

Hello teachers,

I'm [Dena Harrison](#), and between 2002 and 2008 I served as the Northern Nevada Writing Project's Lead Trait-trainer for six counties/school districts here in the great state of Nevada.

Over the summer of 2007, a small group of seven trait-enthusiasts sat together in a Northern Nevada conference room for a week. Our goal was to create a metaphor for the 6 Writing Traits that could be used in elementary, middle school, and junior high classrooms as a complement to those using the NNWP's 2006 "Going Deep with 6-trait Language Guide," which is sadly now out-of-print.

I was lucky enough to be one of those seven teachers, and I so wish our local writing project was still able to sponsor learning experiences like this one, but they have fallen on hard times financially.

The pages that follow this cover-sheet are the final product we created as a small team that summer. I was in charge using my desktop publishing skills to design a visual that was inspired by the trait-inspired metaphor we crafted. All of us from that learning team were allowed access to a color poster printer owned by our district, and we each received a set of these seven posters not only for ourselves but for the teachers at our own schools who were using the traits to teach writing.

I still own my poster set, but because of my crowded classroom walls, I prefer the laminated 8.5" x 11" inch versions I made of the posters with my own color printer. On writing workshop days, each group has a set of these charts sitting in the center of their workspace so that they can refer to trait language as they pre-write, respond, revise, or edit new pieces of writing.

Enjoy using these free posters with your own students. Please be sure to note the copyright statement, which explains how you can share them with your fellow educators without violating the original 2007 copyright.

If you'd like an editable version of these posters (in Microsoft Word™), we simply ask that you make a donation of \$5 to WritingFix using [this link](#). The donation will be used to keep the WritingFix website online since the NNWP no longer has the money to fund it. Thanks in advance for considering making a donation.

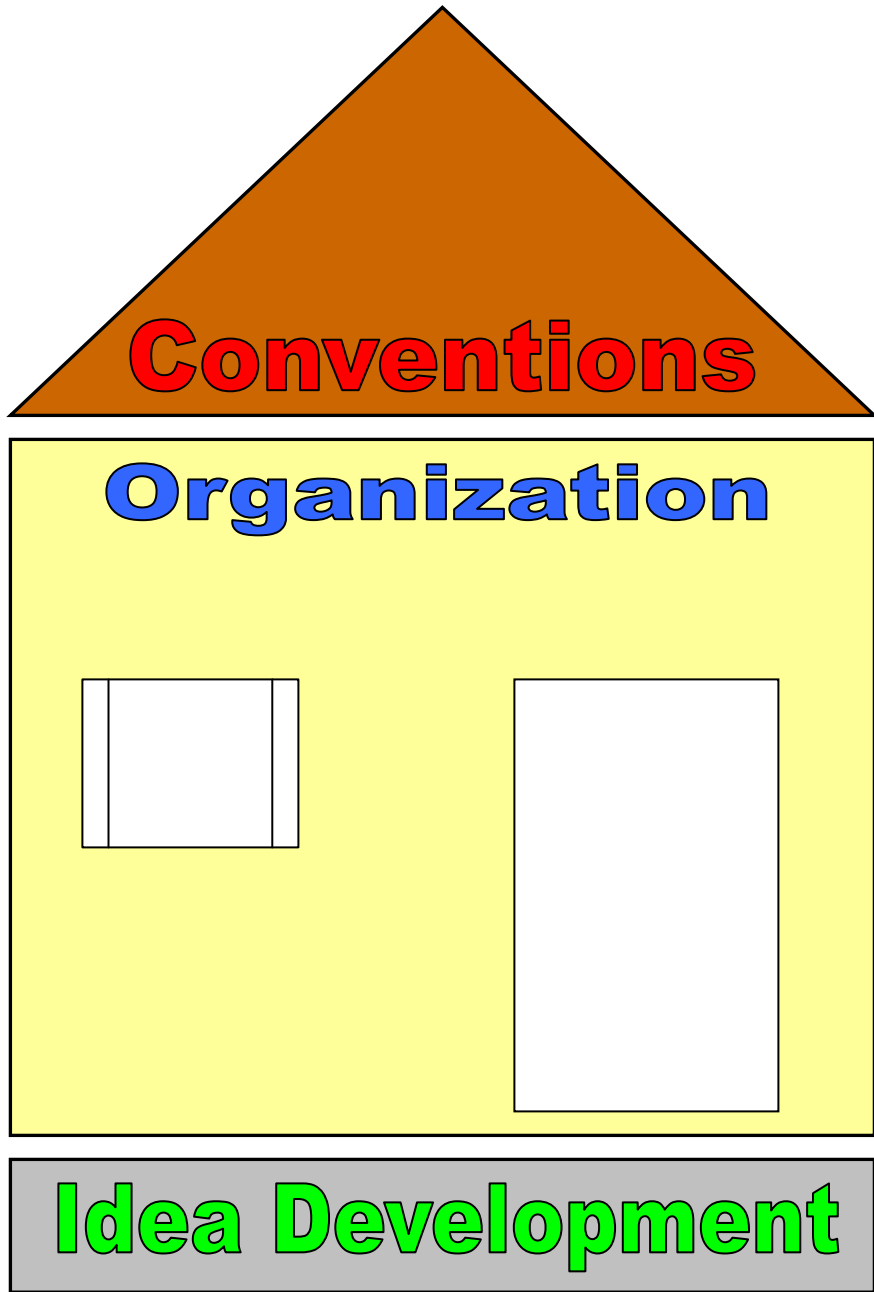
More than anything, be sure to use these posters to inspire your students to use trait language while they discuss writing with you and with each other! Our original group is thrilled they are still being used by amazing educators worldwide!

