

# Whole Brain Teaching Model Classroom

Chris Biffle

Director, Whole Brain Teaching

Okay, you're dreamin' of Teacher Heaven and want to set up a WBT Model Classroom., what should you do?

1. Hanky in hand read this document carefully.

When you're done, you'll be weeping tears of joy.

2. Read our manual, "Whole Brain Teaching for Challenging Kids" (WBT Manual) available as a download at [WholeBrainTeaching.com](http://WholeBrainTeaching.com). This highly detailed guide will give you all the information you need to implement the basics of the WBT classroom management and teaching system in your class.

3. Read free WBT ebooks that are appropriate to your grade level, with special emphasis on Power Pix SuperSpeed packets and the Writing Game.

4. Begin designing your lesson plans, using the Five Step Lesson Template in the appendix of this document.

5. Contact Deb Weigel, WBT Model Classroom project director, at [debweigel@wholebrainteaching.com](mailto:debweigel@wholebrainteaching.com) for additional guidance.

## What does a WBT Model Classroom look like?

A. Five Classroom Rules: the set of rules custom designed by Saskia Biffle (a whopping 99 cents each in the store at [wholebrainteaching.com](http://wholebrainteaching.com)) are displayed prominently in the front of the room.

B. Scoreboard: a Scoreboard is drawn on your whiteboard. Signs, magnets, or other items may be added to the display to increase visual interest. In the first weeks of the school year, average at least 20 total marks on the Scoreboard, never allowing the difference between positive and negative marks to be more than three points.

C. Power Pix Wall: a wall divided into two sections, math and language arts, contains your growing display of Power Pix. We suggest you teach a minimum of two new Pix per week. For visual emphasis, your walls should have a color coded border or background, for example, blue for language arts, red for math. In addition, the Power Pix should be arranged in numbered rows and lettered columns. Thus, when you have 50 Power Pix posted, you could say to your kids, "Please review all the gestures in rows 1 and 3 of the math Power Pix." Or, "Please review the questions and answers for language arts Power Pix in columns D and E." Power Pix currently exist for over 200 K-3 state standards. Pix for additional concepts, or for higher grades, are simple to create.

-- Change the concept into a question, for example, "What is an essay?"

-- Create a kid friendly answer for the question with an accompanying gesture. For example, "An essay is three or more paragraphs on one subject." Gesture: Hold up three fingers then one finger.

-- Put the concept in large type on a sheet of typing paper; after you have taught the concept, place the paper on your Power Pix wall.

D. Seating: Seat your kids in any configuration you wish, horseshoe, rows, etc. but be sure they are assigned partners for Teach-Okay. We strongly suggest your highest kids partner with your lowest.

E. Classroom Leaders Wall: As your students learn WBT, you will begin to nominate kids to lead various procedures. Typically, you will assign, for one day, a student to perform at your request, each of the following call outs: class!, hands and eyes, mirror, papers, seats, lines, switch. If you attend a WBT presentation, you can buy leadership buttons for these students. Set aside part of a wall to post the names and, if possible, the pictures of your leaders. This display can change daily.

F. Mind Soccer Posters: To generate anticipation, before you introduce Mind Soccer to your kids, slowly, over a period of several weeks, put up one or two Mind Soccer posters on your wall (available as free downloads at [WholeBrainTeaching.com](http://WholeBrainTeaching.com))

## What is a WBT Daily Schedule?

After your students are settled, begin the day with a review of the classroom rules. Repeat this review as necessary; we suggest rule rehearsal may be appropriate after each recess and after lunch. As students gain familiarity, use student leaders for these recitations.

Review, for a few minutes, Power Pix question, answer and gestures several times per day.

We suggest a key part of the morning routine for every WBT Model Classroom is a game, Prove It! We've adapted this game from Sixth St. Prep, in Victorville California, one of the top ranked elementary schools in our state. Developed by former principal Linda Mikels, Prove It! appears to be a key component in their remarkable test scores.

