

Writing Paragraphs and Descriptive Writing

Creative Activities to Boost Skills

Written by

Barbara Gruber, M.A., Author, Seminar Presenter, Former Teacher

Sue Gruber, M.A., Teacher, Author, Seminar Presenter

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Helping Children Write Well

Bring out the writer in every child by drawing upon children's life experiences for classroom writing activities. Children write best about things they know and have actually experienced.

Before writing, engage the children in discussions. Invest time in sharing, modeling writing, and discussing ideas. The more children talk and think about what they will write, the more ideas they will have to draw upon during writing activities. Writing will be easier and children will write with depth and details.

Often children's writing lacks focus and rich details. For example:

Chloe All About Me!
I am eight years old. Amy is my friend. I have a five-year-old sister named Sara. I have a new baby brother named Seth. Max is my dog.

In the All About Me writing sample above, each sentence contains a different topic. There are five topics and dozens of subtopics embedded in each of the five topics. Subtopics are perfect for focused writing activities. Children can write with rich details when writing in depth on fewer topics.

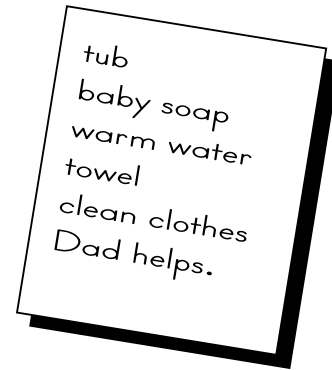
The broad topic of "baby brother" has subtopics such as

- getting ready for his arrival, buying clothes, getting his room ready
- how his name was chosen
- the first day he was at home with the family
- something cute or funny he does
- bath time for Seth
- putting Seth to bed

Helping Children Write Well

Instead of having children write superficially, break topics into subtopics and give children opportunities to do focused writing.

When children write about subtopics, have them jot lists of ideas that they may want to include in each paragraph. This list will be helpful as they write.

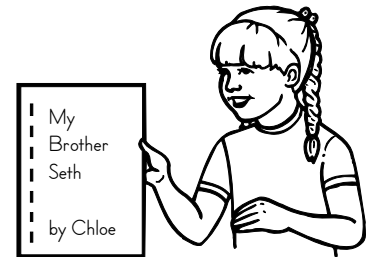


Then, have the children write about the subtopic.

Chloe Seth Gets a Bath

First we get out his clean clothes. Then we put warm water in his little bathtub. Mom bought it at a garage sale for \$3.00. It is yellow. Seth makes a funny face when we put him in the water. He has a tiny nose. He wrinkles it to make the funny face. Daddy and I start laughing and make faces back at him. We have special baby soap. Dad holds Seth while I wash him. We wrap him in a towel and dry him off. Then we put on his clean clothes and put him in his bed. I wish I could give him a bath all by myself, but he is too little.

Children can save their paragraphs about subtopics in their Finished Work folders. Then, after writing about all the subtopics, the paragraphs can be compiled into one larger piece containing five or six paragraphs.



Helping Children Write

In every classroom, there are a few children who have difficulty writing. They have trouble getting started writing and need support during writing. Gather those children at a table and sit with them as they write. Help them get started and answer their questions. Children at the table can help each other. Children who are tentative about writing will have more confidence knowing that classmates and the teacher are there to help.