


Becoming An Effective Essay Writer



Overview

Writing essays are perhaps the most common type of writing students will do in school. They include one or more questions to which students must respond in detail, writing their answers in clear, well-organized manner. Many students have trouble with essay writing because they do not realize there is a sequence to follow to help them write effective essays, and to aid them in doing well on essay exams.

The following unit attempts to introduce students to the five steps in writing effective exam essays, and provides practice for them in writing different types of essays: process essay, compare and contrast essay, descriptive essay, and summary essay, many of which are commensurate with NYS learning standards.

This unit is targeted towards 7th and 8th grade students; however, it can easily be adapted to grade levels 9 through 12.

Connections to NYS Learning Standards

ELA Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding

Students will listen, speak, read, and write for information and understanding. As listeners and readers, students will collect data, facts, and ideas; discover relationships, concepts, and generalizations; and use knowledge from oral written, and electronically produced texts. As speakers and writers, they will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language to acquire, interpret, apply, and transmit information.

Students will:

- 1-produce oral and written reports on topics related to all school subjects
- 2-organize information according to an identifiable structure, such as compare/contrast or general to specific
- 3-develop information with appropriate supporting material, such as facts, details, illustrative examples or anecdotes, and exclude extraneous material
- 4-use the process of pre-writing, drafting, revising, and proofreading (the "writing process") to produce well-constructed informational texts
- 5-use standard English for formal presentations of information, selecting appropriate grammatical constructions and vocabulary, using a variety of sentence structures, and observing the rules of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

ELA Standard 3: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation

Students will listen, speak, read, and write for critical analysis and evaluation. As listeners and readers, students will analyze experiences, ideas, information, and issues presented by others using a variety of established criteria. As speakers and writers they will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language to present from a variety of perspectives, their opinions and judgments on experiences, ideas, information, and issues.