



**Teacher Tips**  
**Elementary Communication Arts DHS**  
**Tips Contributed by Session 1 & 2, Teachers at Sikeston, MO, June 2005**

**Pre-Test Tips**

- edHelper.com is a wonderful website to get practice pages for the MAP test.

**Graphic Organizers**

- Teach students and make sure they understand the difference between tables and venn diagrams.
- Teach students to use a variety of graphic organizers.

**During the Test Tips**

- Erase clearly and do not use mechanical pencils.
- Use magic rub erasers.
- Staying within the provided lines is not as important as staying in the margins and not overlapping the next question.

**Teacher Tips**

- Teach more on taking details from 2 sources for 1 question/work with students comparing 2 different stories or books.
- Teach students what “explain in your own words” means rather than just quoting from the story.
- Don't forget the importance of exposing kids to poetry.
- Help define words from a story (what makes a good definition).
- I have rethought my priorities in teaching writing. I will still teach and require my students to write complete sentences, paragraphs, etc. However, I will focus more on content and flow (beginning, middle, and end). Does the story tell a story or does it just make statements?
- Teach students to write with more details and use a higher vocabulary. Also, model how a student should stay on topic, not bounce around.
- Teach students to practice staying on focus/topic when writing.
- Give more exposure to students in the Comm. Arts area through reading all types of stories, sharing . . .
- Teach students that when comparing/contrasting a negation is not worth a separate point! Ex: +1=brown hair>not brown hair; Ex: +2=brown hair>red hair
- Give students more practice writing reasonable explanations (details).
- When students write their papers, keep in mind that 3 and 4 papers have voice and personality—controlled by the student and 2 and 1 writing controls the student's work.
- Make sure students know what the word “advice” means.
- Teach students to write from a perspective or point of view.
- Teachers should understand how important and useful the Comm. Arts “interpretation of the Show-Me Standards for Assessment” document is. Be sure teachers know to look at the examples under each!

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## The Art of Communication in Communication Arts



- Teach students how to compare different pieces of literature (stories/poems).
- Make sure students understand that they are writing a story and not a list.
- Make sure students realize most CR responses are 2 parts and may need more than 1 answer.
- Work with students on using specific details from the story, article. . .
- Pick top writers and help them improve their writing from a 3 to a 4 (less ordinary words, more details).
- This scoring experience helps teachers.
- Students need daily practice on reading and understanding directions. Many answers simply don't have anything to do with the question asked.
- Expose students to different purposes/styles of writing, instead of only narrative to build descriptive writing skills.
- As a teacher, don't do the work for the writer; expect complete answers.
- When reading an essay—read paper as a whole—look for a story.
- Swap 3 or 4 stories with other teachers to get feedback.
- Use scoring guides in classroom and “MODEL” how to bump up to next point level.
- Teach students to put descriptive details in their writing.
- When working with students, it really helps to show the writer's personality in the story. Work with students on getting letters to refer back to content of a given story. Work on picking out specific details from stories/text.
- Be sure students understand they are using details specific to each/both texts they are using.
- Work on better endings/conclusions to performance events.
- I will go over more things in my classroom that require my students to tell things or explain things in their own words. Also, I will teach them what “advice” means and the appropriate way to give to advice.
- I will keep working on pulling text-based details from stories and poems to give good answers.
- Give lots of detail in story—do not write a list.
- I really enjoyed this opportunity to learn about “how” the test is scored. Scorers are trained to really look deeply and try to give those Missouri students as much credit as possible.
- Work with students on pulling details from the story.
- Make sure students can find the problem in a story.
- Spend more time comparing 2 different types of writing (i.e.: poem and non-fiction).
- Encourage students to go back into passages to write detailed answers with the passage vocabulary.
- Teach students to redefine words in their own words.
- Integrate successful MAP skills into daily routine (all year).
  - following written directions
  - pulling details from text
  - completing assigned reading/writing in a timely manner
  - writing within provided space
- Set expectations high. Differentiate instruction as you move all students toward a goal.
- Integrate reading and writing into content areas of math, science, and social studies.
- Build background knowledge through vocabulary work in content areas.
- Good professional books
  - Whatever It Takes, Rick Dufour
  - Best Practice, Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde

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### Student Tips

- Write answers neatly.
- Don't use the words "stuff and things" when giving details.
- Use specific details when writing the story.
- Attempt to answer each question—better to try than to leave blank.
- When comparing 2 different pieces of writing do not give the exact same words for both parts of the comparison. Use the same idea/concept, but use words specifically related to each piece of writing.
- Be very specific when writing constructed response answers.
- When writing the P.E., students need to have a distinct beginning, middle, and end; be specific on details; use pronouns sparingly; and use lots of descriptions and adjectives.
- Students need to practice and explain their answer in their own words.
- Read the story/poem carefully and use it to help answer the questions.
- When the question asks for details from the selection, be sure to use text based details and not information from past learning.
- In your own words, means not to quote directly from the selection.
- Use details/evidence from the passage instead of personal experiences that aren't text-based.
- Write/find details within a story; not just 1 or 2 word answers.
- Do not overuse pronouns after noun has been stated in CR answers or story writing.
- Read questions WELL and address the question.
- Be specific in answers. Use specific details and tell why or how.
- Follow the prompt precisely. If it says "from the story", make sure it is coming directly from the story. If it says "in your own words", it must be altered in some way so it is in your own words.
- Make sure your story has a beginning, middle, and end. (Students tend to drop the end, so really stress this).
- Restating the question isn't as important as making sure the question is answered.
- Be specific on answers—elaborate, tell as much as you can.
- When writing stories, students should have beginning, middle, and end with detail. Story should flow well.
- Refer to stories, but do not copy from the stories, even if you change one word.

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