

Thankful Writing

Lesson and Craftivity

Free!

I'm So
Thankful!

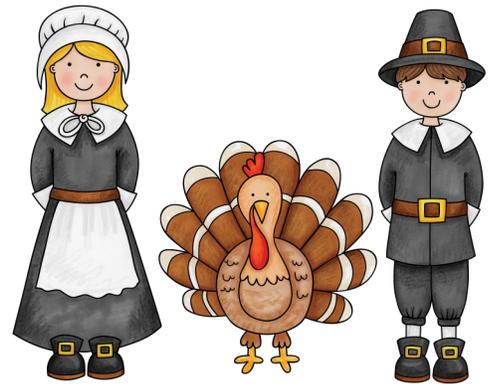
by Alex Brown
November 26, 2015



Laura Candler

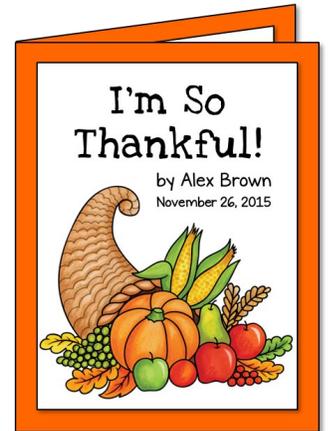
Thankful Writing Lesson and Craftivity

by Laura Candler



Thankful Writing is a step-by-step lesson that's both an easy introduction to expository writing and a craft project. Best of all, the final product is a gift that will be treasured for years! In this packet you'll find a suggested lesson plan and ready-to-use printables to make the process easy.

The suggested lesson below is a blend of whole group instruction, cooperative learning work, and independent writing. Read through the directions to make sure you are comfortable with the process, and modify it as needed for your students. If you plan to follow the lesson as described, start early in November to be sure you have enough time to complete the project. It will probably take longer than you think!



Step-by-Step Lesson

1. Discuss the Meaning of "Thankful"

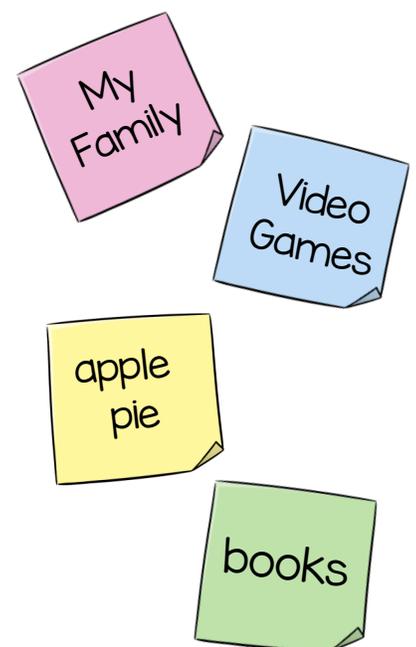
Discuss what it means to be thankful for something or someone, and share a few things or people you are thankful for. Ask students to think of other words that are similar in meaning and list them on the board for reference later (blessed, blessings, grateful, gratitude, appreciate, appreciation, etc.)

2. Brainstorm Topic Ideas

Give each team of three or four students a pad of small sticky notes or scrap paper. Have each person start by taking a few sheets and brainstorming things they are thankful for. They should write each idea on a separate sheet, using as many sheets as needed. As they write each idea, they announce it to the team and place it in the center. Allow five minutes for brainstorming ideas.

3. Sort Ideas into Categories

Tell the class that they are going to be writing an essay about what they are thankful for. (Introduce the term "essay" if they are not familiar with the word.) Say that in order to write about the topic, they need to organize all the ideas that were brainstormed so that they can write in an organized way. Ask students to look at the ideas in the middle of the team and try to group them into categories. After students have spent a few minutes doing this, ask for volunteers to share their team's categories. They might mention family, friends, school, recreation, food, pets, etc.



4. Complete Planning Graphic Organizers

Now explain that everyone needs to choose three categories that they want to write about in their own personal essays. Use this 3-column graphic organizer or have them each fold a sheet of paper in thirds. Ask them to write the name of each category at the top of one column. Under each heading, they should list details they want to include in their paragraph on that topic.

