

# Center for the Study of Expertise in Teaching and Learning

## Handbook of Writing Strategies

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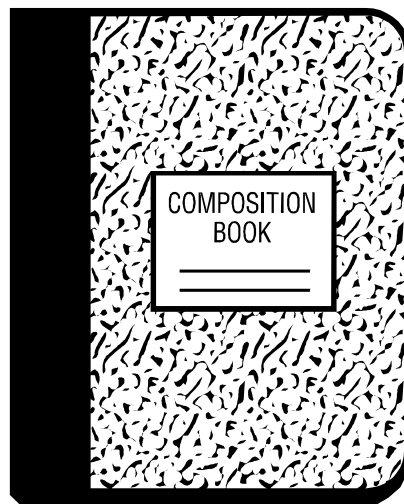
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# Strategies and Sample Lessons For Use of Language



## USE OF LANGUAGE

### How do I help students use different words and language structures effectively in their writing?

Involves helping students use language to convey the intended message of the writing specific to the audience and purpose of the task. It also includes helping students use descriptive, supportive, relevant details as well as vocabulary specific to the task.

### Indicators of Language Usage

- Use descriptive language
- Use appropriate, content, style or genre -specific vocabulary
- Demonstrate sentence variety
- Identify figures of speech (i.e. personification, simile, metaphor, etc.)
- Use figures of speech (i.e. personification, simile, metaphor, etc.)
- Demonstrate a point of view
- Exhibit voice
- Exhibit a sense of style
- Exhibit creativity

## Figurative Language Strategy

### Strategy Description

Skillful use of language helps paint pictures with words in the reader's mind. Using words to stand for or suggest concrete ideas to represent other frequently abstract ideas helps increase and clarify meaning. Figures of speech involve the use of comparison, comparing two things that might normally not be compared. When used well, figures of speech startle, prompt associations with memories, move and delight the reader. In order to learn to effectively use figures of speech, students need to read how authors use them and then experiment with the figures. For this strategy, students will read examples of age appropriate figures of speech with the teacher, discuss the particular figure of speech and, using the figure of speech, then practice in whole groups and small groups.

Implementation Steps:	This strategy helps students' ability to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teacher shares examples of author's use of figure of speech with students, using overhead and student copies of the text. Teacher and students discuss what the figure of speech is and how the figure of speech helps the meaning of the piece.</li> <li>2. Students practice with figure of speech, generating samples of personification, similes and metaphors, depending on the age of the students.</li> <li>3. Students write a paragraph focusing on use of figure of speech individually or in pairs. They apply the practiced figure of speech to their own writing.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read for comprehension</li> <li>• Use descriptive language</li> <li>• Exhibit voice</li> <li>• Exhibit a sense of style</li> </ul>
	Duration of Strategy:
	<u>Steps 1-2:</u> 1-2 class periods, depending on the age of the student
	Materials Needed:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Samples of text using figure of speech</li> <li>• Student's prompts for writing own figures of speech</li> </ul>

## Elementary Level Lesson Using Figurative Language Strategy

Lesson Outline:	Writing Dimensions/Student Needs Addressed:	NYS ELA Standards and Indicators Addressed:
<p>1. Teacher shares with students examples of use of personification (could be called "writing through a mask" for young students). Picture books or short texts like <u>I am the Ocean</u> by Suzanna Marshak are effective. Teacher can place text on overhead and/or give students typed copies. Class discusses how the author is pretending to be whatever is being talked about in the text. It is helpful if the students actually circle words in the text and label the personification. This also provides students with a resource during independent writing time.</p>	<p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine the purpose for reading</li> </ul> <p>Use of Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify figures of speech (personification)</li> </ul>	<p>4.1. Listening and Speaking for social interaction.</p> <p>a. listen attentively and recognize when it is appropriate for them to speak.</p> <p>b. take turns speaking and respond to others' ideas in conversations on familiar topics.</p> <p>c. recognize the kind of interaction appropriate for different circumstances, such as story hour, group discussions, and one-on-one conversations.</p>
<p>2. Students reminisce about how they have pretended while playing in the past to be animals, objects, etc. They share their stories.</p>	<p>Development of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize background knowledge</li> </ul>	
<p>3. Students think about and share orally how they would pretend to be the wind, or ice or snow. Students take turns speaking their ideas and the teacher can record their ideas on chart paper. Students compare how they have thought of different ways to be the same thing.</p>	<p>Use of Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit creativity</li> <li>• Use descriptive language</li> <li>• Use appropriate content, style or genre-specific vocabulary</li> </ul> <p>Voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use language that helps the reader see or feel what is happening or the writer's message</li> <li>• Use emotions and feelings</li> <li>• Bring topic to life</li> </ul>	

