

Running Head: Text Structure: Description

UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY

Text Structure Unit Part 1:

Description

A Project submitted in partial satisfaction

Of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Education

In

English as a Second Language

By

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July 2009

Introduction

Studying description as a text structure has a positive impact on comprehension according to literacy researchers Armbruster, Anderson & Ostertag (1986). The lessons in this unit facilitate understanding of description in both reading and writing. This unit also attempts to effectively implement ESL strategies, which we consider just good teaching, to help all students reach a level of understanding of how text structure aids in literacy. Understanding description has shown to increase comprehension according to Dymock & Nicholson (1999), Pearson & Duke (2002), and Williams, et al (2005). Stephanie Harvey and Anne Goudvis in their book “Strategies That Work,” comment that: “understanding different expository text structures gives readers a better shot at determining important information”(158). In our experience as teachers, ability to use descriptive writing helps students to better express themselves and their writing becomes more comprehensible to others.

Unit Reasoning

We chose this unit because it is applicable throughout many grade levels and applies to the Utah State language arts core curriculum (see below). We also knew it would be appropriate to implement many Strategies from the Siop model and from other accepted sources like Amato and Escheverria that are shown to help improve both comprehension of context as well as to assist in language acquisition for second Language Learners.

Linking to the Standards

Utah State Core Curriculum

The Utah State Core Curriculum for language arts in fifth and sixth grade have some commonalities. Standard I for both grades address oral language; specifically, developing language through listening, speaking, viewing and presenting. Standard VI for fifth and sixth

grade addresses vocabulary, this includes using grade level vocabulary: specifically, using multiple resources to determine meaning including structural analysis and context clues.

Standard VII for both grades addresses comprehension: purposes of texts, strategies to comprehend text, and recognize and use features of narrative and informational text.

Standard VIII, for both fifth and sixth grade focuses on writing: to include preparing to write by gathering and organizing information and ideas, composing a written draft, revise by elaborating and clarifying a written draft, and writing in different forms and genres. (USOE, 2009)

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

TESOL standards are also addressed in this unit. The three standards including in TESOL goal two, which are using English for academic improvement in all content areas, interaction in the classroom and obtaining, processing and constructing content in oral and written form, and using learning strategies to construct and apply knowledge academically. (TESOL, 2009)

English Language Learner (ESL) Strategies

Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) Model has features to better the instruction practices used by teachers. In our unit we focused many features from the SIOP model. The following features, which we patterned our lessons after, are as described in the SIOP model. Feature 1: Content objectives clearly defined, displayed and reviewed with students. This we did by displaying and discussing the enduring understanding and essential questions. The following SIOP features were also used throughout the unit:

- 3: Content concepts appropriate for age and educational background

- 4: Supplementary materials used to a high degree
- 6: Meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts with language practice opportunities
- 7: Concepts explicitly linked to students' background experiences
- 10: Speech appropriate for students' proficiency levels
- 12: A variety of techniques used to make content concepts clear
- 13: Ample opportunities provided for students to use learning strategies
- 15: A variety of questions or tasks that promote higher-order thinking skills
- 16: Frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion
- 18: Sufficient wait time for student responses consistently provided
- 20: Hands-on materials and/or manipulatives provided for students to practice using new content knowledge
- 21: Activities provided for students to apply content and language knowledge
- 25: Student engaged approximately 90% to 100% of the time
- 29: Regular feedback provided to students on the output

English Language Learner (ELL) Teaching Strategies

From Herrell and Jordan (2008) we implemented many ELL teaching strategies. We applied visual scaffolding, realia strategies, interactive read-aloud, preview/review, total physical response, manipulative strategies, partner work, read-aloud plus, interactive writing, cooperative learning and imaging (Herrell & Jordan, 2008). These strategies are classroom tested and valuable because they align with the TESOL standards. We often implement these strategies unconsciously in our teaching, however, it was extremely beneficial to explicitly consider them and implement them into our planning. It is important to mention that the works

of Patricia A. Richard-Amato influenced our lessons though we did not directly use materials or ideas from her book “Making It Happen” (2003).

Unit Overview

Lesson One

Lesson one in our unit on descriptive text addresses prepositions and their use in descriptive reading and writing. Students will listen to a story about prepositions, demonstrate examples of prepositions, and will then identify and properly use prepositions as one element of descriptive writing.

Lesson Two

Lesson two asks the students to be able to identify descriptive writing in text and use this ability to better comprehend descriptive writing. This lesson scaffolds students from a shared experience to a group, paired and then individual experience in identifying and using descriptive text.

Lesson Three

Lesson three requires students to listen to descriptive writing and then use description and good word choices in their writing to convey a deeper meaning. The students writing will “show” the reader - not “tell”. This lesson builds student knowledge using visual scaffolding and Total Physical Response (TPR).

Lesson Four

Lesson four deepens understanding by providing students with an opportunity to physically manipulate an object and then verbally describe the object using knowledge gained from previous lessons. Students gain a greater understanding of the importance of accurate and detailed description.

