

## K-3 Essential 6, Bullet 4 Mentor Texts Sample Video

MAISA Literacy Essentials

<https://youtu.be/SG2vPnygxnc>

Narrator: When teachers provide research and standards aligned writing instruction, they support students' literacy learning. In this classroom, students are studying models to inform their writing of procedural texts.

Teacher Aaron: Today we're going to be writing how to books. So we'll be looking at a mentor text that shows the features of how we want them to write a how to. A mentor text is a well-written example of whatever genre of texts that we'll be working on. It serves as a model for the students to use in their writing, and we'll also be looking at an anti mentor text or a text that doesn't show what we want in today's lesson one that's very general. It doesn't have the exact steps so that they can see what the writing kind of shouldn't look like so that they can think through what they could do to make it better. Looking at both of them and comparing them, they can see what really makes the mentor text stand out, what features in the text make it easier for the reader, make it more effective as a writer when you're using those specific features.

Today we're going to think about procedural text that's going to help us to make some lemonade. So what we need to think about is how to make lemonade and it can be tricky when somebody doesn't know how to do something, how we give them directions or instructions to make sure that it's done correctly. So I have two recipes. One's for lemonade and one's for smoothies. So I'm going to try out my lemonade recipe because that's our focus today is to see if we can make a good lemonade recipe. So when I read it, it says squeeze juice from a lemon. So I have a lemon and the next part, I already did this so we don't have to go fill it up. It says to pour the lemon juice into the container with water. So I have a container with water, so I'm going to squeeze my lemon juice into it, because that's what it says to do. Alright, now I'm going to add sugar, so I have some sugar. Let's see, what should I add? This says add sugar. I like sugar, so I'm going to add some sugar. All right, and then it says stir. So I'm going to stir it up. And according to my recipe, look at that beautiful cup of lemonade that I just made. It looks just like mine. So I just read a how to make lemonade. I followed it just like the directions and I made lemonade. Who wants to be my guinea pig and try my delicious lemonade? Amari, you want to try it? Oh, all right. See what you think of our lemonade. What do you think?

Student: Too watery.

Teacher Aaron: It's too watery. Maybe we didn't have enough sugar or maybe not enough lemon. It just kind of tastes like water. Okay, we'll have to take that to think about that when we write our how to. It's tricky when we teach somebody something that's never done it before. We have to use specific directions. I don't know if I put in the right amount of water or sugar or lemon. I have no idea because it didn't say. Now let's look at my smoothie recipe, A fruit smoothie. There's a title that says ingredients and I have numbers on it. First off, I see two cups of frozen strawberries. One banana broken into chunks, one cup of orange juice, a half cup of plain yogurt. So, it tells me what I need. Then it gives me steps. One, put ingredients into a blender. Two, cover the blender. Three turn on high speed until smooth with no chunks. Four, serve right away. If I look at these two texts, which one do you think is a better example of how as a writer, I would want to write a how to or procedural text. Dylan.

Student: The fruit smoothie

Teacher Aaron: You think the fruit smoothie. Well let's think about this. Let things on there. Specific things that I can do because we're going to make our own lemonade recipe so that it's more specific so that you could take it home and make it if you wanted to. But we're going to make it more specific. So what things on the one that we just said was a better text, could we do to make our lemonade recipe better? Just think about it for a second.

Today, because it's a recipe that they're using measurements and numbers and showing exact amounts and using those details where in the anti mentor text, it's very general. There's not very specific details. There's not specific amounts that they're using. So it makes it more of a broad, general weak writing than the strong writing of the mentor text. One might be that they list the ingredients. So what are some things that we want to make sure we do as writers when we're writing our how to? Karina?

Student: Now, the fruit smoothie tells actually have how much

Teacher Aaron: It tells how much? So it specifically tells how much. So we probably want to include how much. One thing that I noticed when I'm reading it is we said that there was a list of ingredients. The ingredients are at the top. What's the second little category? What does that say, Kaylee? It says step. They put things in steps so I know which step to go. It could be important what order I put things in. If I was going to make brownies like somebody said and I put them in the oven before I mixed everything together, that might not work out. I need to know the steps. I like how on theirs the steps are numbered. Step one, step two, I'm going to put steps in that things are numbered. Let's go over 'em again. So it says that we're going to need a list of ingredients.

We need to know how much of each of those ingredients, we need to write it in sentences. We need to have details about it and we need to tell what the steps are when we're making our lemonade. For mentor text, it could be something written by an author. We used a book or an article. Sometimes we're in the computer lab. It might be something off the internet that's written by a professional writer. It can also be something that's written by me that I'm trying to show something specific or an example from the class of a student or a former student or a student in a different grade of how we want their writing to look and sound. So when I'm looking for a mentor text, I'm looking for the specific features of whatever genre we're working on. What ingredients do we need to make our lemonade? Riley? Sugar. We need sugar. So I'm going to put that on my ingredient list. What else do we need? Brandon? Lemon. We need lemons. Now we need our steps. So over here we'll write our steps. Fill up a one gallon that tells us how much, right? So we said how much we need one gallon pitcher with water, there's our first ingredient. So when we look at a mentor text, we'll look at it, read it, go through it, then have the students kind of examine it and see what they think. We work together to make an anchor chart, write down what the strong features of that text are. What makes it a model text, why we want to use it so it looks better than my other one already. It's more like lemonade, doesn't it? Alright, who was my Guinea pig that said it was too watery? Amaria, you didn't like it? You want to come and try this and tell me if it's better. What do you think?

Student: Much better.

Teacher: Much better. Did it taste more like lemonade and less like water that time? Well, it was much easier for me as a reader. Thank you. It was much easier for me as a reader to follow these steps and directions and make lemonade that Amari would like to have. One thing that the kids really get excited about in writing, we create an anchor chart that has some of the text features that we want them to be focusing on. When they read a mentor text or one that we've done together, they see one that's lacking

something and then they put that in their own writing. Then it makes them feel like their writing's even more powerful than the mentor writing. It really gives them that motivation and engagement to grow as writers. Jackson, you want to come try my lemonade? Thank you.

What do you think?

Student: Best lemonade I ever tasted.

Teacher: What's the best lemonade he's ever tasted? It must be because of this amazing recipe that we used. So I'm going to give you all a chance to try the lemonade while you are starting on your own. How tos. So what we're going to do now is you are going to write your own procedural text, but we need to remember some of our common features. We don't want our how to look like that because then if somebody gets it, they might have this lemonade or somebody said they were going to make a paper airplane. They might have a paper airplane that doesn't fly anywhere because they just didn't know what to do. So you are the expert. You are going to teach somebody how to do it, but we need to make sure that we list the things you need, that you tell how much of those things you need, that you tell about it in sentences.

That made it much easier for me to follow. Use details and steps and numbers. If you use some of those things, it's going to help you a lot in making your how-to much easier to understand the thing that is the most rewarding on a day-to-day basis is seeing the success of the students. And when you have something that you know is going to be successful and you work with the students and you see them be successful, there's no greater reward than that. To see them do things like take strategies you've done before and apply it later or come up and say things about the mentor texts, like how they did something that was different than even the mentor texts did. And seeing that engagement and how it crosses over into their confidence and other subjects and that they use. That is really the day-to-Day, the most rewarding part.

Narrator: Learn more at [literacyessentials.org](http://literacyessentials.org).