

Lesson Plan #3 – Writing

Title: **TORNADO BRAINSTORMING!** **A writing activity for a 5-paragraph essay**

Objective:

In this lesson, students will

1. gain awareness of writing as a process;
2. select a broad topic and then narrow the focus;
3. write a thesis statement;
4. effectively develop and support the thesis statement;
5. organize and conclude the essay

Session time: 50-60 minutes (2 or more sessions may be needed)

Materials and Resources:

- flip chart, markers
- paper, pens, pencils

Methods: Guided discussion, cooperative learning, interactive participation

Procedure

- Ask students to think about a tornado.
- Draw a tornado on the flip chart.
- Point out that the tornado or funnel cloud is broad at the top and then gets progressively narrower – just like a broad topic for an essay that must be narrowed for focus and organization.
- Point out also that a tornado's winds are circular--as our writing process should also be circular, coming back again and again to our topic, and not going off somewhere else with information or examples that are not relevant to the topic.
- Model this writing process with a broad, general subject such as WEATHER

Activity

Using a flip chart and markers, take students through the writing process for each paragraph, using the following as a guide:

Paragraph 1: THESIS STATEMENT

What is it about the topic that you want to say?

Example: *Spring in Southern Illinois brings daffodils and tulips, but it also brings stormy weather. In March and April, especially, spring showers develop into more severe weather that often brings tornadoes.*

Paragraph 2: SUPPORT

How are you going to back up what you say in terms of WHERE or WHEN?

Example: *Most tornado activity occurs along a path that moves from west to east across the country. The southern part of Illinois is right in the middle of this path. It is called "Tornado Alley." It is not unusual for dozens of storms to move across this area in the early spring.*

Paragraph 3: SUPPORT

How are you going to back up what you say in terms of HOW or WHY?

Example: *Sometimes during a thunderstorm, tornadoes will develop but stay high in the sky and not touch the ground. Other times, tornadoes will develop and travel miles across the ground, causing major damage to homes and crops. Most often, tornado-like weather goes hand in hand with rain, wind and hail. Sometimes, however, tornadoes develop in a clear sky during sunny, warm conditions.*

Paragraph 4: SUPPORT

How will you back up what you say in terms of EXAMPLES OR EXPERIENCES?

Example: *For example, in 1982, Marion was hit by an F5 tornado that developed out of a blue, sunny sky but stayed on the ground for over 30 minutes. It had not been raining or windy before the funnel cloud formed, so it took everyone by surprise. Some people did not know that they needed to get to a safe place. Ten people were killed.*

Paragraph 5: CONCLUSION

Without introducing new information, how will you tie together what you have previously stated?

Example: *People who live in southern Illinois must learn to watch the weather closely in the early spring. Tornadoes can form at any time during that time of the year and can cause major damage. It is important to know where you can take shelter in the event of a tornado.*

Note: This lesson is included in the workshop, *The GED Essay: Teaching to the Test*, in the *SIPDC Catalog of Professional Development Opportunities*.