Lesson Five

During lesson five, students will be able to listen to and identify elements of a descriptive paragraph. They will then be guided through the process to create several of their own descriptive paragraphs. This lesson should implement and reinforce the skills learned in all other lessons and serve as a culmination to the unit.

Conclusion

This unit was utilized during tutoring sessions with second language learners and was extremely successful. The overarching goal of understanding text structure is to help students better comprehend text and express themselves through writing. We feel that this is a valuable tool as there is really no reason to read if not for comprehension and no reason to write unless we are able to adequately express ourselves.

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Enduring Understanding:

Students will be able to use description to better comprehend text and express themselves in writing.

Essential Questions:

1. How can I identify descriptive text?
2. How does description help me understand what I am reading?
3. How can my writing improve from my knowledge of descriptive text?
4. How can I use description to verbally communicate my ideas?

Prepositions Lesson Plan

- Objectives: Students will listen to a story about prepositions, demonstrate examples of prepositions, and will then identify and properly use prepositions as one element of descriptive writing.
- Anticipatory Set [hook]: (Access background knowledge) KWL chart or discussion to see if students know what prepositions are.
- Standards:
 - Standard 1: Objective 1: Develop language through listening and speaking
 - Standard 2: Objective 1: Demonstrate an understanding that print carries “the” message
 - Standard 6: Objective 1: Learn new words through listening and reading widely
 - Objective 2: Use resources to learn new words by relating them to known words and/or concepts
 - Standard 7: Objective 1: Identify purposes of text.
 - Objective 2: Apply strategies to comprehend text
 - Standard 8: Objective 1: Prepare to write by gathering and organizing information and ideas
 - Objective 2: Compose a written draft
- ESL Connections:

SIOP Features:

- 3: Content concepts appropriate for age and educational background
- 4: Supplementary materials used to a high degree
- 6: Meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts with language practice opportunities
- 10: Speech appropriate for students’ proficiency levels
- 12: A variety of techniques used to make content concepts clear
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- 20: Hands-on materials and/or manipulatives provided for students to practice using new content knowledge
- 21: Activities provided for students to apply content and language knowledge
- 25: Student engaged approximately 90% to 100% of the time
(Echievarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008)

Teaching strategies:

Visual scaffolding, realia strategies, interactive read-aloud, preview/review, total physical response, manipulative strategies, partner work, read-aloud plus, interactive writing (Herrell & Jordan, 2008)

- Materials:

“Under, Over, By the Clover” – Brian P. Cleary, picture or toy of a mouse and a pile of logs, treasure hunt to be conducted in classroom, x’s for the students to hide, paper, pencil

- Teaching:

- * Read “Under, Over, By the Clover” (Brian P. Cleary)

- * Think of prepositions as: anywhere a mouse can run. Put a picture (or toy) of a mouse and a picture of a log on the board, have students take turns moving the mouse somewhere in relation to the log. Have student identify the preposition.

- Guided Practice:

- * Treasure hunt. Pick a student to do the next activity. Hand student a pre-made treasure hunt with directions full of prepositions. Student must follow the treasure hunt to find the X at the end.

- Closure:

- * Quickly go around the room, each student shares a preposition. Remind students of prepositions from “Under, Over, By the Clover” and anywhere a mouse can run.

- Independent Practice:

