

Writing Curriculum Samples

Dear Principal,

As a writing coach for many yeshivos over the past six years, I have had the opportunity to develop and use many writing activity sheets with students in grades 1-8. This document represents a sample compilation of those materials as well as many new ones.

The goal of this effort is to develop a comprehensive, complimentary yeshiva writing program that will offer a new exercise on a weekly basis to progressively build students' abilities to write clearly and correctly. It is not intended to replace anything that you may presently use for your ELA instruction. Rather, it offers a stand-alone series of activities that will help students improve their written expression through the four primary writing styles:

1. Expository – To inform or explain the subject to the reader.
2. Persuasive – Sharing an opinion; attempting to influence the reader.
3. Narrative – Telling a story (fact or fiction).
4. Descriptive – Using the five senses to paint a picture for the reader.

The next few pages, which were developed for teachers, detail more about the curriculum and how it is to be used.

Each booklet offers teachers plenty of material from which to choose, including graphic organizers for prewriting exercises and rubrics for assessing student writing.

This program is being piloted this year with the goal of making it available for the beginning of the next academic year. (As of now, materials have been prepared for students in grades 1-6.) If you are interested in piloting this program in your school (limited opportunities available), please contact me as soon as possible. You can reach me at nh@impactfulcoaching.com or at (212) 470-6139.

Wishing you much hatzlacha,

Naphtali

Naphtali Hoff

How to Use this Booklet

Dear Teacher,

The purpose of this writing series is to help progressively develop your students' ability to write in a clear and correct manner. In order for your students to gain the most from writing instruction, it is critical that they receive continued direction, guidance and detailed feedback.

As a general rule, train your students to think in terms of "CUPS":

- Capitalization (at the beginning of each sentence and for proper nouns)
- Understanding (do all sentences make sense, independently and in the context of each other?)
- Proper punctuation (commas, periods, quotation marks, etc.)
- Spacing (between words and sentences)

Also, it is suggested that teachers focus their time and attention on the general process rather than responding to ongoing questions about spelling and other matters. Many students will express concern about proper spelling. Keep dictionaries on hand to allow them to look up how their words are spelled.

The booklet contains the following elements:

1. Fill-in sentences (grade 2)

- a. Description: These exercises are designed to ease students into writing. They encourage writers to offer short responses to clear prompts about everyday living that, when taken together, paints a clear picture about a particular topic. Example: *My favorite season is _____. I like it most because _____. My favorite clothing to wear during this season is _____. Etc.* Note that there are many possible correct answers to each of the prompts. These sheets were prepared with a special font that encourages proper letter formation across the three lines (base, mid and head).

b. Suggestions:

- i. Read aloud each sentence and have students brainstorm about possible answers. Then have them write in their responses.

2. Sentence builders (grades 2-4)

a. Description:

- i. Sentence builders help students to expand their sentence writing capabilities by focusing on the "5 w's" (who, what/action, where, when, and why) and "1 h" (how). To allow for the skills to develop incrementally, the worksheets have been divided first into smaller components, beginning with 'who' and 'action'. 'Where' is then added, then 'when', and so on. In each exercise, word banks and sample sentences have been provided.

- ii. For second grade, these sheets were prepared with a special font that encourages proper letter formation across the three lines (base, mid and head).
- iii. Second grade also contains a number of sheets that tie into the spelling curriculum.

b. Suggestions:

- i. Inform students that sentence builders will help them build good sentences by identifying the subject (“who”) and the predicate (other w’s) and writing them correctly. Multiple practice opportunity is provided to develop student automaticity.
- ii. Remind them that these sentences are often the first ones in a story or description. (Example: *Yanky (who) ran (action) home (where) after school (when) because he was hungry (why). When he got home...*)
- iii. Have students self-check and/or peer-check to ensure that they included all of the requested components and have met the “CUPS” expectations.
- iv. Teachers should check these as well (holistically) and also pay particular attention to letter formation.

3. Paragraph/essay writing (grades 2 and up)

a. Description:

- i. This is the most involved type of writing exercise and is found throughout the program, beginning at the end of second grade.
- ii. Over time, students will be introduced to each of the four primary writing types (in many cases they overlap):
 - 1. Expository – To inform or explain the subject to the reader.
 - 2. Persuasive – Sharing an opinion; attempting to influence the reader.
 - 3. Narrative – Telling a story (fact or fiction).
 - 4. Descriptive – Using the five senses to paint a picture for the reader.
- iii. Expectations grow incrementally each year, with more support offered earlier on (in the form of word banks and sample paragraphs). Over time, writing length expectations increase (from one short paragraph to two or more longer paragraphs) and the topics become progressively more advanced.
- iv. In most cases, students are given specific prompts (questions, familiar settings, reflections, stories “in process” that require endings) to respond to.
- v. Sometimes the writing will be more open ended, such as describing what is happening in a particular picture.
- vi. Ideally, students should be walked through a five-step writing process for each piece of writing: prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

1. Prewriting – This is the planning phase of the writing process. During this phase, writers may plan by drawing pictures, making lists, brainstorming, using graphic organizers, or talking with a peer.
 2. Drafting – The drafting phase involves composing the original text.
 3. Revising – During the revision phase, writers (and/or others) examine the content of the writing (see “ARMS” below).
 4. Editing – Editing requires that writers (and/or others) proofread to find errors in grammar, usage, mechanics, and spelling and then make appropriate corrections (see “CUPS” above). Editing should be undertaken when all revisions to the content are complete.
 5. Publishing – Publication refers to the final preparation of a piece of writing for the intended audience.
- vii. This booklet is designed to support those stages in the following way:
1. Prewriting – A number of graphic organizers are included to help students brainstorm and organize their ideas. The sample paragraphs and word banks (where provided) also help to stimulate thinking.
 - a. Teachers can help by reviewing these and having students complete pre-writing exercises and encouraging peer dialogue.
 2. Drafting – This occurs within the booklet.
 3. Revising – Checklists are provided to help students self and peer check for appropriate revisions.
 4. Editing – Checklists and editing symbols (provided) help students self and peer check.
 5. Publishing – Students should be given a new sheet of paper onto which to pen their final draft.

b. Suggestions:

- i. Different students respond in different ways to this kind of writing. Some embrace it while others are more prone to resist, claiming a lack of competence, interest, etc. Seek to encourage everyone to apply themselves to each assignment to the best of their ability, and to focus more on getting words on paper than achieving perfection. Abilities and confidence will grow with time and consistent effort.
- ii. Refine your own skills. Remember: the more that students are exposed to examples of quality oral and written expression, the better.
- iii. Before you begin, be sure to model and discuss each step of the writing process, preferably using a whole-class text.
- iv. Be sure to model and discuss each step of the writing process. To do this, display or distribute a sample text so that all students can view it. Model the self-edit

process with the displayed text, with you assuming the role of author. Then have a volunteer fill out the peer-edit column so that all students can hear and view the process. Finally, discuss what went well and what could be improved in the editing steps that were modeled.

