

Lesson 1: P – Pick a Topic

Objective Students will generate and select a writing topic by evaluating their brainstormed ideas for clarity, interest, and personal connection.

Teach Explain that picking a topic is the first step in writing—and sometimes the hardest! Writers often have lots of ideas, but they need to choose one that they know well, care about, and can explain clearly.

Key Message:

“Picking a topic is like choosing the best seed to grow into a strong paragraph. You want one that’s clear, interesting, and easy to write about.”

Tips for Choosing a Topic:

- Ask: Do I know a lot about this?
- Ask: Can I explain why I care about it?
- Ask: Will someone else find it interesting?

Model Teacher Brainstorm List (Prompt: Write about something you enjoy or know a lot about):

- Pizza
- My dog
- The beach
- My favorite movie
- Playing video games
- My dog cuddles with me when I’m sad
- I love my pet
- I like weekends

Think-Aloud Evaluation:

- Pizza: I like it, but I don’t have much to say beyond “it tastes good.”
- The beach: I’ve only been once—not enough details.
- My dog: I know a lot about him, and I can explain why I love him. *I’ll choose “Why I love my pet” because I have strong feelings and clear examples.*

 **Practice Student Task:** Read the brainstormed list below. Choose one topic to write about. Then answer the questions to help decide if it’s a strong choice.

Pick a Topic – Writing Worksheet

★ Step 1: Brainstorm Your Ideas

Think about things you enjoy, know a lot about, or have strong feelings about. Write as many

ideas as you can!

My Brainstorm List

❖❖ Step 2: Choose One Topic

Look at your brainstorm list. Pick one topic that feels exciting or easy to write about. **My Chosen Topic**

✓ Step 3: Topic Evaluation Checklist

Answer these questions to see if your topic is a strong choice.

Question	Yes / No
Do I know a lot about this topic?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can I explain why I like or care about it?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will it be interesting for someone else to read?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

✍ Step 4: Why I Picked This Topic

Use the sentence starters to explain your choice.

I chose this topic because

_____ I know a lot about
_____ I care about this
topic because _____

Pick a Topic – Writing Worksheet

Step 1: Brainstorm Your Ideas - Think about things you enjoy, know a lot about, or have strong feelings about. Write as many ideas as you can!

Student Brainstorm List:

- Recess
- Pizza
- My favorite color
- Dinosaurs
- My weekend
- A book I read
- My pet fish
- My favorite video game
- Clouds
- School lunch

Step 2: Choose One Topic - Look at your brainstorm list. Pick one topic that feels exciting or easy to write about.

My Chosen Topic

Step 3: Topic Evaluation Checklist - Answer these questions to see if your topic is a strong choice.

Question	Yes / No
Do I know a lot about this topic?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Can I explain why I like or care about it?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Will it be interesting for someone else to read?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Step 4: Why I Picked This Topic

Use the sentence starters to explain your choice.

I chose this topic because

_____ I know a lot about
_____ I care about this
topic because _____

Lesson 2: L – List Ideas About a Topic

Objective Students will generate a list of ideas related to a writing topic to prepare for drafting a paragraph.

Teach Explain that listing ideas is the first step in writing. It helps students gather thoughts before they write a topic sentence or details.

Key Message:

“Listing ideas is like gathering puzzle pieces before you build. You don’t need full sentences—just quick thoughts that connect to your topic.”

Tips for Brainstorming:

- Write short phrases or keywords.
- Don’t worry about spelling or order.
- Focus on ideas that match the topic.

Model Prompt: *Why I love my pet* Teacher models listing ideas before writing a paragraph.

Brainstorm List:

- He cuddles with me
- He makes me laugh
- He follows me around
- He helps me feel better
- He’s always happy to see me
- He listens when I talk
- He’s soft and warm

Think-Aloud Prompts:

- What do I love about my pet?
- How does he make me feel?
- What does he do that’s special?

 **Practice Prompt:** *Why recess is important* Students will brainstorm a list of ideas related to the topic.

Student Task:

1. Write short phrases or keywords.
2. Focus on why recess matters.

List Ideas – Brainstorming Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____ 

Topic Prompt

Why recess is important

❖❖ Brainstorm Box

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-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Write short phrases or keywords that explain why recess is important. You don't need full sentences—just quick ideas!

Sentence Starters (if you need help)

- Kids can...
- Recess helps...
- It's a time to...
- During recess...

Lesson 3: E – Evaluate the List

Objective

Students will evaluate a brainstormed list of ideas and choose the strongest ones. They could later use these to include in a paragraph.

Teach

Explain that not every idea we brainstorm will make it into our writing. Writers *evaluate* their ideas to decide which ones are clear, relevant, and interesting.

Key Message:

“Evaluate” means to *look at your list* and *choose the best ideas* for your paragraph.

