

Writing about Natural Disasters

Introduction

The goal of this book is for children to learn to create a key word outline and retell the basic ideas of the text by using their key words. This book provides a routine format of outlining, vocabulary study, and thesaurus study, to develop competency, independence, and creativity in writing.

Acknowledgements

This writing program is based upon Andrew Pudewa's "Excellence in Writing" program.

Overview

1. INTRODUCTION: A sample has been given on page 4 and page 5. Use this sample as an introduction to this writing program. Write the Mexico City earthquake story on the board. Choose a student reader to read the story aloud. After the story has been read, tell the students they should choose three to four words from each numbered sentence that will help them remember the main idea of each sentence. Have the students write down three to four key words for each numbered sentence on notebook paper. Next divide the students into pairs and have them retell the story to their partner by using their key word outlines. Tell the students the goal is *not* to retell the story verbatim. The goal is *not* to memorize the story. The goal *is* to communicate the *main idea* of the story by using *their* key words. After the stories have been retold, have the class openly discuss which key words should most likely have been chosen, and write them on the board. Talk briefly about the importance of choosing *KEY* words. Read the Mexico City earthquake rewrite. Point out how the new chosen synonyms were used in the story. Encourage the students to write expressively and add creativity to the story while maintaining the facts from their key words.

2. STORIES FOR OUTLINING: Use the following format for weekly writing assignments:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a. student reader reads story aloud | e. thesaurus work independently |
| b. students read story silently | f. key word outline independently |
| c. rewrite title | g. retell story in pairs (optional) |
| d. vocabulary work independently | h. writing independently |

3. VOCABULARY: Have a dictionary readily available for every student. Be sure to inform students that some vocabulary words contain suffixes, and they should look up the root word. Have them carefully match the proper meaning of the word by reading the vocabulary word in context. When choosing a new synonym, have them add the original suffix to the new word.

4. **THESAURUS:** Have a thesaurus readily available for every student. Be sure to inform the students that each thesaurus word chosen will be used in place of the vocabulary words when rewriting from their key word outline.
5. **KEY WORD OUTLINE:** Have the students choose three to four key words from each section. They are to look at their key word outlines only, not the original story when writing.
6. **ROUGH DRAFT:** Every lesson should have a rewrite from the key word outline in rough draft form. Each rough draft should be double-spaced to allow plenty of room for editing. Rough drafts should be due two days after the writing assignments have been given.
7. **FINAL DRAFT:** after editing, the final draft should be written with single spacing, and carefully checked by the students before turning in. All three papers should be included when turning in the assignment. The final draft should be placed on top, with the rough draft and outline following.
8. **GRADING:** Follow the grading sheet provided and staple to each student's paper.

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Proposed Schedule

Week	Lesson	Page #	Weekday	Work Assigned
1	Mount Saint Helens		Monday By Friday	Read story aloud Begin worksheet, Complete #1-4
2	Mount Saint Helens		Monday Wednesday Friday	Begin rough draft Rough draft due Final draft due
3	Tangshan, China		Monday By Friday	Read story aloud Begin worksheet, Complete #1-4
4	Tangshan, China		Monday Wednesday Friday	Begin rough draft Rough draft due Final draft due
5	Mont Pelée		Monday By Friday	Read story aloud Begin worksheet, Complete #1-4
6	Mont Pelée		Monday Wednesday Friday	Begin rough draft Rough draft due Final draft due
7	Mount Huascarán		Monday By Friday	Read story aloud Begin worksheet, Complete #1-4
8	Mount Huascarán		Monday Wednesday Friday	Begin rough draft Rough draft due Final draft due
9	Tri-State Tornado		Monday By Friday	Read story aloud Begin worksheet, Complete #1-4
10	Tri-State Tornado		Monday Wednesday Friday	Begin rough draft Rough draft due Final draft due
11	Spitak, Armenia		Monday By Friday	Read story aloud Begin worksheet, Complete #1-4
12	Spitak, Armenia		Monday Wednesday Friday	Begin rough draft Rough draft due Final draft due
13	San Francisco, CA		Monday By Friday	Read story aloud Begin worksheet, Complete #1-4
14	San Francisco, CA		Monday Wednesday Friday	Begin rough draft Rough draft due Final draft due
15	Mount Vesuvius		Monday By Friday	Read story aloud Begin worksheet, Complete #1-4
16	Mount Vesuvius		Monday Wednesday Friday	Begin rough draft Rough draft due Final draft due
17	Cyclone 2B		Monday By Friday	Read story aloud Begin worksheet, Complete #1-4
18	Cyclone 2B		Monday Wednesday Friday	Begin rough draft Rough draft due Final draft due
19	Mount Pinatubo		Monday By Friday	Read story aloud Begin worksheet, Complete #1-4
20	Mount Pinatubo		Monday Wednesday Friday	Begin rough draft Rough draft due Final draft due
21	Heimaey, Iceland		Monday By Friday	Read story aloud Begin worksheet, Complete #1-4
22	Heimaey, Iceland		Monday Wednesday Friday	Begin rough draft Rough draft due Final draft due
23	Valdivia, Chile		Monday By Friday	Read story aloud Begin worksheet, Complete #1-4
24	Valdivia, Chile		Monday Wednesday Friday	Begin rough draft Rough draft due Final draft due
25	Armero, Columbia		Monday By Friday	Read story aloud Begin worksheet, Complete #1-4
26	Armero, Columbia		Monday Wednesday Friday	Begin rough draft Rough draft due Final draft due

