

Content Planning

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Content Planning Through Guiding Questions and Learning Maps At a Glance

Guiding questions and Learning Maps serve at least two major purposes. First, teachers may be better prepared to teach their classes if they have a very clear understanding of the objectives and content that they will be teaching in their classes. Second, students may learn better if they have a very clear understanding of the connections between what they are, what they have, and what they will be learning.

Guiding Questions

Effective guiding questions should be comprehensive—that is, if students can answer all of the unit questions well, they should be do well on the end of unit assessments—and easy for students to understand. Unit questions can be written on the back of the learning map.

Learning Maps

Learning maps provide a visual summary of the content to be covered in the unit. The content on the learning map should depict what students need to know, understand, and do in the order in which it will be taught.

Introducing Unit Questions and Learning Maps

When introducing learning maps, the teacher shares the main ideas that will be covered in the unit, and students write the main ideas on their map. Students should have a good idea of what the unit will be covering following the introductory lesson.

Daily Use

The learning map and questions can be used for advance and post-organizers for each class, and teachers should guide students to add new details to their map as they learn them.

End of Unit Review

The learning map and questions can be used by teachers to prepare students for an end of unit assessment.

Going Deeper

The ideas contained here are heavily influenced by the work of Keith Lenz, the author of *The Unit Organizer Routine*. You can gain more information about the unit organizer and Keith's other work by visiting www.kucrl.org.

IC CHEAT SHEET

1. Develop guiding questions.
2. Create a learning map.
3. Introduce the guiding questions and learning map.
4. Use the questions and learning map effectively each day.
5. Use the questions and learning map effectively for end of unit review.

DEVELOP GUIDING QUESTIONS

Questions about Guiding Questions	Yes or No?
Do the questions effectively address the standards for the unit and course?	
Have I included an appropriate variety of knowledge, understanding, and application questions?	
Are most of the questions open-ended?	
Do the questions prompt students to use specific learning strategies or technological tools?	
Do the questions prompt students to think about how the content is meaningful, important, or related to their lives or other learning?	
Do the questions prompt students to identify important concepts, ideas, or content structures to be learned?	
Are the questions written in language that is easy to understand (kid friendly)?	
Have I limited my questions to six or fewer?	

CHECKLIST: QUALITY LEARNING MAPS

Learning Map Characteristics	√	Comments
No more than 7 content bubbles are included on the initial version of the map.		
When possible, bubbles are organized to mirror the sequence of the learning occurring in the unit		
Line labels are used effectively to connect content bubbles to the core idea or a kid-friendly paraphrase of the core idea.		
Questions refer only to content that is depicted in the learning map.		
An introductory learning map and expanded learning map have been created before teaching has begun.		

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

CHECKLIST: INTRODUCING THE GUIDING QUESTIONS & LEARNING MAP

TEACHING BEHAVIOR	✓	COMMENTS
The teacher takes 25 – 45 minutes to thoroughly introduce the unit		
The teacher co-constructs the learning map with students		
Students complete their personal map in their own handwriting (at least partially).		
There are at least 4 opportunities to respond per minute during the lesson		
Students store their map in a place where it will be easy for them to retrieve it.		

CHECKLIST: DAILY USE (UNITS)

Daily Use	√	Comments
90% of students have their map open on their desk when the bell rings to start the unit.		
90% of students can locate their learning maps without difficulty		
Each class begins with a review of the content covered up to the current point in the unit.		
The learning map is used to introduce the day's lesson.		
Students record new content learned on the expanded learning map.		
Each day ends with a review of the material depicted on the learning map		

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

CHECKLIST: REVIEW (UNITS)

End of Unit Review	√	Comments
At least 90% of items on assessments refer directly to content that is named on the learning map.		
At least 30 minutes is taken to review content on the learning map prior to final unit assessment.		
Students are prompted to use the learning map to prepare for unit assessment.		
When returning the unit assessment, the teacher explicitly explains how the map and questions could have helped students with the final unit assessment		

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Using the Components of Coaching for Content Planning for Units (enroll, explain, model, observe)

1. Enroll: Finding Teachers to questions and map

- Time: 15 - 30 minutes
- Explain the coaching process (observation form, model, collaborative exploration of data)
- Share the at a glance form and ask if teachers are interested

2. Explain: Developing a Quality Learning Map

- Time: 1 or 2 planning periods (40 - 90 minutes)
- Co-construct a checklist
- Co-develop or refine the guiding questions and learning map
- Use the co-constructed checklist to ensure you have a quality map & questions

3. Explain: Introducing the Map & Questions

- Time: 30 - 45 minutes
- Take the partnership approach, but with the goal of transferring everything on the checklist to the observation form

4. Model: Introducing the Map & Questions

- Time: 15 - 45 minutes
- Coach provides a model of how to introduce the unit map & questions
- Teacher observes the model using a co-constructed observation form
- Coach and teacher discuss what is on the co-constructed observation form (perhaps during class)
- Consider having the coach record your lesson with a Flip camera

