

6 Trait Mini-Lessons - Ideas

Selecting the right topic:

- What's So Special? p. 85-88 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide for the Primary Grades by Ruth Culham
- Small Moments in Your Life
- Picture This p. 89 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide for the Primary Grades by Ruth Culham
- Making Old Ideas New p. 51-54 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide Grades 3 and up by Ruth Culham
- Flashback p. 54 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide Grades 3 and up by Ruth Culham
- Favorite Places p. 54 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide Grades 3 and up by Ruth Culham
- Lightbulb Visual - hold multiple lightbulbs (plastic, rubber or pictures) over your head to represent many ideas in your mind. Think aloud to show how to narrow down a topic until only 1 lightbulb remains. Idea by Kristina Smekens

Narrowing a topic: (the smaller the topic = the more detailed/developed the writing will be)

- Fun With Funnels p. 88-89 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide for the Primary Grades by Ruth Culham
- Narrow it Down p. 89 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide for the Primary Grades by Ruth Culham
- R.A.F.T.S p. 55-58 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide Grades 3 and up by Ruth Culham
- Call it Out p. 58 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide Grades 3 and up by Ruth Culham
- String Along p. 59 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide Grades 3 and up by Ruth Culham
- Picture This p. 59 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide Grades 3 and up by Ruth Culham
- Stacking Boxes/Cups/Gift Bags - teach students how to narrow a topic by writing broad topics on a sticky note on a large box/cup/gift bag (basketball). Visually represent the topic narrowing by uncovering a smaller box/cup/gift bag with a narrower topic (dribbling). Continue process until a narrow topic has been reached (throwing a free throw). Idea by Kristina Smekens
- Lightbulb Size Visual - hold a floodlight light bulb over your head to represent a broad topic. Use smaller light bulbs to represent narrowing of the topic as you think aloud. Think about using a tiny bulb to represent too narrow of a topic (the nose on my clown costume) when appropriate. Idea by Kristina Smekens
- Sentence Cut Out - When a student produces "I like" writing similar to a list (I like school. I like centers. I like recess. I like school.), ask her to identify the thing she likes most about school. Then, cut that sentence out of her writing and paste it as the title on a new page. This will be her narrower topic. Idea by Kristina Smekens

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Developing Ideas Completely/Making the Content Clear & Coherent:

- *Unlocking the Ideas Puzzle* p. 93-94 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide for the Primary Grades by Ruth Culham
- *Questions, Anyone?* p. 94 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide for the Primary Grades by Ruth Culham
- *Can You Tell What Happened?* p. 95 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide for the Primary Grades by Ruth Culham
- *Incorporate Details:* number, name, color, descriptive, sensory, comparison, etc.
- *Develop Characters:* physical description, personality, mood/attitude, habits
- *Develop Setting:* time, season, weather, time, place
- *Develop the plot:* problem/solution, wish/want, problem/climax/resolution
- *Appropriate Sensory Details* - teach all 5 senses but encourage students to only use those that apply to their writing. For example, when describing a great pair of shoes, taste probably only applies if the writing is from the perspective of a dog chewing them. Idea by Kristina Smekens

Selecting Interesting, Relevant Details-Selecting & Elaborating:

- *Can You See It?* p. 90-91 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide for the Primary Grades by Ruth Culham
- *I'm Making Dinner* p. 91 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide for the Primary Grades by Ruth Culham
- *Drawing the Idea* p. 91-93 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide for the Primary Grades by Ruth Culham
- *ABC Chart* (prewriting activity) - (www.SmekensEducation.com Idea Library-smartboard version also available) Write the topic in the center box (cats). Step 1 - LIST. Students brainstorm and list words related to the topic on post-it notes. Place them in the appropriate letter boxes (fur- placed in "f" box). Note: some letters will have many post-it notes while others will remain empty. The goal is to brainstorm details, not to fill the chart. Step 2 - ORGANIZE. Remove the post-it notes from the chart and organize them (Which details go together?). Headings will emerge as you describe categories (parts of a cat, a cat's diet, etc.). Idea by Kristina Smekens

Elaborating Upon Interesting, Relevant Details:

- *It Happened to Me* p. 59-63 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide Grades 3 and up by Ruth Culham
- *Ask Me a Question* p. 64 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide Grades 3 and up by Ruth Culham
- *Leave It Out* p. 64 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide Grades 3 and up by Ruth Culham

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- Building Blocks p. 64 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide Grades 3 and up by Ruth Culham
- Show Me, Don't Just Tell Me p. 65-66 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide Grades 3 and up by Ruth Culham
- Pick the Postcard p. 66 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide Grades 3 and up by Ruth Culham
- Observe Closely, Then Write p. 66-67 6+1 Traits of Writing: the Complete Guide Grades 3 and up by Ruth Culham

Emergent Writers: Drawing (cultivate pictorial detail to avoid "1 sentence & I'm done" writing)

- Draw with color detail
- Revision: add details to a picture
- Draw character details
- Draw setting details
- Draw close-up details (earrings, etc.)
- Draw to represent quantity (box of toys)
- Draw signs of actions and movement (lines, etc.)

Emergent Writers: Labeling

- Label classroom objects
- Label with letters
- Label with words
- Labels match pictures