Lesson Outline:	Writing Dimensions/ Student Needs Addressed:	NYS ELA Standards and Indicators Addressed:
<p>4. Students individually write stories pretending they are the moon. These prompts should help the students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-What would it feel like to be the moon?</li> <li>-What would you say?</li> <li>-How could you describe it?</li> </ul>	<p>Use of Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit creativity</li> <li>• Use descriptive language</li> <li>• Use appropriate content, style or genre-specific vocabulary</li> </ul> <p>Voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use language that helps the reader see or feel what is happening or the writer's message</li> <li>• Use emotions and feelings</li> <li>• Bring topic to life</li> </ul>	<p>2. Speaking and writing for literary response and expression.</p> <p>c. create their own stories, poems, and songs using the elements of the literature they have read and appropriate vocabulary.</p> <p>d. observe the conventions of grammar and usage, spelling, and punctuation.</p>
<p>5. Students share their stories and discuss how they wrote through the mask.</p>		<p>4.1. Listening and Speaking for social interaction.</p> <p>a. listen attentively and recognize when it is appropriate for them to speak.</p> <p>b. take turns speaking and respond to others' ideas in conversations on familiar topics.</p> <p>c. recognize the kind of interaction appropriate for different circumstances, such as story hour, group discussions, and one-on-one conversations.</p>
<b>Strategy Adaptations and Modifications</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Another good book for showing examples of personification is <u>Dirty Laundry Pile: Poems in Different Voices</u>. Poems in the book that work well with early primary students include <u>The Vacuum Cleaner's Revenge</u> by Patricia Hubbell and <u>Crayon Dance</u> by April Halprin Wayland.</li> <li>• <u>The Rooster Who Went to His Uncle's Wedding: A Latin American Folktale</u> is a book that can be substituted for <u>I am the Ocean</u>.</li> <li>• Students can be given a wider choice of topic on which to write. For example, in the elementary lesson students are asked to write about the moon. This could be broadened to celestial objects.</li> </ul>		
<b>Accompanying Assessment Ideas</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students could revisit earlier draft and add "writing through the mask" where description would be appropriate.</li> <li>• Students could write personifications of objects and then play a game with other students guessing what the object is.</li> </ul> <p><i>Performance criteria for an assessment would focus on appropriate use of words and phrases to represent object or ideas personified.</i></p>		

## Intermediate Level Lesson Using Figurative Language Strategy

Lesson Outline:	Writing Dimensions/Student Needs Addressed:	NYS ELA Standards and Indicators Addressed:
<p>1. Students draft story or other descriptive piece.</p>		<p>2.2 Speaking and writing for literary response and expression.</p> <p>c. write stories, poems, literary essays, and plays that observe the conventions of the genre and contain interesting and effective language and voice.</p> <p>d. use standard English effectively.</p>
<p>2. Teacher shares with students examples of simile. Text such as <u>The Borning Room</u> by Paul Fleischman lends itself to analysis and discussion. The teacher may put text on overhead and give the students copies to mark up. Students label the similes and exactly what is being compared.</p>	<p>Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine the purpose for reading.</li> </ul> <p>Use of Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify figures of speech (simile)</li> </ul>	
<p>3. Students discuss the form of the similes (comparison of two unlike things using like or as.) S/he asks students: How does the connecting word help the reader?</p>	<p>Comprehension Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use context clues</li> <li>• Find details</li> <li>• Refer back to story for information</li> </ul>	
<p>4. Students practice using some examples from their own experience. Examples would include: school is like . . . or Friends are like . . .</p>	<p>Development of Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize background knowledge</li> </ul>	