- v. *The primary growth in writing lies in the revising and editing processes. The more committed you are to helping your students reflect and improve upon their writing, the better the results will be.*
- vi. Have students self-edit and/or peer-edit using the “CUPS” process. While the students are working, circulate to check for understanding of the editing process and use of the checklist.
- vii. Have students revise their writing by using the “ARMS” process:
 1. Add missing sentences and words, such as details and descriptors
 2. Remove unneeded sentences and words or those that don't make sense
 3. Move or change the placement of words/sentences to better locations
 4. Substitute or trade words or sentences for other ones that are more clear, alive and exciting
 5. Another consideration is Voice – Are students speaking directly to the reader in a manner that will be clear, consistent and doesn't make assumptions about what the reader actually knows (such as using unidentified pronouns or undefined terms)?

Grade 1 Samples

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All About My Home 10

All About My School 13

Places I Know 15

Foods I Like 17

Purim 19

Pesach 21

All About Me..... 23

SAMPLE



Write your name on each of the lines below

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 10 sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).

SAMPLE

Name: _____

Date: _____

Short Sentence Writing

Copy each of the sentences on the line below it

1. I like school.

I like school.

2. They ride the bus.

3. Snow is white.

4. The bell is loud.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Short Sentence Fill-ins

Fill in the missing word in each of the sentences

1. The color of my school bus is yellow.

2. _____ is the first day of the week.

3. I am in _____ grade.

4. Each morning, I daven to _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

All About My Home

Complete each of the sentences below

1 I live at (address)



1550 43 Street

Brooklyn, NY 11219

Write your
address here

2 I share my room with _____

3. The best room or area
in my home is

4. I like it because

5. My favorite activity at
home is

Grade 2 Samples

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My Summer

Complete each of the sentences below

1. Each summer I go to _____

(choose one: camp / a

bungalow colony)

2. My favorite summer

activity is _____

3. I like it because _____

4. The thing that I like to

do most when I'm with my

family is _____

5. When I'm hot, I like to
eat / drink



6. Eating / drinking it makes
me feel

7. I like to wear

in the summer



8. The best summer trip I
went on was to

GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

(What they are and how to use them)



The word graphic means picture.

An organizer is something that helps keep things in order. It also gives you a place to put things.

When an organizer is made as a picture (graphic), like connected circles or boxes, or even to look like food or a school bus, it helps us to put information in the right place and remember it better.

In this book there are two different but similar types of graphic organizers that are used.



1. 5 Ws and 1 H – Use each space to answer a different “w” question (who, what/action, where, when, why) and 1 “h” question (how). Together, they form a sentence.

2. Build a sentence – This, too, asks you to complete the questions mentioned above, as well as two others (what kind and to whom).

5Ws + 1H

Topic:	
Date:	
Who:	
What:	
When:	
Where:	
Why:	
How:	

What Kind? How? (by) Which? (To Whom?)

Who? Did What?

Why? When? Where?
(so that, because)

Build a sentence: Start with the questions in the center. (Who? Did What?) Make a list of possible answers for each question and then select from each to make a fabulous sentence.

Finished sentence: _____

SENTENCE BUILDERS






WHO, ACTION, WHERE

Write sentences that have a "who", an "action", and a "where" word.

Examples

Totty came home.
 Mommy left the store.
 Berel ran to cheder.

Word Bank

Who		Action			Where	
The doctor  My rebbe Chaim	Mommy The dog The car The monkey The baby Zaidy Totty	smiled sang learned taught walked laughed	jumped ran  ate sat	skipped drove slept barked climbed	home school the park my bedroom the classroom a tree shul	the lunchroom the store  the street

The cat jumped on the wall.

Blank handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed middle line.

A Ball for My Dog

By Stephenie Hovland

Read the passage and answer the 2 questions at the end using complete (full) sentences.

My dog found a ball. It was a yellow ball. My dog loves to chew. He chewed the yellow ball.

My dog found another ball. It was a red ball. My dog loves to play. He played with the red ball.

My dog found another ball. It was a blue ball. My dog loves to run. He ran after the blue ball when I threw it.

I need to find another ball for my dog.

What color should the ball be? What will my dog do with the next ball?

Draw a picture of the dog with the new ball.



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Make Me a Cheese Sandwich



My Bungalow Colony

SAMPLE

Topic
I have lots of fun in my bungalow colony.

Detail
Day camp

Detail
Swimming

Detail
Activities

Detail
Trips

Detail
I also like to bike with my friends and catch frogs.

Conclusion
I hope that you will come and visit.

From Graphic Organizers to Paragraphs!

1. My Bungalow Colony



I have lots of fun in my bungalow colony. One things that's great is the day camp. There are lots of fun activities, such as swimming. We also go on trips. I also like to bike with my friends and catch frogs. I hope that you will come and visit.

2. My Class

I have the best class in school. There are many friends who are fun to play with. We play games during recess and also play after school. Also, the boys learn well, and we get a lot done in class. I look forward to seeing my classmates each day.



3. My favorite Fruit



Clementines are my favorite fruit. I love their sweet, tangy taste. The fruit is very light, has a nice, orange color, and a pleasant smell. They are also super easy to peel; I can usually do it in one piece. I cannot wait to get some more clementines!

