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For Years 3-7



TEACHING NAPLAN* Writing Skills

~ Narratives and Persuasive Essays ~



Book 1

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* The publisher is not an endorsed creator of materials used for annual NAPLAN* testing, and this book has been produced without consulting any Australian government bodies.

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Foreword

This book is designed to create an awareness of all the categories that are assessed in the writing section of the NAPLAN* tests. Because some of the activities will be challenging for students in Years 1 to 5, teachers/parents will need to be selective in deciding which activities to tackle and how much assistance they should provide for younger students. It is hoped that teachers/parents will adapt the exercises, (as well as develop similar ones of their own) to make them more relevant to the particular needs of the children under their care.

These support notes are designed mainly to help parents who are keen to provide extra support for their children. However it is hoped that some teachers will find them both helpful and time-saving. It is especially intended that teachers will find the marking sheets and class record sheets (that can be found at the back of this book) of value.

The marking sheets contain summarised descriptors of how the marks are allocated in each category. Teachers will simply need to circle the number above the particular descriptor that best relates to a student's work. These numbers are then added and converted to a percentage at the bottom of the sheet. When these sheets are returned to the students they will have a clear indication of where they most need to concentrate their efforts to improve. The completed Record Sheet will provide teachers with a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses within a particular class or cohort.

There are no exercises that address the category of Spelling in this book. This is because it is assumed that schools will already have their own spelling programmes in place and parents can find many excellent spelling development activities on the internet. When NAPLAN* markers assess the spelling in students' narratives and essays they follow the guidelines specified below.

Words are categorised as simple, common, difficult and challenging:

Simple Words	Common Words
<p>Two letter words: <i>an, it, up, by.</i></p> <p>Three or four letter words with one syllable, one vowel sound and no phonic blends: <i>clap, drop, egg, will, less.</i></p>	<p>Words with one syllable and two two-consonant blends: <i>crack, broom, catch.</i></p> <p>Words with one or two syllables and common long vowels: <i>sail, broke, only, plastic, right.</i></p> <p>Common words with silent letters: <i>know, write, lamb, climb.</i></p> <p>Words with suffixes that don't change the base word: <i>jumped, sadly, happening.</i></p> <p>Most rule driven words: <i>having, coming, happier, heavier.</i></p>
Difficult Words	Challenging Words
<p>Three or more syllables with uneven stress patterns: <i>chocolate, mineral, dangerous, decorate, favourite, comfortable, advantage.</i></p> <p>Uncommon vowel patterns: <i>drought, hygiene.</i></p> <p>Difficult homophones: <i>practice/practise, board/bored.</i></p> <p>Suffixes where the base word changes: <i>prefer/preferred, relate/relation.</i></p> <p>Many four syllable words: <i>invisible, community, explanation, community, manufacture, incredible, kilometre, temperature.</i></p>	<p>Unusual consonant/vowel patterns: <i>guarantee, brusque, environment, debris, euphoric, discipline, camouflage, endeavour, conscious, intrigue, psychology, possess.</i></p> <p>Longer words with unstressed syllables: <i>responsibility, mathematician, miniature, occasionally, parallel, lackadaisical.</i></p> <p>Foreign and technical words: <i>lieutenant, nonchalant, haemoglobin.</i></p>

The Structure of Narratives 1

1. It is important that your students understand the difference between a narrative and a recount. When they write a letter or an e-mail to a friend, to tell them about a holiday, or family news etc., they are placing a list of events into a logical sequence. This is called a *recount*. It is not a narrative (a story).
2. Hand out Activity 1 entitled *The Structure of Narratives 1*. Read out James' recount. Discuss as a class how James has written well. There are no spelling errors and his punctuation is accurate. Draw attention to the two apostrophes and the inverted commas around *Frisky*. He also uses good words. Discuss the meaning of the word *orphan* with your students.
3. Point out, however, that James would get a low mark for paragraphing. Explain why, as the children complete question one. Tell them that paragraphs break a recount, essay or story into different chunks of information that make it easier for the reader to follow. Each paragraph should start on a new line, or miss a line if the previous paragraph finishes at the end of a line.
4. Tell your students that James' task was to write a narrative. Explain that he would get a low mark for Text Structure because he has not written a narrative. There is no complication or problem that has to be overcome. Explain that a narrative must have:
 - i. A beginning that tells the reader the location and time, introduces the characters and explains the complication.
 - ii. A middle section that describes the events.
 - iii. A resolution.

