

Grade 07: Memoir Language Task

All students must read, understand, and express their understanding of complex, grade-level texts. At the heart of being able to read and understand complex texts is the ability to automatically and fluently decode words and determine how they work together in sentences to produce meaning. Having “language sense” combined with other factors, such as having robust background knowledge and a wide vocabulary, are key determining factors in what makes a student able to read and understand complex texts.¹

The language tasks have been developed to support teachers in developing students’ language sense through repeated exploration of how key sentences from the texts of the ELA Guidebooks 2.0 units are put together to produce meaning. This approach reinforces students’ knowledge of language structures and how those structures produce meaning.²

Each language task is made of at least 20 language links. Each language link is designed to take around 10-15 minutes to conduct. The links can be used with the ELA Guidebooks 2.0 units as a beginning activity with a whole class of students or during targeted, small-group instruction or individual instruction with students who need additional support. Each language link contains text to display or project as a stimulus for student work, teacher directions, and student look-fors. The student look-fors include examples of accurate student responses; however they are not inclusive or exclusive of all possible responses.

The language links focus students on the study of mentor sentences from the unit texts. Mentor sentences were selected for their meaning and their structure. The mentor sentences focus on the main ideas or concepts of the unit texts and present opportunities for students to practice with the complex structures of their grade level. Students study each mentor sentence using the same five lesson protocol. The same five language links are then repeated with a new mentor sentence.

¹ Shanahan, T., Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2012, March). The Challenge of Challenging Text. *Educational Leadership*, 69(6), 58-62. Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar12/vol69/num06/The-Challenge-of-Challenging-Text.aspx>

² Fillmore, L. W., & Fillmore, C. J. (n.d.). What Does Text Complexity Mean for English Learners and Language Minority Students? Retrieved November 12, 2016, from http://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/pdf/academic-papers/06-LWF%20CJF%20Text%20Complexity%20FINAL_0.pdf

These language links focus on the study of 4 mentor sentences from the unit texts. Each language link should take around 10-15 minutes to conduct.

Each mentor sentence is used across five language links that each have a different purpose. The same five language links are then repeated with a new mentor sentence.

1. **What does this sentence mean?**
 - a. Purpose: Students make an initial interpretation of the mentor sentence's meaning.
2. **What do I notice about this sentence?**
 - a. Purpose: Students examine the meaning and structure of the mentor sentence.
3. **What do I know this sentence means?**
 - a. Purpose: Students demonstrate their understanding of the sentence's meaning.
4. **What is the structure of this sentence?**
 - a. Purpose: Students create a sentence frame based on the mentor sentence.
5. **Can I write a quality sentence?**
 - a. Purpose: Students emulate the structure of the mentor sentence in their own sentence.

Throughout this section, notes are provided to identify places of additional skills support for students based on previous grade-level standards. Be sure to keep track during these language links of places where students need additional skills support, and use time during small-group or individual instruction to target those skills.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 1: What does this sentence mean?

1. Display or project:

"The strongest memoirs, I think, are books that recall what it was like to be a child in a world of adults contending with life's adversities."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to copy the sentence.
3. Say: "Write and complete sentence stem underneath the sentence."

Student Look-Fors:

- The sentence means that to Zinsser, the most memorable memoirs are stories written from the point of view of a child who deals with difficulty.

4. After several minutes, ask a few students to share how they paraphrased or interpreted the quotation. Prompt students to use the following stems to guide the conversation.
 - a. "Another way to say this sentence is..."
 - b. "I made meaning of this sentence by..."
 - c. "I looked at..."
 - d. "I noticed that..."

Note: If students have trouble forming their ideas, remind them that this is day 1 with the mentor sentence, and they will have other opportunities to develop understanding of the sentence over the next few language links.

5. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their peers shared.

“How to Write a Memoir”

Mentor Sentence 1: What do I notice about this sentence?

1. Display or project:

“The strongest memoirs, I think, are books that recall what it was like to be a child in a world of adults contending with life’s adversities.”

From “How to Write A Memoir”

- What do you notice about this sentence?
- How does what you notice help you understand the sentence?

2. Direct students to write their answers to the two questions, recording what they notice about the sentence and how that contributes to their understanding.
3. Ask students to share their thoughts with a partner. Prompt them to use the following conversation stems to guide their initial conversations.
 - a. “I noticed...which means...”
 - b. “I knew...so I...”
4. Ask pairs to work together to describe how the sentence is put together. As needed, ask guiding questions to support students:
 - a. “What are the parts of this sentence?”
 - b. “Can we divide this sentence into two or more sentences? What do we have to remove or change?”
 - c. “What phrases or clauses do you notice? How do those help you understand this sentence?”
 - d. “Are there any conjunctions in this sentence? What do those conjunctions mean?”
 - e. “What punctuation do you notice? How does the punctuation help you understand the sentence?”
 - f. “Are there any parts of the sentence that can be removed without effecting the meaning?”
5. Call on 2-3 pairs to share with the class what they notice about the sentence and explain how those ideas contribute to their understanding of the sentence.
6. Prompt them to use the following conversation stems to guide their sharing with the class.
 - a. “We noticed...which means...”
 - b. “We knew...so we...”

As pairs share, mark the grammatical elements students notice on the sentence and record any additional

comments or thoughts on the board or chart paper. These will be needed for the next language links.

After each pair shares, ask another student to rephrase what the pair shared. Prompt students to use the following conversation stems to guide their rephrasing.