Amusement Park

Start with a graphic organizer and then use this paper to turn your information into a paragraph.

Write about a trip that you took to an amusement park. Describe what you did and what made it so much fun. Add other details, like who you went with, when you went, and what you did.

Let's look at the example below to see how to do this.

Zoom Flume

In the summer I went to Zoom Flume with my camp. Zoom Flume is my favorite amusement park because I love water rides. I went on rides with my best friend Shloimy. We were buddies and had to stay with each other the whole time. My favorite ride is the long water slide. I can go down in less than six seconds!

Word Bank

Rides
Park
Roller coaster

Ferris wheel

Wave pool
Lazy River

Water slides
Friends


Coach bus
School / camp
Buddy

Go karts

Bumper cars
Fun
Fast

Title: _____

Making Predictions

Predictions are things that we think will happen next in a story or situation. For example, if a person doesn't stop his car at a stop sign, we can predict that he will get a ticket. In this exercise, read the story and complete it based on what you think happened next.

Uh Oh Eggs!

Daniel was playing a game when his mom called and asked him to come outside to help her carry in some groceries. He walked outside to help.



Daniel grabbed two bags from the car and began walking back to the house. Daniel's toe hit a rock and he tripped. He felt the bags falling from his arms and toward the ground just as he heard his mom yell back, "Be careful with those bags Daniel, they have eggs in them!"

What do you think happened next?

What Was It Like?

*Today you will be writing a letter about **קבלת התורה** as if you were there. Describe the things that you saw, did and felt. Speak as if you were writing a letter to someone who wasn't with you.*

Here is an example:

Dear _____,

It has been an amazing seven weeks! After we left Mitzrayim and crossed Yam Suf, we kept walking in the desert. Finally, we reached Har Sinai, the mountain where we will receive the Torah. Soon Hashem will share His dear Torah with all of us.



Har Sinai is not very big. In fact, it's the smallest mountain around. I wonder why Hashem chose this mountain. I would have thought that the tallest one would have been chosen.

Sincerely,

Yanky

Word Bank

Travel	Lightning	Scary	People
Desert	Thunder	Loud	Nation
Tired	Clouds	Surrounding	Standing
Shavuot	Exciting	Millions	Together
Kabalas HaTorah		Aseres HaDibros	

Write your letter on the next page

Title: _____

Dear _____,

Sincerely,

Thank You Letter

One of the most important things that we can do is to say, "Thank you." There are so many people in our lives that do things that help us out or make us feel good. While it is nice to be told thank you, it can be even more special for someone to receive a note, card or letter that they can look at again and again.

- 1. A good thank you letter begins with a greeting ("Dear _____,").*
- 2. Next comes an opening sentence of thanks ("Thank you so much for..." "I really appreciate...").*
- 3. The next sentence(s) talk about what happens because of the thing that you are thankful for ("When you do that it makes me feel..." "I learn so much better because you...").*
- 4. Then you end with a final sentence ("I hope that one day I can..." "May Hashem help you to...").*
- 5. Add a final word or words before signing, such as "sincerely" or "thanks again".*
- 6. Lastly, sign the note.*

Let's look at some examples below:

Janitor

(1) Dear Carlos,
 (2) Thank you for keeping my school clean. You work hard each day and it really helps. (3) When I come to school and see a clean building, it makes me learn better. (4) I hope that you will keep working here.
 (5) Sincerely,
 (6) Shloime R., 3rd Grade

Bus Driver

(1) Dear R' Yiddle,
 (2) Thank you for driving me to and from cheder each day. I love the way that you drive and the jokes that you tell. (3) Because you drive me to school, I am able to learn so much Torah and play with my friends. (4) I hope that you will be my driver next year again.
 (5) Thanks again,
 (6) Yanky P., 3rd grade

Now it's your turn!

Write your letter on the next page.

Thank You Letter - First Draft

1. Dear _____,

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. (sincerely/thanks again) _____,

6. (name) _____

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The word graphic means picture.

An organizer is something that helps keep things in order. It also gives you a place to put things.

When an organizer is made as a picture (graphic), like connected circles or boxes, or even to look like food or a school bus, it helps us to put information in the right place and remember it better.

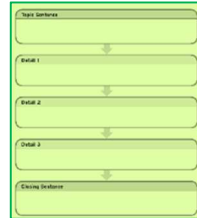
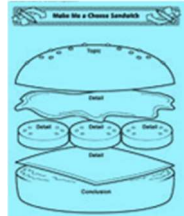
In this book there are a few different types of graphic organizers that are used.

Some are used to help paragraph.

you

write a 5-sentence (or more)

- Cheese Sandwich



- Paragraph Flow

There are 5 spaces or areas in each one that need to be completed.

1. Topic sentence – This is where you write your opening sentence. Something that tells the reader what's coming.
2. Detail sentence 1 – Some information about your topic or a reason why you think a certain way.
3. Detail sentence 2 – More information about your topic, detail(s) about your reason, or another reason.
4. Detail sentence 3 – More information about your topic, detail(s) about your reason, or another reason.
5. Conclusion – A final sentence, often a review (in different words) of your topic or opening sentence.

Example 1: (Story)

1. Topic: Yesterday, I went to the zoo.
2. D1: There were many animals.
3. D2: Some were in open areas surrounded by a wooden railing.
4. D3: I petted some of them and even fed some.
5. Conclusion: My zoo trip was lots of fun.

Example 2: (My opinion)

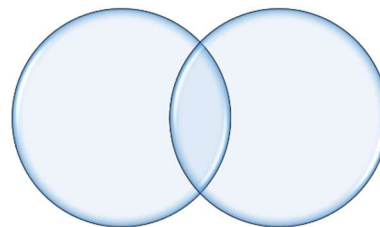
1. Topic: My camp is the best.
2. D1: We go on lots of trips.
3. D2: Last week, we went to Zoom Flume.
4. D3: Three weeks ago, we went go karting.
5. Conclusion: You should come to my camp.

Keep in mind that you DO NOT need to use complete sentences in a graphic organizer.

Here are two other types of graphic organizers.



A **Step by Step Chart** is used to help map out steps in a story or process. Each step is written in the left column, with related details added to the right.



