

Four Square Writing Strategy: 20-Minute Lesson Plan for 7th Grade

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the basic structure of the Four Square Writing method
2. Create a simple Four Square graphic organizer
3. Use the Four Square method to plan a short paragraph

Materials Needed

- Whiteboard and markers
- Blank paper for each student
- Pencils or pens

Introduction (3 minutes)

- Greet the class and explain that today we'll learn a new writing strategy called Four Square Writing.
- Briefly explain that this method helps organize thoughts and plan paragraphs.

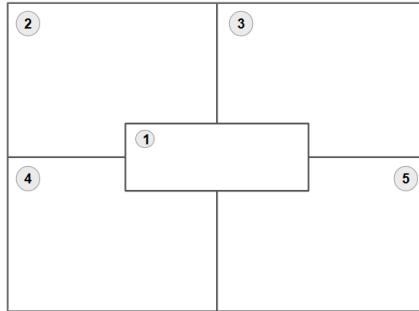
Explanation and Demonstration (7 minutes)

What is Four Square Writing?

- It's a visual tool to help organize ideas for writing.
- It uses a simple grid with four squares and a center box.

How to Create a Four Square:

1. Draw a large square on the board.
2. Divide it into four equal squares.
3. Draw a smaller square in the center, connecting the four squares.



Explain the Purpose of Each Square:

- Center: Main topic or idea
- Top left: First supporting detail
- Top right: Second supporting detail
- Bottom left: Third supporting detail
- Bottom right: Concluding sentence

Demonstrate with an Example:

Topic: "My Favorite Season"

- Write "Summer" in the center square.
- In the other squares, write:
 1. Warm weather
 2. Swimming in the pool
 3. No school
 4. Summer is the best season

"I have my organizer (draw or refer to it). The prompt is, "My Favorite Season". MY favorite season is summer, so I'm going to write it in the center square."

"I have to support my topic with reasons why I like summer. Let's see, I like the warm weather (fill in box 2). I like swimming (fill in box 3). And I LOVE the fact that we have no school (fill in box 4)."

"The last box refers to my conclusion. I think I will just say that summer is the best (fill in box 5)."

"Okay, writers, now I'm going to show you how I take my completed organizer and turn it into a paragraph. I've got my topic in the center—'Summer'—and four ideas around it. Let's see how I can turn these into sentences that flow together."

*"First, I want to start with a topic sentence that tells my reader what this paragraph is about. I'll say: '**Summer is my favorite season because it's full of fun and freedom.**' That gives a clear opinion and hints at what's coming."*

*"Now I'll use my first idea: warm weather. I'll write: '**I love the warm weather because it means I can spend more time outside.**' That connects to summer and explains why it matters to me."*

"Next, I'll talk about swimming. I'll say: '**One of my favorite summer activities is swimming in the pool with my friends.**' That adds a personal detail and keeps the paragraph interesting."

"Now I'll use the 'no school' idea. I'll write: '**Summer also means a break from school, which gives me time to relax and do things I enjoy.**' That shows how summer affects my daily life."

"Finally, I want to wrap it up with a closing sentence that reminds the reader of my opinion. I'll say: '**All of these things make summer the best season of all.**' That ties it together and ends with a strong statement."

"Let's read the whole thing to see how it sounds..." (Teacher reads aloud the full paragraph.)

"See how I used each idea from my brainstorm and turned it into a full sentence? That's how you build a paragraph—one idea at a time, with clear connections and a strong beginning and end."

Guided Practice (7 minutes)

- Have students create their own Four Square on a blank piece of paper.
- Choose a simple topic like "Pizza" for students to practice with.
- Guide students through filling out each square:
 1. Write "Pizza" in the center.
 2. Ask for ideas for the other squares (e.g., "delicious toppings," "cheesy goodness," "great for parties").
 3. Help students come up with a concluding sentence for the bottom right square.

Independent Practice (2 minutes)

- Have students start a new Four Square on their own.
- The topic: "My Favorite Hobby"
- Encourage them to fill in as much as they can in the time given.

Closure (1 minute)

- Recap the main points of the Four Square method.
- Explain how this can help them plan paragraphs and essays in the future.

Extension/Homework

If time allows, or for homework:

- Have students use their "My Favorite Hobby" Four Square to write a complete paragraph.

Remember to adjust the pace and complexity based on your students' needs and prior knowledge. This lesson introduces the basics of the Four Square method, which can be built upon in future lessons.