- a. "They noticed...which meant..."
- b. "They knew...so they..."

Student Look-Fors:

- Students may notice a wide variety of things about the sentence, including:
 - This sentence explains Zinsser's preference for a memoir's perspective.
 - Two commas offset the nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements "I think". These words interrupt the forward movement of the independent clause to show this is an opinion belonging to Zinsser.
 - The sentence is made up of an independent clause with the subject "The strongest memoirs," the verb "are," the predicate "books that recall what it was like to be a child," and followed by two noun phrases.
 - "Strongest" and "life's" are adjectives describing the nouns "memoirs" and "adversities."
 - The adjective clause "that recall what it was like" modifies the noun "books" and answers the question what kind?
 - The prepositional phrase "in a world of adults" modifies the noun "child" by answering the question where?
 - The participial phrase "contending with life's adversities" modifies the noun "child" by adding description of what the child in the world of adults does.

7. Ask students to reflect on their learning by completing one of the following sentence stems. Answers can be spoken or written.
 - a. To understand this sentence, I had to _____.
 - b. Noticing _____ helped me understand the sentence because _____.
 - c. Knowing _____ comes in handy when determining the meaning of this sentence.
8. Note: If student responses do not resemble the student look-fors in this language link, conduct a brief mini-lesson to review or reinforce a grammar skill from an earlier grade found in this sentence, such as writing simple, compound, or complex sentences, or how and when to use punctuation with conjunctions. Focus on a specific skill your students need.³ It is acceptable for students not to understand the full meaning of the sentence on this day.

³ Access the [Grammar Guide](#) to determine the skills students should have coming into grade 7, the skills that need to be reinforced in grade 7, and the skills that need to be explicitly taught in grade 7.

MENTOR SENTENCES

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 1: What do I know this sentence means?

1. Display or project:

"The strongest memoirs, I think, are books that recall what it was like to be a child in a world of adults contending with life's adversities."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to read what they wrote in the previous language link about the meaning of the sentence.
3. Say: "We have been analyzing this mentor sentence. Now we are going to look again at its meaning."
4. Display or project:

- **WHO/WHAT?**
- (Did/will) **DO WHAT?**
- **WHEN** did who do what?
- **WHERE** did who do what?
- **WHY** did who do what?
- **HOW** did who do what?

Summary Sentence: _____

5. Ask the following questions one at a time and prompt students to record their written responses.

WHO/WHAT?

(Did/will) **DO WHAT?**

WHEN did who do what?

WHERE did who do what?

WHY did who do what?

the strongest memoirs

are written in a child's point of view

as an adult looking back

in a world of adults

overcoming life's hardships

HOW did who do what?

N/A

6. Say: "Write a summary of the sentence. Make sure to put the sentence into your own words."

Student Look-Fors:

- The strongest memoirs are written by adults who look back on overcoming life's hardships using the point of view of a child living in a world of adults.
7. After several minutes, ask a few students to share their statements with the class.
8. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their classmates shared.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 1: What is the structure of this sentence?

1. Display or project:

"The strongest memoirs, I think, are books that recall what it was like to be a child in a world of adults contending with life's adversities."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

2. Say: "We have been working with the same mentor sentence to understand what it means. Now we will work together to take it apart so we can write our own quality sentences with a similar structure."
3. Ask: "What have we learned so far about this mentor sentence?" Conduct a brief discussion to review what was learned in the previous language links. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:
 - a. "What does this sentence mean?"
 - b. "What have you noticed about this sentence?"
 - c. "How is it put together?"

Student Look-Fors:

- This sentence means the strongest memoirs are written by adults who look back on overcoming life's hardships using the point of view of a child living in a world of adults.
- Students might say they noticed nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements offset from the independent clause by commas.
- They should understand the nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements "I think" show this sentence is an opinion belonging to Zinsser.
- Students might say they noticed a prepositional phrase, a participial phrase, and an adjective clause that modify nouns.
- Students should understand that the parts of this sentence are subject + comma + nonrestrictive/parenthetical element + comma + verb + predicate + adjective clause + infinitive phrase + prepositional phrase + participial phrase + period.

4. Display or project:

Roger, in Mrs. Jones' opinion, wouldn't behave badly if he had people to care for him.

5. Ask: “How is this sentence similar to the mentor sentence in the way that it is constructed?”

Student Look-Fors:

- Students should identify that the structures are similar--this example, like the mentor sentence, has an independent clause that is interrupted by nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements that are offset by commas.
- They should also identify that the nonrestrictive/parenthetical element shows the sentence is an opinion of Mrs. Jones.

6. Say: “Now let’s build a quality sentence about Roger’s opinion of Mrs. Jones using nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements that are offset by commas.”
7. Write a quality sentence as a class imitating the structure of the mentor sentence. As needed, review the structure of the mentor sentence again and/or ask students to compare the class sentence to the mentor sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- Mrs. Jones, according to Roger, showed him kindness when he deserved to be punished.

8. Say: “Now let’s construct sentences to illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. We will use these frames to write our own sentences and include the nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements below.”
9. Prompt students to identify other nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements that show the sentence is an opinion. Record those nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements. Then, as a class, create sentence frames that illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. Reinforce any other grammatical elements or spelling students may need to produce a quality sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- _____, _____ thinks, _____.
- _____, according to _____, _____.
- _____, in _____’s opinion, _____.

