



#9910 esSAY WHAT?

AIMS MULTIMEDIA, 2000

Grade Level: 8-12

22 mins.

1 Instructional Graphic Enclosed

DESCRIPTION

Four teenagers compete in an essay writing contest judged by Aristotle, Shakespeare, and Mark Twain. Each essay--descriptive, persuasive, narrative, and expository--is read, and each judge comments on its structure and organization, accuracy of communication, and style. A unique presentation that identifies the four essay types and their key elements.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Language Arts--Writing

- Standard: Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process
 - ◆ Benchmark: Uses strategies to adapt writing for different purposes (e.g., to explain, inform, analyze, entertain, reflect, persuade) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1.)
 - ◆ Benchmark: Editing and Publishing: Uses a variety of strategies to edit and publish written work (e.g., uses a checklist to guide proofreading; edits for grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling at a developmentally appropriate level; refines selected pieces to publish for general and specific audiences; uses available technology, such as publishing software or graphics programs, to publish written work) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 4.)
 - ◆ Benchmark: Evaluates own and others' writing (e.g., accumulates a body of written work to determine strengths and weaknesses as a writer, makes suggestions to improve writing, responds productively to reviews of own work) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 5.)
- Standard: Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing
 - ◆ Benchmark: Organizes ideas to achieve cohesion in writing (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 2.)
 - ◆ Benchmark: Uses a variety of techniques to convey a personal style and voice (e.g., stream of consciousness, multiple viewpoints) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 2.)
 - ◆ Benchmark: Uses precise and descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas and supports different purposes (e.g., to stimulate the imagination of the reader, to translate concepts into simpler or more easily

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understood terms, to achieve a specific tone, to explain concepts in literature) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1 and 2.)

- Standard: Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions
 - ◆ Benchmark: Uses conventions of capitalization in written compositions (e.g., within divided quotations; for historical periods and events, geological eras, religious terms, scientific terms) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 3.)
 - ◆ Benchmark: Uses conventions of punctuation in written compositions (e.g., uses commas with nonrestrictive clauses and contrasting expressions, uses quotation marks with ending punctuation, uses colons before extended quotations, uses hyphens for compound adjectives, uses semicolons between independent clauses, uses dashes to break continuity of thought) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 3.)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To illustrate four major essay styles: descriptive, narrative, persuasive, and expository.
2. To examine such components of writing as structure and organization, research, accuracy, voice, and style.
3. To broaden understanding of Standard English conventions.
4. To demonstrate use of revising and editing skills.
5. To practice evaluating others' written work.

VOCABULARY

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. accuracy of communication | 7. conventions | 14. point of view |
| 2. audience | 8. descriptive | 15. structure |
| 3. bookend technique | 9. expository | 16. style |
| 4. chronological order | 10. narrative | 17. theme |
| 5. composition | 11. onomatopoeia | 18. transition |
| 6. contestant | 12. organization | |
| | 13. persuasive | |

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Discuss the four major styles of essays: descriptive, narrative, persuasive, and expository.
2. Review the components of quality essay writing.
 - a. Distribute copies of the "Essay Criteria and Scorecard." (See INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHIC.)
 - b. Explain that the scorecard will be used during pauses in the video to rate each of the presented essays.
3. Discuss the famous writers Aristotle, William Shakespeare, and Mark Twain.
 - a. Describe the kinds of writing for which each of them is famous.
 - b. Explain that animations of these three writers will be judging the qualities of the student essays in the video.

DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Pause the video after each contestant reads their essay. Allow time to score each essay. Consider discussing the scores prior to continuing the video. (See BEFORE SHOWING 2.)

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. What are the primary criteria for which the judges reviewed the contestants' essays? (Structure and organization, accuracy of communication, and style are the primary criteria.)
2. How should the theme or topic of an essay be introduced and used? (It should be stated at the beginning, supported throughout, and referred to at the close.)
3. What is one way to establish understandable order in an essay? (Use chronological order as one way to establish order.)
4. What are two prewriting elements mentioned, and why are they important? (Research and use of an outline are two elements mentioned.)
5. What are some of the basic conventions of Standard English that are crucial for essay writing? (Correct grammar, spelling, and sentence structure are the basic conventions.)
6. How does Mark Twain summarize the concept and purpose of style in essay writing? (He called style "personality on the page" and said ". . . one purpose of style is to make the reader think about what is being said.")
7. What sorts of word choices does Shakespeare compliment in Sandi's descriptive essay? (He spoke about her use of sensory terms and onomatopoeia.)
8. What error in capitalization does Sandi make in her descriptive essay? (She capitalized the words "rainy day"; they should not be capitalized since they are not proper nouns.)
9. How does Mark Twain respond to Holly's use of second and third person when judging her essay? (He said that using the second person "you" strengthened the persuasiveness of her composition, but he deducted points because she switched from second to third person throughout the piece.)
10. What are some structural elements of Angelo's narrative essay for which Aristotle commends him? (He sited his use of the bookends technique to introduce and refer back to his topic, and his strong use of chronological order.)

