

Lesson #1: Adding Depth



Objective 1/TEKS 4.19 C,D: The student will, within a given context, produce an effective composition for a specific purpose.

1. **Objective:** Students will learn to revise compositions by adding and elaborating for coherence, progression, and logical support of ideas.
2. **Activity:**
 - a) **Rationale:** The learner will be presented with a strategy to add depth to ideas in written compositions.
 - b) **Preparation:** *Where's Mom?* simplified version Student Book page 13, Directed Practice page 14, *Where's Mom?* complete version Student Book pages 15-17, Student Practice page 18, Assessment page 19 , Chart Paper/Markers
 - c) **Input: Say:** "As I read over your compositions yesterday, I found myself wanting to know more about your ideas. I had many questions left unanswered. When learning to write, many young authors sometimes list their ideas and events without giving enough information to their readers. Today I thought I would share a strategy with you that many published authors use to help them develop their ideas."
 - d) **Directed Practice:**



- Read the simplified version of *Where's Mom?* by E. Spicer (**Student Book page 13, Teacher Book page 6**). Have the students be on the lookout for any ideas the author lists without giving enough detail or depth to fully understand what she meant. Model thinking aloud as you read the story. Make comments about any questions you have or confusion you encounter.

For instance,

Say: "Mrs. Smith's kids were acting up again.' **Ask:** I wonder what the kids were doing to act up? I know I can think of many things the kids could have been doing, but I wonder what the author meant by acting up?"

Say: "I noticed that the story mentioned the kids aunt meant business. However, the author doesn't give any detail for me to understand what she intended by saying she meant business.

Ask: Was the aunt serious or did that mean she took the kids to where she worked? I wonder what the author had in mind when she said Aunt Karen meant business?"

- Afterwards, allow students to volunteer any questions they generated from the simplified version of the text where they felt the author left out important information.

List the questions they generated on chart tablet. Some of the questions might look like the following:

- What did Mrs. Smith's kids do to act up?
 - Why did the kids do as they were told when their aunt was with them?
 - What did the kids have to do to clean?
 - What happened when they went to their neighbor's house?
 - What did the kids think happened to their mother?
 - Why did the author write about Mrs. Smith calling her sister to thank her for the plan? What plan was the author talking about?
- Next, read the complete version of the story (**Student Book pages 15-17**). Afterwards, check off each question listed on the chart where the author added more information to provide an answer. If questions remain unanswered, discuss how the author could have added more details to the story using the remaining questions.

- This is a good time to address what information is important to the story. For example, if students generated the following question,

"How long was their mother missing?"

The teacher should ask the class if this lack of information keeps them from understanding the story. **Ask:** Is this information extraneous to the story? Does it help the story progress? If not, do not include it in the story.

- Finally, discuss the importance of adding depth to compositions so that the reader can better understand what the author is trying to describe. Also, have students reflect on the simplified version and the complete version of *Where's Mom?* **Ask:** Which version do you feel is more interesting? Which composition allows the reader to see what is happening according to the author? (complete version) Have students justify their answers with examples from the composition.

e) **Student Practice:**



- Follow up this activity by having students work with a partner to add information to the following idea. Write the following sentence on the board.

My mom is helpful.

Ask students questions that help to generate details about the above sentence and have them write their ideas to create a paragraph. Ask students questions such as the following (write these questions and others that pertain on chart paper):

- What does your mom say to show you she is helpful? ("I'll help you with your writing homework as soon as I put your brother to bed.")
- How does she make you feel? (not afraid to try something new, it's okay to ask for help, etc.)

- How does your mom act to show she is helpful? (sits on the couch with me as I am reading, every now and then she will tell me a word I do not know how to read, gives me hugs when I am having a bad day and helps me think about happy things)
 - What does she look like? (smiles, has caring eyes, etc.)
- As students are discussing and developing their paragraphs, walk around and conference with partner groups. Ask students the above questions to help keep them focused. In addition, ask them to read their ideas. Be sure students are not listing ideas, but making the sentences flow together to make sense and build upon one another. For instance;

My mom is helpful. She smiles a lot. She makes me feel good about school. She says, "Good job" a lot. She listens to me. (list of ideas)

My mom is helpful. Every morning she wakes me up with a big smile. If I look like I am in a bad mood, she will give me a hug and say, "I am so glad you are my daughter. Is there something bothering you?" I always feel like I can talk to her about any problem. Every night my mom sits down with me on the couch to help me with my homework. Sometimes she will say, "You only have a few more math problems. You can do it." I feel like I can do anything with her help. (The sentences flow together to make sense and build upon one another.)

