

Thankful Writing

Teaching Suggestions

1. Discuss Meaning of “Thankful”

Discuss what it means to be thankful for something, and share a few things that you are thankful for. Ask students to think of other words that are similar in meaning and list them on the board for reference later (grateful, gratitude, appreciate, appreciation, etc.)



2. Brainstorm Ideas

Give each team a pad of small sticky notes or scrap paper. Have each person start by taking 2 sheets and ask them to brainstorm things they are thankful for. They should write each idea on a separate sheet, using as many sheets as needed. As they write each idea, they announce it to the team and place it in the center. Allow 5 minutes for brainstorming ideas.

3. Organize Ideas

Tell the class that they are going to be writing an essay about what they are thankful for. (Introduce the term “essay” if they are not familiar with the word.) Say that in order to write about the topic, they need to organize all the ideas that were brainstormed so that they can write in an organized way. Ask students to look at the ideas in the middle of the team and try to group them into categories. After students have spent a few minutes doing this, ask for volunteers to share their team’s categories. They might mention family, friends, school, recreation, food, pets, etc.

4. Create Graphic Organizers

Now tell students that they should choose 3 categories that they want to write about in their essays. Use the 3-column Thankful Chart or have them fold a sheet of paper in thirds. Tell them to write the name of each category at the top of one column. Under each heading, they should list details they want to include in their paragraph on that topic.

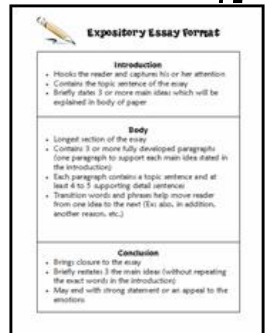
A graphic organizer titled 'I'm Thankful For ..'. The title is centered at the top. Below the title are three empty rectangular boxes, each representing a column for writing. The boxes are separated by vertical lines. There are small decorative icons on either side of the title.

Thankful Writing

Suggestions Continued

5. Introduce Essay Format

If your students are not familiar with the essay format, this is the time to introduce it to them. For the purposes of this essay, a very basic 3-part formula works well. Use the Expository Essay Format blackline master to explain the 3 parts: introduction, body, and conclusion. Make sure they notice that the body is the longest section and includes the most detail. (The Introduction and Conclusion are small like your head and feet; the Body is long like the rest of your body!)



Expository Essay Format

Introduction

- Hooks the reader and captures his or her attention
- Contains the topic sentence of the essay
- Briefly states 3 or more main ideas which will be explained in body of paper

Body

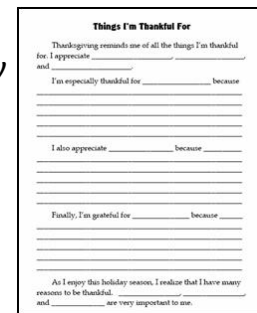
- Longest section of the essay
- Contains 3 or more fully developed paragraphs (one paragraph to support each main idea stated in the introduction)
- Each paragraph contains a topic sentence and at least 4 to 5 supporting detail sentences
- Transition words and phrases help move reader from one idea to the next (Ex: also, in addition, another reason, etc.)

Conclusion

- Brings closure to the essay
- Briefly restates 3 main ideas (without repeating the exact words in the introduction)
- May end with strong statement or an appeal to the emotions

6. Show the Thanksgiving Writing Template

Whether or not you have students actually use the Thanksgiving writing template, you may want to show it to them for a brief overview of how they will organize their paper. Young children may need to use a fill-in-the-blanks approach, but older kids generally do a better job if they are guided through the writing activity without filling in the blanks.



Things I'm Thankful For

Thanksgiving reminds me of all the things I'm thankful for. I appreciate _____ and _____.

I'm especially thankful for _____ because _____.

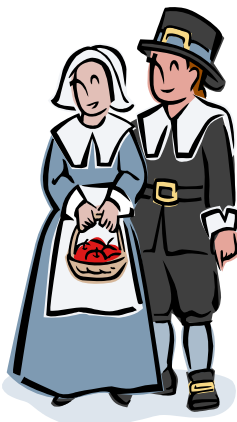
I also appreciate _____ because _____.

Finally, I'm grateful for _____ because _____.

As I enjoy this holiday season, I realize that I have many reasons to be thankful, and _____ are very important to me.

7. Write Essays

Guide students through writing an introduction and check what they have written before moving to the next step. Then guide them through the steps of writing the body and conclusion of their papers. Have them edit their papers before making their final drafts. Use the special Thanksgiving paper or regular lined paper.



8. Create Thanksgiving Folders

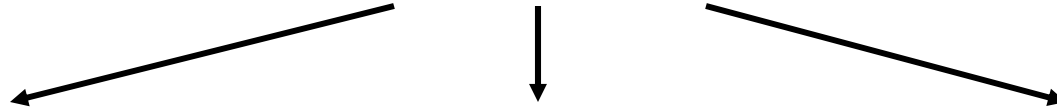
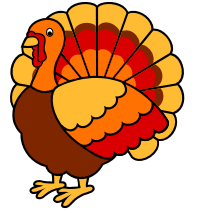
Give each student a large piece of construction paper (12" x 18") to fold in half. Glue the final copy on the inside of the folder. Allow students to decorate the outside of their folders by adding a title and illustrations. Laminate if possible.

9. Present Essays

Encourage students to present their folders to their families on Thanksgiving Day. Their families will be proud of their hard work and thoughtfulness!



I'm Thankful For . .



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Body

- Longest section of the essay
- Contains 3 or more fully developed paragraphs (one paragraph to support each main idea stated in the introduction)
- Each paragraph contains a topic sentence and at least 4 to 5 supporting detail sentences
- Transition words and phrases help move reader from one idea to the next (Ex: also, in addition, another reason, etc.)

Conclusion

- Brings closure to the essay
- Briefly restates 3 the main ideas (without repeating the exact words in the introduction)
- May end with strong statement or an appeal to the emotions

Things I'm Thankful For

Thanksgiving reminds me of all the things I'm thankful for. I appreciate _____, _____, and _____.

I'm especially thankful for _____ because

I also appreciate _____ because _____

Finally, I'm grateful for _____ because _____

As I enjoy this holiday season, I realize that I have many reasons to be thankful. _____, _____, and _____ are very important to me.