10. Direct students to reflect on their learning. Ask: “How does breaking down this sentence into its parts support your understanding of the sentence?” Answers can be spoken or written.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 1: Can I write a quality sentence?

1. Display or project:

"The strongest memoirs, I think, are books that recall what it was like to be a child in a world of adults contending with life's adversities."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

_____, _____ thinks, _____.

_____, according to _____, _____.

_____, in _____'s opinion, _____.

Explain Zinsser's advice for choosing the perspective in your memoir.

2. Say: "Now we are going to write our own quality sentences." Remind students of the elements of a quality sentence discussed in previous language links as well as other model sentences.
3. Read aloud the question, "What is Zinsser's advice for choosing a perspective in your memoir?"
4. Ask students to work independently to write 1-2 quality sentences that answer the question and imitate the structure of the mentor sentence.
5. Remind students they should interrupt their sentences with nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements that show the sentence is an opinion.
6. Encourage students to use the unit texts to ensure they have an accurate response.

Student Look-Fors:

- An exemplar should follow the sentence frame. For example:
 - Memoir writers, Zinsser thinks, should write from the point of view of a child or an adult looking back but not both.
 - Preserving a memory from the point of view of a child, in Zinsser's opinion, brings power to a memoir.
 - Writing as an adult reflecting on a childhood memory, according to Zinsser, can also make a great impact when memoir writing.

MENTOR SENTENCES

- The nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements should clearly indicate the statement is an opinion. For example in all of the look-fors above, the nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements reveal the statements are opinions held by Zinsser about choosing perspective.

Note: More complete sentence stems may be provided, as needed, as a method of additional support. For example, “Memoir writers, Zinsser thinks, should _____.”

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 2: What does this sentence mean?

1. Display or project:

"Writers should look for small self-contained incidents that are still vivid in their memory because they will contain a universal truth that your readers will recognize from their own life."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to copy the sentence.
3. Say: "Write and complete the sentence stem underneath the quotation."

Student Look-Fors:

- The sentence means that memoir writers should look for small, vivid memories that readers everywhere can relate to emotionally.

4. After several minutes, ask a few students to share how they paraphrased or interpreted the quotation. Prompt students to use the following stems to guide the conversation.
 - a. "Another way to say this sentence is..."
 - b. "I made meaning of this sentence by..."
 - c. "I looked at..."
 - d. "I noticed that..."

Note: If students have trouble forming their ideas, remind them that this is day 1 with the mentor sentence, and they will have other opportunities to develop understanding of the sentence over the next few language links.

5. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their peers shared.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 2: What do I notice about this sentence?

1. Display or project:

"Writers should look for small self-contained incidents that are still vivid in their memory because they will contain a universal truth that your readers will recognize from their own life."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

- What do you notice about this sentence?
- How does what you notice help you understand the sentence?

2. Direct students to write their answers to the two questions, recording what they notice about the sentence and how that contributes to their understanding.
3. Ask students to share their thoughts with a partner. Prompt them to use the following conversation stems to guide their initial conversations.
 - a. "I noticed...which means..."
 - b. "I knew...so I..."
4. Ask pairs to work together to describe how the sentence is put together. As needed, ask guiding questions to support students:
 - a. "What are the parts of this sentence?"
 - b. "Can we divide this sentence into two or more sentences? What do we have to remove or change?"
 - c. "What phrases or clauses do you notice? How do those help you understand this sentence?"
 - d. "Are there any conjunctions in this sentence? What do those conjunctions mean?"
 - e. "What punctuation do you notice? How does the punctuation help you understand the sentence?"
 - f. "Are there any parts of the sentence that can be removed without affecting the meaning?"
5. Call on 2-3 pairs to share with the class what they notice about the sentence and explain how those ideas contribute to their understanding of the sentence.
6. Prompt them to use the following conversation stems to guide their sharing with the class.
 - a. "We noticed...which means..."
 - b. "We knew...so we..."

As pairs share, mark the grammatical elements students notice on the sentence and record any additional comments or thoughts on the board or chart paper. These will be needed for the next language links.

After each pair shares, ask another student to rephrase what the pair shared. Prompt students to use the following conversation stems to guide their rephrasing.

- c. "They noticed...which meant..."
- d. "They knew...so they..."

Student Look-Fors:

- Students may notice a wide variety of things about the sentence, including:
 - This sentence explains what types of memories memoir writers should write about.
 - There is an independent clause (writers should look for small self-contained incidents) at the beginning of the sentence followed by a dependent clause (because they will contain a universal truth).
 - The adjective clause "that are still vivid" modifies the noun "incidents."
 - The adjective clause "that readers will recognize" modifies the noun "truth."
 - The prepositional phrase "in their memory" answers the questions where?
 - The prepositional phrase "from their own life" also answers the question where?
 - The subordinating conjunction "because" is used to connect the dependent clause to the independent clause.
 - This is a complex sentence because it is made up of an independent clause and a dependent clause joined by a subordinating conjunction.

7. Ask students to reflect on their learning by completing one of the following sentence stems. Answers can be spoken or written.

- a. To understand this sentence, I had to _____.
- b. Noticing _____ helped me understand the sentence because _____.
- c. Knowing _____ comes in handy when determining the meaning of this sentence.

8. Note: If student responses do not resemble the student look-fors in this language link, conduct a brief mini-lesson to review or reinforce a grammar skill from an earlier grade found in this sentence, such as writing simple, compound, or complex sentences, or how and when to use punctuation with conjunctions. Focus on a specific skill your students need.⁴ It is acceptable for students not to understand the full meaning of the sentence on this day.

