> revised to <i>While I was walking to the bus stop a squirrel stole my lunch</i>; <i>While outside for recess, it is a good idea to practice good sportsmanship</i> revised to <i>While outside for recess, you should practice good sportsmanship</i>).</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Read the draft to identify phrases.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Examine each phrase. If a phrase lacks connection to another sentence component, revise the sentence to make the connection obvious by adding the connection to the phrase, placing the connection in an position where the relationship is obvious, or by moving the phrase to follow the sentence's main clause.</p>	
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing contains no dangling bits—parts that lack attachment to rest of a sentence—and all sentences feature effective structures. No sentences have awkward structures. ▶ Additional revision may improve other aspects of the writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing contains no dangling bits—parts that lack attachment to rest of a sentence. ▶ In some sentences, potentially dangling elements have been connected to the sentence via awkward sentence structures. ▶ Additional revision may improve the writing by eliminating awkward sentence structures while keeping potentially dangling elements connected. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing contains few (two or fewer) dangling bits—parts that lack attachment to the rest of a sentence. ▶ Additional revision could improve writing by further eliminating dangling elements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing contains several (more than two) dangling bits— parts that lack attachment to the rest of a sentence. ▶ Additional revision could significantly improve writing by decreasing dangling elements.

unit
ONEREVISION
SKILLS

Danglers

Definitions

Misplaced
ModifiersOverused
Phrases

Paragraph Unit

Quotes &
Attributions

GENRE

Expository:
Informative
Report

DEFINITIONS			
Objective		Checklist	
<p>With teacher prompting, student identifies terms that may not be familiar to the intended audience and adds clarifying definitional components (#1–3: Hart, 2006, p. 120):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A reference to the larger class of things to which the defined object belongs 2. An explanation of how the thing defined differs from other members of the larger class 3. An illustration (e.g., A wallaby “is 1) a kangaroo that’s 2) generally smaller than the large gray and red kangaroos most Americans think of when they imagine kangaroos, and that 3) most wallabies stand about as tall as a fire hydrant” (Hart, p. 120-121). 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read the draft to identify any terms that may not be familiar to your intended audience. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop definitions for each term. <input type="checkbox"/> Try including the definitions in the manuscript. If they clarify your meaning without distraction, keep them. <input type="checkbox"/> If the definitions cause a distraction, consider revising the draft by using more familiar terms that do not need to be defined for the reader. 	
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing includes definitions for all words that may be unfamiliar to the reader, AND ▶ Definitions include all three elements of a complete definition. ▶ Additional revision may improve other aspects of the writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing includes definitions for all words that may be unfamiliar to the reader, AND ▶ Definitions include two of the three elements of a complete definition. ▶ Additional revising could improve writing by adding a third element to existing definitions. ▶ Additional revising could improve writing by adding a third element to existing definitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing includes definitions for most words that may be unfamiliar to the reader, AND ▶ Definitions include two of the three elements of a complete definition. ▶ Additional revising could improve writing by defining additional unfamiliar words, or by adding a third element to existing definitions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing fails to include definitions for any words that may be unfamiliar to the reader, OR ▶ Writing fails to include terms necessary for coverage of the topic. ▶ Additional revision could significantly improve the writing by improving word choice and/or defining terms that may be unfamiliar to the reader.

8

grade

unit
ONE

REVISION
SKILLS

Danglers

Definitions

Misplaced
Modifiers

Overused
Phrases

Paragraph Unit

Quotes &
Attributions

GENRE

Expository:
Informative
Report

MISPLACED MODIFIERS			
Objective		Checklist	
<p>Student independently identifies and revises sentences containing misplaced modifiers (e.g., <i>The team executed successful plays Friday while wearing new uniforms that surprised their opponents</i> revised to <i>While wearing new uniforms, the team executed successful plays that surprised their opponents</i>).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read the draft to identify modifying phrases. <input type="checkbox"/> Check the location of each modifying phrase and its intended "target." <input type="checkbox"/> If the "target" is missing, rewrite the sentence to include it. <input type="checkbox"/> If the modifying phrase and target are separated by other possible "targets," restructure the sentence to keep modifying phrases and targets together. 	
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing contains no misplaced modifiers and very few, if any, unnecessary modifiers. ▶ Writing is truly exceptional in its efficient and effective use of modifiers. ▶ Additional revision may improve other aspects of the writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing contains no misplaced modifiers. ▶ Writing contains few unnecessary modifiers. ▶ Additional revision could improve writing by eliminating unnecessary modifiers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing contains few (two or fewer) misplaced modifiers. ▶ Writing may contain several unnecessary modifiers. ▶ Additional revision could improve writing by correcting misplaced modifiers and/or eliminate unnecessary modifiers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing contains several (more than two) misplaced modifiers and/or unnecessary modifiers. ▶ Additional revision could significantly improve modifier choice and use.