Students spend 20 minutes every morning playing Prove It! using sample questions from state tests, 10 minutes for math and 10 minutes for language arts. Using a projector, students use test taking strategies (each school should decide which are best) to answer multiple choice questions. *In addition to proving one answer is correct, students must prove the other answers are incorrect.* With small, individual white boards, students write out their reasons for identifying right and wrong answers. They compare answers with their neighbors and, at the teacher's request, hold up the results on their white boards. In essence, Prove It! gives students daily, intensive, critical thinking practice

in answering the kinds of questions they will be faced with at the end of the year.

Every 5-10 minutes during the day, and more often if necessary, mark a positive or negative mark on the Scoreboard. Use the Ping Pong strategy described in the WBT Manual as necessary.

Use the 5 step Lesson Template described at the end of this document to introduce new material.

All through the day, use Teach-Okay whenever you communicate with your class. Keep your presentations in the 15-45 second range. Write Teach-Okay units into your lesson plans. Make a note to yourself where you should be using Mirror, Mirror Words and Switch.

Orally time all transition activities. See the WBT Manual for directions in how to quickly hand papers out and in, get students seated, lined up, etc.

In the first weeks, use more or less recess time as your Scoreboard reward. See the WBT Manual for additional motivators.

## How Do You Evaluate Classroom Management Progress?

As described in the WBT Manual, at the end of the first week, divide your class into Alphas, Go-Alongs, Fence Sitters and Challenging Kids. Update your classroom management score weekly. Also, use the self scoring system described in the manual to keep tabs on your own behavior.

## What is a WBT Yearly Schedule?

Try to stay at the Scoreboard level for as long as possible; Christmas is a good target. Then, after Christmas, introduce the White Practice Cards. After 2-4 weeks, add the Purple Practice Cards and then, later, the Green Practice Cards if a few students need in-class guidance. In the last months of the year, move to Level 3, the Guff Counter, Level 4, the Independents, Level 5, the BullsEye Game and Level 6, the Agreement Bridge as needed.

But remember ... it's your class! Mix up the Levels if you believe it will help your kids. For example, to take care of persistent backtalk, you may want to introduce Level 3, the Guff Counter, a few weeks before Christmas. Don't worry. The WBT Police will not visit your classroom, though we may occasionally look in the windows.

Use material from the Writing Game as soon as you begin writing instruction.

Begin using the SuperSpeed games in math and language arts at least three times per week after the second week of school. The reward for these games, until well after Christmas, should be intrinsic. Simply encourage students to celebrate when they break personal records. If you wish, after Christmas, give students award certificates for their success (but no candy, stickers, cheesy trinkets!)

## What is the WBT Homework Model?

There is considerable evidence that the amount of homework has almost no correlation to amount students learn in elementary school, and very little correlation in middle and high school. (See, *The Case Against Homework* by Sara Bennett and Nancy Kalis.) Nonetheless, at WBT we are not yet ready to abandon the homework ship; we want students to be motivated to do, at minimum, about half an hour of reading and writing every night.

Our approach, the Universal Homework Model (UHM), is simple. The completion rate of homework by students determines the number of minutes the class will play Mind Soccer on Fridays. Please take our word for it ... Mind Soccer is so hysterically fun, kids will do almost anything to play ... and it involves nothing but fast paced academic review!

In addition to using Mind Soccer as the reward, the

key feature of UHM is that there are three levels of homework. Students choose their level. However, we can't use the term "levels" because that concept is part of our classroom management system. Thus, we'll use stars.

**One Star Homework:** Complete your reading log and have it signed by your parents

**Two Star Homework:** Complete your reading log, have it signed by your parents and write your teacher a one page letter describing what you read.

**Three Star Homework:** Complete your reading log, write your teacher a one page "sloppy copy" letter describing what you read and then, in your neatest handwriting, create a masterpiece letter to your teacher describing what you read.

As the year unfolds, we suggest adding easy to check rules for this masterpiece letter: no paragraphs longer than 5 sentences or shorter than three, no sentences shorter than five words ... etc. All the rules should be adjusted by grade level; we have no problem if the rules are so easy to check, that teachers simply thumb through the homework assignments.

Now, how would UHM work in class?

After the five classroom rules have been reviewed, the teacher asks the kids to stand who completed One Star homework. She counts the students and gives the class one point for homework completion. Then the kids stand who did Two Star homework and hold it over their head. Everyone applauds! The teacher counts the standing students and gives the class two points for

Two Star completion. Finally, the kids stand who did Three Star homework and hold it over their heads and WAVE it! Everyone claps and cheers! Oh, everyone is so happy! The standing students bask in the glory of earning so many points for their whole class! The teacher counts the standing kids and gives the class three points for each completion. The score is added up and posted on the board.

