

WRITING WITH SKILL

INSTRUCTOR TEXT LEVEL 1

Susan Wise Bauer



Outline

- I. Ships prepared for battle
- II. Nelson prepared himself for battle
- III. Nelson sent messages to his fleet
- IV. The first shots were fired
- V. Nelson's ship joined the battle
- VI. Nelson's ship was wounded



WRITING WITH SKILL, LEVEL ONE

LEVEL 5 OF THE COMPLETE WRITER

by

Susan Wise Bauer

INSTRUCTOR TEXT

This book is to be used in conjunction with *Writing With Skill, Level One: Level 5 of the Complete Writer, Student Text*

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Sample

WEEK 1: NARRATIVE SUMMARIES

Day One: Original Narration Exercise



Focus: Summarizing a narrative by choosing the main events and listing them chronologically

The steps that say “Student Responsibility” should be completed by the student with no assistance or feedback from you. Other steps may require you to help the student and/or check the student’s work.

The student instructions are reproduced below for your convenience.

STEP ONE: Read (Student Responsibility)

Student instructions for Step One:

Read the following excerpt from the beginning of the first chapter of *The Pepins and Their Problems* by Polly Horvath.

At the end of the excerpt, you will see a small number that sits up above the last word. This small number is called a *superscript* number. *Super* means “above, over,” so a superscript number sits up above the regular script, or print.

When you see the superscript number, look down at the bottom of the page. You will see a line of smaller type beginning with the same number. This is called a *footnote*, because it is a note at the foot, or bottom, of the page. The footnote tells you the title of the book that the excerpt comes from, the author, the publisher, the year of publication, and the page numbers in the book where the excerpt is found.



STEP TWO: Note important events

Student instructions for Step Two:

This is a short and simple passage—a warm-up for you!

When you summarize a narrative, it’s often best to start by jotting down a few phrases or short sentences that remind you of things that happened in the story. Although you may not need to do this with such a short passage, practice this now. On scratch paper, write down four

or five phrases or short sentences that will remind you of the things that happened in the passage. *Do not use more than five phrases or short sentences!*

Be sure to write the events down in the same order that they happen in the story.
If you have trouble with this assignment, ask your instructor for help.

HOW TO HELP THE STUDENT WITH STEP TWO

The student should have written down on scratch paper four or five short phrases or sentences that summarize the main events. The phrases/sentences should resemble a few of the following (these are given only as a guide):

The Pepins always have problems.
The Pepins and their bizarre problems
Toads in their shoes
Couldn't put on their shoes
No one knew what to do.
They went next door to ask their neighbor for help.
Their neighbor had toads in his shoes too.
No one knew how to get the toads out.

This should be an easy assignment, but if the student is having difficulty getting started, ask him:

Who are the main characters in this story?	<i>(The Pepins)</i>
What problem do they have?	<i>(There are toads in their shoes.)</i>
How do they try to solve the problem?	<i>(They go ask their neighbor.)</i>
Does the solution work?	<i>(No, it does not.)</i>

STEP THREE: Write summary sentences

Student instructions for Step Three:

After you've written down your four or five phrases or sentences, try to combine them into two or three sentences. You can do this by putting two phrases in the same sentence (for example, "Toads in their shoes" and "They couldn't put on their shoes" could be combined into "They couldn't put on their shoes because there were toads in the shoes"). Or you may find that one or more of your jotted notes turns out to be unnecessary. (If you leave out the detail that Mr. Bradshaw was eating corn cereal, the summary will still make sense!)

Say your two or three sentences out loud several times before writing them down. After you've written the sentences down, ask your instructor to check them. Remember to proofread the sentences first. Reading them out loud *after* you've written them is an excellent way to check your own work.

If you have trouble, ask your instructor for help.

HOW TO HELP THE STUDENT WITH STEP THREE

In this step, the student practices turning the jotted phrases and sentences into two or three smooth, coherent sentences. She should say her sentences out loud several times before she

writes; listen to make sure that you hear her talking out loud, and if necessary remind her that she should be speaking before she writes.

An acceptable narration might sound like one of the following:

The Pepins were always having strange problems. One morning, they woke up to find toads in their shoes. None of them knew what to do.

OR

The Pepins woke up one morning to find out that their shoes were full of toads. So were their neighbor's, Mr. Bradshaw. None of them knew how to get the toads out of the shoes.

OR

The Pepins found toads in their shoes and couldn't get them out. They went next door to see Mr. Bradshaw, but he didn't know how to get the toads out either.