Venn Diagrams allow you to compare and also contrast different things, like two seasons or characters.

Step-by-Step Chart



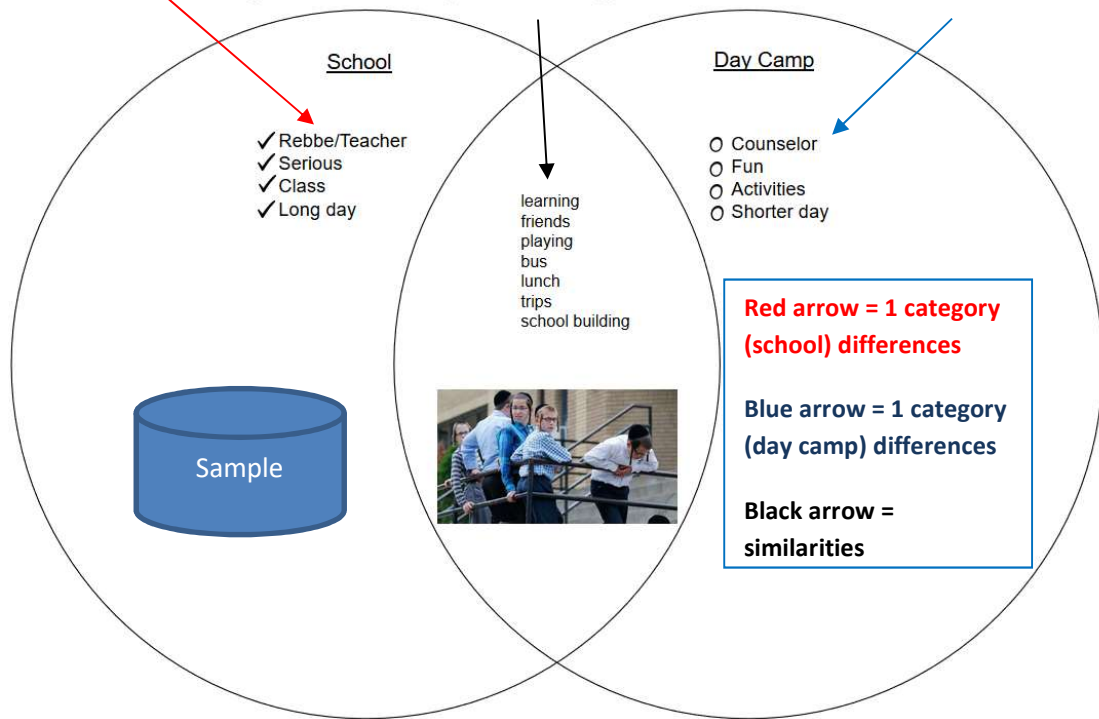
Write each step in order. Add details.

Topic: writing a book report

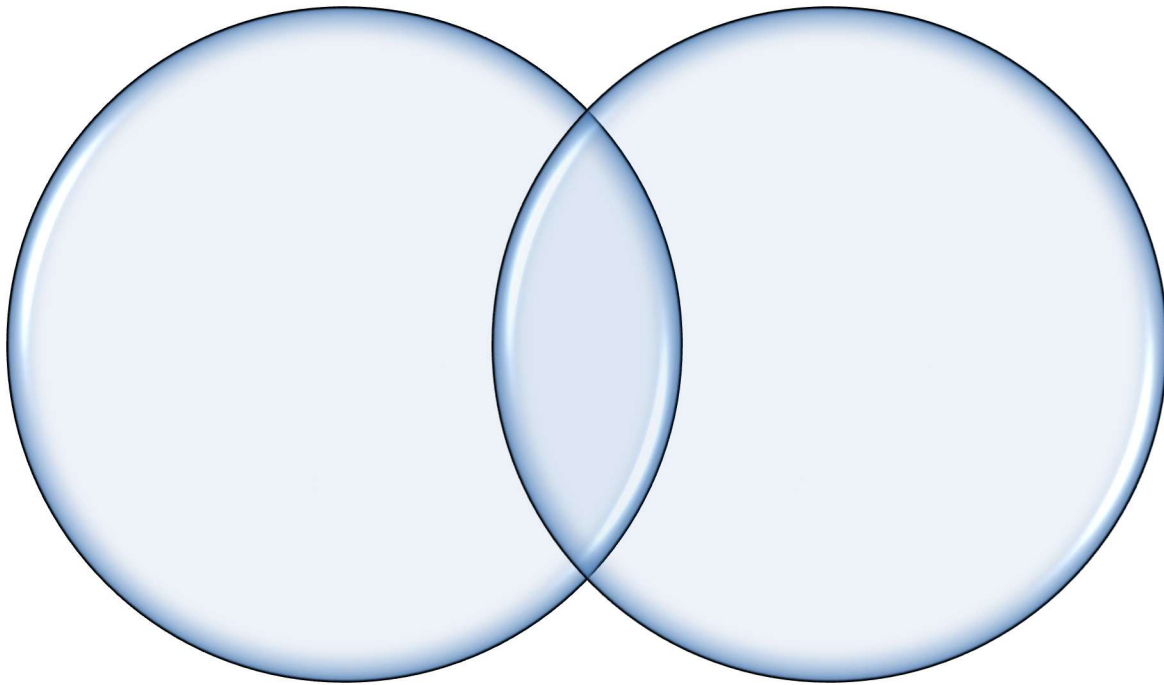
Materials: Good book, pen and paper or computer, imagination and creativity

Steps	Details
Step 1: Pick a book that interests you	You'll spend a lot of time working with this book, so make sure you pick one that you will really enjoy.
Step 2: Read the whole book.	The main purpose of writing a book report is to build your reading comprehension skills, so take the time to read the whole book.
Step 3: Take notes as you read.	Always read with a pencil in hand, especially when you have to write about the book at a later date. When you are reading, take notes in your notebook.
Step 4: Write your book report in chunks.	The best way to avoid delaying is to break down the assignment and do it in three sections (beginning, middle and climax/resolution).
Step 5: Start writing your book report early.	You have to read an entire book, so don't wait until the last minute! It's too stressful to read and write a report in a few days.