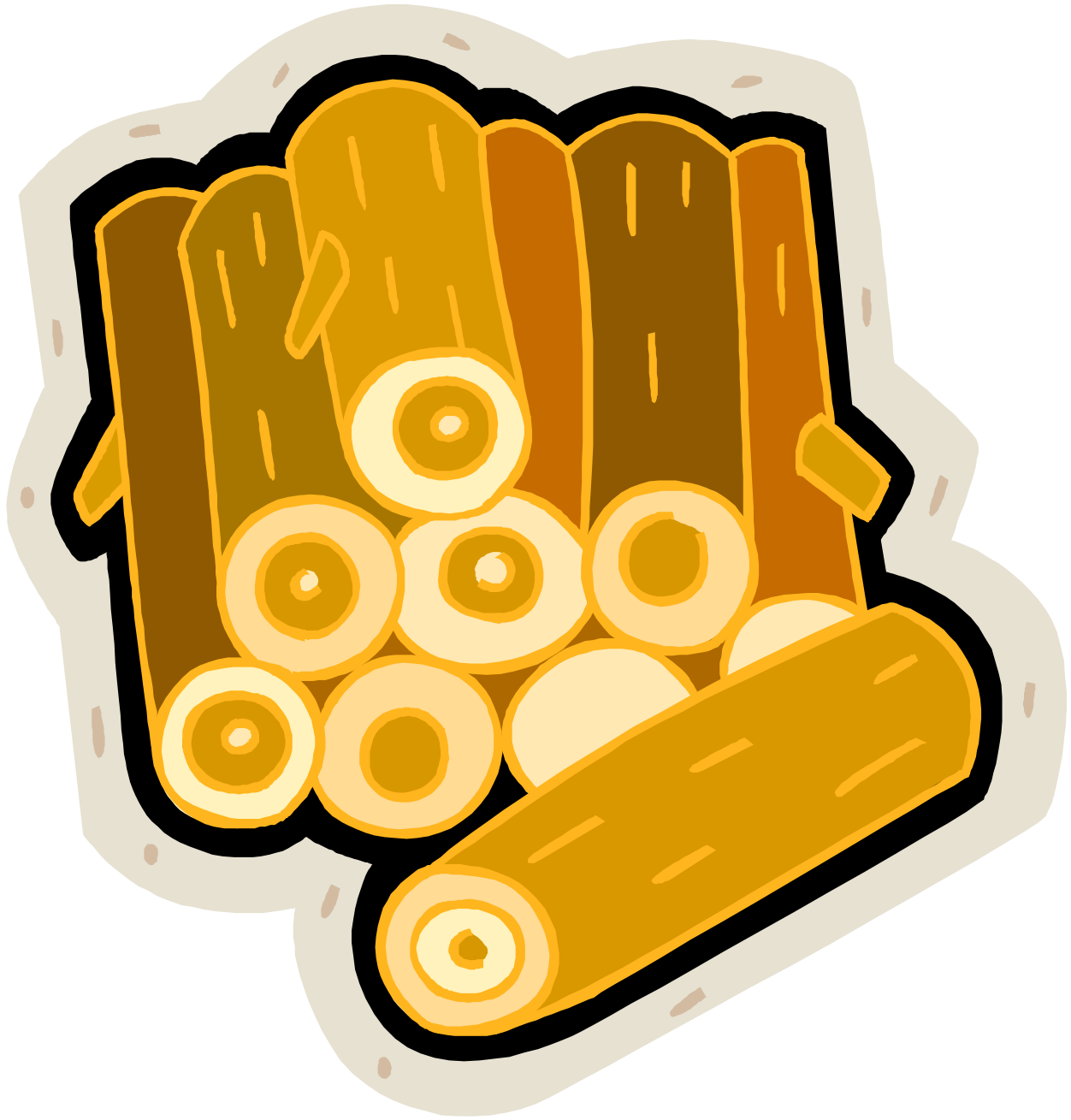
- * Each student will create his/her own treasure hunt (students may hide an X at the ending place). Each student must include at least 5 prepositions. When treasure hunt is ready, students will switch with a partner and follow the directions to find the X. Have students identify the prepositions in the treasure hunt, after they have switched with a partner and before they begin the actual hunt.

- Extensions:

- * Discuss other uses of prepositions which describe time, place, when, and how.

Start in front of the sink. Crawl under your desk. Walk to the front row of desks. Climb over one of the desks. Go through the front door. Come back in the classroom. Stand next to the pencil sharpener. Look behind the poster on the wall above the sharpener. X marks the spot!





X X X X

X X X X

X X X X

X X X X

Descriptive Text

Objective: Students should be able to identify descriptive writing in text and use this ability to better comprehend descriptive writing. This lesson scaffolds students from a shared experience to a group, paired and then individual experience in identifying and using descriptive text.

Standards:

Standard V, Objective 1: Learn new words through listening and reading widely

Standard VII Objective 3d: Identify different structures in texts: Description

Standard VIII, Objective 1c: Use a variety of graphic organizers to organize information from multiple sources.

ESL Connections:

Feature 12: Shared Reading

Feature 4: Supplementary Materials

Feature 21: Application of Content Feature

Feature 15: Partner Work

Teaching Strategies:

Lesson:

Introduction

Students are in a large group setting. Draw on student knowledge, Ask: “Why is description such an important part of what we read and write?”

- Write some responses on the board under the word description
- Put up the Enduring Understanding and Essential questions

Say: “There are few things I can look at to determine if what I am reading is descriptive text. First I can look at how the writing is organized.” Put up the slide How it is organized and go over what it says.

Say: “Next I can look for signal words that are used in descriptive text.” Put up the signal word slide. Go over the signal words

Model

Use the Golden Eagle and Golden Eagle Graphic Organizer slide. Point out and highlight the signal words which are “with and with”. Next highlight the adjectives in a separate color. Talk about how this meets the organizational structure and how it incorporates signal words. Finally put the information into a Golden Eagle Graphic Organizer.

With The Students

Display the Olympic slide and hand a copy out to each student. Read the paragraph with the students and then together, decide which signal words you should highlight. Then fill in the graphic organizer with characteristics of the Olympics. Finally ask the students if this paragraph follows the usual organization of a descriptive text.

Students With Partner

Now that the students have seen this done and practiced with you as a group it is time for them to try it with partners. Hand out the article on Mountain Gorillas along with the blank graphic organizer. On the board you should write their expectation.

1. Read the article
2. Highlight any signal words they see
3. Fill out the Graphic Organizer

Give them ample time to complete this assignment

Debrief

Call the group back together to check learning. You may want to display a blank graphic organizer and have the students help you figure out what you could write in each of the circles. Ask the students if this fit the organization of descriptive text and how.