When the summary is finished, check it using the following rubric (guide to evaluation). This rubric focuses only on the skills emphasized in this lesson and in the accompanying grammar handbook. Future rubrics will build on this, as the student learns more about both organization and mechanics.

Week 1 Narration Rubric

Organization

- 1 Events should be in chronological order.
- 2 If two or more events are listed in a single sentence, they should have a cause and effect relationship.

For example:

The Pepins didn't know what to do, so they went next door to ask Mr. Bradshaw is acceptable; they went next door *because* they didn't know what to do.

The Pepins had toads in their shoes, and they went next door is not acceptable. There is no clear causal relationship between the two sentences.

Mechanics

- 1 Each sentence should make sense on its own when read aloud.
- 2 Each proper name should be capitalized.

Day Two: Original Narration Exercise



Focus: Summarizing a narrative by choosing the main events and listing them chronologically

STEP ONE: Read (Student Responsibility)

Student instructions for Step One:

Read the following excerpt from *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* by Joan Aiken. In this passage, young Sylvia is travelling to stay with her wealthy cousin Bonnie at the country house known as Willoughby Chase. She has not had enough to eat, and her clothes are old and thin, so she is both hungry and cold—but she knows that she should be suspicious of the strange man who is sharing the railway carriage with her. When he offers her a box of chocolates, she refuses, even though her mouth waters.

STEP TWO: Note important events

Student instructions for Step Two:

On scratch paper, write down five or six phrases or short sentences that will remind you of the things that happened in the passage. *Do not use more than six phrases or short sentences!* There are many vivid details in this passage (like the “jam tarts, maids of honor, lemon cheese cakes, Chelsea buns, and numerous little iced confections”). Remember that details should not be included in a summary—try to stay focused on the main events.

Be sure to write the events down in the same order that they happen in the story. If you have trouble with this assignment, ask your instructor for help.

HOW TO HELP THE STUDENT WITH STEP TWO

Today’s exercise is designed to remind the student that details should not go into a summary. The details in this passage—the description of the cakes, the wolves, Sylvia’s dream—are so vivid that the student will be tempted to include them. If you see him writing many more than five or six short phrases or sentences, check to make sure that he is not listing details instead of main events.

The student’s phrases/sentences should resemble some of the following (these are given only as a guide):

The man offered Sylvia cakes to eat.
Sylvia was uncomfortable with the man.
Sylvia ignored man.
Stranger offered her cakes but she refused.
Sylvia fell asleep in the train.
Train stopped because of wolves.

*Wolves got on the line.
 Train stopped.
 Wolves tried to get into the train.
 A wolf broke the window.
 A wolf broke into the train compartment.
 The stranger stabbed the wolf.*

If the student is having difficulty condensing the story, ask him:

How does Sylvia react to the man in the train? *(She tries to ignore him/feels uncomfortable.)*
 What happens to stop the train? *(Wolves are on the line.)*
 What happens after the train stops? *(A wolf breaks in through the window.)*
 How does the man react? *(He stabs the wolf with a piece of glass.)*

STEP THREE: **Write summary sentences**

Student instructions for Step Three:

After you've written down your five or six phrases or sentences, try to combine them into three or four sentences. Remember: you can do this by putting two phrases or sentences together (for example, "Sylvia was uncomfortable" and "The man offered her cakes but she refused" could be combined into "Sylvia was uncomfortable with the man, so when he offered her cakes she refused"). Or you may find that one or more of your jotted notes turns out to be unnecessary. (If you completely leave out the information that the man offered her cakes, the summary will still make sense!)

Say your three or four sentences out loud several times before writing them down. After you've written the sentences down, ask your instructor to check them. Remember to proofread the sentences first by reading them out loud.

If you have trouble, ask your instructor for help.

HOW TO HELP THE STUDENT WITH STEP THREE

In this step, the student practices turning the jotted phrases and sentences into three or four smooth, coherent sentences. She should say her sentences out loud several times before she writes; listen to make sure that you hear her talking out loud, and if necessary remind her that she should be speaking before she writes.

An acceptable narration might sound like one of the following:

Sylvia found herself on the train with a stranger. He offered her cakes, but she tried to ignore him. After they had been travelling for a while, wolves on the line stopped the train. One wolf broke into the train car, but the stranger stabbed it to death.

OR

Sylvia was very uncomfortable with the stranger who was in her compartment, so she tried to ignore him and went to sleep. She woke up when the train stopped. Wolves were on the line, and one of them broke into the compartment. The man threw his cloak over the wolf and stabbed it with a piece of glass.