Model

Use a sample brainstormed list on the board (e.g., reasons why you love your pet). Model how to go through each idea and ask: Is this idea clear? Can I explain it with details? Does it support my topic? Will it make sense to my reader?

Idea	Brainstormed Idea	Keep	Don't Keep	Why?
1	My pet is fluffy.	✓		It's a clear trait that I can describe.
2	I got my pet two years ago.		✓	It's a fact but doesn't explain why I love my pet.
3	My pet barks at a mailman.		✓	It's funny but not really the reason I love them.
	My pet cuddles with me when I'm sad.	✓		Shows emotional support. Great detail for the paragraph.
	My pet eats a lot of food.		✓	Not meaningful or connected to why I love them.
	My pet follows me around the house.	✓		Shows loyalty and connection. A good supporting detail.
	My pet has a red collar.		✓	Just a detail. Not a reason why I love them.

Teacher Reflection Model

- One idea I definitely want to keep:

“My pet cuddles with me when I’m sad” — because it shows how my pet helps me feel better and gives emotional support.

- One idea I decided not to keep:

“My pet has a red collar” — because it’s just a description and doesn’t explain why I love my pet.

Use a simple **color-coding system**:

- Circle or highlight strong ideas in green
- Cross out or gray out weak or off-topic ideas
- Put a question mark next to ideas that need more thought

Support

- Provide a **“What Makes a Good Idea?” checklist**:
 - Is it related to my topic?
 - Can I explain it with details?
 - Will others understand it?
- Offer **sentence frames** for evaluating:
 - “I chose this idea because ____.”
 - “I crossed this out because ____.”
- Use **picture prompts or icons** to help students visualize ideas.

Practice

Students use the **PLEASE Strategy Worksheet – Step 4: Evaluate the List** to review their brainstormed ideas from the “List” step.

PLEASE Strategy Worksheet – Step 4: Evaluate Your Work

Name: _____ Date: _____ Practice Topic: Why

recess is important

Here are some ideas a student brainstormed. Read each one and decide if it's a strong idea to include in the paragraph. Then check Keep or Don't Keep, and explain why.

Idea #	Brainstormed Idea	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Keep	<input type="checkbox"/> Don't Keep	Why?
1	You get to play with friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
2	Recess is after lunch	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
3	It helps you get energy out	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
4	I like pizza	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
5	You can go outside and get fresh air	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
6	Sometimes it's too hot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____
7	It gives your brain a break	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

Reflection

- One idea I definitely want to keep:

- One idea I decided not to keep:

Lesson 4: ACTIVATE the Topic Sentence

Objective Students will write a clear topic sentence that introduces the main idea of their paragraph.

Teach Explain that a topic sentence tells the reader what the paragraph is about. It should be clear, focused, and give a hint about what the writer will explain.

Key Message:

“A topic sentence is like a signpost—it tells your reader where your paragraph is going.”

Tips for a Strong Topic Sentence:

- Say your opinion or main idea clearly.
- Give a reason or hint about what you'll explain.
- Avoid just stating a fact or repeating the prompt.

Model Use the prompt: *Why I love my pet*. Show three example topic sentences and evaluate each one.

Version	Topic Sentence	Evaluation
 Weak	I have a pet dog.	Just a fact—not a reason or opinion.
 Needs Work	My dog is fun and fluffy.	Describes traits but doesn't explain why I love him.

 **Strong** I love my dog because he always makes me feel better when I'm sad.

Think-Aloud Questions:
Clear opinion + reason = strong topic sentence.

- Does this sentence tell my opinion? * Does it give a reason or hint? •

Will it make sense to my reader?

Practice Students will choose the strongest topic sentence from a set of options and explain their choice.

Prompt: *Why recess is important*

Student Task:

1. Read the topic sentence options.
2. Circle the strongest one.
3. Write: "I chose this sentence because..."
4. Bonus: Rewrite one weak sentence to make it stronger.

Option	Topic Sentence
A	Recess is something we do every day.
B	Recess is important because it helps kids take a break and feel better.
C	I like recess.

❖❖ Worksheet: Add a Topic Sentence Includes:

- Sentence options to evaluate
- Space to explain their choice
- Optional rewrite box for improvement

Name: _____ Date: _____ Prompt: *Why recess*

is important

Write a strong topic sentence that introduces your paragraph and gives a hint about your reason.

Step 1: Read and Choose - Check the strongest topic sentence below.

A. Recess is something we do every day.

B. Recess is important because it helps kids take a break and feel better.

C. I like recess.

Step 2: Explain Your Choice - Why did you choose that sentence? /

chose this sentence because:

Step 3: Fix a Weak Sentence - Pick one weak sentence and rewrite it to make it stronger.

