

RAFT

Developed by Nancy Vandervanter

- A system for making sure students understand their writing assignments in your class
- Assignments are generally written from a viewpoint other than that of a student, to an audience other than a teacher, and in a form other than a formal essay
- Seldom use the word **write** in your assignment; choose stronger verbs such as **plead, convince, clarify**.

R

ole of writer (Who are you - a soldier, Abraham Lincoln, a mathematical operation a science concept? (See the chart on the following page for additional ideas.)

A

udience (To whom is this piece written - a mother, Congress, a child?)

F

ormat - What form will it take - a letter, speech, obituary, conversation, memo?)

T

opic + strong verb (Persuade a soldier to spare your life; demand equal pay for equal work.)

RAFT IDEAS

ROLES/AUDIENCES

ad agencies
athletes
cartoonist
characters in stories/novels
ecologists
editors
historians
homesteaders
lawyers
politicians
movie stars
older/younger students
radio announcer's
animals
historical figures
TV characters
poets

FORMATS

advertisement
apology
application
cartoon
bumper sticker
commercial
complaint
confession
dialogue and conversation
dramatic monologue
editorial
epitaph
eulogy
graffiti
interview
invitation
joke
journal and diary
legal brief
letter to the editor
marriage proposal
news story
obituary
pamphlet
petition

photo essay
poem
poster
radio play
rap
recommendation
résumé
review
riddle
sermon
ship's log
slide show script
slogan
sympathy note
telegram
travelogue
TV script
video
wanted poster
warning
will

STRONG VERBS*

admonish
accuse
advise
apologize
attack
beg
blame
boast
clarify
complain
condemn
confide
congratulate
convince
dazzle
defend
define
demand
deny
disagree
discourage
emphasize

evaluate
encourage
entertain
excite
excuse
explain
flatter
flaunt
forbid
foretell
formulate
give
grumble
guide
harass
honor
identify
inquire
insult
interpret
justify
laud
notify
pacify
proclaim
pester
plea
protest
question
resign
reward
satirize
scare
sell
shock
tattle
taunt
teach
tease
testify
urge
warn
welcome
woo
yield

**Use strong verbs with topics to give them some "punch!"*

Student example:

R: blood cell

A: the human body

F: travelogue

T: + strong verb: Explain the function of blood cells as they travel through the human body.

Hello, human body. I am your very own red blood cells. I want to tell you a few things about myself and then talk about how I travel through the highways in your body.

I am a cell in your blood. I carry oxygen. I am quite small. If you were to line me up in a row of 150 red blood cells, we would be only one millimeter long. That is about as wide as your pencil lines. I am round with thick edges and a thin center. I have 25 trillion red cell buddies all traveling around in your vessels. That's enough about me. Now on with my travels. I am like a delivery man. I help with the blood's job of being a pickup and delivery service, but I have lots of fun sliding around in your vessels. The oxygen gas coming into your lungs is picked up by me as I pass through the capillaries in the lungs. The lung is my favorite part of the trip. I splash around in the lungs while my hemoglobin picks up oxygen. I perform the job of pickup and delivery so well.

Now I am on my journey again to the heart. I am making the pulmonary trip from the lungs to the heart. Now I am inside the heart. It is very slippery riding up and down and around curves and out of valves. Finally, I leave the left ventricle and begin the systemic journey, carrying my oxygen to the cells. The blood vessel is a "wet-and-wild" place to be. We slide down branches of the vessel, similar to climbing up the highest branch on a tree, until we find just the right twig, which is like a capillary. Finally, my buddies and I squeeze single file into these tiny capillaries where we unload our oxygen. We then get back together again in veins and work ourselves back to the heart. The heart pumps us through the pulmonary system to the lungs where our journey begins again, and we're off to deliver more oxygen to tired cells.

Student example:

R: point

A: teacher

F: letter

T: + strong verb: Convince your teacher that you have an important function.

Dear Mrs. Havens,

I am Pete the point. I am a point of an endless number of points in space. I want to ask you if you will teach your students about us points and how every single geometric figure is made of us. It is very important to me because it seems that many people think of the point as a small part of geometry since it is so little. Though we are little, we are one of the most important factors of our world of geometry. Without me and all other points, there would be no other geometric figures. We are their building blocks. Though all lines are drawn with one solid mark, in reality a line is an endless set of points going in opposite directions. A sphere is a figure with all points at an equal distance from a center point like me.

So please tell your students all about us points. It troubles me when many think of us as unimportant specks in space. Please spread the reality of our importance to the students you teach. My partners and I would greatly appreciate it. Thank you.

A point,
Pete