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Materials:

A collection of easy-to-read books will be required to complete some of the activities. This unit has been created using the *Frog and Toad* easy-to-read books. However, the unit can be taught successfully using alternative easy-to-read selections. Please note that the activities in this unit are for use with students who are reading *above the level* of the easy-to-read books that you may select.

Objectives:

This instructional unit has been created to teach students how to use certain strategies to improve their own writing. The objectives for this unit are as follows:

- The students will be able to combine several simple sentences into a single and more complex sentence.
- The students will be able to apply an elaboration strategy to improve their writing.
- The students will be able to apply an elaboration strategy to increase the readability of an easy-to-read book.
- The students will publish a completed piece of writing in hard cover format.

Sentence Combining

Lobel, Arnold. *Frog and Toad are Friends*. (1970). HarperTrophy.

The five chapters of *Frog and Toad are Friends* have been used to create five sentence combining activities. Students are required to take a group of simple sentences and combine the sentences into one sentence containing all of the necessary information presented in the smaller sentences.

You may wish to model the first couple of examples for the students before they complete the handouts on their own to ensure they understand what is required of them.

An Example:

1. Frog ran.
2. He ran up the path.
3. The path led to Toad's door.

Sentences combined into - **Frog ran up the path that led to Toad's door.**

Frog and Toad Are Friends
Chapter One - Spring

1. Frog ran.
2. He ran up the path.
3. The path led to Toad's door.

4. He was at the front door.
5. He knocked.

6. Frog walked.
7. He went into the house.
8. It was dark.

9. Toad was lying in bed.
10. He had all the covers.
11. The covers were on his head.

12. Frog pushed Toad.
13. He pushed him out of the house.
14. He pushed him onto the front porch.

15. Toad went back into the house.
16. Toad got into bed.
17. Toad pulled the covers over his head.

18. Frog looked.
19. He looked at Toad's calendar.

20. Toad looked.
21. He looked at the calendar.

22. Toad climbed.
23. He climbed out of bed.
24. He ran.
25. He ran outside.

Frog and Toad Are Friends
Chapter Two - The Story

1. It was a summer day.
2. Frog was not feeling well.

3. Toad made frog some tea.
4. He put it in a cup.
5. The tea was hot.

6. Frog drank.
7. He drank the tea.
8. The tea was in a cup.
9. The tea was hot.

10. Toad walked.
11. He walked up the porch.
12. He walked down the porch.

13. Toad went into the house.
14. He stood on his head.
15. He did that for a very long time.

16. Toad poured water over his head.
17. The water was in a glass.
18. The water was cold.

19. Toad began to bang his head.
20. He banged it against the wall.
21. The wall was hard.

Frog and Toad Are Friends
Chapter Three - A Lost Button

1. Toad went for a walk.
2. Frog went for a walk.
3. They walked across a meadow.
4. The meadow was large.

5. Frog walked in the woods.
6. Toad walked in the woods.
7. Frog walked along the river.
8. Toad walked along the river.

9. I have lost a button.
10. The button came off my jacket.
11. The button was white.

12. They looked in the meadow.
13. The meadow was large.
14. The grass was tall.

15. My button had four holes.
16. My button was big.
17. My button was round.
18. My button was thick.

19. Toad took down his sewing box.
20. It was on a shelf.

21. Toad sewed the buttons on.
22. He sewed them all over his jacket.

Frog and Toad Are Friends
Chapter Four - A Swim

1. Toad went down to the river.
2. Frog went down to the river.
3. They were going to swim.

4. Frog closed his eyes.
5. Toad came out from behind the rocks.
6. Toad had his bathing suit on.

7. Frog swam fast.
8. He swam all afternoon.
9. He made big splashes.

10. Toad swam all afternoon.
11. Toad swam slowly.
12. Toad made small splashed.

13. Frog swam.
14. He swam over to the turtle.
15. He asked the turtle to go away.

16. The turtle sat on the riverbank.
17. The lizard sat on the riverbank.
18. The snake sat on the riverbank.
19. The dragonfly sat on the riverbank.
20. The field mouse sat on the riverbank.