--Dena Harrison



**Sentence
Fluency**

Building
with the
6 traits

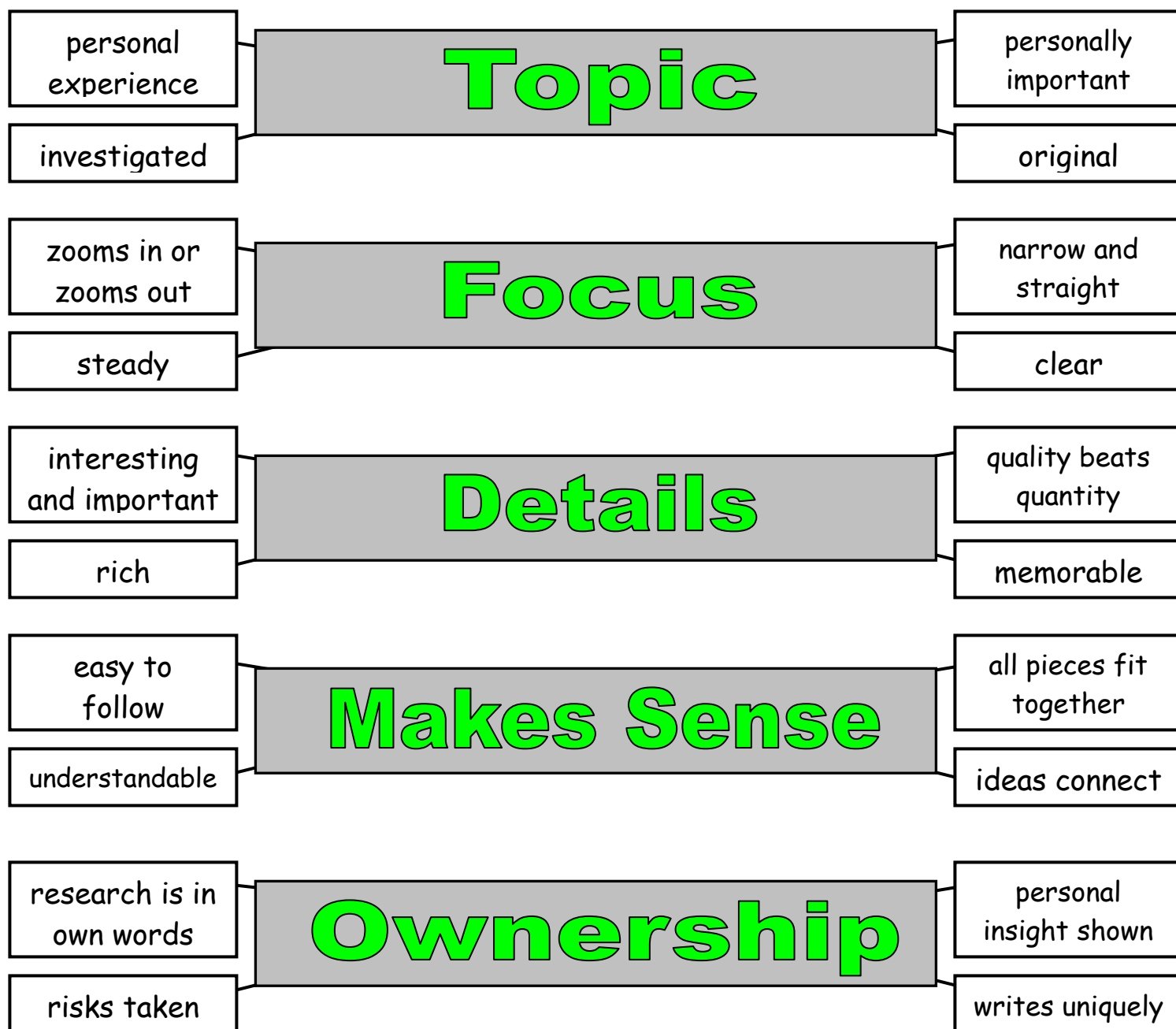


**Word
Choice**

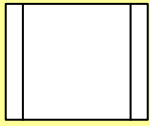
Voice

Idea Development

Like the foundation of a house, IDEA DEVELOPMENT serves as the solid base on which a good piece of writing rests. If you start with a solid idea, your writing can grow as big as you want.



Organization



ORGANIZATION is the structure of writing. Just as a house has an entrance, an exit, hallways that connect, and a sensible layout, so too does a piece of good writing. Blueprints are drawn before a house is built; writing should be "blue-printed" too!

Blueprints:



- appropriate graphic organizer used to plan writing
- the order of the writing makes sense
- the most important ideas receive the most attention
- transitions sound natural

Beginning:



- hooks or grabs the reader
- an inviting lead
- effective topic sentence
- shows where writing is going

Middle:



- parts fit together smoothly
- subtopics or parts are clearly separated
- ideas connect
- contains the "heart" of the writing

End:



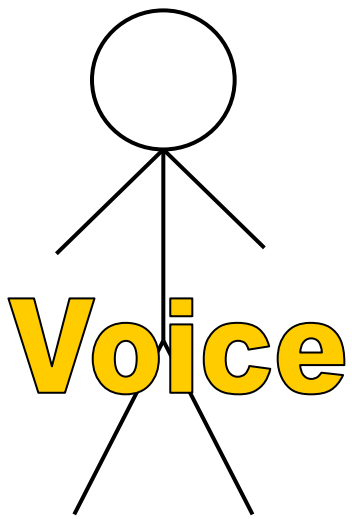
