

Grade 8 ▶

Unit Three

PRE-INSTRUCTION CHECKLIST

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

PATTERN STATEMENT

Things connected but not duplicated keep interest.

NOTES

This unit focuses on two revision elements critical to keeping a reader's interest: sentence variety and transitions. These may seem unrelated or even contrasting, but in *Keys to Great Writing*, author Stephen Wilbers (2000) describes variety and flow as related:

More advanced writers...do more than find the words and construct the sentences that convey their meaning. They attend to how various sentence structures sound in relation to each other. For them, writing involves creating sentence structures that not only connect their thoughts but produce a distinct rhythm and flow (p. 76).

Young writers need to learn the art of both variety and connectedness, the very foci of this unit.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

The pattern, *Things connected but not duplicated keep interest*, can be illustrated by giving students or displaying several reconfigured versions of a comic strip. For

example, one version could have the same comic strip panel repeated over and over again. Another version could leave out one or two critical panels. Such confusing examples could be displayed several times before the original comic strip in its original form is displayed (EX-ex).

Then engage the students in discussing the following (EX-co):

How did the various versions of the comic strip differ from one another?

- Which version was the most effective? Why?
- How does the original comic strip illustrate variety?
- How does the original comic strip illustrate connection?

Continue to use questioning to guide students to recognize the pattern: Things connected but not duplicated keep interest (EX-el). Then ask the students to identify other examples (or non-examples) of the pattern from their own experience—e.g., music [melodies and rhythm change but connect to form a song], a year [seasons and weather change but connect sequentially] (EX-ap). Emphasize the interest that such examples hold because of their variety and connection.

REVISION SKILLS

SENTENCE VARIETY			
Objective		Checklist	
<p>With teacher prompting and support, student evaluates draft for sentence length and type variety and makes desirable revisions.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Read the draft aloud to identify passages that seem to lose momentum.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Review those sections to examine sentence construction.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Revise to vary sentence lengths and/or types.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Continue revising until an oral reading reveals continuous momentum.</p>	
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing flows with no obvious sections needing additional sentence variety. ▶ The writer's message is never lost in the text's flow. ▶ Additional revision may improve other aspects of the writing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing flows with no obvious sections needing additional sentence variety. ▶ A few sentences, while varied from those around them, lose clarity. Restructuring these sentences could keep the writer's meaning obvious. ▶ Additional revision could improve writing by clarifying the writer's meaning while maintaining the established flow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing flows with limited sections affected by a lack of sentence variety. Those sections hinder the writing's otherwise good flow. ▶ Additional revision could improve sentence variety by identifying sections where increased variety would positively influence the writing's flow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing suggests little attention given to sentence variety. Many sentences feature similar lengths and/or structures that make the writing lack flow. ▶ Additional revision could significantly improve sentence variety.

unit
THREEREVISION
SKILLSSentence
Variety

Transitions

GENRE

Expository:
Historic
Retelling

TRANSITIONS			
Objective		Checklist	
<p>With teacher prompting, student reviews the last lines of a preceding paragraph and the first lines of a subsequent paragraph, checking for logical and flowing transitions and making necessary revisions to establish such transitions.</p>		<p><input type="checkbox"/> Read the draft sentence by sentence, focusing on the flow (or lack of it) from one to the next. Do the same with paragraphs and sections.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> If transitions are rough, try one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repeat a word from a previous sentence in the next sentence to establish a continuity of thought • use a signal word—e.g., later, meanwhile, after • rework the sentence/paragraph/section to base the transitions on an obvious “thread,” such as chronology (i.e., an obvious thread frees the writer from being too concerned with transitions) 	
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<p>▶ Writing clearly, smoothly, and naturally connects all ideas and sections. The writer’s intended message is never lost due to missing or awkward transitions.</p> <p>Additional revision may improve other aspects of the writing.</p>	<p>▶ Writing clearly connects all ideas and sections.</p> <p>▶ Some transitions, while connecting ideas, seem unnatural or forced—as if the writer added the transition without maintaining the flow or tone of the surrounding text.</p> <p>▶ Additional revision may improve transitions and give the writing a consistent and natural flow.</p>	<p>▶ Writing clearly connects most of its ideas. Only a few examples of missing transitions jolt the reader or fail to connect the writer’s thoughts.</p> <p>▶ Additional revision could improve the writing’s clarity and flow by improving or adding transitions.</p>	<p>▶ Writing suggests little attention given to transitions. In many places, the writer’s intended meaning becomes unclear because the ideas are not connected.</p> <p>▶ Additional revision could significantly improve the writing’s transitions.</p>