Compare/Contrast Venn Diagram Graphic Organizer



Venn Diagram



Comparing/Contrasting (Venn Diagram)

Start with a Venn Diagram (opposite side) and then use this paper to turn your information into a paragraph.

Choose two seasons, like winter and summer, and, with the help of a Venn Diagram, show how they are similar and how they are different. For example, they are similar in that they have extreme temperatures (very cold/hot) but the days' length in each season are very different (short in winter and long in summer).

After you have finished completing your Venn, re-write the information as paragraphs below.

Let's look at the example below to see how to do this.

Bikes and Motorbikes

Two of my favorite ways to get around are a bicycle and a motorbike. The two are similar because they have a frame that looks the same and both have two wheels. They also go fast and are a lot of fun to ride.

But they are also different. Bicycles are usually less expensive and need the rider to pedal for it to move. Motorbikes are more expensive and use an engine to move. They also go faster than bikes do.

Title: _____

Taking it Step by Step: Playing Ball or a Game

Start with the "Step-by-step" graphic organizer (below) and then use this paper to turn your information into a paragraph.

Describe a game that you like to play in steps.

Let's look at the example below to see how to do this.

Throwing a Football

Throwing a football can be difficult. It is long and oval shaped and can easily wobble when thrown. To throw it well, as in a spiral, follow these steps.

First, grip the ball by putting your fingers across the laces, with your index (pointer) finger closest to the end. Then, hold the ball with both hands and bring it over your shoulder to ear level. Bend your knees and hunch a bit. Lean back on your back foot and move forward as you throw. Roll your fingers off to make the ball spin.

Title: _____

Materials	
Step	Details
Step 1	
Step 2	
Step 3	
Step 4	
Step 5	

Chanukah

Today you will be writing about Chanukah. It could be about any part of Chanukah such as:

- *Why I love Chanukah*
- *My menorah*
- *Playing dreidel*
- *Special Chanukah foods*

Example 1: "Lighting the Menorah"

One of my favorite parts of Chanukah is הדלקת נרות. My family gathers in front of the window that faces the street and we all light together. First, my Totty makes the ברכות and begins to light. My older brothers light next, then I light. After lighting, we sing מעוז צור and get gelt. I cannot wait to light the menorah!



Example 2: "Making Latkes"

There are many special Chanukah foods that I like. My favorite Chanukah food is latkes. They taste so good and remind me of the פך שמן. I love to help my Mommy peel the potatoes and fry the batter. The whole house fills with a delicious smell! I am excited to eat latkes tonight.



Now it's your turn!

Title: _____

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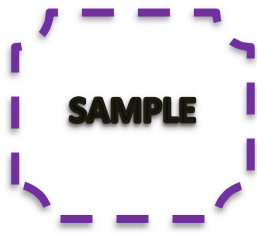
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Sequence Chart

List steps or events in time order.

Topic: Getting to school
First: Wake up and get dressed
Next: Eat breakfast
Next: Get my things ready
Next: Put on my coat or jacket
Next: Wait outside for the bus
Next: Board the bus (greet driver) and sit next to Yanky
Next: Talk about the morning or other things
Last: Get off the bus and go into building


SAMPLE

Pros and Cons Table for Two Choices

Title: Making Life Choices

Choice	Pros	Cons
To eat healthier foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More energy • Less likely to get sick • Can help me lose weight • Better attitude towards health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harder to do (so many foods you can't eat) • Not as tasty • More expensive • More cooking and preparation required
To go to bed earlier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More awake in the morning • Feeling refreshed • Can learn better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less play time • Not exciting • Want to read and speak with family

Persuasive Writing



Arguments For / Against More Writing Assignments

List below the most important arguments, or points of view, used to support your position. Also, list the evidence or claims which support each argument.

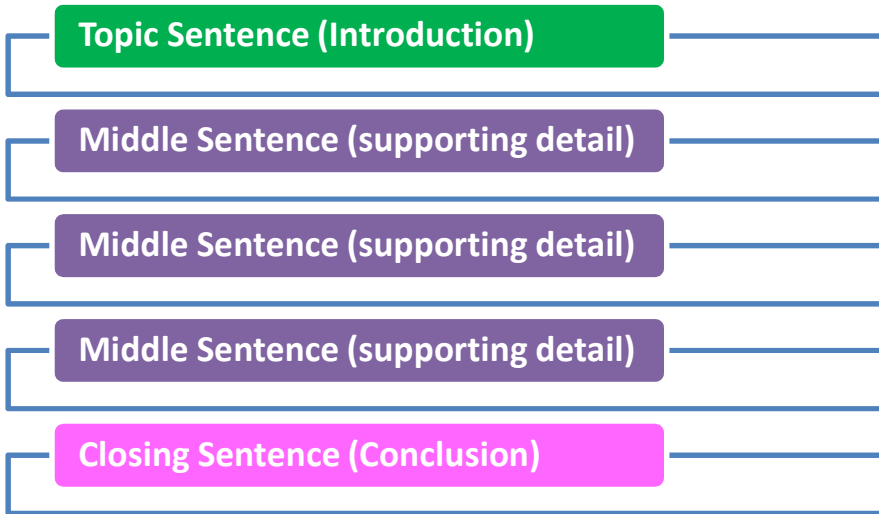
Arguments For / Against	Supporting Evidence or Claims
Improves writing skills	Practice makes perfect
Become clearer, more critical thinkers	Need to organize ideas clearly before writing
Better prepared for school/life	Will be easier to write when required
Opportunity for self-expression	Good way to share ideas with others & get feedback

Tips on How to Write a Proper Paragraph

In previous booklets we introduced paragraph writing. This is an important skill and something that we will continue to work on throughout this booklet as well.

Below is a helpful format to keep in mind when you craft any paragraph. If you stick to these guidelines, you can be sure that each one of your paragraphs will be a success!

- 1. Begin with a topic sentence*
- 2. Then write at least 3 supporting sentences*
- 3. End with a closing sentence*



Let's look at some samples on the next page.

Why I Love to Come to Cheder

Cheder is my favorite place to be.

