

Digital and Printable

# Thankful Writing

Lesson and Craftivity

Free!

I'm So  
Thankful!

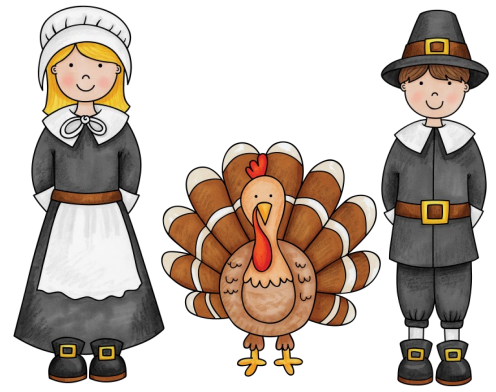
by Alex Brown  
November 26, 2015



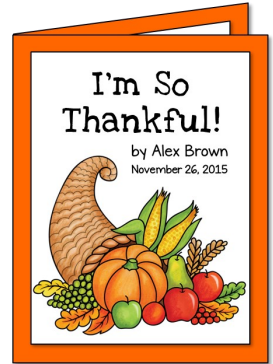
Laura Candler

# Thankful Writing Lesson and Craftivity

by Laura Candler



**Thankful Writing** is a step-by-step lesson that's both an easy introduction to expository writing and a craft project. Best of all, the final product is a gift that will be treasured for years! In this packet you'll find a suggested lesson plan and ready-to-use forms to make the process easy. Printable and digital versions of the student pages are included. Links to the Google Slides are provided in a separate document, and the printable versions start on page 4.



The suggested lesson below combines whole group instruction, cooperative learning work, and independent writing. Read the lesson directions to make sure you're comfortable with the process, and modify them as needed for your students. If you're teaching online, substitute the in-class whole group instruction and cooperative learning activities with virtual instruction via video conferencing to guide your students and provide necessary support. If you plan to follow the full lesson as described, start early in November to be sure you have enough time to complete the project.

## Step-by-Step Lesson

### 1. Discuss the Meaning of "Thankful"

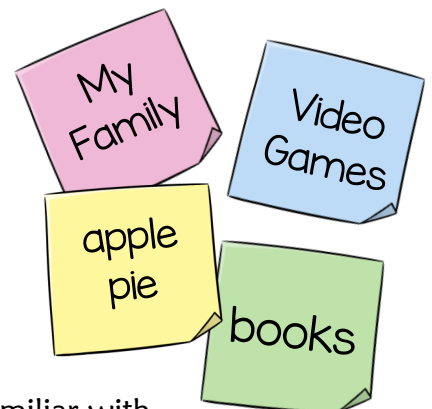
Discuss what it means to be thankful for something or someone, and share a few things or people you are thankful for. Ask students to think of other words that are similar in meaning and list them on the board for reference later (blessed, blessings, grateful, gratitude, appreciate, appreciation, etc.)

### 2. Brainstorm Topic Ideas

Give each team of three or four students a pad of small sticky notes or scrap paper. Have each person start by taking a few sheets and brainstorming things they are thankful for. They should write each idea on a separate sheet, using as many sheets as needed. As they write each idea, they announce it to the team and place it in the center. Allow 5 minutes for brainstorming ideas.

### 3. Sort Ideas into Categories

Tell the class that they are going to be writing an essay about what they are thankful for. (Introduce the term "essay" if they are not familiar with the word.) Explain that before they begin writing about the topic, they'll need to organize all the ideas that were brainstormed so that they can write in an organized way. Ask students to look at the team's ideas and to try to group them into categories. After students have spent a few minutes doing this, ask for volunteers to share their team's categories. They might mention family, friends, school, recreation, food, pets, etc.





#### 4. Complete the Planning Graphic Organizer

Now explain that everyone needs to choose three categories that they want to write about in their own personal essays. Use this 3-column graphic organizer or have them each fold a sheet of paper in thirds. Ask them to write the name of each category at the top of one column. Under each heading, they should list details they want to include in their paragraph on that topic.