Weak sentence:

My stronger version:

❖❖ **Bonus Challenge (Optional)** Write your own topic sentence using this starter: *Recess is important because...*

❖❖ Anchor Tip: What Makes a Strong Topic Sentence?

Says your opinion or main idea Gives a reason or hint Makes sense to your reader Avoids just stating a fact

Lesson 5: S – Support (Write Supporting Details)

Objective Students will write clear and relevant supporting details that explain and support their topic sentence.

Teach Explain that supporting details are the “meat” of the paragraph—they give reasons, examples, and explanations that help the reader understand the topic sentence.

Key Message:

“Supporting details help your reader understand your idea. They answer the question: *Why?* or *How?*”

Tips for Strong Supporting Details:

- Stay focused on the topic.
- Use examples, facts, or explanations.
- Use transition words like *First*, *Also*, *For example*, *This shows that*.

Model Prompt: *Why I love my pet* **Topic Sentence:** *I love my dog because he always makes me feel better when I'm sad.*

Supporting Details:

Detail	Evaluation
✓ First, he cuddles with me when I'm feeling down.	Explains how the dog helps emotionally.
✓ For example, when I had a bad day, he sat next to me and licked my hand.	Specific example that supports the topic.
⚠ My dog eats a lot of food.	Off-topic—not related to emotional support.
✓ Also, he follows me around the house, which makes me feel less alone.	Adds another reason that supports the topic.

Think-Aloud Questions:

- Does this detail explain *why* I love my pet?
- Is it specific and clear?
- Does it connect to my topic sentence?

Say More – Supporting Details Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Practice Prompt: *Why recess is important*. Students will read a topic sentence and choose which supporting details are strong.

Topic Sentence: *Recess is important because it helps kids take a break and feel better.*

Student Task:

1. Read each supporting detail.
2. Circle if it supports the topic sentence.
3. Cross out if it doesn't.

Supporting Detail	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> / <input type="checkbox"/>
First, recess is after lunch.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
For example, kids can run and play to get energy out.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
I like pizza.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Also, fresh air helps kids feel more awake.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
My school has a big playground.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Write Your Own Supporting Detail

Write one new sentence that supports the topic sentence: *Recess is important because it helps kids take a break and feel better.*

Use one of these sentence starters if you'd like:

- *First, * For example, * Also, * This shows that...* **My Supporting Detail:**

Think About It

- Does your sentence explain *why* recess is important?
- Is it clear and specific?
- Does it connect to the topic sentence?

Lesson 6: E – End It (Write a Concluding Sentence)

Objective Students will write a clear concluding sentence that wraps up their paragraph and connects back to the topic sentence.

Teach Explain that a concluding sentence is the final thought in a paragraph. It reminds the reader what the paragraph was about and leaves them with a strong ending.

Key Message:

“A good concluding sentence wraps up your paragraph like a bow. It reminds the reader what you said and why it matters.”

Tips for Strong Conclusions:

- Restate the main idea in a new way.
- Use transition words like *In conclusion*, *All in all*, *That's why*, *This shows that*. •
- Avoid random facts or off-topic ideas.

Model Prompt: *Why I love my pet* **Topic Sentence:** *I love my dog because he always makes me feel better when I'm sad.*

Concluding Sentence Examples:

Sentence	Evaluation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> That's why my dog is my best friend.	Wraps up the idea with emotion and clarity.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> In conclusion, my dog helps me feel loved and happy.	Summarizes the paragraph's message.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> My dog has brown fur.	Off-topic and doesn't wrap up the idea.

Think-Aloud Prompts:

- Does this sentence remind the reader what the paragraph was about? •
- Does it sound like a final thought?
- Is it connected to the topic sentence?

 **Practice Prompt:** *Why recess is important* Students will read a topic sentence and evaluate possible concluding sentences.

Topic Sentence: *Recess is important because it helps kids take a break and feel better.*

End It – Concluding Sentence Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

Topic Sentence

Recess is important because it helps kids take a break and feel better.

Which sentence wraps up the paragraph?

Read each sentence below. Circle **✓** if it wraps up the paragraph clearly. Cross out **✗** if it doesn't fit or doesn't sound complete.

Concluding Sentence	✓ / ✗
That's why recess is fun.	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ <input type="checkbox"/> ✗
Recess helps kids feel better and ready to learn.	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ <input type="checkbox"/> ✗
I like to play tag.	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ <input type="checkbox"/> ✗
In conclusion, recess is an important part of the school day.	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ <input type="checkbox"/> ✗
Recess is after lunch.	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓ <input type="checkbox"/> ✗

Write Your Own Concluding Sentence

Write one sentence that wraps up the paragraph: ***Recess is important because it helps kids take a break and feel better.***

Use one of these sentence starters if you'd like:

- ***In conclusion, * That's why... * All in all, *This shows that...*** My Concluding

Sentence:

Think About It

- **✓** Does your sentence remind the reader what the paragraph was about? •
- ✓ Does it sound like a final thought?
- **✓** Is it connected to the topic sentence?

