

READ AND WRITE SPORTS

Anastasia Suen

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Read and Write Sports

Readers Theatre and Writing Activities for Grades 3–8

Anastasia Suen

A Teacher Ideas Press Book



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For Aimée and Shirley

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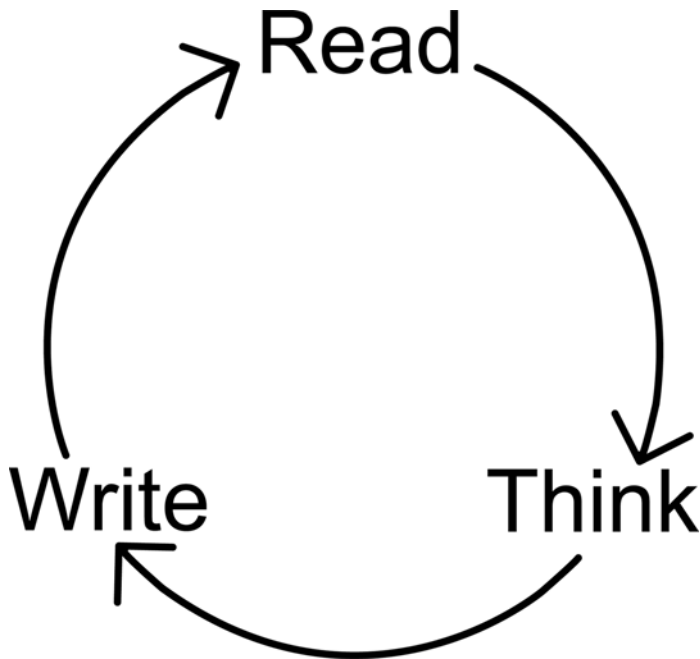
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Introduction

Reading and Writing . . . and Teaching

My mother read to me as a child, so books have always been a part of my life. I wrote and illustrated my first picture book when I was 11 years old, and I've been writing ever since. I wrote as a student and I wrote as a teacher. After all, I was charged with teaching my students how to read and write. I read to them and wrote for them, and they read and wrote for me. I wrote easy readers for my kindergarten and first grade students. When I taught the intermediate grades, I wrote plays for my students to perform.

After my children were born, I began to send my writing to book publishers, and to my dismay, received rejection letters for years. When my youngest was in second grade, I finally sold my first book. (Six weeks later I sold my second book and six weeks after that I sold my third book. After all those years of hearing no, someone finally said yes!)



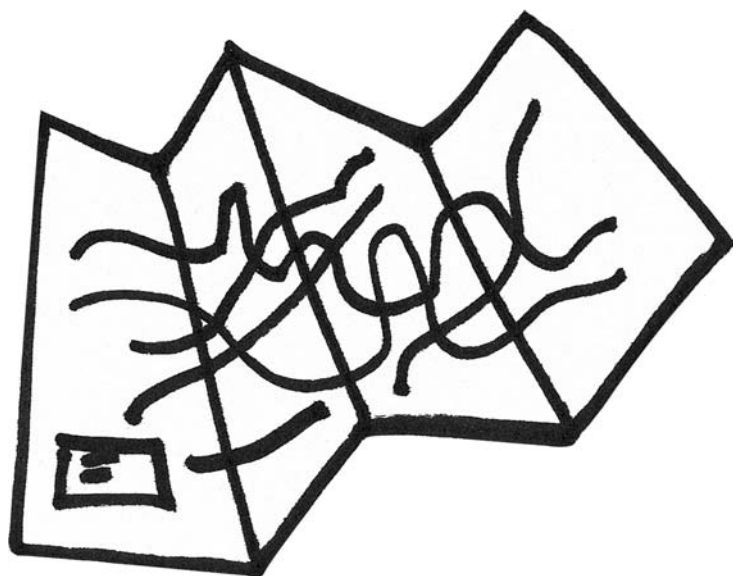
During all this time, I was writing and teaching. For me, *writing and teaching go hand-in-hand. They are yin and yang.* I need to be quiet to hear my thoughts so I can write them down. And yet when I talk about my thoughts with others, what I want to say becomes clearer.

Communication is an ever widening spiral. I read something, and that makes me think, which leads me to write. Reading what I have written leads to new thoughts, so I write again. As I cycle through the creative process this way, my thoughts become clearer and clearer.