OVERUSED PHRASES			
Objective		Checklist	
<p>Student independently identifies clichés (e.g., <i>window of opportunity</i>, <i>a drop in the bucket</i>) or overused phrases (e.g., <i>closest friends</i>, <i>little did he know</i>) and revises the sentence, eliminating the cliché or phrase.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Read the draft to identify common phrases.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ask yourself if the common phrase represents overused phrasing. Is it what you expect to hear in the given context? If so, it is likely a cliché. [Susan Bell (2007) offers this guiding question: “Am I writing new words to fit this moment and this story?” (p. 136)]</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Revise the sentence with fresher language.</p>	
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing contains no examples of overused phrases. The writer uses fresh language throughout the text. ▶ Sentence structure aligns with word choice to give the text both freshness and flow. ▶ Additional revision may improve other aspects of the writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing contains no examples of overused phrases. The writer uses fresh language throughout the text. ▶ Some sentences feature awkward construction, as if avoiding overused phrases caused the writer to choose new words but not restructure the sentences accordingly. ▶ Additional revision may improve writing by better aligning word choice and sentence structure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing contains few (two or fewer) examples of overused phrases. The writer uses fresh language throughout most of the text. ▶ Additional revision may reveal and improve instances of overused phrases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing contains several (more than two) examples of overused phrases. As a result, the text lacks freshness and interest. ▶ Additional revision could significantly improve the text.

8

grade

unit
ONE

REVISION
SKILLS

Danglers

Definitions

Misplaced
Modifiers

Overused
Phrases

Paragraph Unit

Quotes &
Attributions

GENRE

Expository:
Informative
Report

PARAGRAPH UNIT			
Objective	Checklist		
<p>Student independently reviews the paragraphs within a draft and revises the draft so that each paragraph represents a cohesive and singular unit of thought.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Read the draft one paragraph at a time. <input type="checkbox"/> For each paragraph, ask: "What do I want to say here? What point do I want to make?" (Provost, 1985, p. 44). <input type="checkbox"/> Identify the sentence that states that idea. If no such sentence exists, consider adding one. <input type="checkbox"/> Review every sentence in the paragraph. If any do not develop or support the central idea, consider moving or deleting them. 		
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ All paragraphs represent cohesive and singular units of thought. ▶ Writing flows with ideas and paragraphs effectively connected. ▶ Additional revision may improve other aspects of the writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ All paragraphs represent cohesive and singular units of thought. ▶ Writing lacks connections between some paragraphs, making the text lack flow. ▶ Additional revision may improve the writing by connecting paragraphs through transitional phrases that promote the text's flow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Very few paragraphs (not more than one) fail to present a cohesive and singular unit of thought; most paragraphs represent a cohesive and singular unit of thought. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing features two or more paragraphs that fail to present a cohesive and singular unit of thought. ▶ Additional revising could significantly improve the writing by addressing paragraph content and/or structures.