- If students are just listing ideas, suggest they choose one idea about their mom and stick with it. You may ask, "What is it that she does to make you feel good about school? How does that make you feel inside? What does that make you want to say to her? Do your other brothers and sisters feel the same way?"
- Finally, have each partner group read their paragraph aloud to the class. Make comments that help them understand what they did well (*You both did well taking one idea about your mom and explaining all about it, it didn't feel like you were reading a list*), instead of blanket compliments (*Good job!*).

3. **Assessment:**

- Instruct students to turn to **page 19 in their student book**. Have them add information to the ideas listed on the page to create more depth of thought. Remind students not to list ideas, but make the sentences flow together to make sense and build upon one another.
- **Extension:** Once students have had the opportunity to work with adding depth to ideas, have them take out their writing drafts. Ask students to read through their previous compositions and find an idea that they did not develop well enough for the reader. This may be difficult for students to do at first. If so, have them read a draft to a response group and have their peers help them identify where they need to add more information to an underdeveloped idea.

Additionally, it might be more helpful to students for the teacher to highlight one idea (one sentence) that is underdeveloped in each student's composition. This can be done prior to the lesson. Then have students add information to help develop that idea.

Teacher's copy

Simplified Version of
Where's Mom?

By E. Spicer

The Smith children were acting up again. The next morning Mrs. Smith did not come to breakfast. Their Aunt Karen stood in front of them. "I am going to baby-sit the both of you while your mom is away," their aunt announced. The children did as they were told. They could see that their Aunt Karen meant business. The kids at the Smith house had never cleaned so much.

Days went by and there was no sign of their mother. "Maybe we should try to find her," they said. They even went to their neighbor's house. The children thought up many things that may have happened to their mother.

Their mom had finally returned. Mrs. Smith noticed the next morning that both her children were helpful and polite. Later that night Mrs. Smith called her sister to thank her for the great plan.

Teacher's copy



Directed Practice

Simplified Version of *Where's Mom?*

By E. Spicer

Directions: Using the simplified version of *Where's Mom?*, write two to three questions you would ask the author of this story to receive more details about the sentences you underlined on the previous page.

Sample Question to the Author: What were the children doing to act up?

Answers will vary

Question to the Author:

**Why did the children do as they were told when their aunt was
with them?**

Question to the Author:

What did the children have to clean?

Question to the Author:

What did the children think happened to their mom?

Teacher's copy

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The Smith children were acting up again. The oldest child, Kaleel, came running down the hall steaming mad at his sister Alleia. "You're never going to find your shoes until you say you're sorry for breaking my X-Box." Kaleel yelled. Alleia was still in her room trying to find her favorite pair of shoes under all the piles of dirty clothes and heaps of mistreated toys.

For days Mrs. Smith tried to get her two children to clean their rooms and stop yelling at each other. "Now kids that's quite enough," she uttered softly to her children. "Have you cleaned your room for the day?" she asked in a hopeful voice. "We haven't had time," Kaleel retorted. "And by the way," he exclaimed. "I need another X-Box because Alleia broke mine." Kaleel and Alleia were always messing up their rooms, talking back to their mom, and yelling at each other. The time had come for Mrs. Smith to make a decision and something drastic would have to be done.

The next morning Mrs. Smith did not come to breakfast. Both Kaleel and Alleia came pouncing down the hall yelling at the top of their lungs at each other. "Where's breakfast?" they demanded. But no one responded. Together they made a quick sweep of the house looking for their missing mom. But they found no trace of her.

Looking at each other with a twinkle in their eyes they each gave a wink. Now we can really get into some mischief. Suddenly, they heard the front door open and footsteps heading towards the kitchen. Their Aunt Karen stood in front of them. "I am going to baby-sit the both of you while your mom is away," their aunt announced. She slammed down her duffel bag and pulled out a long list of chores. Their aunt chuckled as she looked at the list with both Kaleel and Alleia's name on it. Her eyes grew stern as she peered down towards the two children. "And if you think we are going to have fun, you're highly mistaken," she continued. "There will be no

Teacher's copy

television, no bike riding, no music, no friends over, no phone, no dessert, and no free time," she said as if she were giving orders to a troop of disorderly soldiers.