Lesson Outline:	Writing Dimensions/Student Needs Addressed:	NYS ELA Standards and Indicators Addressed:
<p>5. Students re-read own draft. Students share lines from own writing drafts where they do not use similes. Class members then suggest similes to add as description to those lines.</p>	<p>Use of Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit creativity</li> <li>• Use descriptive language</li> <li>• Use appropriate content, style or genre-specific vocabulary</li> </ul> <p>Voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use language that helps the reader see or feel what is happening or the writer's message</li> <li>• Use emotions and feelings</li> <li>• Bring topic to life</li> </ul>	<p>4.1 Listening and speaking for social interaction.</p> <p>a. listening attentively to others and build on others' ideas in conversations with peers and adults.</p> <p>b. express ideas and concerns clearly and respectfully in conversations and group discussions.</p> <p>d. use verbal and non-verbal skills to improve communication with others.</p>
<p>6. Students re-read own draft, revising and adding appropriate similes suggested by classmates or others they compose on their own.</p>	<p>Use of Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit creativity</li> <li>• Use descriptive language</li> <li>• Use appropriate content, style or genre-specific vocabulary</li> </ul> <p>Voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use language that helps the reader see or feel what is happening or the writer's message</li> <li>• Use emotions and feelings</li> <li>• Bring topic to life</li> </ul> <p>Mechanics and Conventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit evidence of revision</li> </ul>	<p>1.2 Speaking and writing for information and understanding.</p> <p>e. use the process of pre-writing, drafting, revising, and proofreading ( the "writing process") to produce well-constructed informational texts.</p> <p>2.2 Speaking and writing for literary response and expression.</p> <p>c. write stories, poems, literary essays, and plays that observe the conventions of the genre and contain interesting and effective language and voice.</p> <p>d. use standard English effectively.</p>

**Strategy Adaptations and Modifications**

- Another good book for showing examples of personification is Dirty laundry Pile: Poems in Different Voices. Poems in the book that work well with early primary students include The Vacuum Cleaner's Revenge by Patricia Hubbell and Crayon Dance by April Halprin Wayland.

**Accompanying Assessment Ideas**

- Students can reflect on revised draft - Why did I add simile? What does it add to piece? *Performance criteria for an assessment would focus on appropriate use of similes that enhance the object described.*

## Secondary Level Lesson Using Figurative Language Strategy

Lesson Outline:	Writing Dimensions/Student Needs Addressed:	NYS ELA Standards and Indicators Addressed:
1. Students write draft of story or descriptive piece.		2. Speaking and writing for literary response and expression.
2. Teacher shares text with powerful metaphors (comparisons of unlikely things without the use of like or as) with class, using overhead and/or student copies. Class reads text, identifies metaphors and discusses what makes them effective and powerful. It is helpful if students make notes on text.	Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine the purpose for reading</li> </ul> Use of Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify figures of speech (simile)</li> </ul> Comprehension Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use context clues</li> <li>• Find details</li> <li>• Refer back to story for information</li> </ul>	c. write original pieces in a variety of literary forms, correctly using the conventions of the genre and using structure and vocabulary to achieve an effect.  d. use standard English skillfully and with an individual style.  1.2. Speaking and writing for information and understanding.
3. Students practice writing metaphors in small groups. Teacher gives them objects to use in comparisons: -inanimate objects such as rocks, buildings, -possessions, etc. -abstract ideas, such as war, love, hate, fear, etc.	Use of Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit creativity</li> <li>• Use descriptive language</li> <li>• Use appropriate content, style or genre-specific vocabulary</li> </ul> Voice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use language that helps the reader see or feel what is happening or the writer's message</li> <li>• Use emotions and feelings</li> <li>• Bring topic to life</li> </ul>	e. revise and improve early drafts by restructuring, correcting errors, and revising for clarity and effect.  4.1. Listening and speaking for social interaction.
4. Teacher asks students to generate their own metaphors.	Development of Ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize background knowledge</li> </ul>	a. engage in conversations and discussions on academic, technical, and community subjects, anticipating listeners' needs and skillfully addressing them.
5. Students share their metaphors and discuss the basis for the comparison.	Comprehension Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw conclusions</li> </ul>	b. express their thoughts and views clearly with attention to the perspectives and voiced concerns of the others in the conversation.  c. use appropriately the language conventions for a wide variety of social situations.

Lesson Outline:	Writing Dimensions/Student Needs Addressed:	NYS ELA Standards and Indicators Addressed:
<p>6. Students return to own draft and revise adding at least one metaphor to their piece.</p>	<p>Use of Language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit creativity</li> <li>• Use descriptive language</li> <li>• Use appropriate content, style or genre-specific vocabulary</li> </ul> <p>Voice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use language that helps the reader see or feel what is happening or the writer's message</li> <li>• Use emotions and feelings</li> <li>• Bring topic to life</li> </ul> <p>Mechanics and Conventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit evidence of revision</li> </ul>	<p><i>(Cont. list from previous page also applies here)</i></p>

**Accompanying Assessment Ideas**

- Self-reflection - student explains the purpose for the metaphor and how it is effective
  - Students could share their metaphors in small groups and receive feedback on effectiveness.
- Performance criteria for an assessment would focus on appropriate use of metaphors to enhance their text.*

## Sentence Variety Strategy

### Strategy Description

Good writing has flow and meaning. The effective writer uses words and sentences that enhance and clarify the meaning for the reader. There are a variety of methods of varying sentences, each developmentally appropriate for different writers. This strategy involves the writer re-reading his/her draft and revising for a particular type of sentence variety.

