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Power Writing

Traditional Power Writing is based on a numerical approach to the structure of writing. It replaces the ambiguity and abstraction of writing terminology with a numbered structure that students can understand more easily. This numerical structure provides the basis for all forms of writing: expository, persuasive, narrative and descriptive. Power Writing solves the writer's frequent problem of how to say it and in what order.

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Equally important to Power Writing is the sequential teaching process that builds in steps upon the mastery of each concept. Students are taught how to organize their thoughts before their writing begins. Structured writing follows organized thinking. These concepts are taught with age-appropriate exercises to assure that students possess the skills to expand complexity in their thinking and writing.

Power Writing Plus®, as developed by Shirley Poulton, blends the other traits of effective writing into the Power Writing approach. This has created an integrated system for teaching students to write in a manner that demonstrates rich word choice, sentence fluency, ideas and content, organizational structure, voice, and conventions.

Below is an introduction to the numerical structure of Power Writing.

Power 1	focus, main idea, topic sentence, or thesis statement
Power 2	major supporting ideas ("talk" about the Power 1)
Power 3	details, elaboration, examples ("talk" about the Power 2s)
Power Zeros	voice or extra information

Once the structure is mastered, all writers can elaborate, vary, and create competent writing. Stronger writers will bend and rearrange the format to allow their skills and creativity to blossom. Weaker writers will compose a well-thought-out, well-organized piece of writing that includes sentence variation, elevated word choice, and voice. No longer will you have students who have quantity but no quality, and students who have neither quantity nor quality. All students will become proficient in each type of writing.

Below is an example of a simple paragraph written with a focus on basic structure. The identifying elements of the paragraph are color coded for emphasis. Using the number sequence, the paragraph below is described as a Power 1221:

(P1) **Of all the snacks that I crave after school, two remain my favorites.** (P2) **I love the rich taste of a chocolate chip cookie.** (P2) **I also confess that I can't resist bags, bowls, and boxes of crispy, salty chips.** (P1 closing) **3:30! I can't wait to pig out on my favorite snacks, chocolate chip cookies and potato chips.**

Notice the lack of sentences providing supporting detail in the above paragraph. Once the students have established the basic structure, they can begin their second draft. The number sequence for the paragraphs below is a Power 1233/231, with two Power Zeros:

(P1) **Of all the snacks that I crave after school, two remains my favorites.** (P2) **I love the rich taste of a chocolate chip cookie.** (P Zero) **Yum, yum!** (P3) **The sugary taste dancing across my taste buds is the perfect ending to a long school day.** (P3) **If I am lucky enough to have a Mrs. Field's chip, I am even more pleased.**

(P2) **I also confess that I can't resist bags, bowls, and boxes of crispy, salty chips.** (P3) **These crunchy treats become addictive if you're not careful.** (P Zero) **Can you walk by a bowl of chips and resist snagging a handful?** (P1 closing) **3:30! I can't wait to pig out on my favorite snacks, chocolate chip cookies and potato chips.**

The preceding paragraph demonstrates basic Power Writing structure. Power Writing Plus® infuses the organizational strategies of Power Writing with the six traits of effective writing. The result? Student writing shouts and whispers with voice, creativity and organization.

The information listed above was copied and adapted with permission from:

Poulton, Shirley. Power Writing Plus: Teach the Traits of Effective Writing. Grand Haven, MI: C & C Graphics Publishing, 2004.

For more information on Power Writing, visit:

- [Resource links for Power Writing](#)