GENRE

EXPOSITORY: Historic Retelling			
Definition		Objective	
<p>Recounts an historical event or era while reading like a story; similar to an autobiographical or biographical article, but the focus is on an event or era rather than a person</p>		<p>With teacher prompting, student writes a cohesive and coherent narrative retelling of an historical event, era, or series of related events.</p>	
Rubric			
EXEMPLARY	PROFICIENT	ADEQUATE	NOT YET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing presents a cohesive and coherent narrative retelling of an historical event, era, or series of related events. ▶ Retelling incorporates elements of drama and/or story that add interest for the reader. ▶ Retelling conveys more than factual information in a dramatic form. It highlights or illustrates significant ideas that hold importance or influence beyond the historical events it details. ▶ Additional revisions may minimally improve the text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing presents a cohesive and coherent narrative retelling of an historical event, era, or series of related events. ▶ Retelling incorporates elements of drama and/or story that add interest for the reader. ▶ Additional development or revision may broaden the retelling's importance by highlighting significant idea(s). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing presents a cohesive and coherent narrative retelling of an historical event, era, or series of related events. ▶ Retelling maintains an overly factual tone, reading somewhat like a textbook. It lacks the drama or story elements that would make it more interesting for readers. ▶ Additional development or revision could improve the writing's interest level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Writing fails to present a cohesive and coherent narrative retelling of an historical event, era, or series of related events. ▶ Additional development or revision could significantly improve the retelling's unity and/or coherence.

PRACTICE TEXT

APOLLO 11: MISSION TO THE MOON

“The *Eagle* has landed.” Neil Armstrong captured the attention of the world. He uttered these four simple words. Nine years earlier, President John F. Kennedy spoke the words that led to the *Eagle’s* take-off. “I believe this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out,” he declared, “of landing a man on the Moon and returning him safely to the Earth.” The mission, simply stated, was to perform a manned lunar landing and return. The United States achieved the goal.

Carried by a *Saturn V* rocket, *Apollo 11* was launched from the Kennedy Space Center on July 16, 1969. On July 19 *Apollo 11* entered lunar orbit. On July 20 the lunar module (LM) *Eagle*, with Commander Neil Armstrong and LM pilot Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin aboard, separated from the command module *Columbia*. Pilot Michael Collins manned *Columbia* as it circled the moon. The *Eagle* dropped away toward the moon. With only about 25 seconds of fuel left in the LM, Armstrong took control. Armstrong landed *Eagle* safely. Their schedule called for five hours of sleep after landing. The men were too excited to sleep. Instead, they began to plan their extravehicular activity (EVA).

On Monday, July 21, 1969, Neil Armstrong opened *Eagle’s* hatch. He climbed down the nine-rung ladder. He stepped onto the surface of the moon. He became the first human being to walk on another world. “That’s one small step for a man,” Armstrong declared, “one giant leap for mankind.” Buzz Aldrin followed. He described the scene as “magnificent desolation.” The men performed tests, gathered samples of soil and rock, and planted a U.S. flag on the lunar surface. President Richard Nixon called the crew from the White House. He praised them for their successful mission. A plaque with a map of earth and these words was attached to the leg of the lunar module:

“HERE MEN FROM THE PLANET EARTH
FIRST SET FOOT UPON THE MOON
JULY 1969 A.D.
WE CAME IN PEACE FOR ALL MANKIND”

Three days later, on July 24, the three astronauts returned to earth aboard the *Columbia*. They landed in the Pacific Ocean 15 miles from the recovery ship, the *USS Hornet*. Summarizing the mission, Buzz Aldrin explained, “This has been far more than three men on a mission to the Moon...We feel that this stands as a symbol of the insatiable curiosity of all mankind to explore the unknown.”

A group of British scientists, forty years later, described the significance of the risky moon landing as “the greatest technical achievement of mankind to date. . .nothing since *Apollo* has come close.. .”

REVISION
SKILLSSentence
Variety

Transitions



GENRE

Expository:
Historic
Retelling

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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“Apollo 11 Facts.” The Apollo Program. Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. <http://www.nasm.si.edu/collections/imagery/apollo/AS11/a11facts.htm>

Rahman, Tahir. “What Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin Almost

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A POSSIBLE REVISION

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

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In 1969, the United States achieved the goal. Carried by a *Saturn V* rocket, *Apollo 11* was launched from the Kennedy Space Center on July 16. On July 19 *Apollo 11* entered lunar orbit, and on July 20 the lunar module (LM) *Eagle*, with Commander Neil Armstrong and LM pilot Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin aboard, separated from the command module *Columbia*. Pilot Michael Collins manned *Columbia* as it circled the moon while *Eagle* dropped away toward the moon. With only about 25 seconds of fuel left in the LM, Armstrong took control and landed *Eagle* safely. Though their schedule called for five hours of sleep after landing, the men were too excited to sleep. Instead, they began to plan their extravehicular activity (EVA).

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8

grade

unit

THREE

REVISION
SKILLS

Sentence
Variety



Transitions



GENRE

Expository:
Historic
Retelling

8

grade