#### 5. Introduce the Expository Essay Format

Although students are writing about a personal topic, they will be organizing their compositions as basic 3-part expository essays. If they have not been taught this format, you'll need to introduce it to them before they begin writing. Display the Expository Essay Format handout as you explain how to organize the essay into three parts, the introduction, the body, and the conclusion. Make sure they notice that the body is the longest section and includes the most detail. (The Introduction and Conclusion are small like your head and feet; the Body is long like the rest of your body!)

#### 6. Explain the Thanksgiving Writing Template

The writing template on page 6 is designed to be a framework to show students how to organize their writing, and it's not meant to be a fill-in-the-blank activity. Upper elementary students do a far better job with their essays if they use the template as a guide but don't actually write on it. However, children with special needs or young children may need to write on the template and fill in the blanks.

#### 7. Write Rough Drafts of Essays

Ask students to take out a few sheets of lined paper, and guide them through the process of writing each part of the essay. After they write each paragraph, check to be sure they are following directions.

#### 8. Revise and Edit Essays

Display the Thanksgiving Writing Checklist and talk your students through the process of revising and editing their rough drafts. Remind them to proofread carefully to check for spelling and grammatical errors.

#### 9. Write Final Drafts

Provide class time for students to copy their final essays onto plain paper or one of the decorated papers in this pack. If your students want to type their papers, you can let them use one of the Thanksgiving digital writing papers. (Link provided in a separate document.)

#### 10. Create Thanksgiving Folders

Give each student a 12" x 18" piece of construction paper to fold in half. Glue the final copies inside the folders. Ask students to decorate the outsides of their folders and add a title, their name, and the date. Or print a copy of the cover design on page 10 for each student to color. Laminate folders if possible.

#### 11. Present Essays to Families

Encourage students to present their folders to their families on Thanksgiving Day. Their families will be proud of their hard work and thoughtfulness!

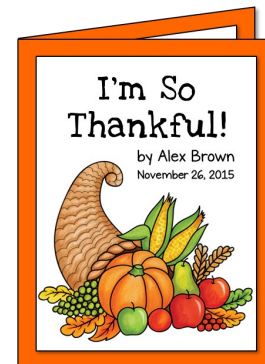
A 3-column graphic organizer titled "I'm Thankful For...". It has a header with a turkey and corn illustration. Below the header, there are three empty columns for writing. A small instruction box at the top right says: "Write the name of each topic you plan to write about at the top of one column. Then under each heading, list details you want to include in your paragraph on that topic."

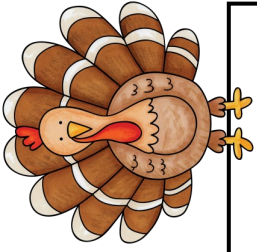
A handout titled "Expository Essay Format" with a pencil icon. It outlines the structure of an expository essay into three parts: Introduction, Body, and Conclusion. The Introduction section lists: Hooks the reader and captures his or her attention; Contains the topic sentence of the essay; Briefly states 3 or more main ideas which will be explained in body of paper. The Body section lists: Longest section of the essay; Contains 3 or more fully developed paragraphs (one paragraph to support each main idea stated in the introduction); Each paragraph contains a topic sentence and at least 4 to 5 supporting detail sentences; Transition words and phrases help move reader from one idea to the next (Ex: also, in addition, another reason, etc.). The Conclusion section lists: Brings closure to the essay. There are star and checkmark icons next to the Body and Conclusion sections respectively.

A writing template titled "I'm So Thankful!". It has a header with a turkey and corn illustration. Below the header, there are several lines for writing. The template includes prompts: "Thanksgiving reminds me of all the things I'm thankful for. I appreciate \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_", "I'm especially thankful for \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_", "I also appreciate \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_", and "Finally, I'm grateful for \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_".