5. Introduce Expository Essay Format

Although students are writing about a personal topic, they will be organizing their compositions as basic 3-part expository essays. If they have not been taught this format, you'll need to introduce it to them before they begin writing. Display the Expository Essay Format handout as you explain how to organize the essay into three parts, the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. Make sure they notice that the body is the longest section and includes the most detail. (The Introduction and Conclusion are small like your head and feet; the Body is long like the rest of your body!)

6. Explain the Thanksgiving Writing Template

The writing template on page 6 is designed to be a framework to show students how to organize their writing, and it's not meant to be a fill-in-the-blank activity. Upper elementary students do a far better job with their essays if they use the template as a guide but don't actually write on it. However, children with special needs or young children may need to write on the template and fill in the blanks.

7. Write Rough Drafts of Essays

Ask students to take out a few sheets of lined paper, and guide them through the process of writing each part of the essay. After they write each paragraph, check to be sure they are following directions.

8. Revise and Edit Essays

Display the Thanksgiving Writing Checklist and talk your students through the process of revising and editing their rough drafts. Remind them to proofread carefully to check for spelling and grammatical errors.

9. Write Final Drafts

Provide class time for students to copy their final essays onto plain paper or one of the decorated papers in this pack. Some students may want to type their essays, but since the final product will be a gift, you may want to encourage them to copy their papers over by hand.

10. Create Thanksgiving Folders

Give each student a 12" x 18" piece of construction paper to fold in half. Glue the final copies inside the folders. Ask students to decorate the outsides of their folders and add a title, their name, and the date. Or print a copy of the cover design on page 10 for each student to color. Laminate folders if possible.

11. Present Essays to Families

Encourage students to present their folders to their families on Thanksgiving Day. Their families will be proud of their hard work and thoughtfulness!

I'm Thankful For . . .

Write the name of each topic you plan to write about at the top of one column. Then under each heading, list details you want to include in your paragraph on that topic.

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Expository Essay Format

Introduction

- Hooks the reader and captures his or her attention
- Contains the topic sentence of the essay
- Briefly states 3 or more main ideas which will be explained in body of paper

Body

- Longest section of the essay
- Contains 3 or more fully developed paragraphs (one paragraph to support each main idea stated in the introduction)
- Each paragraph contains a topic sentence and at least 4 to 5 supporting detail sentences
- Transition words and phrases help move reader from one idea to the next (Ex: also, in addition, another reason, etc.)

Conclusion

- Brings closure to the essay

• Be neat
• Use the lines

I'm So Thankful!

Thanksgiving reminds me of all the things I'm thankful for. I appreciate _____ and _____.

I'm especially thankful for _____ because _____.

I also appreciate _____ because _____.

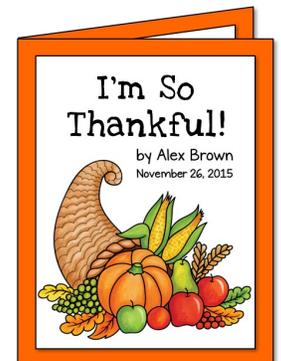
Finally, I'm grateful for _____ because _____.

Thankful Essay Checklist

Now that you finished your rough draft, read through your essay and ask yourself these questions. Think about your answers as you revise your paper to make it even better!

- Do you have an introductory paragraph, or does your essay begin with the first topic?
- Look at your topic sentences and details. Are you thankful for the kinds of things that are going to make people feel appreciated or are you just thankful for having lots of stuff?
- Does every paragraph in the body of the paper have a topic sentence and at least 4 fully-developed detail sentences?
- Are your sentences interesting, or do they all sound just about the same? (Example: "Don't say "the first reason is, my second reason is" over and over. Change your wording to make it more interesting.)
- Look at your use of the word "thankful." Do you repeat it over and over, or have you used a variety of synonyms such as "grateful" and "appreciate"?
- Have you _____
- Have you _____
- Do you _____

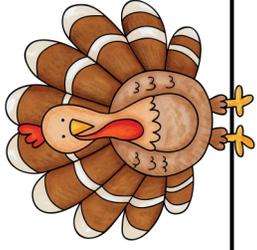
Lined paper for final drafts with a turkey illustration in the top right corner.





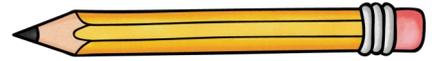
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- Transition words and phrases help move reader from one idea to the next (Ex: also, in addition, another reason, etc.)

