

Professional Learning Communities Facilitator's Guide

for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide: Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School

VIDEO

6:23 minutes

[Full Details and Transcript](#)

Using Graphic Organizers in Writing (Second-Grade Class)

July 2015

Video Details

Facilitator's Guide Session: Recommendation 3, Session 3A
Handout 3A.2: Video Viewing Guide – Using Graphic Organizers in Writing

Description: In this video, a teacher in a second-grade class demonstrates how to use a graphic organizer as the foundation of a writing assignment. The class shown has 26 students. Three are native English speakers; the rest are English learners whose home language is Spanish and whose English proficiency is in the intermediate range. The majority of the students were born in the United States and have been enrolled at this school since kindergarten. This teaching segment was filmed during the second month of school.

Full Transcript

Teacher: We're going to have another lesson today about what we've been studying in science. We've been studying about gravity. We've been learning some special words. What was our first vocabulary word?

Students: *Force.*

Teacher: *Force and gravity . . .*

Students: *Gravity. Weight.*

Video Transcript: Using Graphic Organizers in Writing (Second-Grade Class)

Teacher: *Weight* and . . . ?

Students: *Load*.

Teacher: And *load*, very good. And yesterday, we created this graphic organizer. A graphic organizer helps us organize our ideas for writing. It means it's kind of like a plan to help us think about what we're going to write about. This is going to help us later today when we do our writing. Yesterday, we talked about cause and effect. All right. And we learned that this was the cause of many things. Because of gravity, a rock falls to the ground.

Students: Because of gravity, a rock falls to the ground.

Teacher: Or because of gravity, a ball falls down.

Students: A ball falls down.

Teacher: We're going to do some writing about gravity. And so boys and girls, I have up here kind of like a plan to help us think about our writing. Our informational writing—again, remember, it's always about true and real things—starts with a main idea. Everybody, can you say it?

Students: Main idea.

Teacher: Main idea. Now you might remember in our science book, in our journal, we practiced writing the main idea . . .

Student: Yes.

Teacher: . . . and then the details under the main idea? Remember we did that in our journal? Well, that's what we're going to follow today, that same kind of plan. But what does that mean, the main idea? What is that, the main idea?

Student 1: The big idea.

Teacher: The big or important idea. Now when we go to writing, we take that main idea and we start with what is called a topic . . .

Students: A topic sentence.

Teacher: . . . sentence. That's right. That's our first sentence and that always has the big idea.

Students: Big idea.

Teacher: That's right. That's the first sentence. Then after we have our topic sentence, which is our . . .

Students: Big idea.

Video Transcript: Using Graphic Organizers in Writing (Second-Grade Class)

Teacher: . . . big idea, then we need to have some details. Okay. And the details—usually three is a good number of details—but what are details? What does that mean, details? Well details are . . .

Students: Small ideas that explain the big idea or the topic sentence.

Teacher: . . . small ideas that explain the big idea or the topic sentence. So these little ideas have to give me more information, or they have to explain about this big idea. Let's see. We've got to start with our big idea. So now we go back to our graphic organizer, and let's see. What was this whole big idea? Well, didn't we say that gravity makes many, many things happen?

Students: Yes.

Teacher: Yes. Look at all these things that gravity makes happen. So we can make that our topic sentence. Gravity makes many – because look at all these things we have that we know that gravity does. So gravity makes many, many, many things happen. All right, so that could be our big idea. Then, later, we could write the details to explain that. Well what do I mean gravity makes many things happen? What could be an example of what gravity does? Those could be our details. All right. We're going to start with the topic sentence. I'm going to take this down now. When we write, we start with what? What comes first?

Students: Topic sentence.

Teacher: A topic sentence.

Students: Many things happen because of gravity.

Teacher: Many things happen because of gravity. That's right. Many, many things happen because of gravity. Now I want you to think about it, and then just in a minute, I'm going to have you pair with your seat partner, and then you're going to share. But think, what is something you know that happens because of gravity? Ready? All right. I want you to face your partner. Remember, if you have long hair, you go first. If you have short hair, you share second. All right? Now remember to share in a whisper voice, in a whisper. . .

Students: [crosstalk]

Teacher: Okay. Tell us, what's something that happens because of gravity?

Student 2: A baseball falling down.

Student 3: A shoe?

Teacher: Okay. Say it in a complete sentence. An example of something that happens because of gravity.

Student 4: Snow comes down to the ground because of Earth's gravity.

Teacher: Good. Snow comes down to the ground. What else? On your paper that you'll see in a minute, I already wrote this for you. So this part is finished. Now you're going to continue to write right on the line after

Video Transcript: Using Graphic Organizers in Writing (Second-Grade Class)

the topic sentence, and you're going to give the details. Now where could you maybe look to get some ideas for your three details?

Student 5: The graphic organizer.

Teacher: The graphic organizer. That might give you some ideas of what to write. Now will you turn the papers over that you have on your desk. Give me an example. What happens because of gravity? What? I want to explain what this means, this conclusion. The conclusion is what did we learn? What did we learn about gravity? Gravity's always doing what?

Teachers: Pulling things down. So that's what we're going to write at the end. That's what we learned from all this. Gravity always . . .

Student 6: Pulls things down.

Teacher: That's right. I'm going to write it up here, the conclusion. I heard a lot of you saying it. Here we go. Will you share your whole paragraph? Start from the topic sentence. Hector, can you read yours? Nice, loud voice, dear.

Hector: Many things happen because of gravity. A ball falls down. An acorn falls to the ground. Apples fall down to the ground. Gravity always pulls things down.

Teacher: Excellent. All right. It's time to clean up, and you did a great job.

– *End of Transcript* –

Disclaimer: This video, produced by the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Southwest is part of a series developed for the *Professional Learning Communities Facilitator's Guide for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide: Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School*.

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