Frog and Toad Are Friends
Chapter Five - The Letter

1. Toad was sitting.
2. He was sitting on his front porch.

3. Waiting for the mail makes me sad.
4. My mailbox is empty.
5. It is empty every day.

6. Frog sat on the porch.
7. Toad sat on the porch.
8. They were both feeling sad.

9. He found a pencil.
10. He found a piece of paper.

11. He wrote on the paper.
12. He put the paper in an envelope.

13. Frog ran out of his house.
14. He saw a snail.
15. He knew the snail.

16. Frog ran back.
17. He ran to Toad's house.
18. Toad was taking a nap.

19. Frog looked.
20. He looked out the window.
21. The window was large.

22. Frog went out on the porch.
23. Toad went out on the porch.
24. They waited for the mail.
25. They were happy.

What Do I Know? An Elaboration Strategy

The purpose of this activity is to focus the students' attention on making their writing more descriptive by questioning what they have written about a particular topic.

Model the example outlined below. Explain to students that it is very important that they pay close attention to what you are doing because they will be responsible for applying the strategy to a piece of their own writing.

1. Copy the following lines onto the chalkboard.

*The cat ran into the street. I saw the car.
I was worried. The cat ran away just in time.*

2. Read the lines aloud.

Ask - "What do I know about the cat?" Answer - "It was black."

3. Go back to the writing sample and add the word *black* in both sentences that contain the word cat.

*The **black** cat ran into the street. I saw the car.
I was worried. The **black** cat ran away just in time.*

4. Read the new lines aloud.

Ask - "What do I know about the street?" Answer - "It was busy."

5. Go back to the writing sample and add the new words.

*The **black** cat ran into the **busy** street. I saw the car.
I was worried. The **black** cat ran away just in time.*

6. Read the new lines aloud.

Ask - "What do I know about the car?" Answer - "It was red. It was speeding."

7. Go back to the writing sample and add the new words.

*The **black** cat ran into the **busy** street. I saw the **speeding red** car. I was
worried. The **black** cat ran away just in time.*

8. Read the new lines aloud.

Ask - "Why was I worried?" Answer - "I thought the cat was going to be hit by the car."

9. Go back to the writing sample and add the new words. Notice that the new words or idea does not have to be written into the story word for word. If need be, an entire new sentence can be added.

*The black cat ran into the busy street. I saw the speeding red car. I was **worried about the cat because I thought the car was going to run it over!** The black cat ran away just in time.*

10. Read the new lines aloud.

Ask - "What do I know about how the cat ran away?" Answer - "I know I felt relief once that cat was out of the way. The cat ran away quickly."

11. Go back to the writing sample and add the new words. Notice that all suggested ideas do not need to be used in the new sentences.

*The black cat ran into the busy street. I saw the speeding red car. I was worried about the cat because I thought the car was going to run it over! **To my relief,** the black cat ran away just in time.*

12. Read the new lines aloud.

Ask - "Are there any more details that I want to add or words I would like to change?" Answer - "I could call the cat a calico cat. I also don't like the way the third sentence is worded."

13. Go back to the writing sample and add the new words.

*The black **calico** cat ran into the busy street. I saw the speeding red car. I was worried about the cat because I thought the car was going to run it over! **To my relief,** the black **calico** cat ran away just in time.*

Have students suggest alternative ways to word the third sentence.

Now it is the students' turn to practice this elaboration strategy on their own writing. They may begin by creating a new piece of writing, or they may use some of their work that is already underway. After the students have had the opportunity to add to their work, encourage them to share the first version with their peers, as well as, the elaborated draft so that their peers can comment on the differences between the two drafts.

Re-Writing *Frog and Toad*

Students will find it interesting to apply the elaboration technique taught in the previous lesson on one of the *Frog and Toad* books. Consider placing students into groups of 3-4. Each group can then elaborate one of the chapters within a particular *Frog and Toad* book. Allow class time for groups to share their work.

The Original Text

One morning Toad sat in bed.
“I have many things to do,” he said.
“I will write them all down on a list so that I can remember them.”