A checklist titled "Thankful Essay Checklist" with a turkey and corn illustration. It includes instructions: "Now that you finished your rough draft, read through your essay and ask yourself these questions. Think about your answers as you revise your paper to make it even better!" The checklist items are: "Do you have an introductory paragraph, or does your essay begin with the first topic?", "Look at your topic sentences and details. Are you thankful for the kinds of things that are going to make people feel appreciated or are you just thankful for having lots of stuff?", "Does every paragraph in the body of the paper have a topic sentence and at least 4 fully-developed detail sentences?", "Are your sentences interesting, or do they all sound just about the same? (Example: 'Don't say 'the first reason is, my second reason is' over and over. Change your wording to make it more interesting.)", "Look at your use of the word 'thankful.' Do you repeat it over and over, or have you used a variety of synonyms such as 'grateful' and 'appreciated'?", "Have you...", "Do you...".

A sheet of lined paper with a turkey and corn illustration in the bottom right corner. It is intended for students to write their final essays on.





Enter the name of each topic you plan to write about at the top of one column. Then under each heading, list details you want to include in your paragraph on that topic.


# Expository Essay Format



## Introduction

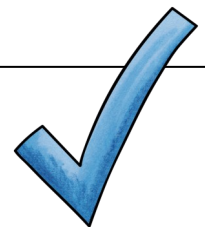
- Hooks the reader and captures his or her attention
- Contains the topic sentence of the essay
- Briefly states 3 or more main ideas which will be explained in body of paper

## Body



- Longest section of the essay
- Contains 3 or more fully developed paragraphs (one paragraph to support each main idea stated in the introduction)
- Each paragraph contains a topic sentence and at least 4 to 5 supporting detail sentences
- Transition words and phrases help move reader from one idea to the next (Ex: also, in addition, another reason, etc.)

## Conclusion



- Brings closure to the essay
- Briefly restates 3 the main ideas (without repeating the exact words in the introduction)
- May end with strong statement or an appeal to the emotions

# I'm So Thankful!

Thanksgiving reminds me of all the people and things I'm thankful for. I appreciate \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

I'm especially thankful for \_\_\_\_\_ because

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I also appreciate \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

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Finally, I'm grateful for \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_

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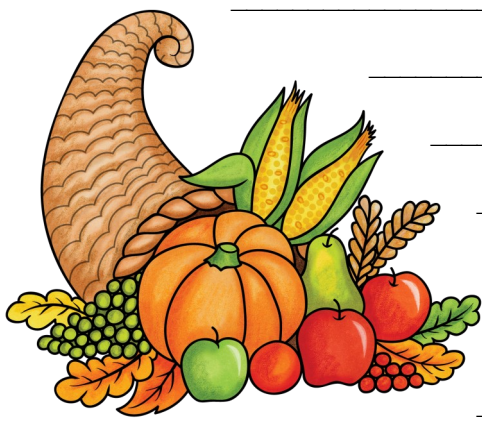
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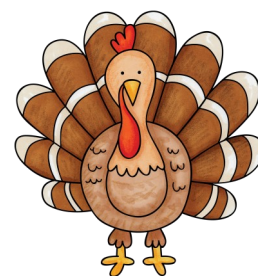
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As I enjoy this holiday season, I realize that I have many reasons to be thankful. \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ are just a few of the blessings in my life!

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 6 horizontal lines.

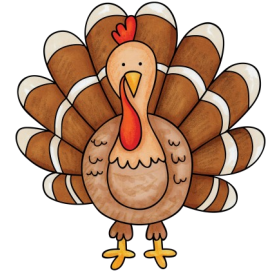


Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines.



# Thankful Writing Essay Checklist

Read your rough draft and ask yourself these questions. Think about your answers as you edit and revise your essay to make it even better!