5. Observe: Teacher Introducing the Map & Questions

- Time: 15 - 45 minutes
- Coach uses a co-constructed observation form while observing the teacher introduce a unit (ideally later in the same day of the model)
- Coach continues to observe and discuss the observation forms until teacher is fluent in use of the questions and map
- Consider recording the lesson with a Flip camera to share with the teacher

6. Explore: Teacher's Introduction of the Map & Questions

- Time: 15 - 45 minutes
- Coach reports data on the observation form non-judgementally
- Begins by asking the teacher "how do you think things went today"
- Shares data provisionally (e.g. "this is only my observation, what you think is way more important")
- Partners with teacher to identify specific next steps to be implemented (e.g. so as you look at this form, what do you think you should differently next time?)

- If a video recording of the lesson has been made, the coach should show the video to the teacher and ask them to use the observation form to identify what occurred and what didn't occur
- **7. Explain: Daily Use of the Map & Questions**
- Time: 20 - 30 minutes
- Take the partnership approach, but with the goal of transferring everything on the checklist to the observation form

8. & 9. Model, Observe and Explore: Daily Use of the Map & Questions

- Repeat steps 4, 5 & 6 but now applied to daily use

10. Explain: End of Unit Review

- Time: 30 - 45 minutes
- At least 90% of items on final assessment are on the unit learning map
- Take at least 30 minutes to review the content on the unit learning map
- Prompt students to use the learning map for review
- When returning the assessments, point out how the learning map could have helped