On Friday, if the class scored 80% of the total possible points for One Star homework, then they play Mind Soccer for one minute. The timing should be very strict ... use a kitchen timer with a loud buzzer. Stop the instant the buzzer sounds; you want your kids begging to play longer. "Oh sorry! I hope we have lots of Three Star homeworks next week. Tell your neighbor how many Three Star homeworks you're going to do!"

If the class scored 80% of the total possible points for Two Star homework, then they play Mind Soccer for two minutes.

If the class scored 80% of the total possible points for Three Star homework, then they play Mind Soccer for three minutes.

For example, (this will be more complex in the telling than the doing), assume there are 30 kids in class and five homework assignments per week. If every student does a One Star Homework, then the total possible points are 150. Eighty percent of 150 equals 120 points; the class would have to score at least this many points to play a minute of Mind Soccer.

For Three Star Homework, the total possible points

would be 30 students x 5 homeworks x 3 = 450. To earn 3 minutes of Mind Soccer, the class would have to score 80% of 450 or 360 points.

As you can tell, the UHM system has quite a bit of fun and peer pressure built into it. Imagine what class feels like on Thursday at the end of the day.

The teacher looks at the homework score, quickly figures out how many points are needed to get three minutes of Mind Soccer for the next day. Oh no! Almost everyone has to do Three Star homework! Who is willing to volunteer??? Some kids are so desperate for recognition, that they ask "What is four star homework?!" Natural leaders and outsiders, exactly the two groups we want to reach, will be among the main volunteers to do extra homework to gain their peers' esteem.

To make homework completion even easier to evaluate, assign homework captains who will fill in a homework log for each student, each day. Juan stood up for One Star homework; the captain checks and sees Juan was being honest and records 1 star in Monday's box on the log. At the end of the week, each student's homework, with the log on top, is stapled together and handed in to the instructor.

## What is the Five Step WBT Lesson Template?

Recently, my colleagues and I at WBT put together a very useful addition to our teaching techniques, a five step lesson template. Here are the five steps:

Step 1 Question: Ask a question.

Step 2 Answer: Give the answer to the question, in kid friendly language, accompanied by a gesture.

Step 3 Expand: Expand the answer with examples, Brain Toys, diagrams, explanations.

Step 4 Test: Test for comprehension with the Yes-No Way, QT or other tests.

In the Yes-No Way test, the teacher asks a question. For example, “Is boy a noun?” If the answer is “yes,” students pump their fists and exclaim “yes!” If the answer is “no” students point their fingers at their foreheads and then extend their arms outward, exclaiming in disbelief, “no way!” The Yes-No Way test provides teachers with a rapid, visual overview of students’ comprehension.

A second test used in our 5 step template is the Quick Test, abbreviated QT. The teacher says, “QT”; students respond, “Cutie!” and cover their eyes. The teacher makes true/false statements. For example, “A noun is a person, place or action word.” If the answer is true, students silently give a thumbs up gesture. If the answer is false, students silently give a thumbs down

gesture. QT provides a rapid, clear picture of individual student's understanding. If 80% of the class passes both tests, the teacher should go on to Step 5 below. If not, the teacher should cycle back to Step 3 above and reteach the concept with new material.

**Step 5 Critical Thinking:** The teacher gives students tasks that require they use what they have learned in a critical thinking context. For example, students compare and contrast the current concept (noun) with previous concepts (verb, adjective, preposition), use the current concept in a sentence frame with "because" or explain the concept with a collection of Brain Toys.

For a video example of the Five Step Template, see Farrah Shipley's superb demo at:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/ChrisBiffle>

## What Are Some Sample Five Step Lessons?

### Noun

Step 1 Question: What is a noun?

Step 2 Answer: A noun is a person, place or thing (for gestures, point to yourself for "person," sweep your arms around the room for "place," knock on a desk for "thing.")