QUOTES & ATTRIBUTIONS			
Objective		Checklist	
<p>Student independently identifies quotes that can be effectively divided with the attribution placed between phrases and makes desirable revisions (e.g., <i>Jane scolded, "You should think twice, Jeffrey, before putting that pepper in your mouth."</i> revised to <i>"You should think twice, Jeffrey" Jane scolded, "before putting that pepper in your mouth."</i>).</p>		<input type="checkbox"/> Read the draft to identify quotes or dialogue. <input type="checkbox"/> If the attribution appears at the beginning or end of the sentence/section, try moving it to the first logical break in the quote. <input type="checkbox"/> Use enough variety in placing attributions that your text reads smoothly.	
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing features a good variety of quote-attribution structures. ▶ The quote-attribution structures contribute to the text's flow and interestingness. ▶ All quotes included in the writing are relevant and effective. ▶ Additional revisions may improve other aspects of the writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing features a good variety of quote-attribution structures. ▶ The quote-attribution structures contribute to the text's flow and interestingness. ▶ Some quotes lack connection to the paragraph or section in which they are included, or seem added simply to increase quote usage. Such quotes are unnecessary. ▶ Additional revision may improve the writing by keeping only those quotes that add to the writer's intended meaning or credibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing shows limited variety of quote-attribution structure. Some revision is obvious. ▶ Additional revision could improve the writing by increasing the variety of quote-attribution structures to give the text better flow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing either lacks quotes where they would be appropriate and effective, or lacks variety in quote-attribution variety, making the text seem choppy. ▶ Additional revision could significantly improve quote-attribution structures.

8

grade

unit
ONE

REVISION
SKILLS

Danglers

Definitions

Misplaced
Modifiers

Overused
Phrases

Paragraph Unit

Quotes &
Attributions

GENRE

Expository:
Informative
Report

GENRE

EXPOSITORY: Informative Report			
Definition		Objective	
Provides an objective and thorough summary of some topic. Coverage, while complete, is often more general than specific in nature with only enough detail to validate a fact		With teacher prompting and support, student writes a cohesive (unified and complete) and coherent (clear and logical) multi-paragraph (i.e., sufficient for the topic) informative report based on content gathered from multiple resources (i.e., sufficient for the topic)—including at least one interview—and that reveals an emerging author's voice.	
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing presents a cohesive (unified and complete) and coherent (clear and logical) multi-paragraph (i.e., sufficient for the topic) informative report based on content gathered from multiple resources (i.e., sufficient for the topic)—including at least one interview. ▶ Writing reveals an emerging author's voice, and its influence can be seen/heard consistently throughout the text, making the writing more interesting to read. ▶ Additional revision may improve other aspects of the writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing presents a cohesive (unified and complete) and coherent (clear and logical) multi-paragraph (i.e., sufficient for the topic) informative report based on content gathered from multiple resources (i.e., sufficient for the topic)—including at least one interview. ▶ Writing reveals an emerging author's voice. Some passages lack this voice, but its influence can be seen/heard throughout the text, and its presence makes the writing more interesting to read. ▶ Additional revision may improve the writing by making the author's emerging voice consistent throughout the entire text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing presents a cohesive (unified and complete) and coherent (clear and logical) multi-paragraph (i.e., sufficient for the topic) informative report based on content gathered from multiple resources (i.e., sufficient for the topic)—including at least one interview. ▶ Writing maintains a consistent but not distinct author's voice. ▶ Additional revising could improve the writing by making the voice more distinct and reflective of the author. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing fails to present a cohesive (unified and complete) and coherent (clear and logical) multi-paragraph (i.e., sufficient for the topic) informative report based on content gathered from multiple resources (i.e., sufficient for the topic)—including at least one interview, <p>AND/OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing lacks a consistent voice. ▶ Additional revision could significantly improve the writing by adding necessary content or making the presentation of information more consistent in voice.

PRACTICE TEXT

ADOPTING A GREYHOUND

“Do you think we should get a dog?” That question opens a window of opportunity for a family searching for a cuddly, loving family member. Little do they know at that point, the decision will not be simple. There are the cute, fuzzy, hyperactive puppies or the well-trained, helpful, energetic adult dogs or the calm, sleepy, laid-back older dogs. One breed of dog, the greyhound, is so type-cast as a racer that pet owners often overlook the potential for a wonderful family pet. Originally, greyhounds traveled with explorers and generals and lived in the palaces of Europe in the company of royalty.

Outstanding hunters, these sight hounds are the fastest runners of all breeds, capable of sprinting up to 45 miles per hour. (Sight hounds like greyhounds are hunting dogs that use sight rather than scent to pursue prey.) Thus, the American greyhounds are bred almost exclusively for racing, raised in racetrack kennels, and retired after two to five years. Sadly, owners find themselves caught between a rock and a hard place, and the retired racers are often sold to research facilities or euthanized (put gently to death). Although racetrack owners are hoping they won't make waves, recently, animal lovers have begun to come to the rescue. Adoption centers have opened so retired racers at many racetracks can live out their days in loving homes. A greyhound named Liza found her loving home with Melissa Pickell.