11. & 12. Model, Observe and Explore: End of Unit Review

- Repeat steps 5 & 6 but now applied to end of unit review

Sample Questions and Learning Maps

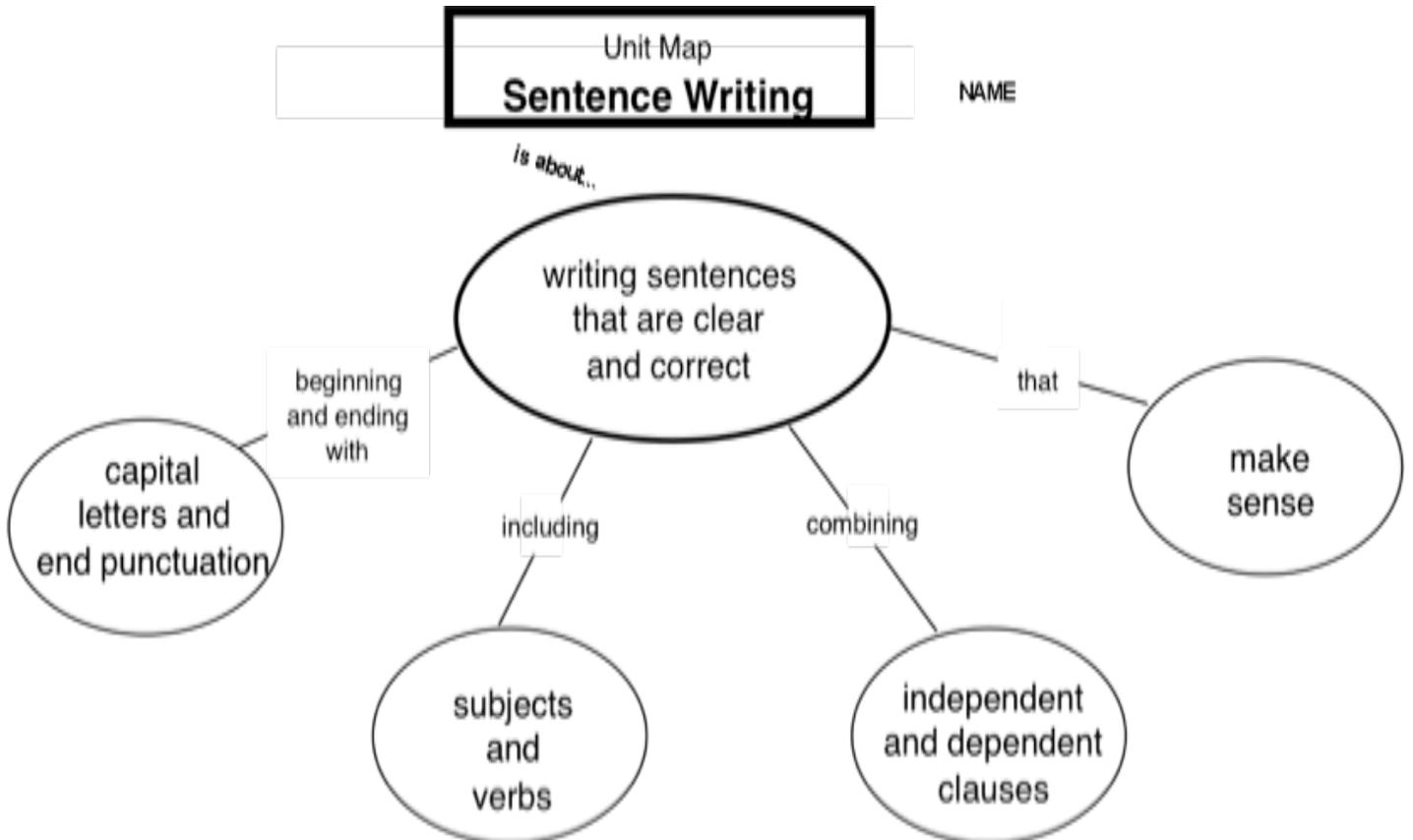
Unit Questions

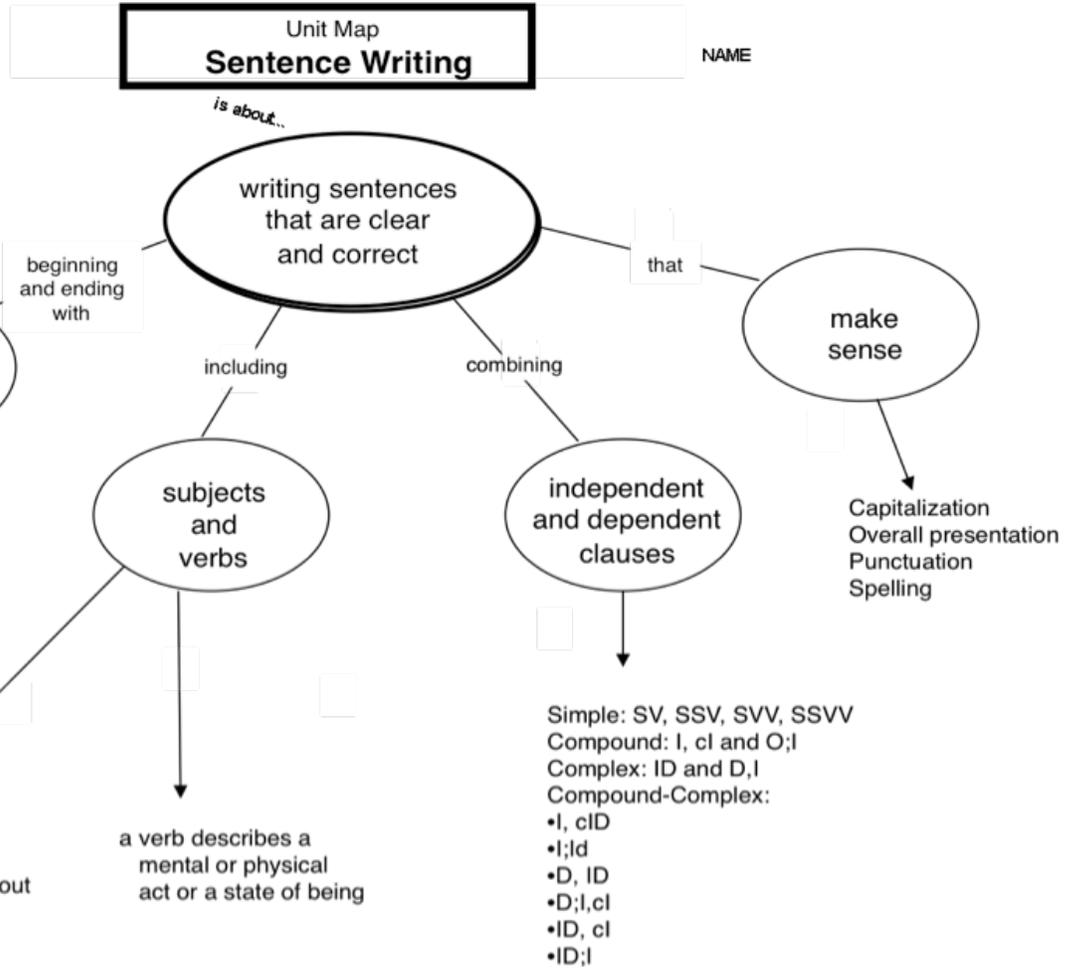
1.How do I use capital letters and end punctuation?

2.How are subjects and verbs used in sentences?

3.What are the sentence types using independent and dependent clauses?

4.How can I make sure that a sentence makes sense?





Unit Questions: Proportional Reasoning and Statistics

1. Which graph is appropriate for the given information?
2. When is it appropriate to use mean, median, mode, and range?
3. How do you solve proportions?
4. How do you calculate odds?
5. How do you calculate probability?
6. What is the difference between odds and probability?
How would you compute one given the other?
7. How you would estimate the cost of an item when a percent off is given?
8. How would you calculate a percent increase or decrease in cost?

Unit Questions: Paragraph Writing

1. Why is it important to organize our writing?
2. What are several sequencing patterns I can use to organize my writing?
3. What are topic, detail, and clincher sentences?
4. What are the different types of topic, detail, and clincher sentences?
5. What is the best way for me to put together the various types of sentences in paragraphs?
6. How can I use my understanding of point of view and verb tense to write better paragraphs?