⁴ Access the [Grammar Guide](#) to determine the skills students should have coming into grade 7, the skills that need to be reinforced in grade 7, and the skills that need to be explicitly taught in grade 7.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 2: What do I know this sentence means?

1. Display or project:

"Writers should look for small self-contained incidents that are still vivid in their memory because they will contain a universal truth that your readers will recognize from their own life."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to read what they wrote in the previous language link about the meaning of the sentence.
3. Say: "We have been analyzing this mentor sentence. Now we are going to look again at its meaning."
4. Display or project:

- **WHO/WHAT?**
- (Did/will) **DO WHAT?**
- **WHEN** did who do what?
- **WHERE** did who do what?
- **WHY** did who do what?
- **HOW** did who do what?

Summary Sentence: _____

5. Ask the following questions one at a time and prompt students to record their written responses.

WHO/WHAT?

writers

(Did/will) **DO WHAT?**

should look for vivid incidents

WHEN did who do what?

N/A

WHERE did who do what?

in their memory

WHY did who do what?

they will contain a universal truth that readers will relate to

HOW did who do what?

N/A

6. Encourage students to expand their summary sentence. Prompt them to use information from the unit texts to answer questions not provided in the original sentence.

WHO/WHAT?

writers

(Did/will) **DO WHAT?**

should look for vivid incidents

WHEN did who do what?

planning for writing a memoir

WHERE did who do what?

in their memory

WHY did who do what?

they will contain a universal truth that readers will relate to

HOW did who do what?

write about one vivid memory per day for two months to find patterns

7. Say: "Write a summary of the sentence. Make sure to put the sentence into your own words."

Student Look-Fors:

- When planning for a memoir, writers should look for one vivid incident to write about per day for two months to find one in their memory that will contain a universal truth that readers can relate to.

8. After several minutes, ask a few students to share their statements with the class.
9. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their classmates shared.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 2: What is the structure of this sentence?

1. Display or project:

"Writers should look for small self-contained incidents that are still vivid in their memory because they will contain a universal truth that your readers will recognize from their own life."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

2. Say: "We have been working with the same mentor sentence to understand what it means. Now we will work together to take it apart so we can write our own quality sentences with a similar structure."
3. Ask: "What have we learned so far about this mentor sentence?" Conduct a brief discussion to review what was learned in the previous language links. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:
 - a. "What does this sentence mean?"
 - b. "What have you noticed about this sentence?"
 - c. "How is it put together?"

Student Look-Fors:

- The sentence means that memoir writers should look for small, vivid memories that readers everywhere can relate to emotionally.
- Students might say they noticed an independent clause followed by a dependent clause.
- Students might say they noticed adjective clauses that modified nouns.
- Students might say they noticed prepositional phrases that answered the question where?
- The subordinating conjunction "because" is used to connect the dependent clause to the independent clause.
- This is a complex sentence because it is made up of an independent clause and a dependent clause joined by a subordinating conjunction.
- The parts of the sentence are independent clause + adjective clause + prepositional phrase + dependent clause + adjective clause + prepositional phrase + period.

4. Ask: "Where is there a conjunction that connects words, phrases, or clauses in this sentence? What does it mean?"

Student Look-Fors:

- The conjunction is *because* before “they will contain a universal truth.” *Because* is used to show the readers why memoir writers should choose to write about small self-contained incidents that are vivid in their memory. *Because* means “the reason is,” so it tells the reader why this decision is important.

5. Say: “Remember, conjunctions connect words, phrases, or clauses in a sentence and signal different relationships between ideas. Sometimes conjunctions add on ideas and sometimes conjunctions signal a change or contrast in ideas. They show how ideas relate in a sentence, so as we read, we better understand what a writer means. When we write, we use conjunctions to expand our sentences and make sure our meaning is clear to the reader.”

6. Display or project:

The narrator in gives the clerk a nickel and an orange since he didn’t have enough to pay for his date’s candy.

The clerk made eye contact with the narrator so that he knew it was ok to use his orange for payment.

7. Ask: “How are these sentences similar to the mentor sentence?”

Student Look-Fors:

- Students should identify that the structures are similar--these examples, like the mentor sentence, are complex sentences.
- Students should explain that the function of the conjunction in the sentences is to show how the ideas on each side of the conjunction connect. For example, in the first example, the dependent clause begins with the subordinating conjunction “since” and gives a reason the narrator gave the clerk a nickel and an orange as payment. In the second sentence, the subordinating conjunction “so that” gives a reason the clerk made eye contact with the narrator when he paid for the candy.

8. Say: “Now let’s build a quality sentence about the theme developed in “Oranges” using subordinating conjunctions.”

9. Write a quality sentence as a class imitating the structure of the mentor sentence. As needed, review the structure of the mentor sentence again and/or ask students to compare the class sentence to the mentor sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- The theme developed in “Oranges” is warm feelings of first love are universal and can be communicated in unspoken ways because the clerk lets the payment go out of tenderness for her own memories.

10. Say: “Now let’s build a sentence frame to illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. We will use these frames to write our own sentences.”
11. Display an anchor chart, or provide students with a list, of subordinating conjunctions and guide students to identify the relationships they signal. Then, as a class, create sentence frames that illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. Reinforce any other grammatical elements or spelling students may need to produce a quality sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- _____ because _____.
- _____ since _____.
- _____ so that _____.