While waiting in her lonely kennel, Miss Pickell adopted Liza at the local racetrack to rescue her from euthanasia. She reasoned that this was an inexpensive way to purchase a healthy, pure-bred dog. “Liza was a shy, sweet, quiet companion for our other dog,” Melissa recalled. “She surprised us by not fitting the stereotype of the speed racer. Liza was not a high-energy pet. She loved to play in water and snow, but was often a couch potato, sleeping on her back with her legs straight up in the air,” Miss Pickell added.

Dog lovers do not have to look very far to find these gentle giants ready to love and be loved.

While doing a quick online “greyhound” search, one can turn up many greyhound adoption groups. Perhaps now the family's question will no longer be, “Do you think we should get a dog?” but instead, “Which greyhound should we choose?”

“About Greyhounds.” The Greyhound Project, Inc. (<http://www.adopt-a-greyhound.org>), 2009.

“Greyhound.” Wikipedia. Wikipedia Foundation. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greyhound>), 2009.

“Greyhounds.” Greyhound Pets of America. (<http://www.greyhoundpets.org>)

The Greyhound Protection League. (<http://www.greyhounds.org/gpl/contents/entry2.htm>)

8
gradeunit
ONEREVISION
SKILLS

Danglers



Definitions

Misplaced
ModifiersOverused
Phrases

Paragraph Unit

Quotes &
Attributions**GENRE**
Expository:
Informative
Report

A POSSIBLE REVISION

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

ADOPTING A GREYHOUND

“Do you think we should get a dog?” That question launches a search full of decisions. The choice of a cuddly, loving family member will not be simple. Dogs can be cute, fuzzy, hyperactive puppies or well-trained, helpful, energetic adult dogs or calm, sleepy, laid-back older dogs. One breed, the greyhound, is so type-cast as a racer that pet owners often overlook its potential as a wonderful family pet.

Originally, greyhounds were not used for racing but as symbols of status. Greyhounds traveled with explorers and generals and lived among royalty in European palaces. Greyhound owners were viewed as having more rank or wealth than most people.

Owners soon recognized that greyhounds were capable of more than suggesting status. Outstanding hunters, these sight hounds are the fastest runners of all breeds, capable of sprinting up to 45 miles per hour. (Sight hounds like greyhounds are hunting dogs that use sight rather than scent to pursue prey.) Thus, American greyhounds are bred almost exclusively for racing, raised in racetrack kennels, and retired after two to five years of competing. Sadly, the retired racers are often sold to research facilities or euthanized (gently put to death).

Recently, animal lovers have begun to rescue these dogs. Many racetracks have opened adoption centers so potential owners can provide loving homes for retired racers. A greyhound named Liza found hers with Melissa Pickell. Miss Pickell adopted Liza at the local racetrack to rescue the greyhound from euthanasia. She reasoned that this was an inexpensive way to purchase a healthy, pure-bred dog. “Liza was a shy, sweet, quiet companion for our other dog,” Melissa recalled. “She surprised us by not fitting the stereotype of the speed racer,” she added. “Liza was not a high-energy pet. She loved to play in water and snow, but was often a couch potato, sleeping on her back with her legs straight up in the air.”

Dog lovers do not have to look very far to find these gentle giants ready to love and be loved. A quick online “greyhound” search turns up many adoption groups. Perhaps now the family’s question will no longer be, “Do you think we should get a dog?” but instead, “Which greyhound should we choose?”

“About Greyhounds.” The Greyhound Project, Inc. (<http://www.adopt-a-greyhound.org>), 2009.

“Greyhound.” Wikipedia. Wikipedia Foundation. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greyhound>), 2009.

“Greyhounds.” Greyhound Pets of America. (<http://www.greyhoundpets.org>)

The Greyhound Protection League. (<http://www.greyhounds.org/gpl/contents/entry2.htm>)

Pickell, Melissa. “Life with Liza.” Interview. 14 August 2009.

unit ONE

REVISION SKILLS

Danglers



Definitions



Misplaced Modifiers



Overused Phrases



Paragraph Unit



Quotes & Attributions



GENRE

Expository:
Informative
Report