Step 3 Explain: Give other examples of nouns. Ask students to point to nouns in the room. Then, ask students to find nouns in a list of verbs, nouns and adjectives on the board. Ask them to explain why a

word on the list is, or isn't, a noun using "because" in their explanation.

Step 4 Test: Students respond "Yes" or "No Way" (with emphatic gestures) to the following questions:

- Is "boy" a noun?
- Is "run" a noun?
- Is "happy" a noun?
- Is "tree" a noun?
- Is "school" a noun?
- Is "eating" a noun?

If the 80% of the class answers correctly, use the QT test with the following True/False statements.

- Every noun is a person, place or activity.
- Every noun is a person, thing or adjective.
- Every noun is a person, place or thing.
- "Desk" is a noun.
- "Running" is a noun.
- There are two nouns in the following sentence:

"The boy went home."

If at least 80% of your students passed the QT test then go on to step 5. If not, return and reteach Step 3 with new materials.

Step 5 Critical Thinking: Students complete one or more of the following exercises:

- Compare and contrast nouns and verbs.
- Write sentences and underline each noun.
- Play Aliens: Your neighbor is from Planet Zork.

Using words and energetic sign language, teach him or her what the word "noun" means. Use lots of examples

and gestures. Then trade roles and let your neighbor teach you.

-- Use Sockless Hand Puppets, then the Air Blackboard, then Props, then Action figures to explain nouns to your neighbor.

At the end of the lesson, the teacher posts a sheet of typing paper with the word "Noun" on the Power Pix wall.

## Verb

Step 1 Question: What is a verb?

Step 2 Answer: A verb is an action word. (gesture: pump your arms as if you are running.)

Step 3 Expand: Provide other examples of verbs. Ask students to give each other examples of verbs. Tell students to find verbs in a list of verbs, nouns and adjectives on the board. Ask them to explain why a word on the board is, or isn't, a verb using "because" in their explanation.

Step 4 Test: Students respond "Yes" or "No Way" (with emphatic gestures) to the following questions:

- Is "running" a verb?
- Is "ate" a verb?
- Is "dog" a verb?
- Is "pencil" a verb?
- Is "wrote" a verb?
- Is "sleeping" a verb?

If 80% of the class responds correctly, use the QT test with the following True/False statements.

- Every verb is a person, place or thing.

- Verbs are action words.
- “Blue” is a verb.
- “to eat” is a verb.
- “Running” is a verb.
- There are two verbs in the sentence, “I ate beans at home.”

If at least 80% of your students passed the QT test then go on to step 5. If not, return and reteach Step 3 with new materials.

Step 5 Critical Thinking: Students complete one or more of the following exercises.

- Compare and contrast verbs and nouns.
- Write sentences and underline each verb.
- Play Aliens: Your neighbor is from Planet Zork. Use words and energetic sign language, teach him or her what the word “verb” means. Use lots of examples and gestures. Then trade roles and let your neighbor teach you.

-- Use Sockless Hand Puppets, then the Air Blackboard, then Props, then Action figures to explain verbs to your neighbor.

At the end of the lesson, the teacher posts a sheet of typing paper with the word “Verb” on the Power Pix wall.

## Handing In Papers

Step 1 Question: How do we hand in papers?

Step 2 Answer: We hand in papers as quickly as possible to the paper captains; the paper captains stack

the papers neatly on the teacher's desk. (Use gestures to demonstrate how quickly papers are handed in. Then tap on your desk indicating where papers should be stacked.)

Step 3 Expand: Let students practice the right and wrong way to hand in papers.

Step 4 Test: Using a practice stack of papers, time your class to see how quickly they can hand in papers. After several tries, put their best time on the board as the class record.

Step 5 Critical Thinking: Ask students to evaluate the current plan for handing in papers. Then, give them time to design and evaluate alternate systems for handing in papers. Encourage suggestions that would make the procedure fun ... students cheering, clapping, finger snapping, chanting?

At the end of the lesson, the teacher posts a sheet of typing paper with the words "Handing in papers" on the Power Pix wall.

Note that almost any lesson can be put into these five steps. Virtually every state standard could be set up as a question which requires an answer, an expanded explanation, comprehension tests and critical thinking tasks.

Now, how would the five step template fit into the Teach-Okay pattern? Simple! Every step begins with "Class" and ends with "Teach!"