Conclusion



- Brings closure to the essay
- Briefly restates 3 the main ideas (without repeating the exact words in the introduction)
- May end with strong statement or an appeal to the emotions

I'm So Thankful!

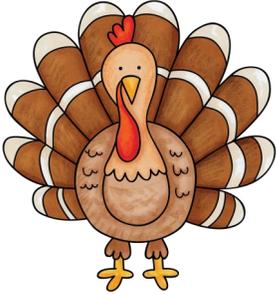
Thanksgiving reminds me of all the things I'm thankful for.
I appreciate _____, _____, and
_____.

I'm especially thankful for _____ because

I also appreciate _____ because _____

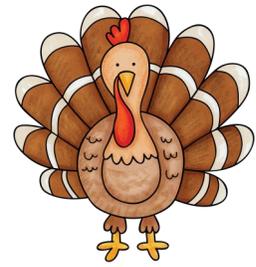
Finally, I'm grateful for _____ because _____

As I enjoy this holiday season, I realize that I have many
reasons to be thankful. _____,
and _____ are very important to me.



A series of horizontal lines for writing, consisting of 20 lines in total. The first three lines are positioned to the left of the turkey illustration, and the remaining 17 lines extend across the width of the page.

Thankful Essay Checklist



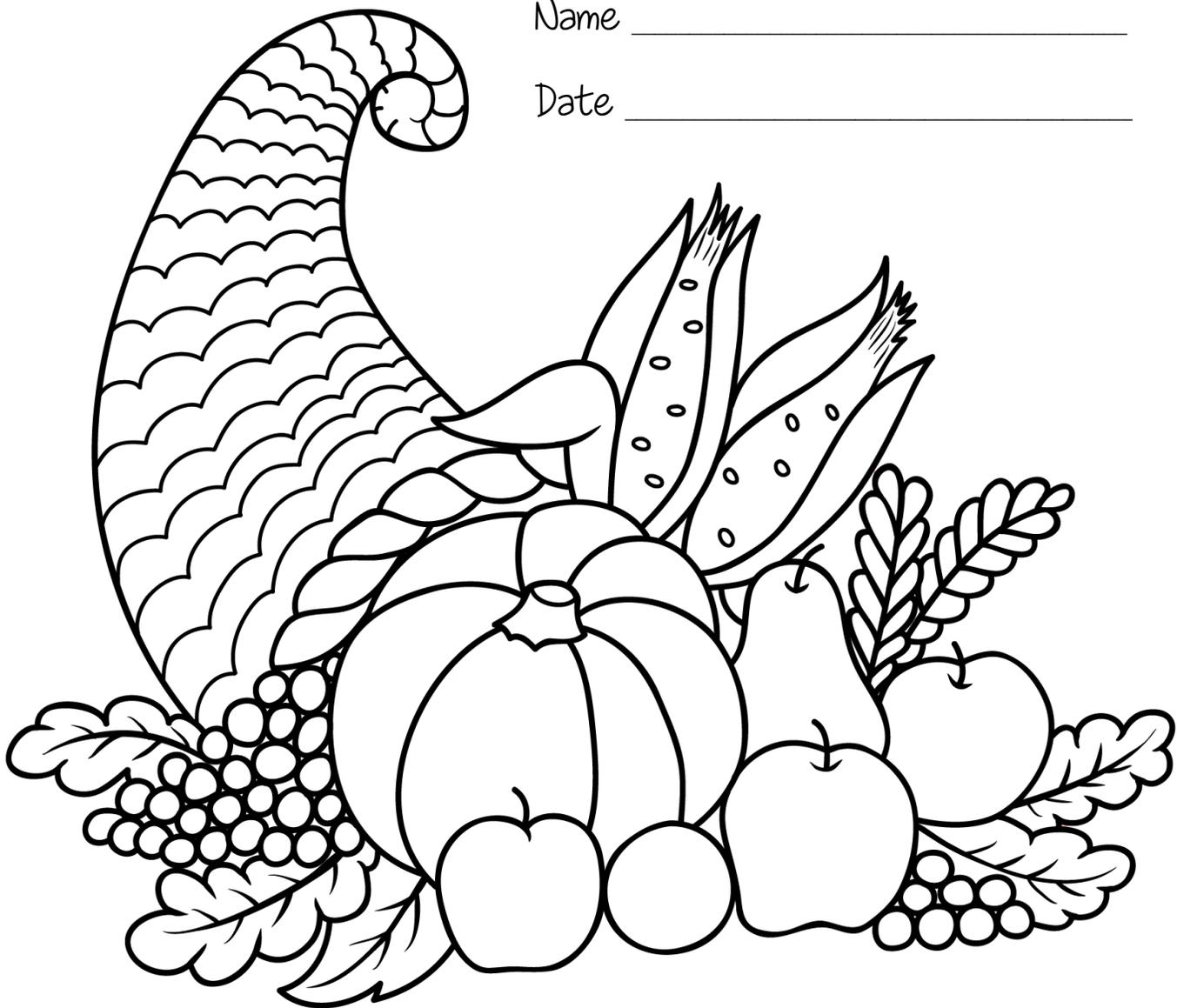
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- Are your sentences interesting, or do they all sound just about the same? (Example - Don't say "My first reason is, my second reason is" over and over. Change your wording to make it more interesting)
- Look at your use of the word "thankful." Do you repeat it over and over, or have you used a variety of synonyms such as "grateful" and "appreciate"?
- Have you corrected your spelling errors?
- Have you written in complete sentences, or does your essay contain run-on sentences and fragments?
- Do you have an interesting conclusion, or does your paper just end abruptly?