Implementation Steps:	This strategy helps students' ability to:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Student writes draft.</li> <li>2. Student reads draft carefully looking for variations or lack of variations in sentence beginnings, length or sophistication of sentences.</li> <li>3. Student then identifies sections of draft where more variation would be effective and helpful for the reader.</li> <li>4. Student rewrites draft, adding variety in sentences.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate sentence variety</li> <li>• Exhibit a sense of style</li> <li>• Exhibit creativity</li> <li>• Demonstrate a point of view</li> </ul>
	<b>Duration of Strategy:</b>
	<u>Step 1:</u> 1 class period
	<u>Steps 2-4:</u> 1-2 class periods
	<b>Materials Needed:</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student draft</li> <li>• Pens, pencils</li> </ul>

## Intermediate Level Lesson Using Sentence Variety Strategy

Lesson Outline:	Writing Dimensions/Student Needs Addressed:	NYS ELA Standards and Indicators Addressed:
1. The students each have before them a draft of a piece of writing. The teacher tells the students they will be re-reading the draft to look for effective sentences.	Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine purpose for reading</li> </ul>	
2. Students re-read carefully, counting the number of words in each sentence. In pencil, students then write the number of words in each sentence at the end the sentence.		
3. The class discusses the message behind short sentences (ex. They surprise...They get right to the point...They are like real talking...)	Comprehension Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw conclusions</li> </ul>	4.1 Listening and speaking for social interaction.  a. listening attentively to others and build on others' ideas in conversations with peers and adults.
4. The class discusses the message behind long sentences (They give more information...They describe more...They lead the reader to the point more slowly...).	Comprehension Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draw conclusions</li> </ul>	b. express ideas and concerns clearly and respectfully in conversations and group discussions.  d. use verbal and non-verbal skills to improve communication with others.
5. Students look at variety of their sentences and make changes, either combining sentences or separating them to provide effective variety. The teacher models this a few times using sentences from students' papers.	Use of Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit a sense of style</li> <li>• Use descriptive language</li> <li>• Demonstrate sentence variety</li> </ul>	1.2 Speaking and writing for information and understanding  e. use the process of pre-writing, drafting, revising, and proofreading ( the "writing process") to produce well-constructed texts

Lesson Outline:	Writing Dimensions/Student Needs Addressed:	NYS ELA Standards and Indicators Addressed:
6. Students incorporate variations into next their draft.	Use of Language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit a sense of style</li> <li>• Use descriptive language</li> <li>• Demonstrate sentence variety</li> </ul> Mechanics and Conventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit evidence of revision</li> </ul>	f. use standard English for formal presentation of information, selecting appropriate grammatical constructions and vocabulary, using a variety of sentence structures, and observing the rules of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

Strategy Adaptations and Modifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide students with examples of effective sentences to use as examples from which to work when writing independently.</li> <li>• Have students make a line plot to show the numbers of words in sentences in the first draft and then the improved draft. This provides students with a visual of their overall piece. The two line plots together allows students to compare the two pieces of writing.</li> </ul>

Accompanying Assessment Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can look at two drafts side by side and then reflect in writing why they made the changes and how the changes will improve the written piece.</li> </ul>

<b>Adaptations Using Sentence Variety Strategy At Other Levels</b>	
<b>Elementary Level</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The very young writer needs to be concerned with the variation of opening words in sentences. The same word repeated every time is boring (e.g., I...I...I...). Students will re-read their drafts placing their pencils on the first word of each sentence and seeing if the words are the same. Repetition of the same word more than twice should prompt revision, changing that first word.</li> </ul>	<b>Secondary Level</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older student writers are ready to be concerned with the complexity of their sentences. The students re-read their drafts one sentence at a time labeling the sentences as either simple, compound, complex or compound-complex. Too much repetition of any one type is a signal for revision for fluency. The student then revises draft.</li> </ul>
Accompanying Assessment Ideas	
<b>Elementary Level</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students can read each other's revised pieces and react to meaning and sentence variety.</li> <li>• Teacher could place several student revised drafts on overhead and read with entire class to illustrate sentence variety.</li> </ul>	<b>Secondary Level</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher can place several student revised paragraphs on overhead and read with entire class to illustrate variety.</li> <li>• Students could have a checklist with definitions and labels for the types of sentences.</li> </ul>
<i>Performance criteria for an assessment would focus on purposeful use of varied sentences.</i>	