The Elaborated Text

One sunny morning, when the birds chirped merrily outside, Toad sat in bed thinking to himself.
“I have many things I must do today,” he said aloud. “I will write them all down on a list so that I can remember them. I will use the fine stationary that my grandmother sent me and the pen that I found near the pond.”

Taken from *Frog and Toad Together* by Arnold Lobel.

For older students, introduce them to the Fry Readability Graph and the process used to determine the readability of a particular literature selection. Have students determine the readability of the easy-to-read book that they are going to use in the elaboration process. After the students have elaborated the text, have them calculate the readability again to determine if they raised the readability of the text with their revision, and if so, by how many grade levels. Students may also be interested in determining the readability of some of their own work.

To Determine Readability

1. Count the first 100 words of the story. Mark your spot lightly with a pencil.
2. Count how many sentences there are within the first 100 words of text. Record your answer.
3. Count how many syllables there are in the first 100 words of text. Record your answer.
4. Graph the answers on Fry’s Readability Graph to calculate the readability level.

Fry Readability Graph

Please download the graph from this website.

<http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/fry/fry.html>

Time to Write!

It is time now for students to begin creating a piece of writing that will be published in hard-cover format during the final stages of this unit. Explain to the students that they are about to begin a journey through the writing process. They will begin by writing a first draft. They will have several opportunities to share their work with their peers as they work through their revisions. In the final stage, they will prepare their books and complete the final copy of their work.

1. Students select a topic to write about that is personally meaningful to them. If students are experiencing difficulty choosing a topic to write about, allow them an opportunity to discuss possible topics with peers.

2. When it is time to write, make it clear to the students that the classroom must remain quiet. Take the time to model writing for the students - sit down and write! Tell the students that you are not to be disturbed while you are writing and that you'll circulate later on to see how they are doing. Write until the majority of the students have settled down, and then begin helping any students that may be struggling.

3. Allow for a regular daily writing time.

Sharing & Revising

Once the students have made some progress in their rough drafts, it is time to begin the sharing stage of the writing process. How you wish to set up the peer sharing periods will depend a great deal on the personalities of the students in your class, and their ability to work in groups. Before peer sharing is attempted, ensure that the students are familiar with sharing and responding positively, as well as, proper group behavior. Groups may stay the same throughout the sharing stage or students may meet with different peers each day.

Possible Structures for Group Sharing

1. **Breaking Out:** Students get into groups of 3-4. Each student finishes the following statements:
 - When I was getting started I . . .
 - My favorite part so far is . . .
 - I had some trouble when I . . .

Students may not be ready to share their work with others at this point. However, all students should take part in the discussion.

1. **Feelings:** Authors read their work aloud to their group. The listeners write down how they feel as the author reads. Each listener tells the author what feelings they were experiencing at different points in the story.
2. **Summarizing:** Authors read their work to their group. The group listens and then each group member provides the reader with
 - a summary of what he or she heard (main idea) stated in one sentence
 - one word from the piece of writing that best explains the work
 - one word NOT from the paper that summarizes the work
1. **Similes:** Authors read their work to the group. The group listens and then each group member describes the piece of writing using a simile (your piece was like a river that runs deep, your piece was like a tear drop that fell slowly from your lips).
2. Authors read their work to a peer. As the peer listens he or she writes down three things he or she liked about the piece. The peer also records one thing about the piece that he or she thinks can be improved. The peer and the author discuss the items on the list and the peer explains why he or she like/disliked what was listed.

Editing

It is now time for students to add a little bit of polish to their writing. In the editing stage, students focus one last time on spelling, punctuation and grammar. Consider having students exchange their papers with a peer for a fresh perspective. New eyes can often catch mistakes that familiar readers overlook.

Editing Warm Up

In chapter five of *Frog and Toad are Friends*, Frog writes Toad a short letter. On the following page is a reply letter from Toad. Toad has made several mistakes. Have your students edit Toad's letter so that he can correct it before he mails his reply to Frog.