Look at this diagram:

Say, "Class!"	Step 1: Pose a Question	Clap Twice, Say "Teach!"
Say, "Class!"	Step 2: Give Answer with Gesture(s)	Clap Twice, Say "Teach!"
Say, "Class!"	Step 3: Expand the Answer	Clap Twice, Say "Teach!"
Say, "Class!"	Step 4: Test for Comprehension	Clap Twice, Say "Teach!"
Say, "Class!"	Step 5: Give Critical Thinking Tasks	Clap Twice, Say "Teach!"

Here are two important points. First, Step 3 is the primary teaching opportunity. Use as many Teach-Okay cycles as necessary to fully clarify the answer to the question. For example, if you are teaching the definition of "fraction," you might spend 10 minutes with 10-15 Teach-Okays before you are confident students are ready to move on to the tests in Step 4.

The second important point is that you will need to post a sign, usually on typing paper, on a classroom wall for each concept you have taught. Power Pix, available as free downloads at [WholeBrainTeaching.com](http://WholeBrainTeaching.com), are a good source of concept signs for over 200 state

standards. Your concept wall then becomes a primary teaching tool. Several times a day, ask students to review the question, answer, gesture and examples for some or all the concepts you have covered.

## Five Day Lesson Plan

Following is a five day lesson plan, building reading, writing and thinking skills, using reading from *Charlotte's Web*. Material from any other book you read aloud to your students may be substituted. The five lessons are: sentence, topic sentence, paragraph, prediction and summary. Students advance from the simplest unit, sentence, and finish by writing three paragraph essays. These five lessons are appropriate for third-6<sup>th</sup> graders, but may be adapted to younger or older students. Exercises for differentiated small group work has been included. In general, the high and middle groups work independently, while the teacher guides the low group.

### Day One: Sentence

Step 1 Question: What is a sentence?

Step 2 Answer: A sentence is a complete message.

(Hold a thumb and forefinger to your ear, mimicking a phone.)

Step 3 Expand: Speak examples of sentences and fragments. Explain the Midnight Phone Call Test.

“Imagine you are sound asleep and the phone rings. Rinnnng! You pick it up and someone says, ‘Running and laughing on the beach.’ Click! Was that a complete

message?’

Explain that a sentence is a complete message that would make sense in the middle of the night. Mix up examples of sentences and fragments. Students, using the word “because,” discuss the examples, explaining which would, or would not, pass the Midnight Phone Call test.

Further explain that from this point forward in the class, you want all your questions answered with complete sentences. Give examples of the correct and incorrect way to answer questions.

-- What is your favorite food?

Incorrect: Pizza!

Correct: My favorite food is pizza!

-- What did you do yesterday?

Incorrect: Played soccer.

Correct: Yesterday I played soccer.

-- Do you think it will rain today?

Incorrect: No.

Correct: I don’t think it will rain today.

Read aloud from “Charlotte’s Web.” Stop in the middle of a sentence. Explain that you have just spoken an incomplete sentence, that wouldn’t pass the Midnight Phone Call Test. Continue reading. Occasionally stop in the middle or at the end of a sentence. Ask students to explain using “because” if you have, or haven’t, read a sentence.

Summarize the points you have made about sentences.

Read aloud again from “Charlotte’s Web.” Stop and

ask, “What is this story about?” Or, “What just happened to the pig?” Or, “What do you think will happen next?” Ask students to respond with complete sentences.

#### Step 4 Test: Yes/No Way

-- Is this is the gesture for a sentence? (make various gestures)

-- Is every sentence a complete message?

-- Is this a sentence, “I like grapes on my cereal.”

-- Is this a sentence, “Liking grapes on my cereal.”

-- Is this a sentence, “The pig’s name is Wilbur.”

If 80% of your students pass the test, go on the QT.

#### QT Test

-- The test for a sentence is called the Midnight Phone Call Test.

-- Whenever we answer a question, we must use a sentence.

-- A sentence can have only three words.

-- A sentence cannot have more than 10 words.

-- A sentence is an incomplete message.

-- A sentence is a complete message.