Students can now complete question two.

5. Outline some possible complications that could change James' recount into a narrative:
 - i. When James arrived no-one was there to meet him.
 - ii. James was afraid that he wouldn't like being on the farm and that his cousins would tease him.
 - iii. James would be sad about being away from home.

Students can now complete questions three and four.

Read James' work below.

Holiday on Uncle Bob's Farm - By James

I waved to Mum from the train as it pulled away from the platform. Two hours later the train arrived at Millstown. Uncle Bob was waiting with my two cousins to meet me. I loved staying on Uncle Bob's farm. I rode on the tractor every day and I helped to feed the calves. I also fed a bottle full of milk to one of the lambs that was an orphan. The lamb's name was "Frisky". The time flew by really fast because I was having such a good time. One week later I was on the train again, heading back home to the boring black roads, the stop signs and the heavy traffic of the city.

1. James has written one long paragraph when there should be four short paragraphs. Can you draw two lines like this // in James' recount to show where he should have started a new paragraph? Read the dot points below to help you.

• In the first paragraph James is leaving on the train.

• In the second paragraph he arrives at Millstown.

• The third paragraph tells us about the farm. It tells us the things that James did on the farm and how he felt about being there.

• In the fourth paragraph James is going home again.

2. James has written a recount of his holiday at his Uncle Bob's farm. Can you explain why it is a recount and **not** a story?

3. To change James' recount into a story there has to be a problem (or a complication). Brainstorm some possible problems that could have happened. You will also need to discuss how each problem could be solved (the *resolution*).

Brainstorm



4. Do you think James likes living in the city? Circle your answer. YES NO
Explain why you think he does, or does not, like living in the city.

The Structure of Narratives 5

1. Here is the correct paragraph structure for the extract:

The old women, more than sixty of them, were beginning to screech and jump off their seats as though sticks were being stuck into their bottoms. A few of them jumped up on to their chairs, others were standing on the tables and all of them were wiggling about and moving their heads in an extraordinary way.

Then all at once, they became silent. Then they froze. Every old lady stood as stiff and quiet as a corpse. The whole room became hauntingly still.

The distinction between the two paragraphs is very clear. The first one describes all the action. The second one moves to silence. Everything is suddenly very still. There is no action.

2. Discuss the shades of meaning between the writer's words and those listed below.

starting / beginning	No real difference.
chairs /seats	There is a difference here. They might not be sitting on chairs. They could be seated on benches or even stools. The writer doesn't specify. He/she leaves it to the reader to decide.
shaking / wiggling	There is an important difference. <i>Wiggling</i> suggests short rapid movements. <i>Shaking</i> could be describing slower movements.
unusual / extraordinary	There is a sense of surprise and astonishment implied by the word <i>extraordinary</i> . It is a much stronger word than <i>unusual</i> . It is <i>unusual</i> for rain to fall in summer but it is not <i>extraordinary</i> .
carcass / corpse	Both words refer to a dead body. However <i>corpse</i> is usually applied to a dead human. <i>Carcass</i> is used when describing a dead animal.

3. Similes

When the children have had time to write some similes of their own, select some of them to read aloud to the class. Discuss them and compare them to those used by the writer. (Notice the connection between *corpse* and *deathly still*. The writer creates a spooky sense of fear by using this link.)

1. Below is a short piece of writing. Two paragraphs have been joined into one. It is your job to separate them again. You can draw a red line between the two paragraphs, or you can cut them out and glue them onto a blank piece of paper, leaving a gap between them.

The old women, more than sixty of them, were beginning to screech and jump off their seats as though sticks were being stuck into their bottoms. A few of them jumped up on to their chairs, others were standing on the tables and all of them were wiggling about and moving their heads in an extraordinary way. Then all at once, they became silent. Then they froze. Every old lady stood as stiff and quiet as a corpse. The whole room became hauntingly still.

2. Which words that the writer has used mean nearly the same as the ones below?

starting _____
chairs _____
shaking _____
unusual _____
carcass _____

3. The writer uses two similes that help the readers get a clear picture of the scene in their minds. Try to replace the similes that he used with two of your own.

● SIMILE 1
... screech and jump off their seats *as though sticks were being stuck into their bottoms.*

... screech and jump off their seats as though

● SIMILE 2
Every old lady stood *as stiff and quiet as a corpse.*

Every old lady stood as stiff and quiet