I discovered that writing is actually the final step of the creative process. Without previous experiences, I really didn't have anything to write about. That was why I got stuck! I need to read and think and *live* before I can write about something. *A lack of experience is the first source of writer's block.*

I brought my personal experience with writer's block into the classroom. I only ask students to write about something that they know or want to find out. Student-directed learning is motivated learning.

Another thing I discovered over the years is that the writing process is easier when I have a map. Sitting at a desk with a blank page is terrifying! How do I know where the story should go? What should I do? I know I'm not alone in this. I see it in every classroom I work in (and I have taught kindergarten to college). *A lack of direction is the second source of writer's block.*



When I share my fear of the blank page with students, it always lowers the tension. They realize they are not alone, and become open to writing and thinking and sharing. I share my maps with them, and guide them through the creative process. As we talk through their story, students of all ages are always amazed at how the words come pouring out. I tell them that their words are already there, we just need to use a map to find them. We just need to ask the right questions.

Peer Editing

As you share this question-directed writing process with your students, you are also teaching your students to be editors. Yes, even elementary school students can help each other write. Peer editing is an important part of becoming a writer. Asking questions at each stage of the writing process helps young writers clarify what they want to say. It is a practical way to help your students realize that they are writing for an audience.

Using peer editors also helps you individualize your instruction. Your active learners are helping each other, giving you time to work with other students one-on-one. Everyone is learning. It's a win-win!

You are holding a book of writing maps in your hand. Today we call these writing maps Graphic Organizer Charts (GO Charts). With these maps, you can help your students discover the stories they have inside. They will help your students discover stories in the world around them. These Graphic Organizer Charts will guide your students on their journey as readers, thinkers, and writers. They will give you questions to ask your students, so they can discover their stories step-by-step.

In the classroom, I found that students had an easier time using the maps when they saw how someone else had used them, so the GO Charts in this book appear in two different forms. In the sports chapters, you will find completed examples of each GO Chart. At the back of the book, there are black line masters of each GO Chart for you to reproduce. After you model how another student created the sample GO Chart, you can hand out copies of the black line masters for your students to use.

Prewriting, the Forgotten Step

There are writing charts in classrooms all over the country that show the five steps of writing.

The Five Steps of Writing

1. Prewrite
2. Rough Draft
3. Revise
4. Edit
5. Publish

Younger students skip the first step. Young writers simply don't plan ahead. They get an idea and they write it down. This is developmentally appropriate in the primary grades.

As students grow older, however, we want to help them learn how to think ahead. We want them to learn how to plan. However, because they have been writing for several years without this step, many writers see it as unnecessary.

I'll be honest and tell you that I see this with many adult writers that I work with as well. Some writers don't plan ahead; they just sit down and write. The problem comes later when they are halfway through their novel and don't know what to do next. Any editing I try to do is met with resistance. They have spent months working on those chapters! Who am I to tell them that those chapters are unnecessary and need to be deleted? They don't want me to touch their precious words, because they think they are done. (They don't really want critique, they want praise. In their minds, what they have written is golden.)

This is why I like to work with the maps first. If I can help them to plan their story before they spend a lot of time on it, students of all ages are much more open to the

editing process. The GO Charts are filled in with just a few words and phrases, so the work is finished quickly. Because they haven't spent hours working on these words, most students are quite open to discussing changes. After all, how hard is it to cross off a few words on the page? So they cross off a few words here and add a few others there. And then we talk about it and they do it again. Their first idea isn't always the best one. Sometimes it takes a few tries to figure things out. I have found that helping students be open to change at this early stage results in stronger and more focused writing in the end. Editing in the prewriting stage makes the writing process a lot less traumatic for everyone.

Why Sports?

I selected sports as the topic of this writing book because in classroom after classroom, it was the only topic that many students want to write about. Once I told them they could write about their favorite sports, my "reluctant" writers became "active" writers. They wanted to tell me all about their favorite sport and what they did at their last game.

To capitalize on this strong interest, I have selected 10 sports.

1. Football
2. Basketball
3. Hockey
4. Skating
5. Baseball
6. Soccer
7. Track
8. Gymnastics
9. BMX
10. Skateboarding

These sports are listed in the order they usually occur during the school year. This will allow you to use this book with your class throughout the year.

How to Use This Book

For each of the 10 sports in this volume, your students will read, write, and work with words. In each chapter, there is a readers theatre selection, an expository writing exercise, a narrative writing exercise, a poetry writing exercise, and two word puzzles. The lesson plans are here in this section. The student pages include a readers theatre script, example GO Charts for each sport, and the two word puzzles. The GO Chart masters are in Appendix One and the puzzle solutions are in Appendix Two.

