

Establishing a Summer Bucket List that transitions to Letter Writing

Title: Establishing a Summer Bucket List that transitions to Letter Writing

Concept: 6 Traits- Organization

Grade Level: First or Second Grade

Common Core Standard: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.1.1

General Goal: Students will generate an idea to accomplish over the summer. Students will create a proposal inviting a friend to join them as they complete their summer goal.

Specific Objectives:

Students will explore and express their ideas and opinions.

Students will recognize that writing is an important tool for communicating.

Students will organize their thoughts and then express them through writing.

Students will be able to determine realistic and nonrealistic goals.

Prerequisite learning: This lesson assumes that students have been writing independently and have used a keyboard for writing (computer not required). Students may need to understand the difference between realistic and nonrealistic summer goals they would be able to accomplish.

Materials needed: *Click, Clack, Moo Cows That Type* by Doreen Cronin. Students will need paper, pencil, crayons, scissors, and glue. Beforehand make buckets or if you have time students may make their own buckets (students will need scissors and glue to make buckets). Brainstorming activity sheet and premade writing paper with the letter template would benefit student writing. Students may need access to computers for typing.

Distribution and collection strategy: Teacher will set up laptops prior to activity and put laptops away after activity. Student supplies are located in their “work bags,” which are located in their desk.

Instruction and Activities: This would be an excellent end of the year activity.

First Activity:

Anticipatory Set – 5 minutes: Begin with a discussion about summer interest. Teacher presents a few favorite summer events through pictures or discussion, and explains why. Students discuss with a partner some of their favorite

summer activities and why. Ask for volunteers to share an event their partner talked about. Verbally address excellent examples students share with the class and thank students for volunteering. For example, “Thank you for sharing. I enjoyed hearing that Jayda’s favorite summer experience was traveling to Arkansas to spend time with her family. I learned something new about Jayda.”

Step-by-Step Procedure – 15 – 20 minutes: Explain to students that they are going to create a list of favorite activities to complete this coming summer. Before making the list, talk about the significance of writing a list. Questions the teacher can use when talking about the effects of writing a list: Where have you seen a list and what was it for? When might you make a list or when have you made a list?

Teacher should share their summer bucket list and/or student samples. This will give students an example of a realistic list. Some students may want to make a nonrealistic list of events. They will need to make a realistic list first and then they may make a nonrealistic list in their free time.

Explain to students that their goal is to try to complete this list before the summer ends. Give students time to write down their ideas on a piece of paper. If students are struggling, teacher may want to brainstorm possible activities for student’s summer bucket list and record it on the board.

Each student will receive a premade paper bucket with a paper shovel attached. They will write their name on the shovel and neatly record their top six summer bucket activities. Number of goals may be adjusted depending on the needs of the student. Students may also type their ideas during the designated computer time and glue it to their bucket. If students finish early they may create a nonrealistic summer list.

When students are finished they may present their ideas to the class or small group. They will need to explain why they choose these ideas. Hanging up the finished buckets would be a great way for students to read about their peers and possibly start conversations amongst students.

Student Assessment/Reflections – Evaluation during the first and second activity: Having students share what their peer said about their goals lets you check for student understanding and if they are able to articulate what they heard.

Observe as students write their summer goals. Who is struggling with ideas? Where is guidance needed? Ask the student what they like to do over the summer to activate ideas. Ask to share interesting ideas that students have written. This may help struggling writers. Watch out for nonrealistic summer goals, as some students this age may struggle with whether they can actually accomplish that goal over the summer.

During small group participation, walk around and listen to students interacting. As a teacher, it is good to listen to students at this moment and only partake in the conversation if needed. Check to see if groups are explaining why they choose that activity. This will help with the following activity.

Second Activity:

Anticipatory Set – 2 minutes: Have students use their summer bucket list to complete the next activity. Explain to students that they will write a letter inviting someone to join them as they accomplish at least one summer goal. First have students brainstorm individuals that would be willing to partake in different goals. As students think about who they will write to, you may continue with the lesson.

Step-by-Step Procedures – 20-30 minutes: Show the class your bucket list as you explain to the class possible goals you will complete and who you would invite to help you accomplish that goal. Record on the board these possible goals, who you will ask, and why will ask that person. Speak your thoughts out loud for students to hear what you are thinking. Then continue explaining why you are asking this person and how you will ask them to join. Students will eventually need to express their opinion in their letter, explaining to their recipient why the goal they selected is a good goal for the summer.

Before handing out the brainstorming sheet for students to record their ideas, explain to the class that once they finish their sheet you will partner them up to discuss the possibilities they recorded. Students will take turns explaining to their partner their summer goals, and who they will be writing their letter to. Encourage the partner to give feedback determining which goal they think is a good idea, or suggest a different way and explain their reasoning so that it is clear. Remind students that we are here to encourage and help each other grow into strong writers. As an example, ask students for their feedback about your topic and explanations. Be thankful and except student's suggestions. Explain to the class that each writer has the final choice of how they want to write their letter. This activity is meant to help us become better writers.

Third Activity:

Anticipatory Set – 5 minutes: Have students use their brainstorming sheet to complete the next activity. Ask students if they have every written a letter or received a letter. Encourage students to share information they know about letter writing. Explain to students that they will write a letter inviting someone to join them as they accomplish at least one summer goal.

Step-by-Step Procedures- 30 minutes: Invite students to the reading rug to listen to *Click, Clack, Moo Cows That Type* by Doreen Cronin. Address the letters in the story and why they were written. What is the purpose of the letter? Who is the letter for and who wrote the letter? Look at the parts of the letter; such as the introduction, the body, and the ending of the letter. Ask students what part of the letter catches their attention and why. If students struggle identifying the part of the letter that catches their attention, you might want to set an example first explaining what part of the letter that caught your attention. After the story, explain to students that they need to keep in mind the parts of a letter and how they will catch the reader's attention.

As students repeat one thing they learned about writing a letter, they may go back to their seat. Model for students how to write a letter. Use the friendly letter template to project overhead. Think out loud about who you will write your letter to and what you will invite them to do with you over the summer. Write some possible starter sentences that may grab the attention of the person receiving the letter. Let your student's help you decide which sentence would be the best.

Explain to students that it is now their turn to write a letter inviting someone to join you in the accomplishment of at least one summer goal. As students take out their pencil, hand out a premade letter template. While students are writing, walk around and visit with students. Address positive attributes of the individuals writing and encourage them where they could improve. It is a beneficial for students to read their letters out loud to themselves or to others as they continue to perfect their writing.

As students finish, explain to the class that they may rewrite their letters on a new sheet of paper or type it on the computer before they mail it. It is important that the receiver is able to read their writing. Depending on time or during another lesson, have students address their envelopes to be mailed. If students do not have enough time, you may need another day to finish the writing activity.

Student assessments/ Reflections – Assess students during story time as they answer questions and comment about the story. Continue to assess students as they help you structure your letter. While students are writing their letters, make sure you are interacting with students and noting how they grab the attention of the reader. Students should be writing their letters correctly using the guidelines that were discussed during class time.

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