

## Mini-lesson

### Third Grade

**SARAH:** All right guys, so in writing workshop last week, we did a lot of research about some different things: whale sharks, monkeys, and sea otters. And yesterday, you guys started your discovery drafts.

Well, I went home last night, and I decided that I wanted to write an expository text that taught about something that I know a lot about. And I was thinking, what animal do I know a lot about? Pugs. So I went home, and I wrote down everything I know about pugs. Can I share it with you?

**STUDENTS:** Yes.

**SARAH:** “What comes in a little packaged body, but has an enormous personality? Why, a pug, of course. I’m going to teach you all about pugs. A group of pugs is called a grumble. Pugs can be fawn, apricot fawn, silver fawn, or black. Pugs make great pets because they are playful and thrive on human companionship. Lots of pugs suffer from obesity, because they overeat and can’t exercise. But that’s OK, because pugs are so cute, who cares if they get fat? In fact, pugs are so lovable, lots of kings and queens owned pugs. I hope you enjoyed learning about this spunky little lapdog.”

What’d you guys think? You like it? Thank you.

So, that’s my discovery draft. Any feedback? Amira?

**AMIRA:** I think that you need a little bit more or less.

**SARAH:** I probably need to revise it, because this is just a discovery draft, right? Yeah. Mohammed?

**MOHAMMED:** You might want to add why you have a pug.

**SARAH:** I might put some of my own personal experiences in there with a pug.

**STUDENT:** Why you love your pug?

**SARAH:** Hmm. I do love my pug very much. You guys know that. But this is an expository text, not an opinion piece. So, in expository, I need to make sure I'm giving facts about pugs. If I was gonna write an opinion piece, I could try to convince you all to go out and get a pug, and I would include why I love her so much.

Well, as writers, you know, we all go back and revise, and ask what we can do to make our writing better. And when we talk about nonfiction, one of the things we have to consider, especially as a writer, is our organization. Do you think I, as a writer, should go back and reread my writing and see if I could organize it better? Because that's something writers do. When I threw all my information down in my discovery draft, I was just trying to get out as much information as I could, as fast as I could. So now, as a writer, I have to go back and think of categories. Because writers think about how to organize information into categories, which makes it easier for their readers to understand.

So let's go back, and I'm going to read my writing again, and let's see if you guys can help me figure out some different categories to put my information in. OK? So I'm going to skip over my lede, where I introduce my topic, and go back down to my facts.

So I said, "A group of pugs is called a grumble. Pugs can be fawn, apricot fawn, silver fawn, or black."

You said something to me about fur, right? In telling their colors, and talking about fur, what am I doing? What part of my writing is that? What am I teaching you about?

**STUDENT:** What it looks like.

**SARAH:** What it looks like. Could that be a section? Maybe one of my sections could be looks.

All right, so that looks like one category. Looks. I've got some color, I've got some description of their bodies. Did anyone else hear any other categories in my writing, of a way I could organize my writing?

**STUDENT:** What they do?

**SARAH:** What they do—their attitudes, right? We have looks, we have how they act. Their behavior.

So, again, I wanna go through my writing and find and mark all the places where I talk about the pug's behavior. Hmm...playful—let's make another line, how they act—they're playful, they thrive on human companionship.

And I'm noticing, as I keep reading through my writing, a category that I come up with is where they come from. I have a lot of information in my writing about pugs and how they came from China, and how they were bred for royalty, and lots of kings and queens had pugs. So that could be another section of my writing.

And I also talked a lot about, in here, about some health issues that pugs have. Like they get fat, and they have those smushed faces, and they can't breathe easily. So I could write something about their problems.

So these are categories that, for my writing, might work.

So your job today, as writers, is to think about how to organize information into categories, to make it easier for your reader to understand. So as you guys go back with your writing, first thing you're gonna do is—

**STUDENT:** Reread our writing.

**SARAH:**

Reread your writing. Second thing you're gonna do is decide on the categories you wanna use to organize your writing. And then, after you've gone through—and you can use the pens to mark up your paper, and make little lines to divide them into what categories you want—then you'll need to get a new piece of paper, and rewrite your draft. OK? That's your job as writers today.