Extension/Independent Work (optional)

You can now repeat the steps you used with the partners with a National Geographic Explorer article (Living Color is a good example) or you can you an additional descriptive article.

DESCRIPTION



How is it Organized?

Look for:

- A Main Idea
- Unique Features or Characteristics
- Supporting Ideas
- Examples

DESCRIPTION

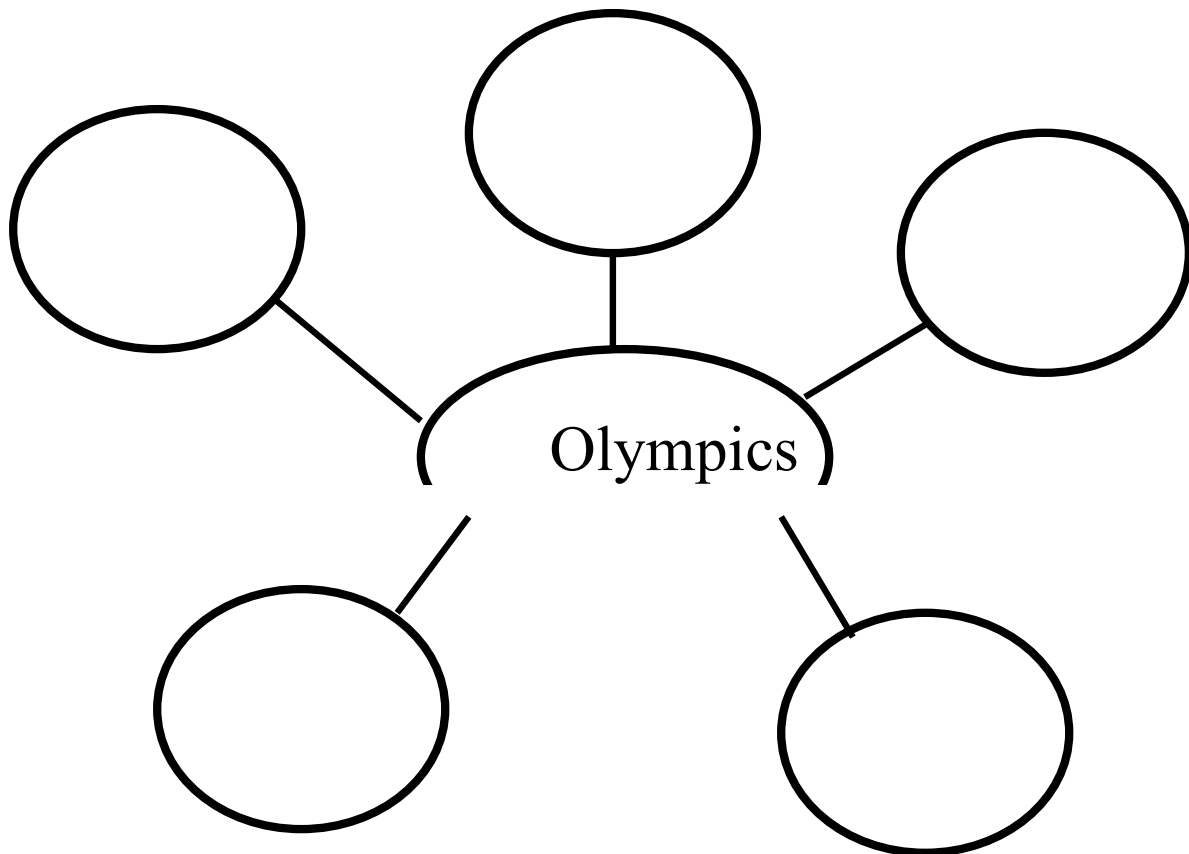
What are the SIGNAL words?

- Among
- As
- Beyond
- Can be defined
- Consists of
- Figurative language
- For example
- For instance
- Involves
- Like
- On
- Over
- Prepositions
- Descriptive adjectives
- Such as
- With
- Within