Name: _____

Date: _____

Mount Saint Helens

May 18, 1980



May 18, 1980 eruption of Mt. St.
Helens USGS

(1) Two geologists flying in a small plane inside the crater of Mount Saint Helens saw the north flank of the mountain suddenly begin to ripple and churn. (2) Clouds of ash shot into the air as the pilot of the small plane tried frantically to escape the boiling clouds. (3) With only seconds to spare the plane slipped over the rim of the volcano to safety. (4) A small earthquake beneath the volcano caused the north slope of the mountain to collapse. (5) Below the collapsing north slope a gigantic landslide swept down the flanks of the volcano at over 180 mph. (6) David Johnson, a geologist monitoring the volcanoes six miles away, radioed to the world that the eruption had begun. (7) He was blown away by the pyroclastic flow that swept down the mountain and his body has never been recovered. (8) A large forest of old growth Douglas firs was destroyed in seconds as the blast knocked over the trees like dominoes. (9) Campers sleeping miles from the volcano died instantly as the superheated gases in the pyroclastic flows swept over their campsites. (10) Others drove down logging roads at speeds up to

80 mph to escape the superheated gases. (11) The debris from the landslide clogged the Columbia River trapping large ocean going ships in port until the river could be dredged. (12) Fifty-seven people died and 130,000 acres of trees were destroyed during the first few minutes of the eruption.

1. Read the story above and create a new title on the line below.

2. Vocabulary: In the story above, underline the vocabulary words listed below and define each one.

a. plane: _____

b. gigantic: _____

c. forest: _____

3. Thesaurus: Look up the vocabulary words in a thesaurus and write a new synonym to replace each vocabulary word in your final writing assignment.

Vocabulary Word	Synonym word
a. plane	a.
b. gigantic	b.
c. forest	c.

4. Outline the story by choosing three to four key words from each numbered section. Use your synonym words in place of each vocabulary word.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

(6) _____

(7) _____

(8) _____

(9) _____

(10) _____

(11) _____

(12) _____

5. Rewrite the story on a separate sheet of paper using you key-word outline. Use your new title for the story and underline your chosen synonym words. Always check your work in the following areas.

- Title
- Indentation
- Spelling
- Punctuation
- Neat cursive
- Name & date

Terms to Know

- ◆ **Crater** — The bowl shaped area at or near the top of a volcano through which volcanic material is ejected onto the surface of the Earth.
- ◆ **Eruption** — Ejection of solid, liquid and gaseous materials onto the surface of the Earth during volcanic activity. Volcanic eruptions can be mild events with molten rock overflowing a volcanic vent or extremely violent events destroying large areas of land.
- ◆ **Mount Saint Helens** — One of the active Cascade Range volcanoes located in the state of Washington.
- ◆ **Pyroclastic flow** — An avalanche of hot, dry rock fragments mixed with hot gases that can travel up to 100 mph away from a volcano.
- ◆ **Superheated hot gases** — Superheated hot gases in pyroclastic flows can reach temperatures of 950 degrees centigrade and can move across land and water at high speeds.