Aunt Karen had a beehive hairdo that stacked high above her head. Each ring was held together by large crochet needles that looked like huge nails sticking out from the hive. The children thought at any minute a swarm of bees would jet out of her hair and start attacking them. She had long fingernails that were painted black. The color of her nails were a perfect match to her black combat boots, black fatigues, and black military T-shirt.

Aunt Karen then began barking out orders. The children did as they were told. They could see that their Aunt Karen meant business.

The kids at the Smith house had never cleaned so much. They washed their own clothes, organized their closets, dusted the entire house, vacuumed, scrubbed floors, washed the windows both inside and out, and much, much more. Kaleel and Alleia felt as if they were going through boot camp.

Days went by and there was no sign of their mother. "Maybe we should try to find her," they said. "We can call the missing persons hotline or hire a detective," suggested Alleia. "No, they will never believe us," responded Kaleel. Alleia decided to listen to the messages on the answering machine hoping to get some information. Kaleel searched the internet databases for clues to where she might be. They even went to their neighbor's house. But as soon as they asked their neighbor if she knew where their mom might be, she started to giggle and shut the door. Their neighbor would not be much help.

The children imagined many things that may have happened to their mom. "Maybe she drove to California to learn how to surf," Kaleel suggested. "No way," replied Alleia. "Maybe she decided to join the military like her sister," Alleia said. But both ideas didn't seem appropriate.

Teacher's copy

The next morning Kaleel and Alleia began cleaning the dishes from breakfast when they heard the front door open. Both children stood up straight and began to work faster. Unexpectedly a soft voice greeted them. They immediately knew it was their mom and turned around and ran to hug her. Their mom had finally returned. "Oh my, you both seem so excited to see me. I missed you both so much," their mom said lovingly. "You don't know how much we have missed you," they both whispered back in relief.

Mrs. Smith noticed the next morning that both her children were helpful and polite. The rest of the day Kaleel and Alleia cleaned their rooms, washed their clothes, vacuumed and much, much more without even as much as a whimper. "What has gotten into the two of you to bring about such a nice change?" their mom asked. "Oh, we just appreciate everything you have done for us," they said as they smiled at each other.

Later that night Mrs. Smith called her sister to thank her for the great plan. "What are sisters for?" Karen said with a laugh.



Name(s) _____ / _____ Date _____

Teacher's copy

Student Practice



Your Turn

Directions: After your teacher has put you with a writing partner, read the sentence below. This sentence is vague and does not give the reader enough information to understand what the author means. With your partner, write additional sentences that help create depth to the idea. Discuss what information you would like to add to help the ideas build upon one another rather than listing them.

Answers will vary

My mom is helpful. Every morning she wakes me up with a big smile. If I look like I am in a bad mood, she will give me a hug and say, "I am so glad you are my daughter. Is there something bothering you?" I always feel like I can talk to her about any problem. Every night my mom sits down with me on the couch to help me with my homework. Sometimes she will say, "You only have a few more math problems. You can do it." I feel like I can do anything with her help.

Name _____ Date _____

Teacher's copy



Assessment

Directions: This sentence is vague and does not give the reader enough information to understand what the author means. Write additional sentences that help create depth to the idea. Keep in mind that the sentences need to flow together.

Answers will vary

The students were playing nicely together. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. The two boys that usually go around trying to start an argument were now helping the other students learn how to play soccer. My best friend who said he would never be caught dead playing the game was getting everyone organized. "Is this a dream?" I thought to myself. But before I had a chance to think about what was going on Ethan pulled me into the game and told me to be the goalie. "Alright!" I yelled as I ran across the field.



Directed Practice

Directions: Follow along as your teacher reads the simplified version of *Where's Mom?* Underline any ideas you think are vague and need more depth to explain what the author means. Afterwards, on the following page, write two to three questions you would ask the author of this story to receive more details about the sentences you underlined.

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The Smith children were acting up again. The next morning Mrs. Smith did not come to breakfast. Their Aunt Karen stood in front of them. "I am going to babysit the both of you while your mom is away," their aunt announced. The children did as they were told. They could see that their Aunt Karen meant business. The kids at the Smith house had never cleaned so much.

Days went by and there was no sign of their mother. "Maybe we should try to find her," they said. They even went to their neighbor's house. The children thought up many things that may have happened to their mother.

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