I love to come to Cheder to learn.

My rebbe is a wonderful person who teaches me Torah and how to daven.

My teacher teaches me all about math, reading and writing.

I also like to play with my friends.

I love to come to Cheder every day.

Why I Love to Come to Cheder

Cheder is one of my favorite places to be. I like to come to Cheder to learn. My rebbe is a wonderful person who teaches me Torah and how to daven. My teacher teaches me all about math, reading, and writing. I also like to play with my friends and have fun. I love to come to Cheder every day!

My Favorite Chol Hamoed Trip

My favorite chol hamoed trip was to the zoo.

At the zoo, there are many things to do.

You can go and see the animals (the bird house is so loud!).

There is also a safari ride, where you can see the animals walking, eating and sleeping.

The zoo was filled with Yidden and it really felt special.

I cannot wait to go to visit the zoo again next year on chol hamoed.

My favorite Chol Hamoed Trip

My favorite chol hamoed trip was to the zoo. At the zoo, there are many things to do. You can go and see the animals (the bird house is so loud!). There is also a safari ride, where you can see the animals walking, eating and sleeping. The zoo was filled with Yidden and it really felt special. I cannot wait to go to visit the zoo again next year on chol hamoed.

Writing Poetry

Poetry is a type of writing that uses rhyme and rhythm to create a special flow of words.

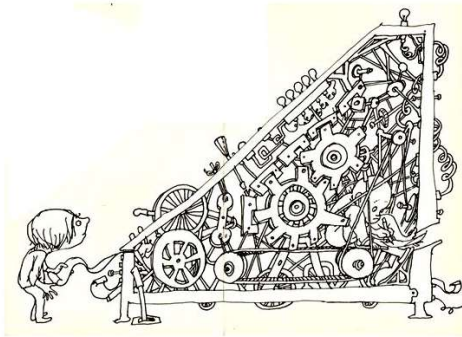
Poems paint a vivid, colorful picture of something or convey ideas and feelings. They consist of phrases and stanzas, not sentences and paragraphs.

There are different kinds of poems.

- *Some have a specific number of syllables and rhyming pattern. Those are called metered poems.*
- *Other poems do not follow any rhyme or pattern and those are called free verse.*

Let's look at a sample poem with a specific rhyming pattern. Highlight the pairs of rhyming words.

The Homework Machine



By Shel Silverstein

The Homework Machine, oh, the Homework Machine,

Most perfect contraption that's ever been seen.

Just put in your homework, then drop in a dime,

Snap on the switch, and in ten seconds' time,

Your homework comes out, quick and clean as can be.

Here it is— 'nine plus four?' and the answer is 'three.'

Three? Oh me . . .

I guess it's not as perfect as I thought it would be.

Writing Poetry

Write a poem about Homework. Fill in the blanks with your own ideas.

Homework

My teacher says it’s good for me

But I would rather _____ (suggestion for rhyming word: *tree*)

Tomorrow is a test in math

But I would rather _____ (suggestion for rhyming word: *path*)

I wrote a lot in school today

And now I want _____ (suggestion: *play*)

But I will rise above my mood

Sip some water and _____ (suggestion: *food*)

My notebook’s here, pen in hand

And I have entered Homework Land!!!

Write a poem about “What If?”. After reading the sample, fill in the blanks with your own ideas.

What If?

What if I got tall?

I might have to buy new clothes

What if I was strong?

I could lift heavy boxes

What if I became rich?

I would help poor people

Ask a question: What would you do if something changed in you?

What If?

What if _____

I might _____

What if _____

I could _____

What if _____

I would _____

Ask a question: _____

A Letter to Your Councilman

For this exercise, you will write a letter to your congressman. The purpose of this letter is to share a **safety-related concern** that you hope will be passed along to the NYC DOT (Department of Transportation).

Common safety-related concerns include:

- ✓ Poor road condition (potholes, no striping)
- ✓ Motorist speed (too fast, may want speedhumps)
- ✓ Lack /wrong kind of (proper) signage, like no stop sign or traffic light
- ✓ Not enough policemen on patrol

On the next page, you will write your letter. It should include each of the following:

1. Name and return address of the letter writer:
2. Date
3. Address/salutation (Dear _____,)
4. Body of the letter
 - a. Paragraph stating concern (Why you are writing/what you want) – “I am writing to share the following safety concern...” “As a resident of Boro Park, I want to bring an important safety concern to your attention.”)
 - b. Paragraph backing up you concern (“I have noticed many times that...” “Yesterday, there was an accident at...” “When I walk to school, I feel...”)
 - c. Call to action (“Please contact...” “I ask that you please go to that area to...”)
5. Sincerely,
6. Your name

Formal Letter Sample

Ploni Almoni
123 41st Street
Brooklyn, NY 11218

December 15, 2018

Mr. Kalman Yeger
4424 16th Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11204

Dear Mr. Yeger:

I am writing you concerning a safety issue in Boro Park. The corner of Dahill Road and 37th Street very much could use a traffic light. Because Dahill runs on an angle, it is difficult for drivers to see if cars are oncoming. This makes it likelier that accidents will occur.

Just the other day, my father was trying to make a left turn at this intersection. He checked both ways and, thinking that the road was clear, began to make his turn. As if from nowhere, a car started hurtling down Dahill Road and came very close to hitting us. I have heard from many friends that this has happened to them as well.

I believe that installing a traffic light at this intersection will solve the problem and make the area safer for motorists, riders and pedestrians.

I ask that you please visit the intersection soon to observe the situation and, if you agree, pass this information along to the DOT so that it can be addressed.

Sincerely,

Ploni Almoni

Ploni Almoni

Persuasive Writing

Arguments For / Against _____

List below the most important arguments, or points of view, used to support your position. Also, list the evidence or claims which support each argument.

Arguments For / Against	Supporting Evidence or Claims

Start with a persuasive map (opposite page). Use this paper to turn your information into a 5-paragraph response.