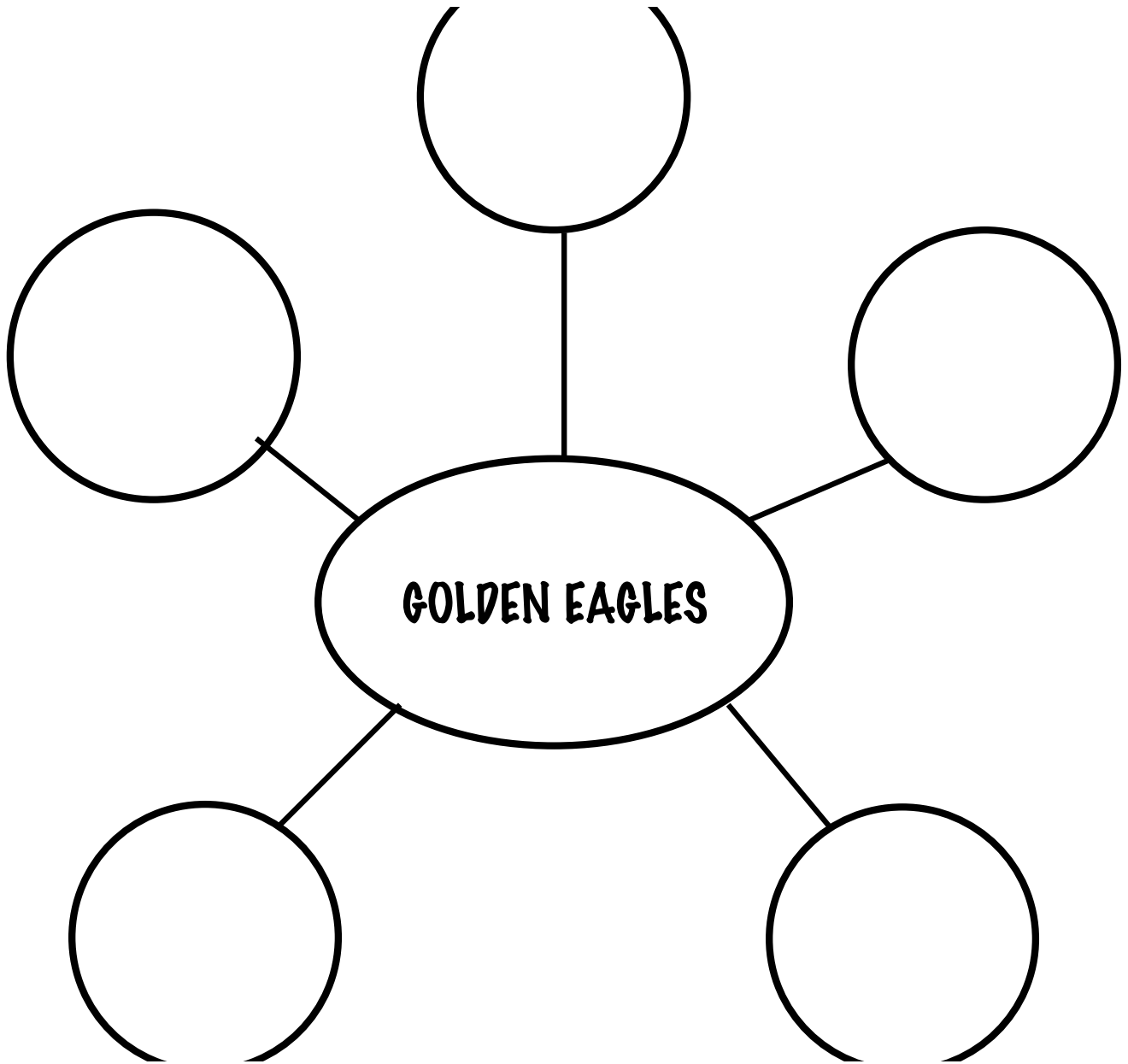
THE OLYMPICS

The Olympic symbol consists of five interlocking rings. The rings represent the five continents from which athletes come to compete in the games. The rings are colored black, blue, green, red and yellow. At least one of these colors is found in the flag of every country sending athletes to compete in the Olympic games.



GOLDEN EAGLES

Golden Eagles are powerful raptors with large dark brown bodies and small heads with golden crowns.



Gorillas are high on the list of animals that people find most fascinating. For many people, gorillas are *the* most fascinating animals in the world. This is partly because gorillas seem to be so much like people.

When you see gorillas in a zoo, it is hard to escape the feeling that they are watching you as closely as you are watching them. They sometimes look back at you with so much interest and intelligence that you begin to wonder what they think of you. If gorillas could talk, they might turn to each other and say “what a strange human that is!”

