

Information Extra

Purpose

Students will write informational pieces with multiple paragraphs that establish and support a central idea with a topic sentence near the beginning of the first paragraph and that include supporting paragraphs with facts, details, and simple explanations.

Materials

For the teacher: chalk, chalkboard

For the students: pencils, paper, reference materials, history news books (e.g., *The Roman News*, *The Egyptian News*, *The History News* by Candlewick Press; books of historical fiction by Jean Fritz), access to the Internet for research, copies of Black Line Masters (BLM) *Questionnaire* and *Outline*

Activity

A. Pre-Activity Preparation

Choose a set of historical events that would contain subject matter for imaginative articles.

B. Pre-Activity Discussion

1. Tell students to imagine the following scenario:
You are a reporter for the daily gazette in the year [*insert appropriate year*]. Suddenly, [*describe event that you have studied*]. Everyone is covering the event, but because you are a star reporter, you are looking for a different angle for a shorter article. What are some things associated with this event that you could cover?
2. Create idea webs on the chalkboard with the different angles that the students suggest. Place the idea in the center of the web and refine it or have ideas for witnesses to interview, location of interviews, pictures, and details to include in the outside circles.
3. Together with the students, brainstorm ideas for headlines to catch the reader's attention.

C. Question and Outline

1. Divide students into groups and have them pick one of the topics on the chalkboard (or, with your permission, a new topic they have selected).

(continued)

EXTENDING
THE



ACTIVITY

Take students on a field trip to a living history site. Have them interview the actors to obtain quotations for a new or existing article.

connecting
across the



curriculum

Visual Arts

Show students postcards of famous paintings. Have students write a story about the picture, describing what happened before, during, and after the event shown.

Standards Links
4.4.6, 4.5.3, 4.5.6

Activity (continued)

2. Give students time to find details on their topics using the BLM *Questionnaire*.
3. When students have completed their questionnaires, distribute the BLM *Outline* to student groups.
4. Have the student groups use their questionnaires to make an outline of their article, filling in the spaces for thesis and supporting paragraphs.
5. Have student groups write their articles, adding details and explanations.

D. Close the Activity


1. Collect the completed group articles.
2. Distribute copies for the other groups to read.


Questions for Review


Basic Concepts and Processes

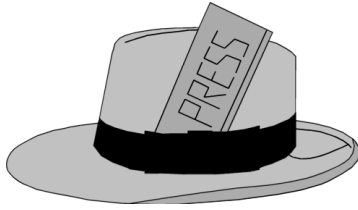
When your students are finished with their articles, assess students' knowledge by asking the following questions:

 What does an interesting article contain?

 What are some steps you might take before writing a draft of an article?

 How would you check your facts for your article?

 Why would you have quotation marks around a statement from a witness?



Name: _____

Questionnaire

Directions: Take notes for your article by filling in the spaces below.

Topic: _____

Possible headlines: _____

Why do your readers need to know about this? _____

Summarize what happened: _____

Interesting details: _____

Story from a witness or expert: _____

What might happen in the future because of this event? _____

Questionnaire

Teacher Directions

After students have chosen a topic for their articles, give each student a copy of the *BLM Questionnaire*.

Have students fill in their topics at the top of the page. Instruct students to brainstorm ideas for headlines and write about why their topics might be interesting to their readers. Instruct students to invent a witness and write a statement from this person's point of view in the witness section of the BLM. Have students complete the rest of the questionnaire as they conduct their research.

Answer Key

Not applicable.

Outline

Name: _____

Main Topic: _____

Paragraph A: _____

Paragraph B: _____

Paragraph C: _____

Closing (sum up and predict): _____

Outline

Teacher Directions

When students have finished their research and completed the BLM *Questionnaire*, distribute copies of the BLM *Outline*.

Have students write their pieces on the BLM, filling in a headline in the top box on the page, a topic sentence, three supporting paragraphs, and a closing in the appropriate spaces. Have students write and revise their articles, using the BLM as their first draft.

Answer Key

Not applicable.