Strategies for Editing

1. Provide a checklist that students must go through as they read their paper one last time. The checklist can be made up by the students during a discussion about what they think good writing is (proper punctuation, capitalization, etc). As the students read over their work one last time they must check for all of the elements listed on the checklist. The checklist is signed by the student as "proof" that the student has checked over their work.
2. Assembly Line Editing: Place the students around a long table. Each student should be sitting directly across from another student. Students exchange their papers across the table. The teacher assigns the group of students ONE thing to look for as they read over their peers work (capitalization, periods, spelling, commas, etc). Once the students are finished looking for that one particular element, they return the paper they were editing to the owner. Students all move down one seat and exchange papers with the student sitting across from them. The teacher then assigns another error for students to check for in the paper they are editing. This assembly line editing continues until the students have had the opportunity to examine several other papers.

Editing Checklist

	yes	no
	yes	no
	yes	no
	yes	no
	yes	no
	yes	no
	yes	no

I have edited my paper for each item that is listed above.

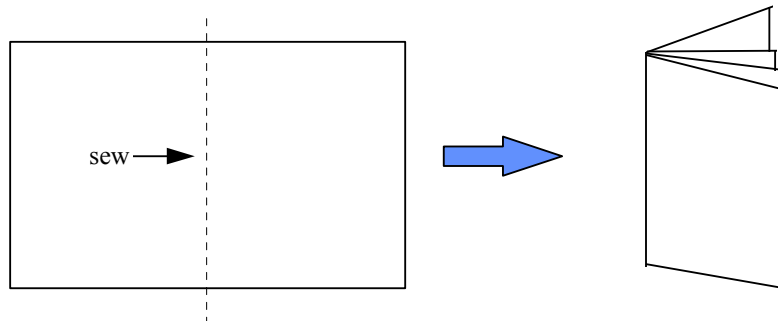
Student's Signature

Publishing

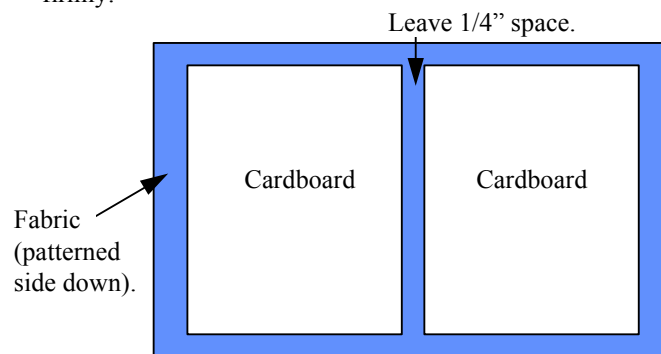
Once students have their work ready for publishing, they must decide what type of book format they want to use to publish their work. They also must determine where page breaks will go, whether their work will be typed or hand written, if their book will include an “about the author” page, and if the book will be illustrated.

Instructions for making hard-cover book:

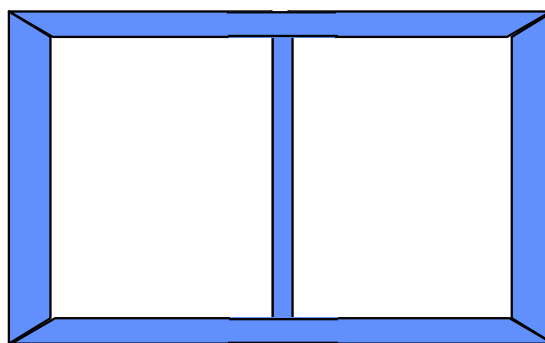
- Take six sheets of plain white paper. Line the paper up and hold it together while folding all six sheets in half. Sew along the crease using fairly large stitching so the paper doesn't tear apart. Set aside the booklet.



