



Writing Skills and Grammar 5-6 Syllabus

Course Goals

1 Develop Organization Skills

Students improve the organization and structure of their writing by developing pre-writing techniques such as brainstorming, outlining, and ordering ideas. They improve their proficiency with transitions and introductory and closing statements.

2 Develop Essay-Writing Proficiency

Students improve their essay writing skills by mastering concepts such as paragraph structure, thesis development, supporting arguments, compelling word choice, and the writer's voice.

3 Improve Written Mechanics

Students improve the mechanics of their writing by developing a stronger understanding of the parts of speech, punctuation, sentence structure, spelling, and homophones.

4 Practice Writing Through Revision

Students apply the skills they develop at the structural, paragraph, and sentence level through reviewing peers' writing and revising their own work.

Course Topics

1 Organization and Structure

Students learn how to organize essays and other writing on both the paragraph and the larger structural level, as well as how to effectively introduce and conclude different forms of writing.

2 Thesis Statements

Students practice crafting persuasive and compelling thesis statements and using these thesis statements as the core of a written piece's development.

3 Transitions and conclusions

Students learn how to make transitions between ideas clear to the reader, including through different methods for relating connected arguments and synthesizing multiple arguments into meaningful conclusions.

4 Planning and Outlining

Students use pre-writing tools such as brainstorming, idea mapping, and outlining to organize thoughts and arguments before beginning a written piece.

5 Punctuation

Students practice identifying and correcting proper use of commas, colons, semicolons, apostrophes, and other punctuation marks.

6 Homophones and Spelling

Students play games and activities to help recognize homophones and commonly misspelled words and to avoid related spelling errors.

7 Parts of Speech

Students understand the constituent parts of sentences (including nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and pronouns) in order to

most effectively structure and revise their sentences.

8 Writing Persuasively

Students practice applying methods of persuasive writing, including argument, counter-argument, use of evidence, and assertion.

9 Metaphors and Similes

Students explore metaphor and simile to understand the persuasive and illustrative uses of analogy, as well as to enhance their creative writing.

10 Imagery and Vivid Language

Students practice writing colorful imagery, sensory descriptions, and characterization to make their writing more engaging.

Course Schedule

Day 1

Course Introduction

Students are introduced to each other, the course rules, and the instructor.

Discussion About Writing

Students and the instructor discuss the importance of good writing skills, and what they hope to get out of the class.

Think Tank Pre-Writing

Students do a pre-writing activity as an introduction to planning and brainstorming.

Expanding an Idea

Students practice developing an essay plan from a starting idea via the brainstorming procedure.

Comma Rules Part 1

Students learn proper comma use and the related rules, and they learn to avoid common misuses of commas.

The Idea Tree

Students use a graphical idea tree to organize brainstormed ideas for written pieces.

Begin Mini-Essays

Students begin writing their mini-essays based on prior planning and brainstorming exercises.

Comma Rules Part 2

Students learn proper comma use and the related rules, and they learn to avoid common misuses of commas.

Day 2

Word Unscramble

Students play a word puzzle game as a daily warm-up.

Continue Mini-Essays

Students work with partners to review and revise the mini-essays they previously began working on.

Spelling Practice Day 2

Students complete spelling practice worksheets and review them as a class.

Spelling Game: Sparkle

Students play a class spelling game using the vocabulary words they worked with in the previous spelling practice.

Paragraph Seeds

Students work singly and with partners to develop and revise paragraphs from topic ideas.

Transitions

Students review their previous written works with a focus on transitions, and they develop and improve their transitional technique.

Day 3

A Summer in Space Fill-In Story

Students complete a "story skeleton" as a warm-up exercise.

Thesis Statements

Students learn about the importance of thesis statements and practice developing them. They work singly, in small groups, and as a class.

Order of Ideas

Students carry out partner exercises to improve their understanding of order of ideas, and to learn how to apply this to better organization of written works.

Buried Treasure Contest

Students work in pairs to complete a competitive vocabulary game.

Outlines and Organization

Students learn outlining and organizational strategies for writing and practice these strategies before using them in their written pieces.

Essays--First Drafts

Students write a first draft of an essay based on the organizational outline they developed in the previous activity.

Using Active Verbs

Students complete a grammar practice activity focusing on active verbs. The class reviews the activity together.

Day 4

Parts of Speech: Nouns and Verbs

Students learn about the concept of parts of speech, with a focus on nouns and verbs, and they use individual and group activities to improve familiarity with this concept.

Day 4 Peer Review/Revisions

Students review and revise the essay drafts they wrote on Day 3.

Sensory Words

Students learn about the use of evocative and sensory language, and they use group and individual activities to practice this.

Vivid Images

Students practice using vivid imagery and sensory language to describe people, places, and events in written pieces.

Day 5

Parts of Speech: Adjectives and Adverbs

Students review the concept of parts of speech and learn more about adjectives, adverbs, and their proper use with individual and group activities.

Personal essay

Students use the brainstorming and outlining skills they've been working on to begin planning and writing a personal essay.

Parts of Speech: Mad Libs

Students do a creative "Mad Libs" activity based on short stories they write themselves.

Day 6

Warm-up: Descriptive Story-telling

Students practice descriptive and creative story-telling with a group improvisational story exercise.

Day 6 Peer Review/Revisions

Students review and revise the essays they wrote on Day 5.

Spelling Practice Day 6

Students complete spelling practice worksheets and review them as a class.

Spelling Game: Human Tic-Tac-Toe

Students play a class tic-tac-toe game to practice spelling and vocabulary words.

Day 7

Warm-up: Wild Sentences

Students warm up with a class game where they take turns developing simple sentences into rich, complex ones.

Apostrophes

Students learn proper apostrophe usage and practice it singly and as a class.

How-To Essays

Students write a draft of an essay based on something they know how to do well.

Colons and Semicolons

Students learn about proper colon and semicolon usage and practice it with group and individual exercises.

Homophone Game

Students play a team-based game in which they must use homophones correctly in a sentence.

Day 8

Alliteration and Sentences

Students complete exercises on alliteration, subject-verb agreement, and run-on sentences.

Revising How-To Essays

Students work in pairs to review and revise the how-to essay drafts they wrote the previous day.

Round Robin Stories

Students play a creative writing game in which they work in groups to collaboratively write a short story.

Begin Opinion Essays

Students begin planning and pre-writing an essay in which they present and persuasively argue for a point of opinion.

Day 9

Write Opinion Essays

Students write a first draft of the opinion essay they planned in the previous activity.

Game--Student Choice

Students play a writing or spelling game of their choice as a warm-up or break activity.

Revise Opinion Essays

Students review and revise the opinion essay drafts they wrote previously.

Work on Final Portfolios

Students assemble a final portfolio of their favorite written pieces from the class, plus future writing prompts and illustrations if desired.

Day 10

Similes and Metaphors

Students use group and individual activities to learn about similes and metaphors, their uses, and how to construct them.

Creative Writing Project

Students complete a creative writing project using what they've learned about simile and metaphor, and they work in pairs to proofread and review their work.

Last Day Review

Students recap the session's grammar lessons and play a team-based grammar correction game.

Last Day Wrap-Up

Students receive final portfolios and other class work for them to take home.

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