Persuade Me: Voting Age

You are hearing that some lawmakers are considering changing the voting age from 18 to 13. You were asked by your local newspaper to pen an editorial to persuade readers either to make the change or leave things alone. Some possible considerations:

- ✓ We live in a democracy
- ✓ More voters
- ✓ Greater opportunity for change
- ✓ Voting on children-related issues
- ✓ Whether children are "old enough" to make important decisions
- ✓ If children can make independent decisions, not based on others' opinions

Write 5 paragraphs that include an introduction, 3 main reasons that you feel the way that you do (one per paragraph), and a conclusion.

Title: _____

(1) Introduction

(2) Reason I

(3) Reason II

(4) Reason III

(5) Conclusion

Author name: _____ Date: _____

Peer name: _____ Date: _____

Editing Checklist for Self- and Peer Editing

Directions: Edit your written work using the Self-Edit columns, fixing any errors you notice. Then, have a peer complete the Peer Edit columns while you observe.

Self-Edit		√ when done	
Punctuation	I read my written piece aloud to see where to stop or pause for punctuation.		
	Quotation marks are included where needed.		
Capital Letters	I checked for capitals at the beginning of sentences.		
	Proper nouns begin with capital letters.		
Grammar	My sentences are complete thoughts. Contain a noun & a verb.		
	I don't have any run-on sentences.		
Spelling	I checked spelling and fixed the words that didn't look right.		
Peer-Edit		√ when done	Comments / suggestions
Punctuation	I read the author's piece aloud to see where to stop or pause for punctuation.		
	Quotation marks are included where needed.		
Capital Letters	I checked for capitals at the beginning of sentences.		
	Proper nouns begin with capital letters.		
Grammar	Sentences are complete thoughts. Contain a noun & a verb.		
	There are no run-on sentences.		
Spelling	Spelling is correct.		

Grades

6+

Samples

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Changing Seasons

When seasons change (winter to spring, spring to summer, etc.,) we notice differences in such things as weather, length of day(light), changes in nature, such as budding or falling leaves, and even in the foods we eat and clothes we wear. Describe one of these seasonal changes in detail below.

Here is an example.

Goodbye Summer, Hello Fall

Perhaps the most dramatic change of season when summer turns to fall. Days become shorter and the temperatures slowly start to drop. After a few months of long, hot days, things start to feel more normal. While I enjoy summer weather and summer activities, like sports and swimming, I also like when I don't have to worry about staying cool all of the time.

My clothing also changes between summer and fall. This does not happen immediately, but gradually. In summer, I wear short-sleeved shirts. My clothing is lighter and more suitable for playing. Towards summer's end, I actually have to put on a jacket at night and wear a blanket when I sleep! As fall progresses, my clothing becomes heavier and the colors become darker.

Another change in the season is the appearance of nature. At summer's end, the trees are still green and full, and the plants are tall and strong. Over time, however, all of that begins to change. Leaves start turning all sorts of amazing colors, like yellow, orange and red. A few weeks later, they have all fallen off, leaving the tree branches bare. What a difference a few months make!

Now it's your turn to craft a 3-paragraph description of seasonal change.

Suggestion: Divide your topic into 2-3 big ideas (such as temperature, clothing and nature.) Then prepare a few details for each and organize them into paragraphs. Once you have that ready, start with an introduction (about seasonal changes) and use the ideas and details to support it. At the end, use a conclusion to "tie a bow" on what you've written, by restating the introduction or adding a final thought.

Title: _____

Writing a Letter of Recommendation

A letter of recommendation states the qualities and capabilities of a person who is applying to a new position, such as to be accepted as a student in a school or an applicant for a job. The letter is written by someone who knows the applicant well and aims to convince the reader to accept the applicant.

Let's look at a sample letter of recommendation. The 4 colored boxes describe the components that every recommendation letter should have.

March 20, 2019

Rabbi Yeshaya Brookstone
Menahel
Mesivta Torah V'Avodah
613 Gemara Way
Brooklyn, NY 11230

Dear Rabbi Brookstone,

I highly recommend Moishe Fireworker to your Mesivta. I have known Moishe for eight years. He is baal middos and baal achrayis and is loved by his peers. He is intelligent and motivated. He prepares for every shiur and participates well in class.

Moishe is a Menahel's dream. I am amazed at his maturity and seriousness, even at his young age. I have no doubt that Moishe will shine in Mesivta Torah V'Avodah and be a role model in hasmadah and derech ertz for his fellow classmates.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully yours,
Rabbi Gedalyah Gross
Assistant Principal
Yeshiva Ahavas Hatorah

Connection to applicant

Traits, skills, abilities of applicant


Reasons to accept applicant

Offer to answer more questions

Writing a Postcard

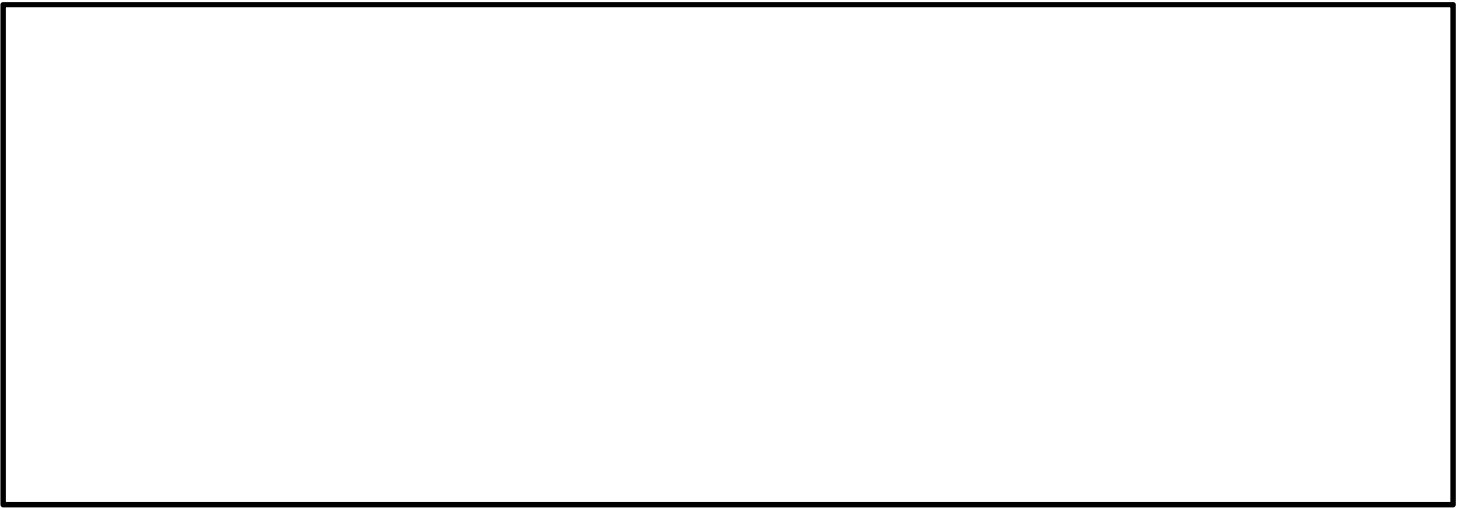
People sometimes send postcards when traveling. The postcard is a unique way to stay in touch, not only because you can write to someone about where you are and what you are doing, but because the picture on the front can be like sharing a personal snapshot of your travel with a friend.