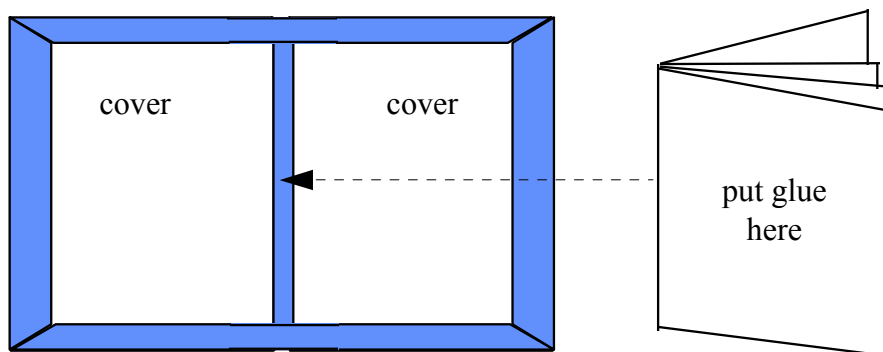
- Lay fabric (15"x11") patterned side down onto a table. Lay two pieces of 6"x9" cardboard on top of the fabric leaving 1/4" between the pieces of cardboard. Apply glue to the under sides of the cardboard pieces and place back on the fabric (glued side face down on fabric). Smooth and hold firmly.



- Fold up the edges of the cloth on to the cardboard (like your wrapping the ends of a present). Glue them in place. Trim Excess bulky fabric.



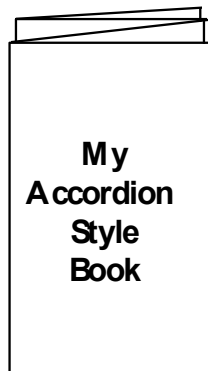
- Take the sewn pages and put glue on the front cover. Place the crease of the sewn book in the 1/4" space left between the cardboard pieces. Press the cover page of the booklet, glued side down into the cardboard (front cover). This page should cover the rough edges of the fabric. Do the same to the back cover. Close the book and place heavy item on top to press out air bubbles and to keep book flat while it is drying. (Check to make sure no glue has escaped so that the pages don't get glued together).



Put spine of sewn booklet into space between covers while gluing front and back sheets of paper of booklet to front and back cover of cloth booklet.

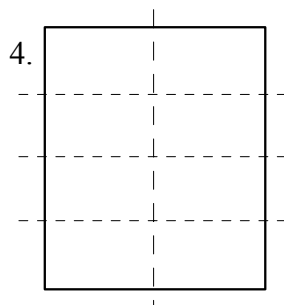
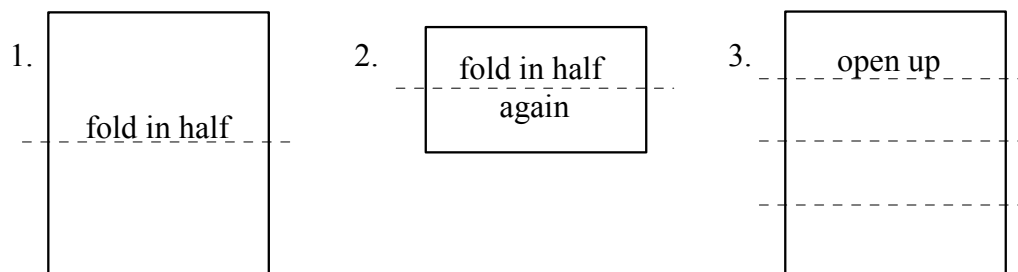
- If students will be printing in the text by hand, they may do so once the book has dried. Remind students not to use markers when illustrating as the ink will show through the paper.

More Book Making Ideas

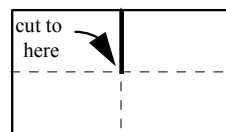


The accordion style book is very easy to make. Take a piece of paper and fold it as illustrated (like a brochure). Students can then glue in illustrations and text (not too much glue or the pages wrinkle!!)

A Tiny Book for Tiny Hands



Fold vertically in half and open up. Then fold in half the way you folded it in step 1. Cut down middle fold until the scissors hit the other fold line.



5. Open the sheet up and fold vertically like done in the first part of step 4. Push the ends towards the middle and the slit in the paper will open up, keep pushing until the slit closes. Press the book flat.