What relationships do these conjunctions signal?

Cause and effect	Sequence	Under certain conditions	Comparison (Addition)
so that as because that since	after until when	unless that	as

13. Direct students to reflect on their learning. Ask: “How does breaking down this sentence into its parts support your understanding of the sentence?” Answers can be spoken or written.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 2: Can I write a quality sentence?

1. Display or project:

"Writers should look for small self-contained incidents that are still vivid in their memory because they will contain a universal truth that your readers will recognize from their own life."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

_____ because _____.

_____ since _____.

_____ so that _____.

Explain what advice Zinsser gives for determining what a memoir should be written about.

2. Say, "Now we are going to write our own quality sentences." Remind students of the elements of a quality sentence discussed in previous language links as well as other model sentences.
3. Read the prompt aloud, "Explain what advice Zinsser gives for determining what a memoir should be written about."
4. Ask students to work independently to write 1-2 quality sentences that answer the question and imitate the structure of the mentor sentence.

5. Remind students to select a subordinating conjunction to signal the appropriate connection of ideas in their sentences.
6. Encourage students to refer to unit texts to ensure their responses are correct.

Student Look-Fors:

- Writers should focus on memories that demonstrate a common emotional experience because readers will identify with that emotion in their own life.
- Writers should focus on small, vivid memories since they trigger an emotional response in the reader.
- Zinsser suggests writers find memories with a universal truth so that readers everywhere will be able to relate.

“How to Write a Memoir”

Mentor Sentence 3: What does this sentence mean?

1. Display or project:

“Memoir writers shouldn’t visualize the finished product, a grand edifice they have vowed to construct, because that will only make them anxious.”

From “How to Write A Memoir”

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to copy the sentence.
3. Say: “Write and complete sentence stem underneath the sentence.”

Student Look-Fors:

- The sentence means that if memoir writers only focus on their completed, complex story it may cause uneasiness.

4. After several minutes, ask a few students to share how they paraphrased or interpreted the quotation. Prompt students to use the following stems to guide the conversation.
 - a. “Another way to say this sentence is...”
 - b. “I made meaning of this sentence by...”
 - c. “I looked at....”
 - d. “I noticed that...”

Note: If students have trouble forming their ideas, remind them that this is day 1 with the mentor sentence, and they will have other opportunities to develop understanding of the sentence over the next few language links.

5. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their peers shared.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 3: What do I notice about this sentence?

1. Display or project:

"Memoir writers shouldn't visualize the finished product, a grand edifice they have vowed to construct, because that will only make them anxious."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

- What do you notice about this sentence?
- How does what you notice help you understand the sentence?

2. Direct students to write their answers to the two questions, recording what they notice about the sentence and how that contributes to their understanding.
3. Ask students to share their thoughts with a partner. Prompt them to use the following conversation stems to guide their initial conversations.
 - a. "I noticed...which means..."
 - b. "I knew...so I..."
4. Ask pairs to work together to describe how the sentence is put together. As needed, ask guiding questions to support students:
 - a. "What are the parts of this sentence?"
 - b. "Can we divide this sentence into two or more sentences? What do we have to remove or change?"
 - c. "What phrases or clauses do you notice? How do those help you understand this sentence?"
 - d. "Are there any conjunctions in this sentence? What do those conjunctions mean?"
 - e. "What punctuation do you notice? How does the punctuation help you understand the sentence?"
 - f. "Are there any parts of the sentence that can be removed without affecting the meaning?"
5. Call on 2-3 pairs to share with the class what they notice about the sentence and explain how those ideas contribute to their understanding of the sentence.
6. Prompt them to use the following conversation stems to guide their sharing with the class.
 - a. "We noticed...which means..."
 - b. "We knew...so we..."

As pairs share, mark the grammatical elements students notice on the sentence and record any additional

comments or thoughts on the board or chart paper. These will be needed for the next language links.

After each pair shares, ask another student to rephrase what the pair shared. Prompt students to use the following conversation stems to guide their rephrasing.

- c. "They noticed...which meant..."
- d. "They knew...so they..."

Student Look-Fors:

- Students may notice a wide variety of things about the sentence, including:
 - This sentence says focusing on the finished product can make a memoir writer uneasy.
 - There is an independent clause (memoir writers should not visualize the finished product) at the beginning of the sentence followed by a dependent clause (because it will only make them anxious).
 - There is an appositive offset by two commas that renames and adds information about the noun phrase "finished product."
 - The appositive can be removed from the sentence without changing the meaning.
 - The adjective clause "they have vowed to construct" modifies the noun "edifice."
 - The subordinating conjunction "because" is used to connect the dependent clause to the independent clause.
 - This is a complex sentence because it is made up of an independent clause interrupted by an appositive and a dependent clause joined by a subordinating conjunction.

7. Ask students to reflect on their learning by completing one of the following sentence stems. Answers can be spoken or written.

- a. To understand this sentence, I had to _____.
- b. Noticing _____ helped me understand the sentence because _____.
- c. Knowing _____ comes in handy when determining the meaning of this sentence.

8. Note: If student responses do not resemble the student look-fors in this language link, conduct a brief mini-lesson to review or reinforce a grammar skill from an earlier grade found in this sentence, such as writing simple, compound, or complex sentences, or how and when to use punctuation with conjunctions. Focus on a specific skill your students need.⁵ It is acceptable for students not to understand the full meaning of the sentence on this day.