#### Step 5 Critical Thinking: Sentence frames

Using a list of words on the board (dog, book, Wilbur, Charlotte’s Web, duck, tree, running) students write sentences. Upper grade students should be given the additional requirement that sentences must contain 7 or more words.

At the end of the lesson, the teacher posts a sheet of typing paper with the word “Sentence” on the Power Pix wall.

## Group Work

A. High group: Students create their own list of words and write sentences that use at least two of the words.

B. Middle group: Students, working in pairs, write sentences about a new list of subjects created by the teacher.

C. Low group: Working with the teacher, students speak sentences and then complete the teacher's dictation prompts. For example, "I like cake because ..."  
"I have fun when I ... " "My dog is ... "

## Day Two: Topic Sentence

The teacher reviews key ideas about sentences from the previous day.

Step 1 Question: What is a topic sentence?

Step 2 Answer: A topic sentence states the one subject of a paragraph. (Gesture: hold up one finger)

Step 3 Expand: Give examples of strong and weak topic sentences from a list on the board.

-- Wilbur is a big, pink, pig.

-- Wilbur has many adventures in "Charlotte's Web."

-- "Charlotte's Web" is a white book with drawings and 113 pages.

-- "Charlotte's Web" is an exciting story.

Students talk about strong and weak topic

sentences.

The teacher points out that a strong topic sentence covers more information, gives the big picture. A weak topic sentence covers less information, gives close-ups. It's easy to write more sentences about a strong topic sentence; it's hard to write more sentences about a weak topic sentence.

Read aloud from "Charlotte's Web." Stop occasionally and speak a sentence about what you read. Ask students to discuss why it was, or wasn't, a strong topic sentence.

Read aloud and ask, "What is happening in the story now?" Students respond with a complete sentence. Guide them in shaping their sentence into a strong topic sentence.

Read aloud and give a weak topic sentence. Ask students to change it into a strong topic sentence. Point out that this will be difficult

Step 4 Test: Yes/No Way

-- Is this is the gesture for topic sentence? (Make various gestures)

-- Can a topic sentence state the two main subjects of a paragraph?

-- Does a strong topic sentence always have more words than a weak topic sentence?

-- Does a strong topic sentence give the big picture?

-- Is a topic sentence the same as a paragraph?

-- Does a topic sentence state the one main subject of a paragraph?

## QT Test

-- A topic sentence is one of several sentences in a paragraph.

-- A topic sentence states the main subject of a paragraph.

-- A topic sentence must be longer than other sentences in a paragraph.

-- A topic sentence can be shorter than other sentences in a paragraph.

Step 5 Critical thinking: Sentence frames (students write and complete sentences below in as many ways as possible):

-- I like school because ....

-- .... is a very exciting movie.

-- The best thing about me is that I am ....

-- There are three reasons why I like ...

-- “Charlotte’s Web” will be about ... (after seeing pictures from the book)

At the end of the lesson, the teacher posts a sheet of typing paper with the word “Topic Sentence” on the Power Pix wall. Students share their sentences and discuss which are strong or weak.

## Small Groups

A. High Group: Students write paragraphs using topic sentences from Step 5 above. In addition, they could be assigned to use teacher selected vocabulary in their paragraphs.

B. Middle Group: Working in pairs, students write

as many topic sentences as possible on any of following subjects: school, games, friends, home, the playground, movies, favorite toys, favorite candy.

C. Low Group: The teacher asks for ideas about topic sentences on a variety of subjects. Then, students are guided by the teacher as they work as a group to create topic sentences.

### Day Three: Paragraph

The teacher reviews key concepts about sentences and topic sentences from the previous two days. Students discuss what happened in *Charlotte's Web*. Mentioning individual characters and events, the teacher asks questions like, "What happened at the start of the story? ... Why did the farmer want to get rid of Wilber?" Students answer all the teacher's questions with complete sentences.

Step 1 Question: What is a paragraph?

Step 2 Answer: A paragraph is a group of sentences about a topic sentence. (Gesture: bring three fingers on one hand, representing sentences, toward the upraised, index finger on the other hand, representing a topic sentence)

Step 3 Expand: Write 5 sentences, out of paragraph order, on the board. Three of them are related. One sentence is the topic sentence. Ask the following questions:

-- Which sentence is the topic sentence?