Lesson Plan: Writing Supporting Detail Paragraphs for an Essay

Lesson Overview

- * Grade Level: 7th grade
- * Duration: 20 minutes
- * Topic: Writing supporting detail paragraphs for an essay

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this mini-lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the purpose of supporting detail paragraphs in an essay
2. Identify the key components of a supporting detail paragraph
3. Practice writing a simple supporting detail paragraph

Materials Needed

- * Whiteboard and markers
- * Student notebooks and pens/pencils
- * Handout with a sample supporting detail paragraph (optional)

Introduction (3 minutes)

- * Begin by asking students: "What do you think is the purpose of supporting details in an essay?"
- * Discuss a few responses and explain that supporting details help prove the main idea of an essay and make the argument stronger.

Main Lesson (12 minutes)

1. Explain the structure of a supporting detail paragraph (4 minutes)

Write on the whiteboard and explain:

- * Topic sentence: Introduces the main point of the paragraph
- * Evidence: Facts, examples, or quotes that support the topic sentence
- * Explanation: How the evidence relates to the topic sentence
- * Transition: A sentence that connects to the next paragraph

2. Provide an example (4 minutes)

Share a simple example of a supporting detail paragraph:

"Playing team sports can improve social skills. For instance, when students join a basketball team, they learn to communicate effectively with their teammates during games. They must coordinate plays, encourage each other, and resolve conflicts on the court. These interactions help students develop better communication and cooperation skills that can be applied in other areas of life."

Identify each component in the example paragraph.

3. Guided practice (4 minutes)

- * As a class, brainstorm a topic sentence for a supporting detail paragraph about the importance of reading.
- * Ask students to suggest evidence and explanations for the topic sentence.
- * Write the paragraph on the board with student input, ensuring all components are included.

Practice Activity (3 minutes)

- * Have students start writing their own supporting detail paragraph on a topic of their choice.
- * Encourage them to include all the components discussed in the lesson.

Conclusion (2 minutes)

- * Recap the key components of a supporting detail paragraph.
- * Remind students that strong supporting details make their essays more convincing and engaging.
- * Assign homework: Complete the supporting detail paragraph started in class.

Extension/Homework

- * Students should finish writing their supporting detail paragraph at home.
- * Ask them to underline or highlight each component (topic sentence, evidence, explanation, transition) in their paragraph.

Assessment

- * Informal assessment through class participation and guided practice.
- * Formal assessment of completed supporting detail paragraphs (homework).

Mini-Lesson Plan: Writing a Main Idea or Thesis Sentence for Informative Writing

Lesson Overview

- * Grade Level: 7th grade
- * Duration: 20 minutes
- * Topic: Writing a main idea or thesis sentence for informative writing

Lesson Objectives

By the end of this mini-lesson, students will be able to:

1. Understand the concept of a main idea or thesis sentence
2. Identify the key components of a strong main idea sentence
3. Practice writing their own main idea sentences for informative paragraphs

Materials Needed

- Whiteboard and markers
- Student notebooks and pencils
- Sample informative paragraphs (teacher-prepared)

Introduction (3 minutes)

- * Begin the lesson by asking students: "What do you think is the most important sentence in a paragraph?"
- * After a brief discussion, explain that today we'll focus on the main idea or thesis sentence, which is often the most crucial part of an informative paragraph.

Direct Instruction (5 minutes)

1. Define main idea/thesis sentence:
"A main idea or thesis sentence is a clear, concise statement that summarizes the central point of your informative paragraph or essay."
2. Explain the key components of a strong main idea sentence:
 - Specific topic
 - Controlling idea (what you want to say about the topic)
 - Clear and concise language
3. Provide an example:

Write on the whiteboard: "The Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest coral reef system, is facing significant threats due to climate change and pollution."

Analyze the example:

- Specific topic: The Great Barrier Reef
- Controlling idea: facing significant threats
- Clear and concise language: uses specific terms and avoids unnecessary words

Guided Practice (7 minutes)

1. Display a sample informative paragraph on the whiteboard (without the main idea sentence).
2. Ask students to read the paragraph silently.
3. Guide the class in identifying the topic and key points of the paragraph.
4. As a class, collaboratively craft a main idea sentence for the paragraph, ensuring it includes the specific topic, controlling idea, and clear language.
5. Write the final version on the whiteboard and discuss why it effectively summarizes the paragraph.

Independent Practice (4 minutes)

1. Provide students with another sample informative paragraph (without the main idea sentence).
2. Instruct students to write their own main idea sentence for the paragraph in their notebooks.
3. Remind them to include the specific topic, controlling idea, and use clear, concise language.

Closure (1 minute)

- * Recap the importance of a strong main idea sentence in informative writing.
- * Encourage students to apply this skill in their future writing assignments.

Extension/Homework

- * Assign students to find an informative article and identify its main idea sentence, or write one if it's not clearly stated.
- * Ask them to explain why they think it's effective or how they could improve it.

Remember to adjust the pace and complexity of the lesson based on your students' needs and prior knowledge. This mini-lesson serves as an introduction to the concept, and further practice will be necessary for students to master the skill.