



RAFTS

What You Should Know	What You Might Tell Students
ROLE	
The Role of the writer is as varied as your imagination. Roles can be gleaned from subject-area topics, school situations, book characters, and real people—the sky’s the limit. When the student assumes a role other than him or herself, he or she must decide on the appropriate voice for the piece. When introducing the Role, remind students that the Role asks them to think about Who is the author of this piece?	Think about the way this author would write about the topic. What voice is just right for this piece of writing? Exuberant? Edgy? Confident? Hilarious? Serious? Considerate? The words and phrases in your writing should enhance the voice you choose. Ask yourself, “How would this person use words to express him or herself clearly and make his or her voice heard?”
AUDIENCE	
You, the teacher, are your students’ typical Audience. By assigning a specific Audience, you can empower students to communicate their ideas to someone other than yourself. Encourage them to think about how best to reach their audience through voice and word choice, making sure to consider what they know about the topic. When introducing Audience to students, have them place themselves in the assigned Role, then answer the question, Who is the audience for this writing?	When writing to a certain Audience, keep in mind that you will need to determine the perfect match of voice and word choice to communicate your ideas. Consider the relationship between the role and the audience and the kind of voice that is most appropriate. Think about the words you will use. Should you be formal? Informal? What vocabulary should be explained? Be sure to think about not only <i>what</i> needs to be said, but also <i>how</i> it needs to be said to address a particular Audience.
FORMAT	
Assigning a specific Format give you the opportunity to help students learn about many possible organizational structures for their writing. Teach them to write brochures, directions, advertisements, letters, and so forth. By learning different Formats, students will practice organizing their ideas in many different ways. When introducing Format to students, have them think about the question How do the ideas need to be organized?	There are many different formats for writing. By focusing on Format, you will be practicing and learning organizational structures for your writing. Once you know the format for the piece you are going to write, ask yourself, “How do I organize this piece to achieve this particular Format? Where should it start? What goes in the middle? How will it end? What should my writing look like? What are the most important organizational issues when I write in this format?”



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TOPIC	
<p>The Topic helps students focus on the details of their writing so that their ideas develop as clearly as possible. The Topic should be well defined and contain clear guidelines such as: “Write a persuasive letter to a city planner and include several strong arguments for a new public swimming pool in your area.” Giving students these clear guidelines helps them determine how much information they should include in order to develop their ideas fully. When introducing the Topic to students, have them think about the question, What is the main idea of the writing?</p>	<p>If the Topic of your writing is to explain or inform the reader of something, ask yourself, “Have I included enough information so that the reader thinks I’m an expert?” “Do all my ideas add up to something important?” “Have I told the reader something he or she doesn’t already know?” If the topic is to develop a narrative, ask yourself, “Is my story fully developed and complete?” “Have I written a story that is interesting and will hold the reader’s attention?” “Have I put in just the right amount of detail?”</p>
STRONG VERB	
<p>A Strong Verb such as <i>persuade</i>, <i>analyze</i>, <i>create</i>, <i>predict</i>, or <i>compare</i>, helps students see the purpose of the writing and, from there, determine the appropriate ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency, and conventions for their writing. Help students see how being clear about the overall purpose for the writing works hand-in-hand with each trait. By establishing a clear purpose at the beginning, students will be able to focus on the goal: creating a strong piece of writing. When introducing the Strong Verb to students, have them think about the question, What is the purpose of the writing?</p>	<p>The Strong Verb directs you to the purpose of your writing, which, in turn, helps you, determine the appropriate ideas, organization, voice, word choice sentence fluency and conventions for your writing. If, for example, the Strong Verb lets you know that your purpose is to persuade, then your writing should contain thoughtful arguments that will convince your reader of your point. Ask yourself, “What purpose for writing does the strong verb convey?” “What words can I use to help make my purpose clear?” “What voice will best suit my purpose?” “How can I construct my sentence to help bring my idea to life?” “What is the best organization to make this piece of writing really work well?” “Are there things I could do with conventions to make sure that this piece of writing fulfills its purpose?”</p>