- might leave you thinking or wondering
- makes the writing feel complete
- leaves the reader feeling satisfied
- ties things together

Title:

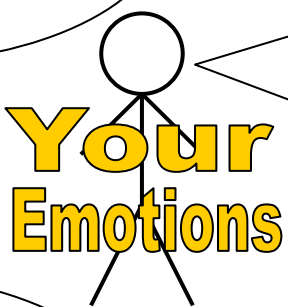


- hints at the writing's big idea
- is catchy
- makes sense
- is memorable

The author's VOICE—a.k.a. you!—should be present in every piece of writing you make. Sometimes your presence needs to be strong, but sometimes it should be kept subtle. How will you ensure that your reader recognizes this as your writing?



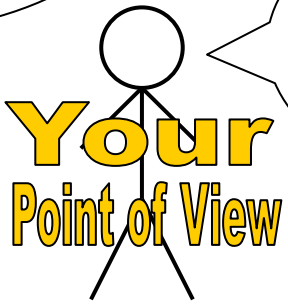
- sounds honest
- sounds sincere
- shows passion
- shows confidence



- energetic
- heart-felt
- author shows feelings toward topic (tone)
- author invites feelings from reader (mood)



- be either a storyteller or reporter
- showcase your techniques
- sound like you
- show personal risk



- shows an opinion
- considers perspectives
- audience awareness
- audience sensitivity



- writer knows own voice
- shows insight
- sounds believable
- writer owns topic

The roof of a house—though planned from the beginning—is not built first. Think about **CONVENTIONS** near the end of your process.