The sample below is something that George Washington might have written at some point during the American Revolution.

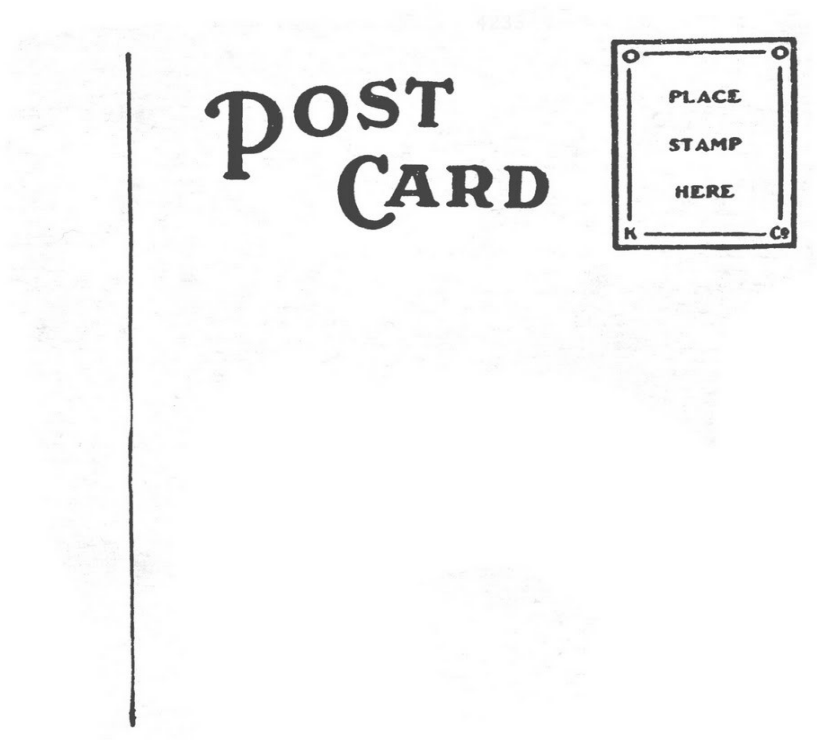
<p><i>Dear John,</i></p> <p><i>I am writing from the front lines. Leading our forces has been harder than I thought. There is much training to do and we simply don't have the supplies that we need to operate at full strength. Things are hard in the winter months, when our men must fight and survive without proper clothing or shoes.</i></p> <p><i>I am very much hopeful that we can win this war and retain our independence.</i></p> <p><i>Sincerely,</i></p> <p><i>George Washington</i></p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; text-align: center;">POST CARD</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>John Smith</i></p> <hr style="width: 80%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>127 American Way</i></p> <hr style="width: 80%; margin: auto;"/> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Newport, RI 02840</i></p>
---	--

For your postcard, draw a picture on the first “side” (top half.) It should be picture of the place that you are writing from (imagined.) Then, on the next “side” (bottom half,) write a paragraph telling a friend about your trip.

Draw image in the box below – SIDE A



Write your message in the left side below and address the card on the right side – SIDE B



Persuade Me: Year-Round School

Start with a persuasive map (opposite page). Use this paper to turn your information into a 5-paragraph response.

Your school is thinking about making school year-round, with a 1-month summer break but with more breaks (long weekends and occasional vacation days) built in. People respect your opinion, so your friends ask you to pen an opinion to persuade readers either to make the proposed change or to leave things alone. Some possible considerations:

Pros

Cons

- ✓ *More school = more learning*
- ✓ *More qualified people will want to teach (more teaching = more income)*
- ✓ *More breaks during the year is better than one longer summer break*
- ✓ *Less summer "learning loss"; you don't have to relearn things again in the fall*

- ✓ *Summer school is expensive to operate*
- ✓ *Students need summer vacation to recharge*
- ✓ *Camp is the most fun part of the year*
- ✓ *Fewer opportunities to meet kids from other areas*
- ✓ *Less opportunity to engage in nature and travel*

Write 5 paragraphs that include an introduction, 3 main reasons that you feel the way that you do (one per paragraph), and a conclusion.

Title: _____

(1) Introduction

(2) Reason I

(3) Reason II

(4) Reason III

(5) Conclusion

Writing Poetry: Free Verse

When we think of poetry, we think of rhyme and rhythm. Yet there is a kind of poetry without rhyme and rhythm. It's called free verse. Free verse poems do not follow any pattern, but still possess the flow and artistic expression that are characteristic of poetry. This is accomplished by using lots of description and strategic word placement.

To the right is an examples of a free verse poem.

Now it's your turn!

Watermelon

Big and green
Reddish, pink and juicy
Black seeds throughout,
Cool,
Delicious,
And sweet,

1. Think of a food. Write its name here: _____
2. Draw a picture of it:

3. Jot down lots of describing words and phrases about this food in the cloud below. Try to answer these questions as you jot down descriptions.

- What does it taste like?
- Where do you eat it?
- What does it look like?
- When do you eat it?
- What does it feel like?
- Why do you eat it?
- What sound does it make when eaten?