Mini Lesson Plan: Introducing the PLEASE Writing Strategy

Grade Level: 4–8

Subject: Writing (can be integrated into Science, Social Studies, or ELA)

Duration: 45–60 minutes

Objective: Students will learn and apply the PLEASE strategy to plan and write a well-structured paragraph.

Learning Objectives

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

- Identify and explain each step of the PLEASE strategy.
- Use a graphic organizer to plan a paragraph using PLEASE.
- Write a paragraph that includes a clear topic sentence, supporting details, and a conclusion.

Materials

- PLEASE anchor chart or poster (visual aid)
- Student graphic organizer (fillable or printable)
- Sample paragraph (model text)
- Whiteboard or chart paper
- Markers
- Student writing notebooks or devices

Lesson Steps

1. Hook (5 minutes)

Ask:

“Have you ever started writing and didn’t know what to say next?”

Introduce the PLEASE strategy as a tool to help organize thoughts and make writing easier and clearer.

2. Teach & Model (15 minutes)

- Display the PLEASE poster.
- Go through each letter:
 - P – Pick a topic
 - L – List ideas
 - E – Evaluate the list
 - A – Activate with a topic sentence
 - S – Supply supporting sentences
 - E – End with a conclusion
- Model the strategy using a think-aloud. Example topic: Why animals are important to ecosystems.
- Fill in a graphic organizer in front of the class and write a sample paragraph together.

3. Guided Practice (15 minutes)

- Students work in pairs or small groups to complete a PLEASE organizer on a new topic (e.g., Why recycling matters).
- Circulate and support with prompts:
 - “Which ideas are strongest?”
 - “What’s your topic sentence going to be?”

4. Independent Practice (10–15 minutes)

- Students choose their own topic or use a prompt.
- Complete the organizer and begin drafting a paragraph using the PLEASE structure.

5. Share & Reflect (5–10 minutes)

- Invite a few students to share their topic sentences or full paragraphs.

Reflect as a class:

“Which step helped you the most?”

“How did the strategy make writing easier?”

Assessment

- Informal: Observe student participation and use of the organizer.
- Formal: Collect and review student paragraphs using a simple rubric (e.g., includes all parts of PLEASE, clarity, organization).

Mini-Lesson: Introduction to the PLEASE Strategy

Objective

Students will learn the steps of the PLEASE writing strategy and apply them to build a simple paragraph.

Teacher Script

“Writing a paragraph is like building a sandwich. You need a plan, ingredients, and a good structure to hold it all together. That’s where the **PLEASE strategy** comes in! Each letter helps us remember what to do next.”

❓❓ PLEASE Strategy Breakdown

Letter	Step	What It Means
P	Plan	Think about your topic and purpose.
L	List	Jot down your ideas—anything that comes to mind.
E	Evaluate	Choose the best ideas to use in your paragraph.
A	Activate Topic Sentence	Write a strong opening sentence that tells what your paragraph is about.
S	Supporting Sentences	Add details, examples, or explanations to support your topic.

E Ending Wrap it up with a final thought or conclusion.

Quick Practice Idea

Model using a silly or fun topic to practice with, like:

- Why pizza should be a school lunch every day
- The best superpower to have
- Why recess is secretly magical
- My pet’s secret life when I’m not home

Walk through the PLEASE steps with one of these topics.

PLEASE Strategy – Teacher Model Example

P – Plan

What will your paragraph be about?

My topic is: *Why pizza should be a school lunch every day*

L – List

Write down all the ideas you have about this topic.

- Everyone loves pizza
- It has lots of toppings to choose from
- It's easy to serve
- It makes lunch more exciting
- You can eat it hot or cold
- It's better than mystery meat
- It makes people happy
- It's a food you never get tired of

E – Evaluate

Starred ideas:

- It makes lunch more exciting 
- Everyone loves pizza 
- It's better than mystery meat 

A – Activate Topic Sentence

Write one strong sentence that tells what your paragraph is about.

Pizza should be a school lunch every day because it's delicious, popular, and way more fun than the usual cafeteria food.

S – Supporting Sentences

Add 2–3 sentences that give details, examples, or reasons.

1. Almost every student I know loves pizza, so it would make lunch something to look forward to.
2. It's way better than mystery meat or soggy vegetables.
3. Pizza comes in so many styles that it would never get boring.

E – Ending

Wrap it up with a final thought or conclusion.

If schools served pizza every day, lunchtime would be the best part of the day!