I'm So Thankful!

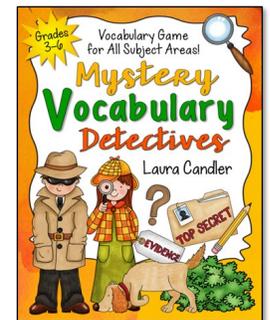
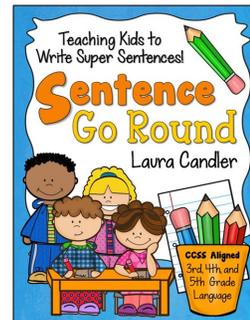
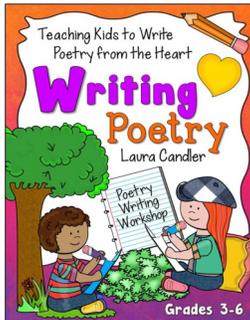
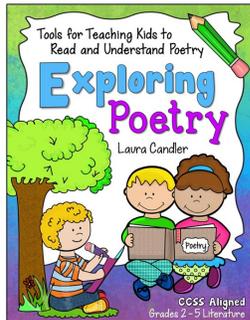
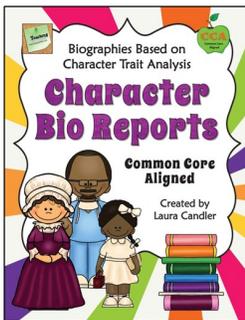
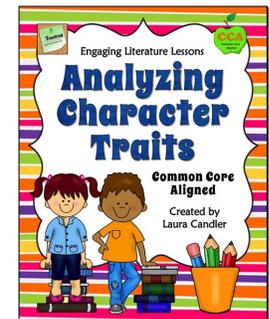
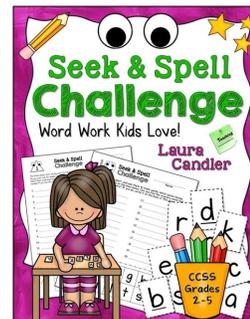
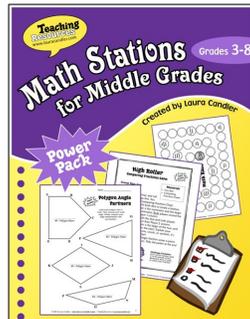
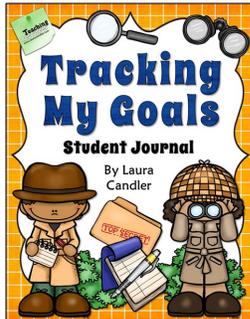
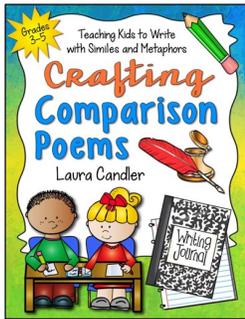
Name _____

Date _____



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