

ELA units · Grades 2 and 3 Follow it exactly Could somebody else do this from what you have written?

Grades 2-3

5 days · 4 books · 211 min in full · 131 min short ·

The idea

A procedure is writing that has to work. These five days take instructions out of four chapter books - a first-aid procedure described in a story, a way of wrapping a tree, three household repairs, a machine and a shift code - and test them by asking whether somebody else could follow the steps accurately. This unit is unusually practical, and its culminating product is a performance rather than a claim. The class keeps asking the same question: does the procedure contain enough information, in the right order, for another person to carry it out?

The quill-removal and tree-wrapping passages are real-world procedures described in the books. They are used here as texts to analyze, not as first-aid or animal-care guidance. The repairs, contraption and code then make the same reading demand in increasingly controlled forms: the steps have to be complete, ordered and checkable.

The arc

1. A procedure can name roles, materials and an order
2. A rule can prevent a specific way of failing
3. Following a procedure accurately is different from explaining why its steps work
4. A machine's order cannot be varied
5. A rule can be stated so that its reason is checkable

Where this fits

When to run it. Grades 2-3, whenever procedural reading and writing fit naturally into the year.

What it assumes. Children can read a numbered list and act on it.

What it builds. Reading a procedure precisely; identifying the failure a rule guards against; following an order that cannot be varied; writing instructions somebody else can use.

What it leads to. Any later work on technical and expository writing.

The 5 days

DAY 1

Following Instructions: Forty Quills Set out how the family removes the quills, who does what, and the reason behind each instruction.

Why here. First: a real-world procedure described in the book, with roles, materials and reasons.

Everything the unit is about is present on day 1.

From Soapstone Porcupine by Jeff Pinkney · A real-world procedure described in the text, with roles, materials and reasons 43 min full · 22 min short · Makes: A jobs-and-equipment table, plus a numbered instruction card

DAY 2

Following Instructions: Four Rules for Wrapping a Tree Write out Marlene's method for protecting a tree with chicken wire, with the reason for every step.

Why here. Second, and the sharpest - a short procedure in which every rule answers a way of failing.

The class states the failure behind each rule.

From Badir and the Beaver by Shannon Stewart · A short procedure in which every rule answers a way

of failing 35 min full · 22 min short · Makes: A four-step instruction card, each step with its reason

DAY 3

Following a Procedure: Three Things Jelly Mends Write out Jelly's three repairs step by step, and explain the reason for each step.

Why here. Third: three household repairs, and the one part of that book needing no story at all. The class now separates following the steps from explaining why the steps work.

From Princess Angelica, Part-Time Lion Trainer by Monique Polak · The one set of skills in this book that needs no story at all 43 min full · 22 min short · Makes: Three numbered procedures, with the reasons beside the steps

DAY 4

Sequence: How the Stupendous Contraption Works Follow the machine from the golf ball to the weeds, naming each link, and say where it needs a push.

Why here. Fourth. A machine whose order cannot be varied - a golf ball, disc cases, a race car and a toilet seat. Following the sequence accurately is the whole test.

From Ben the Inventor by Robin Stevenson · A golf ball, a row of disc cases, a race car and a toilet seat 45 min full · 31 min short · Makes: A chain diagram with one box per link, and a star where it needs help

DAY 5

How the Code Works, and Why the Number Is Two Build the boys' shift code, check the two coded examples the book gives, and explain why Jack chooses the number he does.

Why here. Last: two alphabets, a shift of two, and two worked examples. A procedure the class can execute and then check arithmetically, which is the tightest test in the unit.

From Ben the Inventor by Robin Stevenson · Two alphabets, a shift of two, and two worked examples 45 min full · 34 min short · Makes: A working decoder, and both of the book's examples checked Words to use Word How it is used procedure Used from day 1 for an ordered set of steps that leads to a result. A procedure may also name materials or roles when they matter. role

Day 1. Who does what, as distinct from what is done.

in order

Day 4, where varying the order breaks the machine.

What to prepare Checkpoint 1 page, one per child Checkpoint 2 page, one per child Materials for one teacher-approved harmless procedure the class writes itself Checkpoints After day 2 · What is each rule for The four rules for wrapping a tree. For each, the child says what would go wrong without it. Without a book. Four rules on a page and no book. Look for. A distinct failure for each rule. Repeating one failure means the rules are being read as a list. Say to the child. What would go wrong if you skipped each rule? After day 5 · Encode and decode A short word to encode with the plus-two rule, and a coded word to decode. The child does both and states the rule in one sentence.

Without a book. A blank page and no book. Look for. Both directions correct and the rule stated. One direction is common; both plus the rule is secure. Say to the child. Encode this word. Decode this one. Now write the rule. The task at the end Somebody else's hands Each pair writes a procedure for something harmless and teacher-approved that can be done in the room, with any needed roles and materials, a workable order, and a reason for any rule or constraint whose purpose matters. Another pair performs it from the text alone, with no questions allowed. The writing pair may not speak until it is finished. Stop the performance if any direction becomes unsafe or unclear enough to create a risk. The writing pair then records what worked, where the performing pair hesitated or went wrong, and what wording would make the procedure more usable. Collect. The written procedure and the record of what happened when another

pair followed it. Time. One session of about 45 minutes.

Teacher key

Checkpoint 1: the wrapping rules guard against the wrap being too tight, too low, too loose and left on too long. Any four distinct failures matching the rules are correct. Checkpoint 2: the rule is that each letter moves two places forward to encode and two places back to decode. Task: success on the first attempt is evidence that the procedure was usable. A hesitation, wrong turn or failed step identifies a place to revise.

Judge the writing by whether another pair could act from it accurately and safely, not by whether failure occurred. What a strong answer looks like Strand What to see Roles Names who does what when more than one role is needed.

Strand What to see Order Puts the steps in an order that works. Reasons Explains what a rule or constraint prevents when its purpose matters. Usability Somebody else can follow it without asking. Keeping the daily evidence Keep each child's or pair's procedure work from day 1 and the final procedure from the culminating task. Day 1 shows whether the class can extract roles, materials and ordered steps from a text. The final task shows whether they can write a procedure that another pair can actually use. For the final task, keep the performance record with the writing. That record - what worked, where somebody hesitated, and where revision was needed - is the strongest evidence of usability. What to pass on Pairs whose procedure could not be followed should keep it and revise it rather than write a new one; the revision is where the learning is.

Day 1 describes removing porcupine quills from a dog. It is a real-world

procedure described in the book, but it is being studied here only as procedural writing. It is not classroom first-aid guidance and must not be attempted. The books this unit uses Ben the Inventor by Robin Stevenson · 2 lessons Soapstone Porcupine by Jeff Pinkney · 1 lesson Badir and the Beaver by Shannon Stewart · 1 lesson Princess Angelica,