

Lesson Plan: The Secret Recipe of a Great Story

Subject: Language Arts (Writing Process)

Age Group: 11 years old (Homeschool/IB-PYP)

Time Allotment: 90-120 minutes (can be split over two days)

IB-PYP Connections

- **Transdisciplinary Theme:** How We Express Ourselves
- **Central Idea:** The writing process is a creative journey with distinct stages that help us refine and share our ideas effectively.
- **Key Concepts:**
 - **Form:** What are the different stages of writing?
 - **Process:** How do we move through the stages to create a finished piece?
 - **Function:** How does each stage improve our writing?
- **Learner Profile Attributes:** Communicator, Thinker, Reflective
- **Approaches to Learning (ATL) Skills:** Communication (writing), Thinking (creative & critical thinking), Self-Management (organization)

Materials Needed

- Large sheet of paper or whiteboard
- Markers or colored pencils
- 5 large index cards or pieces of construction paper
- 1 "mixing bowl" (a real bowl or a drawing of one)
- Smaller slips of paper or sticky notes ("ingredients")
- Notebook paper or writing journal
- Pencils and pens
- "ARMS" and "CUPS" anchor chart cards (details below)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, the student will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the five stages of the writing process (Prewriting, Drafting, Revising, Editing, Publishing).
 2. Apply each stage of the writing process to create a short, original story or descriptive paragraph.
 3. Reflect on how using a structured process improves the quality of their writing.
-

Lesson Procedure

Part 1: Tuning In - The Chef's Kitchen (15 minutes)

1. **Engage with an Analogy:** Ask the student, "If you were going to bake a cake from scratch, would you just throw all the ingredients into a pan and stick it in the oven? What would happen?" Discuss the need for a recipe, for measuring ingredients, for mixing, for baking, and finally for decorating.
2. **Introduce the Central Idea:** Explain that writing is just like baking. Great writers don't just write a perfect story in one go. They follow a "recipe" called the **writing process**. This process helps them organize their ideas (ingredients), mix them together, bake them into a story, and add the final decorations to make it perfect for sharing.
3. **Set up the "Kitchen":** Label the five large index cards with the stages of the writing process:
 - 1. Prewriting (Gathering Ingredients)
 - 2. Drafting (Mixing the Batter)
 - 3. Revising (Improving the Flavor)
 - 4. Editing (Decorating & Quality Control)
 - 5. Publishing (Serving the Cake!)
 Lay these cards out in order on the table or floor.

Part 2: Finding Out & Sorting Out - The Creative Recipe (60 minutes)

The student will now move through each stage to create their own piece of writing.

Stage 1: Prewriting (Gathering Ingredients) (15 mins)

- **Activity: Idea Brainstorm.** Place the "mixing bowl" on the table. Ask the student to choose a broad topic they're interested in (e.g., "A Magical Adventure," "My Dream Pet," "A Day on Mars").
- On the small slips of paper ("ingredients"), have the student brainstorm and write down single words or short phrases related to their topic. Ideas include characters, settings, problems, feelings, and sensory details (what you see, hear, smell).
- Encourage at least 10-15 "ingredient" slips. They should toss each one into the mixing bowl as they write it. This is about generating ideas, not forming sentences. No idea is a bad idea!

Stage 2: Drafting (Mixing the Batter) (15 mins)

- **Activity: Fast & Furious Writing.** The student now takes their ingredients from the bowl and starts "mixing" them into a story on their notebook paper.
- The goal is to get the story down on paper without worrying about mistakes. Emphasize that this is the "messy first draft." It doesn't have to be perfect. Just get the ideas from the bowl onto the page in sentence and paragraph form. Don't stop to fix spelling or punctuation. Just write!

Stage 3: Revising (Improving the Flavor) (15 mins)

- **Activity: ARMS Check.** Introduce the concept of revising: this is where we make the story *better*, not just correct. Introduce the **ARMS** acronym:
 - **A** - Add sentences, words, or details. (Is there a place where I can describe the setting more?)
 - **R** - Remove words or sentences that don't make sense or aren't needed. (Am I repeating myself?)
 - **M** - Move a sentence or word to a better spot. (Would this sentence sound better at the beginning?)

- **S** - Substitute boring words with more exciting ones. (Can I replace "nice" with "spectacular" or "walked" with "strolled"?)
- Have the student re-read their draft aloud (this helps catch awkward phrasing) and use a different colored pen to make ARMS revisions.

Stage 4: Editing (Decorating & Quality Control) (15 mins)

- **Activity: CUPS Check.** Now, introduce editing: this is where we check for correctness, like a chef making sure the decorations are perfect. Introduce the **CUPS** acronym:
 - **C** - Capitalization (Start of sentences, proper nouns)
 - **U** - Usage (Does it make sense? Did I use the right word, like "their" vs. "there"?)
 - **P** - Punctuation (Periods, question marks, commas)
 - **S** - Spelling (Circle any words you're not sure about and look them up)
- Guide the student to go through their revised draft one last time, specifically looking for CUPS errors. This is a slow, careful read-through.

Part 3: Going Further - Publishing (Serving the Cake!) (15 minutes)

1. **Activity: Share Your Creation.** Publishing simply means sharing your work with an audience. Give the student a choice in how they want to "serve" their story:
 - Neatly rewrite it on a fresh piece of paper and add an illustration.
 - Type it up on a computer.
 - Create a dramatic reading of the story for family members.
 - Turn it into a mini-comic strip.
2. Celebrate the final product! Display it proudly.

Closure & Reflection (5-10 minutes)

Discuss the process using reflective questions:

- Which "recipe step" (stage) was the most helpful for you? Why?
- Which stage was the most challenging?
- How did your story change from the first messy draft to the final published piece?
- How can you use this "recipe" for other types of writing, like school reports or emails?

Assessment

- **Formative:** Observe the student's engagement and understanding at each stage. Check their application of ARMS and CUPS during the revision and editing steps.
- **Summative:** The final published piece of writing serves as the summative assessment. Use a simple checklist:
 - [] Student generated ideas during prewriting.
 - [] Student completed a first draft.
 - [] Student applied at least two ARMS revision strategies.
 - [] Student corrected errors using the CUPS editing strategy.
 - [] Student produced a final, polished piece for publishing.

Differentiation & Extension

- **For Support:**

- Provide sentence starters during the drafting phase (e.g., "Once upon a time...", "Suddenly,...").
- Focus on only one aspect of ARMS (e.g., "Let's just look for better words to substitute") and one aspect of CUPS (e.g., "Let's just check for periods at the end of each sentence").
- Work collaboratively on brainstorming the "ingredients."

- **For Extension:**

- Challenge the student to write a longer story with a more complex plot.
- Introduce more advanced revision techniques, such as adding dialogue or figurative language (similes, metaphors).
- Have the student "publish" their work in a more formal way, like creating a small book or starting a personal blog.