⁵ Access the [Grammar Guide](#) to determine the skills students should have coming into grade 7, the skills that need to be reinforced in grade 7, and the skills that need to be explicitly taught in grade 7.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 3: What do I know this sentence means?

1. Display or project:

"Memoir writers shouldn't visualize the finished product, a grand edifice they have vowed to construct, because that will only make them anxious."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to read what they wrote in the previous language link about the meaning of the sentence.
3. Say: "We have been analyzing this mentor sentence. Now we are going to look again at its meaning."
4. Display or project:

- **WHO/WHAT?**
- (Did/will) **DO WHAT?**
- **WHEN** did who do what?
- **WHERE** did who do what?
- **WHY** did who do what?
- **HOW** did who do what?

Summary Sentence: _____

5. Ask the following questions one at a time and prompt students to record their written responses.

WHO/WHAT?

memoir writers

(Did/will) **DO WHAT?**

shouldn't visualize a finished product

WHEN did who do what?

N/A

WHERE did who do what?

N/A

WHY did who do what?

it will make them anxious

HOW did who do what? N/A

6. Encourage students to expand their summary sentence. Prompt them to use information from the unit texts to answer questions not provided in the original sentence.

WHO/WHAT?	memoir writers
(Did/will) DO WHAT?	shouldn't visualize a finished product
WHEN did who do what?	planning for a memoir
WHERE did who do what?	N/A
WHY did who do what?	it will make them anxious
HOW did who do what?	focus on easy manageable chunks

7. Say: "Write a summary of the sentence underneath the quotation. Make sure to put the sentence into your own words."

Student Look-Fors:

- When planning for a memoir, writers should focus on easy, manageable chunks because focusing on the finished product will make them anxious.
8. After several minutes, ask a few students to share their statements with the class.
 9. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their classmates shared.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 3: What is the structure of this sentence?

1. Display or project:

"Memoir writers shouldn't visualize the finished product, a grand edifice they have vowed to construct, because that will only make them anxious."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

2. Say: "We have been working with the same mentor sentence to understand what it means. Now we will work together to take it apart so we can write our own quality sentences with a similar structure."
3. Ask: "What have we learned so far about this mentor sentence?" Conduct a brief discussion to review what was learned in the previous language links. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:
 - a. "What does this sentence mean?"
 - b. "What have you noticed about this sentence?"
 - c. "How is it put together?"

Student Look-Fors:

- This sentence means focusing on the finished product while planning can make a memoir writer uneasy.
- Students might say they noticed an appositive offset by commas.
- Students might say they noticed an adjective clause that modifies a noun.
- Students should understand that the parts of this sentence are independent clause + comma + appositive + comma + dependent clause + period.
- Students should understand that the appositive renames the noun "product" and adds description.

4. Ask: "Where is there a conjunction that connects words, phrases, or clauses in this sentence? What does it mean?"

Student Look-Fors:

- The conjunction is *because* before "that will only make them anxious." *Because* is used to show the readers why memoir writers shouldn't focus on the finished product. *Because* means "the reason is," so it tells the reader why they shouldn't focus on a finished product.

5. Say: "Remember, conjunctions connect words, phrases, or clauses in a sentence and signal different relationships between ideas. Sometimes conjunctions add on ideas and sometimes conjunctions signal a change or contrast in ideas. They show how ideas relate in a sentence, so as we read, we better understand what a writer means. When we write, we use conjunctions to expand our sentences and make sure our meaning is clear

to the reader.”

6. Display or project:

William Zinsser, the author of “How to Write a Memoir,” presents examples of solutions after presenting common problems memoir writers face.

Zinsser uses details from memoirs written by his father, a businessman, when he gives advice to young writers.

7. Ask: “How are these sentences similar to the mentor sentence?”

Student Look-Fors:

- Students should identify that the structures are similar--these examples, like the mentor sentence, are complex sentences that are interrupted by an appositive offset by commas.
- Students should explain that the function of the subordinating conjunction in the sentences is to show how the ideas on each side of the conjunction connect. For example, in the first example, the dependent clause shows when Zinsser presents examples of solutions, so the conjunction “after” is used to signal a sequence of events. In the second sentence, the dependent clause shows when he uses details from his father’s memoirs. The subordinating conjunction “when” is used to indicate the events happen simultaneously.

8. Say: “Now let’s build a quality sentence about Zinsser’s central ideas using an appositive and a subordinating conjunction.”
9. Write a quality sentence as a class imitating the structure of the mentor sentence. As needed, review the structure of the mentor sentence again and/or ask students to compare the class sentence to the mentor sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- In “How to Write a Memoir,” an essay by William Zinsser, a central idea is writers should be themselves when writing their own stories.

10. Say: “Now let’s build a sentence frame to illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. We will use these frames to write our own sentences.”
11. Display an anchor chart, or provide students with a list, of subordinating conjunctions and guide students to identify the relationships they signal. Then, as a class, create sentence frames that illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. Reinforce any other grammatical elements or spelling students may need to produce a quality

sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- _____, a _____, because _____.
- _____, the _____, _____ after _____.
- _____, a _____, when _____.

What relationships do these conjunctions signal?

Cause and effect	Sequence	Under certain conditions	Comparison (Addition)
so as because that since	after until when	unless that	as

13. Direct students to reflect on their learning. Ask: “How does breaking down this sentence into its parts support your understanding of the sentence?” Answers can be spoken or written.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 3: Can I write a quality sentence?