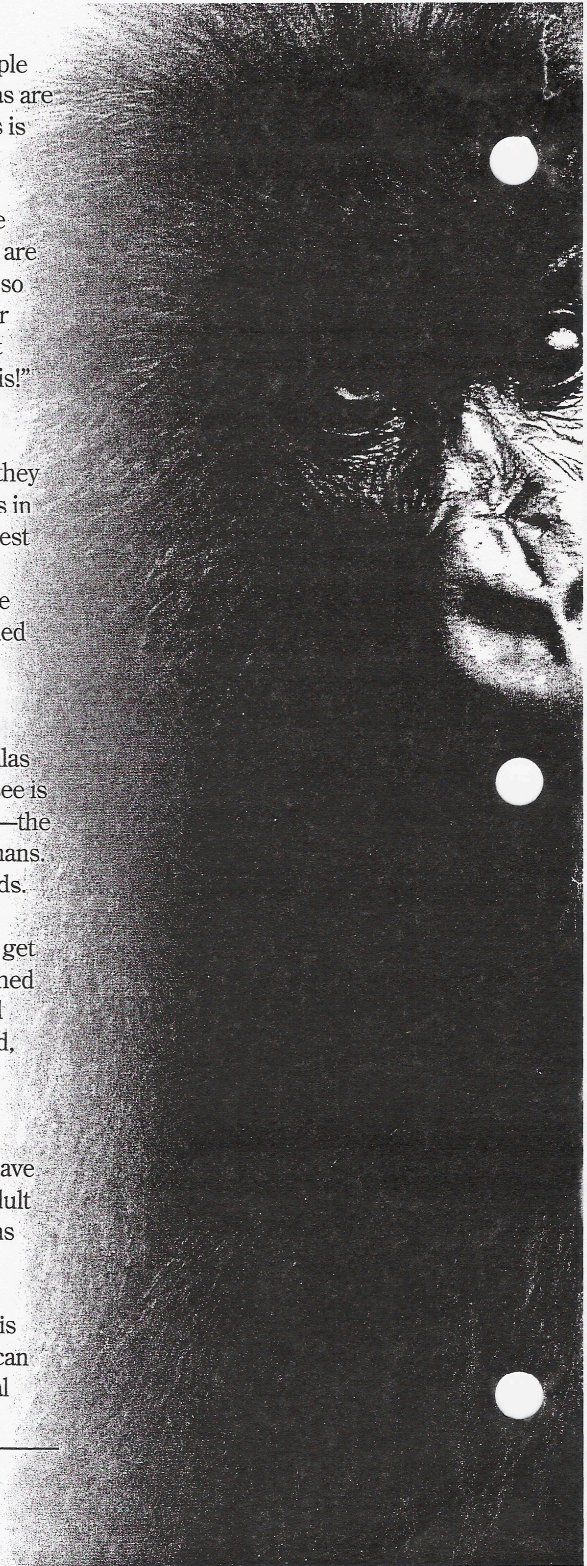
The resemblance of gorillas and other great apes (chimpanzees and orangutans) to people is the reason they are called the *anthropoid* (“man-like”) apes. Many tribes in Africa think of gorillas as primitive people, and the earliest explorers also thought that gorillas might be primitive, hairy people. In fact, the name *gorilla* was given to these animals by an explorer from ancient Carthage, who sailed along the west coast of Africa about 2,500 years ago. Literally translated, gorilla means “hairy person.”

What are some of the things you notice about gorillas when you see them? Well, the first thing you probably see is that they are *big*. Gorillas are the largest of all primates—the family of animals that includes monkeys, apes, and humans. The average weight of an adult male gorilla is 340 pounds. Adult females are much smaller. They normally weigh about half as much as males. In zoos, males sometimes get very big indeed. The largest zoo gorilla on record weighed more than 750 pounds. But this was because the animal was overfed. In most zoos today, gorillas are not overfed, and they weigh about as much as wild gorillas.

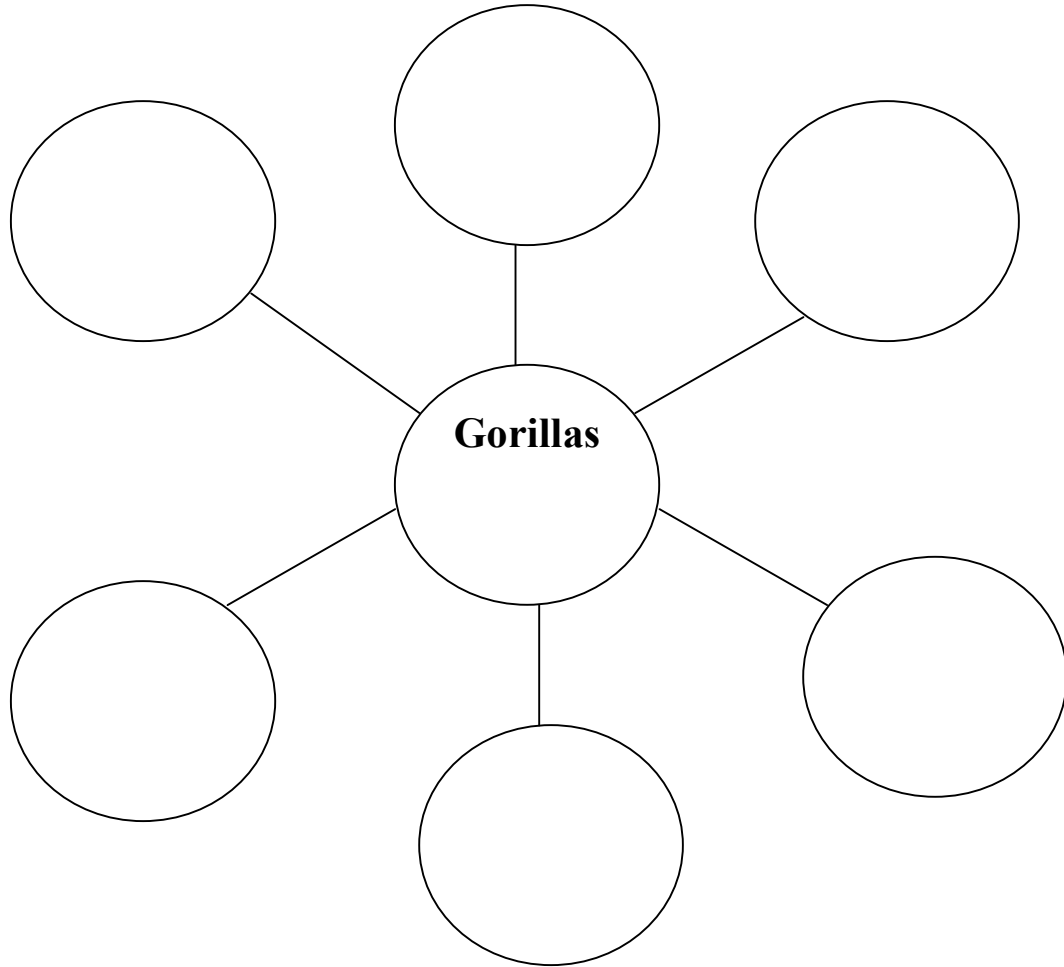
The second thing you will probably notice about gorillas is that they are very *hairy*. All healthy gorillas have thick, springy hair covering most of their bodies. But adult gorillas do not have hair on the face, the chest, the palms of their hands, or the soles of their feet.

