

Writing to Learn

Explanation of Reading Strategy

RAFT

Using this RAFT technique (Holston, V. & Santa, 2004) empowers students with an easy, meaningful way to incorporate writing into content-area instruction. RAFT is especially engaging because students write to an audience other than their teacher, and they write for a specific purpose. Since writing is specific and focused, students better understand the need to explain the topic clearly and completely. This can be used with any topic from current events to math. RAFT consists of four major components, namely:

Role of the Writer	Who are you?	student, plant, soldier
Audience	To whom is this written?	president, public, self
Format	What form will it take?	letter, article, diary
Topic + Strong Verb	What topic of importance have I chosen?	describe effects of..., explain why..., warn about

Before Reading

Introduce the material to be read by previewing all topics, pictures, and questions. Brainstorm with students the many varied and possible “points of view” that could be used to relate opinions or feelings about the topic they are about to read. To whom could these be expressed? Record these on the board.

During Reading

Students then read the selection, keeping in mind the viewpoints that others (or objects) could possibly contribute on the subject. A variation is to assign students a point of view and have them use post-its as they read to mark the information that supports their assigned point of view.

After Reading

Upon completion of the reading, explain that all writers need to consider four components of every composition: the role of the writer, the audience, the format and the topic. Then, brainstorm additional ideas about the topics that came to mind during the reading. Write RAFT on the board and list possible roles, audiences, formats and strong verbs that are appropriate for each topic.

Have students choose one example from each category to incorporate into their writing about the topic.

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Subject _____

Brainstorm options, or consider some of the following...

<u>Role</u>	<u>Audience</u>	<u>Format</u>	<u>Topic</u>
citizen	legislator	letter	vote for recycling
student	prime minister of Japan	letter	stop killing whale for research
Columnist Mike Royko	public	news column	demand gun control
constituent	U. S. Senator	letter	abolish capitol punishment
square root	whole number	love letter	explain relationship
criminal	Judge	plea	explain why he shouldn't be punished
scientist	Charles Darwin	research brief	refute a point in evolution theory
trout	self	diary	describe effects of acid rain on lake
animal	zookeeper	memo	his needs at the zoo
plant	sun	thank you note	explain the sun's role in plant growth
mineral	8th grade student	report	what student should know about me
red blood cells traveling through circulatory system	new cells traveling through the system	dialogue	warn of hazards on journey, including peer pressure of white blood cells

Source: Janice Strop, Wisconsin. Project CRISS Workshops.

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Model of Reading Strategy

RAFT

Subject Social Studies Activity

My Choices:

Role: Fourth Grade Student

Audience: President of the United States

Format: Letter

Topic: Government

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500
April 7, 2003

Dear Mr. President,

I am Megan. This year in Social Studies I have been learning about the government and how the people vote for Representatives in Congress. I thought it was so interesting to find out how people vote for the Presidents, like you.

I also learned that there are three branches to the Federal Government. The first branch is the Executive and that's what you are. I also learned that you enforce the laws after the Congress makes the laws. I think it's very cool that you are the President and get to live in the White House. Is it hard to take care of everything at once? I sure think it would be for me. What I also think is really cool is the Constitution and The Bill of Rights. Our government has worked well for many years.

I really think that learning about you, what Representatives take care of, and how the Government works is very cool and interesting. I also think that being the President is an AWESOME job to have! I wish you all the best.

Your friend,

Megan

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Template of Reading Strategy

RAFT

Subject _____

My Choices:

Role: _____

Audience: _____

Format: _____

Topic: _____