- Which sentences are about the topic sentence?
- Why isn't this sentence about the topic sentence?
- How should we order the sentences that are part of the same paragraph?

Read aloud selections from *Charlotte's Web*. Insert a random sentence. Ask students to explain why the sentence doesn't belong in the paragraph. Ask: "What is the subject of the paragraph? What is the subject of the sentence I just spoke?" Guide the discussion until students understand that all sentences in a paragraph in a story are about the same subject, usually what is happening.

Read aloud again from *Charlotte's Web*. Insert random sentences; students hold up their hands when they hear the sentence you created. Ask students to explain why that sentence doesn't belong in the paragraph. Ask, "What is the subject of the paragraph? What is the subject of that sentence?" Continue with this exercise until students see, again, that all the sentences in a paragraph must be about the same subject.

Next, introduce the concept of the Adder. An Adder is a sentence that adds information to any previous sentence. (Thus, Adders form the bulk of student writing, adding information to topic sentences.)

The teacher demonstrates the Adder gesture, pointing her index fingers at each other and spinning them, as if saying "More!"

This diagram is placed on the board: Question -> Answer -> Adders.

Whenever the teacher asks a question, she may use the Adder gesture to prompt students to add more sentences to their answer. Thus, students are encouraged to speak paragraphs.

Step 4 Test: Yes-No Way

- Should every paragraph have a topic sentence?
- Can a paragraph have 10 sentences?
- Can a paragraph have 3 sentences?
- Can a paragraph have no sentences?
- Is this the gesture for paragraph?
- Is this the gesture for topic sentence? (make various gestures)
- Is this the gesture for sentence? (make various gestures)
- Is this the gesture for an Adder? (make various gestures)

QT: Quick Test

- An Adder always comes before a topic sentence.
- Every paragraph has a topic sentence at the end.
- A topic sentence is the longest sentence in a paragraph.
- A topic sentence is the shortest sentence in a paragraph.
- A topic sentence states the main idea in a paragraph.

Step 5 Critical Thinking: Students use paragraph frames filling in the following as many times as possible.

-- There are two reasons I like .... First, .... Second,  
...

-- ... is an exciting game to play. One reason why ...  
is exciting is because ... Another reason why ... is  
exciting is because ...

One person I admire is ... (Add several sentences  
explaining why you admire this person)

At the end of the lesson, the teacher posts a sheet of  
typing paper with the word "Paragraph" on the Power  
Pix wall.

### Small Groups

A. High group: Students revise paragraphs created  
in Step 5 with the following options (teacher's choice):  
include previous vocabulary words and/or every  
paragraph must contain five sentences and/or  
consecutive sentences can't start with same word  
and/or no sentences can contain "and"

B. Middle Group: Students work in pairs to revise  
paragraphs from Step 5; every paragraph must contain  
five sentences.

C. Low Group: Guided writing. The teacher and  
her group write paragraphs together beginning with  
topic sentence frames from previous day:

-- I like school because ....

-- .... is a very exciting movie.

-- The best thing about me is that I am ....

-- ... There are three reasons why I like ...

-- "Charlotte's Web" will be about ... (after seeing

pictures from the book)

At the end of the lesson, the teacher posts a sheet of typing paper with the word “Paragraph” on the Power Pix wall.

## Day Four: Prediction

Employing the Power Pix wall, the teacher reviews the previous three days concepts: sentence, topic sentence, paragraph

Step 1 Question: What is a prediction?

Step 2 Answer: A prediction is a guess about the future. (Gesture: scratch your head, point “into the future.”)

Step 3 Expand; From a list of subjects on the board, model predicting. Distinguish between smart and foolish predictions. Smart predictions are more likely to happen. Foolish predictions are less likely to happen. Use the sentence model, “I predict .... because ...” Discuss how different “because” make a prediction smart or foolish. “I predict it will rain tomorrow because it rained on this day last year.” “I predict it will rain tomorrow because the weatherman said a big storm is coming.”

Students make smart (thumbs up) or foolish (thumbs down) predictions based on board subjects using the word “because.”

Read aloud from *Charlotte’s Web*. Stop and make predictions. Students give you thumbs up or thumbs down and explain why they say your prediction is smart or foolish.