## Personal Dictionary Strategy

### Strategy Description

Effective writers are skilled in choosing just the right word/words to clearly convey their message. Student writers need resources to help them build and practice with word choice. A personal dictionary enables the student writer to have a word bank at his/her fingertips. Arranged according to a number of purposes, the dictionary will stretch the writer's use of descriptive and content specific words.

### Implementation Steps:

1. Student writes draft.
2. Student uses personal dictionary containing words of personal importance (family names) or classroom content importance (color words, science vocabulary, awesome adjectives...) to improve and enhance word choice. The teacher will direct specific student use.
3. Student revises writing with vocabulary.

### This strategy helps students' ability to:

- Vary word choice
- Use words correctly and in meaningful context
- Use descriptive language

### Duration of Strategy:

#### Step 1:

1 class period

#### Steps 2-3:

1-2 class periods

### Materials Needed:

- Student draft
- Dictionary (could be a notebook or papers stapled together to make booklet)
- Classroom word banks

## Elementary Level Lesson Using Personal Dictionary Strategy

Lesson Outline:	Writing Dimensions/Student Needs Addressed:	NYS ELA Standards and Indicators Addressed:
1. Student writes draft.		1.2. Speaking and writing for information and understanding.
2. Teacher directs students to find words for people and things in their writing. The student then looks up and adds names for the people and things (ex. My dog, Buddy).	<b>Use of Language</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use descriptive language</li> <li>• Use appropriate content, style or genre-specific vocabulary</li> </ul> <b>Voice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring the topic to life</li> </ul> <b>Mechanics and Conventions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit evidence of revision</li> </ul>	d. use details, examples, anecdotes, or personal experiences to explain or clarify information.  f. use the process of pre-writing, drafting, revising, and proofreading ( the "writing process") to produce well-constructed informational texts.
3. Teacher directs students to find places where description is needed. Students then look in dictionary for good descriptive words (color, shape, size, etc.)	<b>Use of Language</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use descriptive language</li> <li>• Use appropriate content, style or genre-specific vocabulary</li> </ul> <b>Voice</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring the topic to life</li> </ul> <b>Mechanics and Conventions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit evidence of revision</li> </ul>	2.2. Speaking and writing for literary response and expression.
4. Students underline or circle the added or revised words in the draft.	<b>Mechanics and Conventions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exhibit evidence of revision</li> </ul>	c. create their own stories, poems, and songs using the elements of the literature they have read and appropriate vocabulary.  d. observe the conventions of grammar and usage, spelling, and punctuation.

### Accompanying Assessment Ideas

- Students can count the number of added or revised words.
- Students can share orally in small groups or large group why they made revisions.

## Adaptations Using Personal Dictionary Strategy At Other Levels

<b>Intermediate Level</b>	<b>Secondary Level</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students write draft.</li> <li>Teacher reads students text with strong verbs. Students identify the verbs and what makes them effective. Students then circle the verbs in their drafts and look up those verbs in a section of their personal dictionary. Revision occurs when they replace weak verbs with stronger verbs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students read essay prompt prepared by the teacher. They identify key words in the prompt they need to address. They then look up key word (like "show") and find effective synonyms for the key word. They then make sure during drafting and revision of their answer to the prompt that they vary their word choices.</li> </ul>

### Accompanying Assessment Ideas:

<b>Intermediate Level</b>	<b>Secondary Level</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students could keep a T chart, individually or as whole group:</li> </ul> <div style="margin-left: 40px; margin-top: 10px;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; padding: 5px 20px;">Weaker Verb</td> <td style="padding: 5px 20px;">Stronger Verb</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border-right: 1px solid black; height: 50px;"></td> <td style="height: 50px;"></td> </tr> </table> </div>	Weaker Verb	Stronger Verb			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students can work in small groups and compare their synonyms and vote as a group on two or three most effective ones</li> </ul>
Weaker Verb	Stronger Verb				

# Lesson Plan Template



Lesson Goals (Objectives):

The Teacher Will:	The Students Will:	Dimension/Indicators Addressed:

How will I assess my students?