1. Display or project:

"Memoir writers shouldn't visualize the finished product, a grand edifice they have vowed to construct, because that will only make them anxious."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

_____, a _____, because _____.
_____, the _____, after _____.
_____, a _____, when _____.

What advice does Zinsser give a writer when they begin organizing their thoughts?

2. Say, "Now we are going to write our own quality sentences." Remind students of the elements of a quality sentence discussed in previous language links as well as other model sentences.
3. Read the prompt aloud, "What advice does Zinsser give a writer when they begin organizing their thoughts?"
4. Ask students to work independently to write 1-2 quality sentences that answer the question and imitate the structure of the mentor sentence.
5. Remind students to select a subordinating conjunction to signal the appropriate connection of ideas in their sentences.
6. Encourage students to refer to unit texts to ensure their responses are correct.

Student Look-Fors:

- William Zinsser, a famous memoir writer, suggests writing daily in manageable chunks because patterns will emerge over time.
- William Zinsser, the author of "How to Write a Memoir," suggests looking for patterns after writing daily for two months.
- In "How to Write a Memoir," an essay by William Zinsser, writers are advised not to be impatient when beginning memoir planning.

MENTOR SENTENCES

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 4: What does this sentence mean?

1. Display or project:

"Writing is a powerful search mechanism that allows you to come to terms with your life narrative, work through some of life's hardest knocks, and find understanding and solace."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to copy the sentence.
3. Say: "Write and complete sentence stem underneath the sentence."

Student Look-Fors:

- The sentence means writing is an important tool that allows you to work through hardships in your life and to find comfort in accepting them.

4. After several minutes, ask a few students to share how they paraphrased or interpreted the quotation. Prompt students to use the following stems to guide the conversation.
 - a. "Another way to say this sentence is..."
 - b. "I made meaning of this sentence by..."
 - c. "I looked at..."
 - d. "I noticed that..."

Note: If students have trouble forming their ideas, remind them that this is day 1 with the mentor sentence, and they will have other opportunities to develop understanding of the sentence over the next few language links.

5. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their peers shared.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 4: What do I notice about this sentence?

1. Display or project:

"Writing is a powerful search mechanism that allows you to come to terms with your life narrative, work through some of life's hardest knocks, and find understanding and solace."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

- What do you notice about this sentence?
- How does what you notice help you understand the sentence?

2. Direct students to write their answers to the two questions, recording what they notice about the sentence and how that contributes to their understanding.
3. Ask students to share their thoughts with a partner. Prompt them to use the following conversation stems to guide their initial conversations.
 - a. "I noticed...which means..."
 - b. "I knew...so I..."
4. Ask pairs to work together to describe how the sentence is put together. As needed, ask guiding questions to support students:
 - g. "What are the parts of this sentence?"
 - h. "Can we divide this sentence into two or more sentences? What do we have to remove or change?"
 - i. "What phrases or clauses do you notice? How do those help you understand this sentence?"
 - j. "Are there any conjunctions in this sentence? What do those conjunctions mean?"
 - k. "What punctuation do you notice? How does the punctuation help you understand the sentence?"
 - l. "Are there parts of the sentence that can be removed without affecting the meaning?"
5. Call on 2-3 pairs to share with the class what they notice about the sentence and explain how those ideas contribute to their understanding of the sentence.
6. Prompt them to use the following conversation stems to guide their sharing with the class.
 - a. "We noticed...which means..."
 - b. "We knew...so we..."

As pairs share, mark the grammatical elements students notice on the sentence and record any additional comments or thoughts on the board or chart paper. These will be needed for the next language links.

After each pair shares, ask another student to rephrase what the pair shared. Prompt students to use the following conversation stems to guide their rephrasing.

- a. "They noticed...which meant..."
- b. "They knew....so they..."

Student Look-Fors:

- Students may notice a wide variety of things about the sentence, including:
 - This sentence explains why writing is a powerful tool for dealing with hardships in life.
 - The sentence begins with an independent clause (writing is a powerful search mechanism).
 - There is an adjective clause "that allows you" that modifies the noun "mechanism."
 - There is a conjunction "and" that connects items together—Writing is a tool that allows you to come to terms, work through hardship, and find understanding.
 - The commas in the series tell us that writing is a powerful tool that does three things: allows you to come to terms, allows you to work through hardships, and allows you to find understanding.
 - There is an apostrophe in the word life's to show possession of "hardest knocks."
 - There are two commas used between items in a series to help us understand what makes writing a powerful tool.

7. Ask students to reflect on their learning by completing one of the following sentence stems. Answers can be spoken or written.

- a. To understand this sentence, I had to _____.
- b. Noticing _____ helped me understand the sentence because _____.
- c. Knowing _____ comes in handy when determining the meaning of this sentence.

8. Note: If student responses do not resemble the student look-fors in this language link, conduct a brief mini-lesson to review or reinforce a grammar skill from an earlier grade found in this sentence, such as writing simple, compound, or complex sentences, or how and when to use punctuation with conjunctions. Focus on a specific skill your students need.⁶ It is acceptable for students not to understand the full meaning of the sentence on this day.

⁶ Access the [Grammar Guide](#) to determine the skills students should have coming into grade 7, the skills that need to be reinforced in grade 7, and the skills that need to be explicitly taught in grade 7.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 4: What do I know this sentence means?

1. Display or project:

"Writing is a powerful search mechanism that allows you to come to terms with your life narrative, work through some of life's hardest knocks, and find understanding and solace."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

This sentence means...