Readers Theatre

Each readers theatre script has an introduction page with a summary of the play, the reading level, staging directions and props suggestions. To allow you to cast the play accurately, the reading level for each speaking part is also listed on the teacher’s summary page. Dialogue is short, so the reading levels for most of the speaking parts are quite low. This will allow your “reluctant” readers to stand in front of the class and read with confidence. Every play also has a chorus speaking part for the “crowd” or the “fans” so the entire class will be able to participate (which will keep everyone on task).

Ask students to write their name at the top of their script. They should also highlight their lines part with a marker. Because each student is part of the play, they will have to read along each time it is performed. The highlighted sections will remind students when it is their turn to speak.

A readers theatre play is not the same as a traditional school play.

Traditional school play	Readers Theatre
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• students recite their lines from memory• the play is held onstage• students dress in costumes• a backdrop and props are always used	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• students read from a script• the play takes place in the classroom• no costumes are required• backdrop and props are optional

The goal of any readers theatre performance is to give students practice reading aloud. This is accomplished in two ways. As students prepare for the performance, they read the play over and over. During the performance they read the words again aloud.

Write an Expository Paragraph

We will begin our writing in each chapter with the facts. This will ground your students in the world of each sport. (It’s hard to write about something you don’t understand.)

Each student will write an expository paragraph about one aspect of the sport. The paragraph will answer a student-directed question. As you can see in the chart, there are five different steps. Selecting a topic is always a difficult task for some students. In each chapter that task will be made somewhat easier by the fact that we are focusing on only one sport. For avid fans, however, there are still too many choices, so we’ll use a mind map to narrow things down. Let’s use the baseball chapter as an example.

So students can see their tasks at a glance, make a copy of this Write an Expository Paragraph Chart, found in Appendix One, for each student’s writing folder. The black line masters for the Topic GO Charts are in the appendix after this instruction chart.

Name _____ Date _____

Write an Expository Paragraph Chart

- 1. Select a topic.
- 2. Think of a question.
- 3. Find 5 facts that answer your question.
- 4. Organize your facts.
- 5. Write about your facts.

Warm-Up

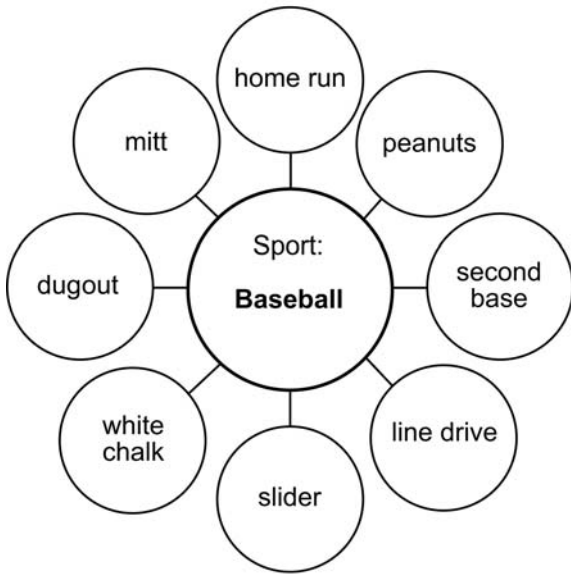
Every sport begins with a warm-up, so for our sports writing, we will warm up too! For expository writing, we will begin with the Topic Mind Map GO Chart.

Hand out copies of the completed Baseball Topic Mind Map GO Chart. Point out that the name of the sport is written in the center of the chart. The other words on the chart are all related to the word in the center. Ask students to read the words aloud.

Name Abigail Date January 9

Baseball Topic Mind Map GO Chart

Write the name of your sport in the center circle and add details in the smaller circles. This brainstorming will help you figure out a research question. What do you want to know about this sport?



I want to know: Where did baseball come from?

Draw your students' attention to the question at the bottom of the chart. Tell them that the student who created this chart wanted to know more about this aspect of baseball.

After discussing the completed example, hand out blank Topic Mind Map GO Charts for the students to use. Ask them to write the name of the sport in the center circle and create their own mind map. (Some of your lower-level students will still find this task difficult, so tell them that they can use these words from the example on their mind map, too.)

After each student has a completed mind map, the next step is to think of a question. When they look at these words, what do they want to know? What do they want to find out? Ask students to write their question at the bottom of their chart.