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WHAT WORKS

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Lesson in Action

AT A GLANCE

Before Drafting

- Review the goal of the lesson.
- Review strategies for writing good leads.
- Use mentor text to model how to write a lead.
- Engage class in a discussion about features of leads.

During Drafting

- Review prewriting information previously saved on class website.
- Draft one or more leads.
- Have students peer edit the leads.
- Have students record new information for possible leads.

After Drafting

- Demonstrate how to create multimedia for leads.
- Give students opportunities to explore using a variety of technology tools.
- Provide opportunities for feedback.

Drafting: Possible Leads

Context

Students in Mr. Bradford's Grade 5 class are creating a digital report about key women in the American Revolution. He is aware that the reading and writing skills of his 25 students vary considerably. To prepare for drafting, students have watched videos, listened to audio recordings, read books, gathered information and taken notes, and completed a range of prewriting activities. Mr. Bradford has provided a research report template on Google Docs. With their basic drafts in place, he is ready to teach students how to draft a lead.

Common Core State Standards

- ▶ [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.4](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/5/4) (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/5/4>)
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- ▶ [CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.7](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/5/7) (<http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/5/7>)
Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

Lesson Objective

Students will practice drafting possible leads to use in their report on women in the American Revolution.

Technology

- ▶ Interactive whiteboard and document camera to demonstrate and model leads
- ▶ Multimedia resources to create leads that allow students multiple means of expression
- ▶ Tablets so that students can view online resources, create leads, and conference
- ▶ Digital portfolio for ongoing formative evaluation and self-reflection

Assessment

- ▶ Teacher giving students immediate feedback on draft leads
- ▶ Peer editing using multimedia tools
- ▶ Self-reflection using online checklists and portfolio

Mr. Bradford's Class in Action

Before Drafting

Mr. Bradford explains that the class will focus on writing leads for their reports. He explains, "Professional writers think about how they could grab the reader's interest, how to frame a lead, and what kind of strategy to use. You have lots of choices!"

On the interactive whiteboard, Mr. Bradford shows a chart identifying strategies that writers use to create a good lead:

Type	Explanation
Question	Asks an interesting question
Flashback	Goes back to a specific past event relevant to the topic
Dialogue	Begins with dialogue to engage the reader
Quote	Uses a specific quote that tells the reader something about the topic
Fact	Provides information to set the context for the reader
Action	Starts with an exciting event to get the reader involved
Snapshot	Uses descriptive words to "paint a picture"
Startling statement	Catches the reader's attention

Using a document camera, Mr. Bradford shows students a brief passage with the lead highlighted. He asks students to identify the type of lead the author has used. Bob responds, "The author is using a fact!" "Yes, that's right," Mr. Bradford replies. "The author is using a fact to set the context for the reader."

Mr. Bradford repeats the process, sharing passages with examples of other kinds of leads. Another student mentions, "Flashback, snapshot, and action leads really get people's attention!"

Mr. Bradford displays excerpts from the class website on the interactive whiteboard. Representatives from each group come up to the whiteboard to share the results of their detective work. One by one, students open the link to their website, highlight the lead, and discuss the type of lead.

During Drafting

Mr. Bradford asks students to open their digital writing portfolios so that they can access the information they have collected thus far, including any tidbits that could be worked into a possible lead.

He wants students to draft one or more leads using online note cards. As they work, he circulates around the room to give advice, make suggestions, and provide additional support. When needed, students do not hesitate to ask him for feedback on emerging ideas.

Students work in groups, sharing and discussing possible leads for about 20 minutes. Each group chooses one lead to discuss with the class by using a document camera.

As students take turns reading aloud their draft leads, Mr. Bradford asks other students to comment on the type of lead and what they like about it. One student says, "This lead is a question and it makes me want to learn more."

Mr. Bradford assigns one of three American Revolution websites to each student to explore and underline content that could be used for a lead. Next, working again in their small groups, they create leads by using their online note cards.

The class comes together and shares a few leads. One student shows her lead on the document camera: “Let’s go back in time to when the first American flag was designed and created.” Mr. Bradford comments to the class, “I really like the way you tried to hook the reader’s interest with those leads. They are all different, but they still grab our attention.”

After Drafting

The next day, Mr. Bradford introduces the class to ways they can use audio, video, and graphics to make their leads more interesting. He demonstrates several multimedia websites and encourages the class to think about how they could use images, music, and video.

Over the next two days, students work in pairs to create their leads in a format of their choice. Some use the classroom laptop digital camera options; others use the graphic text options on the interactive whiteboard or laptop digital recording.

Mr. Bradford meets individually with students to provide informal feedback and make suggestions for improvement. When they meet, each student brings a completed self-reflection form. Expanding on the student’s own reflection, Mr. Bradford provides additional feedback. For example, when meeting with Sal, he says, “Your voice is strong and clear. Perhaps you can make a bigger impression by looking directly at your classmates instead of at the floor while reading that exciting lead.”

Reflection

Mr. Bradford is pleased with the multiple ways he engaged students with different technology tools to help them understand how to write a lead. He recognized that it was important to spend time introducing the skill and to give his students time to practice, which seemed to take the pressure off struggling students. He decides to use mentor texts suggested by a colleague. She shared a PowerPoint that included examples of leads that several of her students wrote last year.