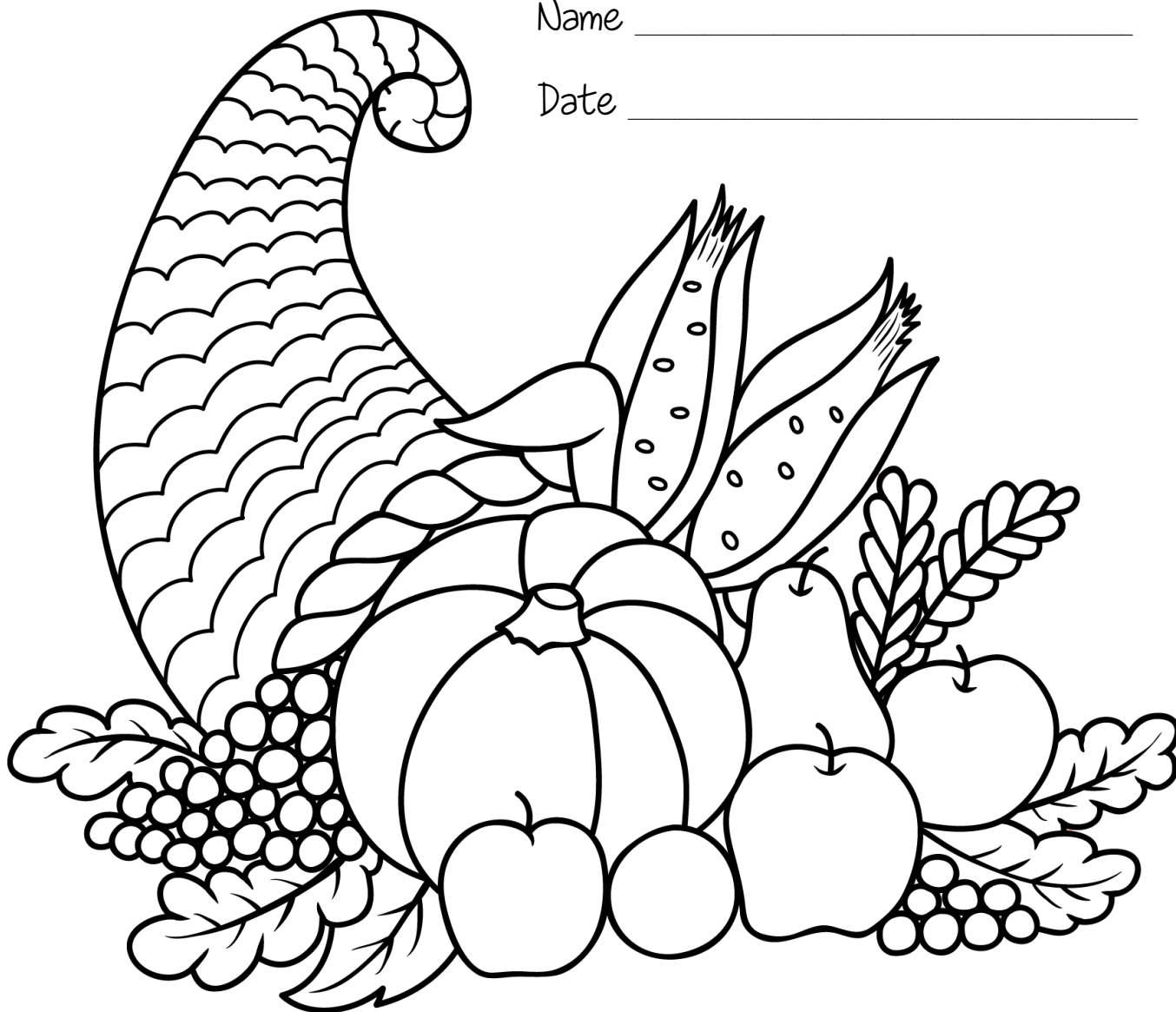


- ☐ Does your essay have an introductory paragraph?
- ☐ Does every paragraph in the body of the paper have a topic sentence and at least 4 fully-developed detail sentences?
- ☐ Does your essay have an interesting conclusion?
- ☐ Look at your topic sentences and details. Are you thankful for the kinds of things that are going to make people feel appreciated or are you just thankful for having lots of stuff?
- ☐ Are your sentences interesting, or do they all sound similar? (For example, don't say, "My first reason is, my second reason is" over and over. If you do, change your wording to make it more interesting.)
- ☐ Look at your use of the word "thankful." Do you repeat it over and over, or have you used a variety of synonyms such as "grateful" and "appreciate"?
- ☐ Have you written in complete sentences, or does your essay contain run-on sentences and fragments?
- ☐ Have you corrected all grammatical errors, including errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization?

# I'm So Thankful!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



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