Read aloud from *Charlotte's Web*. Stop and ask students to make smart predictions about what will happen next. The best students will be able to make foolish predictions and explain why.

At the end of the read aloud, ask students to predict how the book will end. Encourage the strongest students to give several sentences about how the book will end. Write one of these examples on the board and point out that the first sentence was a prediction *topic* sentence! The other sentences completed a paragraph.

Step 4 Test: Yes/No Way

- Is it a prediction to say this is a desk?
- Is it a prediction to say, I bet we will have hamburgers for lunch?
- Is this the prediction gesture (demonstrate various gestures).
- Is a prediction the same as a topic sentence?
- Are all predictions smart predictions?

QT: Quick Test

- A prediction is a guess about the future.
- A prediction is always true.
- A prediction is a guess about the past.
- Smart predictions are more likely to happen.
- A prediction could be a topic sentence.

Step 5 Critical Thinking: sentence frames

Put the following topics on the board:

sports, games, school, my future, next year, tomorrow, next week, computers, cell phones

Students use these topics in a spoken or written sentence frame, "I predict .... " (add several Adder

sentences explaining the reasons for the prediction)

At the end of the lesson, the teacher posts a sheet of typing paper with the word “Prediction” on the Power Pix wall. Students share their sentences and discuss which are strong or weak.

### Small Groups

A. High Group: Students write smart and foolish prediction topic sentences about *Charlotte’s Web*. They discuss strong and weak evidence that supports a prediction; they complete paragraphs using strong evidence to support their predictions.

B. Middle Group: Students work in pairs to make strong predictions about *Charlotte’s Web*. They discuss reasons for predictions. Students work in pairs writing one or more prediction paragraphs.

C. Low Group: Led by the teacher, the group writes a strong prediction topic sentence, one that is likely to happen. Then, working together with teacher synthesizing the best ideas, group writes one or more prediction paragraphs.

### Day Five: Summary

Review previous days using the Power Pix wall.

1. Question: What is a summary?
2. Answer: A summary briefly describes what happened.

3. Expand: Give examples of good and bad summaries. A bad summary could be too long, too short or include information not related to what happened.

The teacher models a bad, too long summary of previous three days (uses yada, yada, yada as filler). Students discuss how it could be cut down to key points.

The teacher models a bad, too short summary of previous three days. Students point out what was missing and speak their own summaries.

The teacher models a bad summary containing irrelevant material of what the class did that morning. Students point out the irrelevant material and speak their own summaries.

Students discuss a good summary of the previous three days. What should be covered? What could be omitted?

The teacher asks for bad, short summaries of *Charlotte's Web*. Students correct and improve by summaries by adding details. Teacher also gives bad summaries that include events that didn't happen in the story. Students correct the summary.

Teacher reads from *Charlotte's Web*, giving bad short summaries of a paragraph. Students point out how to improve the summaries by adding details.

4. Test:

Yes/No Way

- Is this the summary gesture?
- Is this the topic sentence gesture?
- Is this the paragraph gesture?
- Is this the prediction gesture?

## QT: Quick Test

-- A good summary of a story includes all the important things that happened in a story.

-- A bad summary is always longer than a good summary.

-- A good summary is always longer than a bad summary.

## 5. Critical Thinking:

With the teacher's help, students complete the following paragraph frames by writing or speaking:

Several important things happened in the story.  
First, .... Second, .... Third ...

*Charlotte's Web* is an exciting story. One reason it is exciting is because ... Another reason it is exciting because ...

Students follow these directions:

1. Write a topic sentence.
2. Write two sentences about the topic sentence
3. Add a summary sentence that begins, "In conclusion, ..."

At the end of the lesson, the teacher posts a sheet of typing paper with the word "Summary" on the Power Pix wall. Students share their sentences and discuss which are strong or weak.

## Small Groups

A. High Group: Students individually write three paragraph essays. The first paragraph is about *Charlotte's Web*. The second paragraph is a prediction

paragraph. The third paragraph begins, “In conclusion,” and must contain at least three sentences. If students finish early, other three paragraph assignments will be given.

B. Middle Group: The students work in pairs to write a three paragraph essay using the pattern above from the High Group.

C. Low Group: Same as Middle Group, but with more discussion and leading suggestions by teacher.