One of the most remarkable things about gorillas is something that you can't see by looking at them. They can live to be very old. In zoos, where they get good medical care, they may live more than 50 years.

MOUNTAIN GORILLAS



GORILLA GRAPHIC ORGANIZER



Word Choice Lesson Plan

* Objective: Students will listen to a good use of descriptive writing and will then use description and good word choices in their writing to convey a deeper meaning. The students writing will “show” the reader - not “tell”.

* Standards:

Standard 1: Objective 1: Develop language through listening and speaking.

Standard 7: Objective 2: Apply strategies to comprehend text.

Standard 8: Objective 1: Prepare to write by gathering and organizing information and ideas.

Objective 2: Compose a written draft.

Objective 3: Revise by elaborating and clarifying a written draft.

Objective 6: Write in different forms and genres.

* ESL Connections:

SIOP Features:

3: Content concepts appropriate for age and educational background

4: Supplementary materials used to a high degree

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10: Speech appropriate for students’ proficiency levels

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16: Frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion

18: Sufficient wait time for student responses consistently provided

21: Activities provided for students to apply content and language

knowledge

25: Student engaged approximately 90% to 100% of the time

29: Regular feedback provided to students on the output

Teaching strategies:

Visual scaffolding, realia strategies, interactive read-aloud, Total physical response (TPR), Read-aloud plus, interactive writing

* Materials:

“The Boy” – Roald Dahl, pictures of dogs, paper, pencils, practice sentences.

* Anticipatory Set:

- * Read “The Boy” by Roald Dahl pg. 33 (section about candy store).

Discuss how Roald Dahl **shows** us what the characters are like.

* *Look at your pencils, everyone has one, but they are all different. Think of some words to describe your pencil and share those words with your neighbor.*

* Teaching:

* *Close your eyes and imagine this sentence. “The dog was sad.” (Write it on the board or overhead.) What did you see? As students answer, say “No, that’s not what I was talking about.” Let’s take this sentence and show the reader what is going on – let’s make some better word choices. Have students write the sentence in their notebooks.*

* *First, let’s add a precise noun. (Let students give suggestions and decide on one as a class. Show pictures of a variety of dogs.)*

The Bassett Hound was sad. (Continue to write new sentence each time and have students write each new sentence in their notebooks.)

- * *Second, let’s add an adjective.*

The floppy-eared Bassett Hound was sad.

* *Third, let’s add an action verb. Have students act out action verbs as they are discussed.*

The floppy-eared Bassett Hound whined.

* *Fourth, let’s add an adverb. Discuss and demonstrate what this will look like when combined with the adjective.*

The floppy-eared Bassett Hound whined pitifully.

- * *Fifth, let’s add a “why”.*

The floppy-eared Bassett Hound whined pitifully as his master drove away.

* *Now close your eyes and picture this new sentence. Discuss the differences between the first sentence and the final, revised sentence.*

* Guided Practice:

Work together at your tables to improve these boring sentences with some great word choices using the steps we just learned. (Give one sentence to each

table.) After students have had some time to fix their sentences, have each table share their beginning sentence and their new and improved sentence with the class.

- * I did my homework.
- * I rode my bike.
- * She ate ice cream.
- * She screamed.
- * He fell asleep.

* Independent Practice:

In your notebook rewrite this sentence by yourself.

He ran to the tree.

* Closure:

Quickly review good word choice, how to do it, why it's important, etc. If time, ask a few students share their final sentence.

* Extension:

For tired/overused words use "Hip, Hip, Horray, for Annie McRae" for alternatives for the word "said".

Descriptive Object Lesson

Objective: Students will deepen their understanding by physically manipulating an object and then verbally describing the object using knowledge gained from previous lessons. Students will gain a greater understanding of the importance of accurate and detailed description.