Applications and Activities

1. Write a descriptive, a narrative, a persuasive, and an expository essay.
 - a. Use prewriting strategies to develop ideas and organization.
 - b. Write rough drafts.
 - c. Evaluate peers' rough drafts using a rating scale. Provide specific feedback to help the writer improve their essay.
 - d. Write final drafts.

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- e. Evaluate again.
- f. Publish completed essays.
2. Develop items to rate under each component of the scorecard. Use the new scorecard to rate peers' writings.
3. Write one type of essay from three different points of view: first, second, and third person. Compare the essays, and discuss which one is best for this type of essay.
4. Read works by Mark Twain, William Shakespeare, and Aristotle. Compare their styles. Discuss why the producers of the video chose these three authors for judges.

SUMMARY

How often do language arts students have their essays reviewed by the likes of Aristotle, Shakespeare, and Mark Twain? In *esSAY WHAT?* four teens compete in the televised finals of a national essay writing contest judged by these illustrious authors. Each of the four has already had his or her writing skills tested by competing in the major categories of: descriptive, narrative, persuasive, and expository essays. While the contestants prepare to read their compositions, the program's comedic host invites audience members to keep score along with our judges, to see how their ratings stack up against the "experts."

As each contestant finishes reading his or her entry aloud, Aristotle, Twain, and Shakespeare critique the essay for such elements as organization, content, vocabulary, voice, and fluency. The high points and suggestions for improvement for each composition are illustrated and discussed in a clear and succinct manner. Overall, the essays are well-rounded and engaging, and the young presenters seem to sparkle with excitement. Although their scores are very close, one young author is named the winner based on her essay's structure, organization, accuracy, and style.

CMP RELATED RESOURCES

- [The Perfect Paragraph #9345](#)
- [Write an Essay #2547](#)
- [The Write Stuff: Writing Creatively #9949](#)

World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and "kid safe" sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **PARADIGM ONLINE WRITING ASSISTANT**

<http://www.powa.org/>

Paradigm is an interactive, menu-driven, online writer's guide and handbook. It includes information on topic discovery, organizing, revising, editing, documenting sources, and on four different kinds of essays.

- **HOMEWORK CENTER WRITING SKILLS**

<http://www.factmonster.com/homework/writingskills1.html>

This Web site covers five basic tips for writing essays and also provides advanced information on the steps in writing essays. In addition, it provides information on narrative, descriptive, and persuasive essays with an example of each.

- **ESSAYS**

http://www2.actden.com/writ_den/tips/essay/index.htm

Explains the parts of an essay and kinds of essays. It also provides information about prewriting, writing, editing, and publishing essays. Has a link to a tips page with detailed information on sentences and paragraphs.

INSTRUCTIONAL GRAPHIC

- **ESSAY CRITERIA AND SCORECARD**

Essay Criteria and Scorecard

Directions: Use the criteria listed below to score each video contestant's essay. Use the scorecard boxes to record the ratings.

STRUCTURE:

- State theme at beginning.
- Develop and support theme.
- Refer back to theme at close.
- Be organized and understandable.
- Utilize logical or chronological order.

ACCURACY OF COMMUNICATION:

- Use words and sentences effectively for clarity.
- Use appropriate vocabulary.
- Use good sentence structure.
- Use correct conventions of English grammar and correct spelling.

STYLE:

- Hold the reader's interest.
- Maintain a consistent point of view.
- Have emotional impact.
- Use well-developed research skills.

esSay What?
Scorecard

Descriptive (1-10)

Structure . . . _____

Accuracy of
Communication . . . _____

Style . . . _____

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Persuasive (1-10)

Structure . . . _____

Accuracy of
Communication . . . _____

Style . . . _____

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Expository (1-10)

Structure . . . _____

Accuracy of
Communication . . . _____

Style . . . _____

esSay What?
Scorecard

Narrative (1-10)

Structure . . . _____

Accuracy of
Communication . . . _____

Style . . . _____