Conventions

Spelling

- Know your “sight words”!
- Use the dictionary!
- Abbreviate correctly!
- Double-check your vocabulary words!

Punctuation

- Check end punctuation! (periods, question marks, exclamation points)
- Check middle punctuation! (commas, apostrophes, semi-colons)
- Check dialogue punctuation!
- Check your hyphens!

Capitalization

- Capitalize proper names!
- Capitalize sentence beginnings!
- Capitalize titles!
- Don't mis-use/overuse capitals.

Grammar

- Check your noun and verb agreement!
- Check your noun and pronoun agreement!
- Check appropriateness: “gonna” versus “going to”!
- Double check verb tense!

Spacing

- Indent those paragraphs!
- Use the right amount of space between words!
- Don't put blank space between paragraphs!
- Use appropriate margins!

Sentence Fluency

Just as white clouds float peacefully in the sky, or thunder clouds arrive with alarm, sentences and phrases float through a piece of writing. Do you want your SENTENCE FLUENCY to be subtle or alarming?

Variety of Sounds

- repetition
- natural sounding
- rhythm and cadence
- experiments with language

Variety of Beginnings

- prepositions
- conjunctions
- participial phrases
- question words

Variety of Sentences

- complex and simple
- declarative and interrogative
- exclamatory and imperative
- short and long

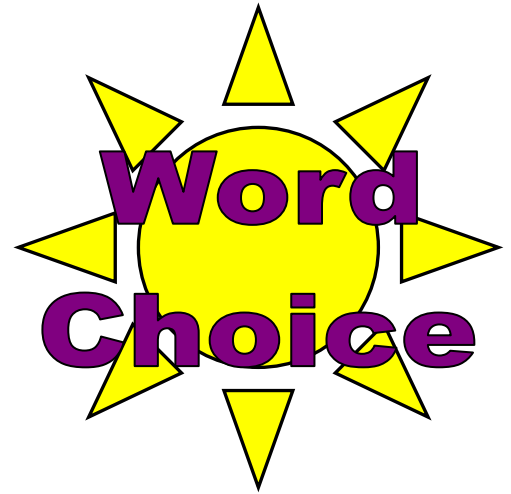
Variety of Connectors

- transitions
- connecting words and phrases
- sentence flow together
- experiments with colons and semi-colons

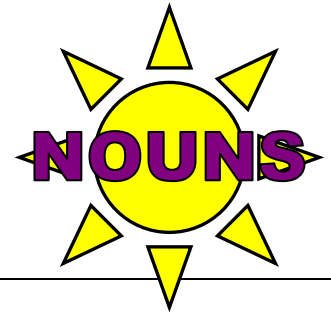
Has Readability

- carefully crafted
- smooth and flowing
- sounds natural when read aloud
- parallelism

WORD CHOICE—like the sun in the sky—can accomplish many things: comfort or sunburn, thirst or relaxation. The words you choose to include in your writing have profound impact on your reader.



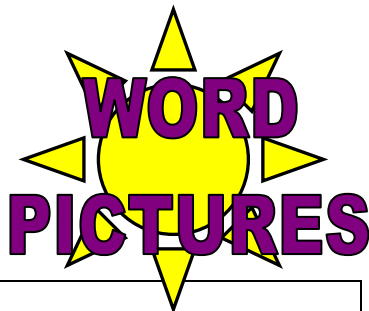
- precise verbs
- unique verbs
- writer considers synonyms
- balance of action and linking verbs



- precise nouns
- unique nouns
- purposeful use of pronouns
- correct noun and pronoun agreement



- precise adjectives
- unique adjectives
- writer considers synonyms
- using fewer quality adjectives is better than using a string of weak adjectives



- sensory images
- memorable phrases
- uses word pictures when appropriate
- verbs, adjectives, and nouns work together



- personification
- tries new vocabulary
- onomatopoeia
- effective similes and metaphors
- alliteration