Link to Utah State Core:

Standard VII Objective 3d: Identify different structures in texts: Description

ESL Connections:

Feature 4: Supplementary Materials

Feature 21: Application of Content Feature

Feature 15: Partner Work

Feature 20: Guessing Game, Hands on Manipulatives

Materials: set of random objects that can be drawn but have some detail, offices or folders, crayons, paper

Lesson:

Introduction

We have been looking at description in both reading and writing. Today we are going to play a game to become better at describing.

Before we begin lets find out what you know and if you have any connection to this: (Ask)

Why do you think we would want to be able to describe things well?

List kids ideas on the board (you want them to come up with something like “so others will be able to understand and maybe even visualize what we are talking about”)

Can you remember a time when someone didn’t describe something well to you, maybe giving you directions or asking you for an object?

Let kids share

Activity:

Explain the game they will be playing to the class: Today we are going to be working on describing objects aloud. You are going to be working with a partner. One partner will have an object that the other partner cannot see. The partner with the object must describe the object to the other partner so that the partner can draw the object. We will be sharing our drawings to see how much they look like the objects. There are a few rules to this game (write on the board)

1. One partner describes the secret object and the other must draw it.
2. Only the describing partner gets to see the object.
3. The drawing partner must only draw what has been described to them.

Split the class into partners. Have them put up offices or folders between them and their partner. Hand out the objects and begin.

****You may want to set a time limit – you will have 5 minutes/10 minutes****

DISCUSS: Stop the students. Have partners show each other the drawing and the objects. Talk about how they did, what was hard and what they would do next time.

SWITCH: Repeat the activity allowing the partners to switch roles.

Debrief

Call the group back together to check learning. What did they think of the activity? Was it difficult? Was there a group that was more successful and if so, why?

Extension/Independent Work (optional)

Have students write a descriptive paragraph about something in the room without saying what it is. When finished the class can try to figure out what it is.

Descriptive Paragraph Writing Lesson Plan

* Objective:

Students will be able to listen to and identify elements of a descriptive paragraph and will then create several of their own descriptive paragraphs.

* Standards:

Standard 1: Objective 1: Develop language through listening and speaking.

Standard 7: Objective 2: Apply strategies to comprehend text.

Standard 8: Objective 1: Prepare to write by gathering and organizing information and ideas.

Objective 2: Compose a written draft.

Objective 3: Revise by elaborating and clarifying a written draft.

Objective 6: Write in different forms and genres.

*ESL Connections:

SIOP Features:

3: Content concepts appropriate for age and educational background

7: Concepts explicitly linked to students' background experiences

10: Speech appropriate for students' proficiency levels

13: Ample opportunities provided for students to use learning strategies

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21: Activities provided for students to apply content and language knowledge

25: Student engaged approximately 90% to 100% of the time

29: Regular feedback provided to students on the output

(Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2008)

Teaching Strategies:

Realia strategies, interactive read-aloud, cooperative learning, imaging, interactive writing (Herrell & Jordan, 2008)

* Materials:

Descriptive paragraph to read for an example, paper, pencil

* Anticipatory Set:

Read a descriptive paragraph to students and have them identify descriptive elements. (Example: The bell signaling the start of recess wailed and boisterous children filled the halls. The commotion soon made its way outside into the biting mid-December wind. The playground was covered quickly with children bundled in hats, coats, gloves, scarves, and boots. Before long, noses were blue, hands were numb, and feet were stamping to fight off the cold.)

* Teaching:

Weather permitting, take students outside to do some shared writing. First, work on composing a paragraph together to describe the surroundings. Discuss how to include the five senses to add to the description (how does it look, smell, sound, taste, or feel). (Example: It was a sunny day with a clear blue sky. The air smelled fresh like a nice summer day. Birds were singing and hooting. The cars zoomed past on their way to work. But the playground sat empty waiting for children to come play.)

* Independent Practice:

Next, chose a house or an object to describe. Remind students about the things learned in previous lessons. Allow students to do most of the identifying and describing, just guide the students in sentence flow. (Example: The small house with the white picket fence was surrounded by pine trees. Flowers bloomed in the front yard. White curtains covered the windows. The skinny, smokeless chimney waited for the weather to change.)

* Conclusion:

Finally, (this part of the lesson may need to be continued on another day) have each student write their own paragraph about themselves (or someone they know – character everyone knows, someone famous, etc.) Draw a picture of person to display, then read the papers and have students try to guess who is being described (Example: She was an energetic little girl, small for her young age of 6. She was full of life and it showed on her face. Her blue-green eyes smiled and her shoulder length light brown hair was pulled back in a liberating ponytail. She bopped around with a skip in her step and a song always on the tip of her tongue. She had a contagious laugh that none around her could resist.)

Identify descriptive elements and favorite parts of each piece. Hang pictures and paragraphs around the classroom.

*Extensions:

In Writer's Workshop make sure students work on at least one descriptive paragraph in each story (introducing characters or settings are great opportunities).