



EDUCATION @ MESA ARTS CENTER

COOPERATIVE SENTENCE STRIP PARAGRAPH

Introduction & Objective: Here students will work in small groups to create sentences, then work as a whole class to create a paragraph from those sentences. This serves as both a review of content material and practice in both oral and written language fluency.

Materials:

- Large chart or butcher paper & magnets/tape **OR** Pocket Chart
- Large sentence strips
- Notebook paper
- Markers

Procedure:

1. Preparation: Create a topic sentence that encompasses the show or Dia de los Muertos as a topic. This could be something like “Día de los Muertos is a celebration that honors those who have passed away.” Write the topic sentence on large butcher or chart paper. Or, if you are using a pocket chart, write it on a sentence strip and place it at the top of the pocket chart.
2. Read the topic sentence with students.
3. Explain to students that they are going to work in small groups to create a sentence that would be relevant for a paragraph with the topic sentence you’ve provided. In order to get students excited and engaged, a game-like quality is added to the assignment. After discussing options among their group, the group will write their rough draft sentence on a piece of notebook paper. When they have done this, they raise their hands for the teacher to check their sentence. If there are any errors, factual or grammatical, the teacher guides them to these mistakes without correcting it for them. Students must fix the sentence and then raise their hands to have it checked again. If it is correct, students get the final copy sentence strip paper and re-write their sentence on it. The key here is that no two groups can write the same sentence about the same supporting fact. The goal is to finish as quickly as possible before someone else uses the same idea. When the students have finished their final copy sentence, they put it on the large paper underneath the topic sentence using magnets so that they can be easily moved during the editing process, or place it in the pocket chart.
4. Once all groups have finished their sentences, the class reads through all the sentences together. Guided by the teacher, the class discusses the best order to put the sentences in—is there a sentence that should clearly go directly after the topic sentence? Are there facts that should be grouped together? As the class makes these decisions, the teacher moves the sentences around, visually modeling how to edit a paragraph.
5. When the paragraph is completely edited, the class reads it out loud together.