2. Prompt students to read what they wrote in the previous language link about the meaning of the sentence.
3. Say: "We have been analyzing this mentor sentence. Now we are going to look again at its meaning."
4. Display or project:

- **WHO/WHAT?**
- (Did/will) **DO WHAT?**
- **WHEN** did who do what?
- **WHERE** did who do what?
- **WHY** did who do what?
- **HOW** did who do what?

Summary Sentence: _____

5. Ask the following questions one at a time and prompt students to record their written responses.

WHO/WHAT?

writing

Did/will **DO WHAT?**

is a powerful tool

WHEN did who do what?

N/A

WHERE did who do what?

N/A

WHY did who do what?

it allows you to work through life's hardships

HOW did who do what?

by finding understanding and comfort

6. Say: "Write a summary of the sentence. Make sure to put the sentence into your own words."

Student Look-Fors:

- Writing is a powerful tool because it allows you to work through life's hardships by finding understanding and comfort.

7. After several minutes, ask a few students to share their statements with the class.
8. Prompt students to revise or adjust their written responses based on what their classmates shared.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 4: What is the structure of this sentence?

1. Display or project:

"Writing is a powerful search mechanism that allows you to come to terms with your life narrative, work through some of life's hardest knocks, and find understanding and solace."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

2. Say: "We have been working with the same mentor sentence to understand what it means. Now we will work together to take it apart so we can write our own quality sentences with a similar structure."
3. Ask: "What have we learned so far about this mentor sentence?" Conduct a brief discussion to review what was learned in the previous language links. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:
 - a. "What does this sentence mean?"
 - b. "What have you noticed about this sentence?"
 - c. "How is it put together?"

Student Look-Fors:

- This sentence means writing is a powerful tool because it allows you to work through life's hardships by finding understanding and comfort.
- Students might say they noticed an independent clause, an adjective clause, commas, or conjunctions.
- Students should understand that the parts of this sentence are independent clause + adjective clause + items in a series separated by commas and joined by the conjunction *and* + period.
- They should understand that the items in a series justify reasons writing is a powerful tool

4. Ask "What does the comma do in this sentence?"

Student Look-Fors:

- Students should identify the role of both commas is to separate the list of reasons writing is a powerful tool.

5. Say: "We use commas to separate items in a series. In this sentence, the comma is separating reason's writing is a powerful tool. We can use commas to show a series of nouns, verbs, phrases, and clauses."
6. Note: According to the [Grammar Guide](#), students learned how to use commas in a series to separate single words in grade 1. In grade 7, the skill should progress to include phrases or clauses in a series, and students should use

appropriate agreement and parallelism. As needed, provide small-group instruction for students who need additional support with this skill.

7. Display or project:

Editing your essay is an important step that allows you to make sure your thesis summarizes the essay's key points, ensure body paragraphs have enough detail, and correct spelling or grammar errors.

8. Ask: "How is this sentence similar to the mentor sentence in the way that it is constructed?"

Student Look-Fors:

- Students should identify that similar to the mentor sentence, this example contains a series of phrases separated by commas and joined by the conjunction *and*.

9. Say: "Now let's build a quality sentence about how Cisneros supports Zinsser's memoir writing advice in "Eleven."

10. Write a quality sentence as a class imitating the structure of the mentor sentence. As needed, review the structure of the mentor sentence again and/or ask students to compare the class sentence to the mentor sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- Cisneros supports Zinsser's advice to think small by choosing a vivid memory, writing about a memory with a universal truth, and allowing her readers to make an emotional connection.

11. Say: "Now let's construct sentences to illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. We will use these frames to write our own sentences that contain phrases in a series separated by commas and joined with the conjunction *and*."

12. Prompt students to identify possible sentence structures for items in a series. As a class, create sentence frames that illustrate the structure of the mentor sentence. Reinforce any other grammatical elements or spelling students may need to produce a quality sentence.

Student Look-Fors:

- Memoir writing allows you to _____, _____, and _____.
- Zinsser gives advice for memoir writing that includes _____, _____, and _____.
- The author _____ supports Zinsser's advice by _____, _____, and _____.

13. Direct students to reflect on their learning. Ask: “How does breaking down this sentence into its parts support your understanding of the sentence?” Answers can be spoken or written.

"How to Write a Memoir"

Mentor Sentence 4: Can I write a quality sentence?

1. Display or project:

"Writing is a powerful search mechanism that allows you to come to terms with your life narrative, work through some of life's hardest knocks, and find understanding and solace."

From "How to Write A Memoir"

Memoir writing allows you to _____, _____, and _____.

Zinsser gives advice for memoir writing that includes _____, _____, and _____.

The author _____ supports Zinsser's advice by _____, _____, and _____.

What advice does Rick Riordan give to young writers?

2. Say: "Now we are going to write our own quality sentences." Remind students of the elements of a quality sentence discussed in previous language links as well as other model sentences.
3. Read aloud the question, "What advice does Rick Riordan give to young writers?"
4. Ask students to work independently to write 1-2 quality sentences that answer the question and imitate the structure of the mentor sentence.
5. Remind students to use items in a series to provide two or more pieces of advice Riordan gives young writers.
6. Encourage students to use the unit texts to ensure they have an accurate response.

Student Look-Fors:

- Rick Riordan gives young writers advice that includes use colorful descriptions that will develop characters or plot, define characters through their choices and actions, and avoid the overuse of dialogue tags in character's conversations.