THE SOUND OF CHANGE (GRADES 6-8)

AMY HARTER

In this lesson, middle school students use sound as cues for structural shifts in informational writing. This lesson specifically targets the skill of organization in informational writing, which a student might be asked to do in any class. Whether you're trying to help your students organize their writing about a historical event, a scientific process, or a piece of literature, this lesson can be easily used to provide an interactive, exciting way to help students analyze and improve the structure of their own work. The suggested informational writing topic in this lesson is "a place in my community" but please feel free to adapt the topic of writing to your own teaching needs as you and your students discover the world of Booktrack Classroom.

TARGET AGE GROUP

- Middle School
- Grades 6-8

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FROM THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS LESSON

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.A
Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.A
Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.6
Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently.

BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF THE LESSON

1. **Get informed.** Register your teacher account for Booktrack Classroom and add all of your students. Create a quick sample Booktrack Classroom project, just to see how everything works. It's very easy to use! But just in case you or your students have questions along the way, there are **video tutorials available here** that will guide you through the process of using Booktrack Classroom.

2. **What is Booktrack Classroom?** Introduce your students to Booktrack Classroom using **this promotional video**. Briefly discuss what Booktrack Classroom can do, and field initial student questions and comments about this awesome educational tool!

3. **Supply headphones.** While working with Booktrack Classroom, the ability for each individual student to listen to sound on their device is crucial. Make sure that each student will be able to provide headphones of their own, or borrow sets from your classroom library on the days of the lesson.

4. **Sign-up**. Have your students sign in to Booktrack Classroom accounts on a school computer or by adding the Booktrack Classroom App to their internet devices. Select the type of sign-up that works best for your school's technology capabilities. It might be good to have a Booktrack Classroom "play day" at the time of sign-up, too, so that students can get an initial feel for how Booktrack Classroom looks and works. They can also use this chance to get out some of the inevitable first giggles of excitement about the fact that they have control over their own sound effects!

TIMELINE

Designed for four sessions of 50 minutes each.

ACTIVITIES

DAY ONE – PREWRITING

1. Introduce the writing topic to students—for these instructions, we'll work with a suggested topic of "a place in my community." Brainstorm possibilities for writing along with students using a whiteboard, document camera, or other whole-class display. Ask them, "What are some memorable places in our community?" Record student ideas in a concept map as they are suggested. They may choose major cultural locations such as a museum or city landmark, or perhaps they'll suggest a smaller local gem such as a restaurant, park, or library.

2. Ask students to pick one of the mentioned places to write about. Inform the students that their piece of writing should include an introduction, three supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion. Distribute the graphic organizer (Handout #1) to help students gather their ideas.

3. Students may spend any additional class time beginning their homework: writing a draft of the first two essay paragraphs.

DAYS TWO AND THREE—DRAFTING

1. Students log in to Booktrack and select "Create" from the menu at the top of the screen. If the editor does not automatically open a blank page, select the "new Booktrack" button. This will open a new document where the students can add text. On their screens, they'll see the blue ribbon of step one, "Text," highlighted. Instruct students that they should stay on the Text ribbon until their writing is completed.

2. The first step is to add text, which students can pull straight from the draft that they began yesterday. As class progresses, help students use their graphic organizer as a tool to prompt their writing until the five paragraphs are complete.

3. Once students have completed their five paragraphs, the fun is ready to begin! As students move forward to the second blue ribbon step, "Sound," they can start adding sound effects to mark the structural components of their essay. Provide students who are ready for this step with Handout #2, the sound key instructions, so they know which sounds to place in which part of their texts. As students work, the teacher can circulate, troubleshoot, encourage, and redirect as necessary.

4. As students finish and move to the final step ("Publish" the Booktrack to their libraries), encourage them to think about whether or not they would like to share their writing aloud to the class on the next class day.

Day Four—Read-Aloud Sharing and/or Listening Galleries

1. Day four is all about sharing! Give your students a chance to pick whether they would like to read a portion of their work aloud to the class to reinforce public speaking skills, or if they would be more comfortable having others read their work on Booktrack Classroom with headphones. Allowing students to select their comfort level creates the opportunity to differentiate while still privileging every student as an author worth sharing.

2. For students who would like to share aloud, the reading speed setting on Booktrack Classroom should be set at the same speed at which the student speaks. A good starting setting is 150 words per minute, which can be sped up or slowed down depending on the student's speaking fluency. Help each student who wishes to read aloud by projecting his or her Booktrack on a screen or SmartBoard, if available. Otherwise, the student can read straight from his or her device with the volume up. You may wish to have students select their best two paragraphs to share, or read the full piece—this, of course, depends on the amount of time and the number of students that you have in your classroom!

3. For students who prefer to share more discreetly, create a listening gallery by asking students to bring up their Booktrack at their own stations where their device or computer is running, with headphones attached, for a circulating stream of student listeners to stop by and read (and listen to) the details of one another's written work.

HANDOUT #1

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER   "A PLACE IN MY COMMUNITY"

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS THIS PLACE? [DESCRIBE.]

IDEA #1: REASON TO VISIT THIS LOCATION. [EXPLAIN AND SUPPORT.]

IDEA #2: REASON TO VISIT THIS LOCATION. [EXPLAIN AND SUPPORT.]

IDEA #3: REASON TO VISIT THIS LOCATION. [EXPLAIN AND SUPPORT.]

CONCLUSION: GIVE INFORMATION ABOUT WHERE TO FIND THIS PLACE. [CALL TO ACTION]

HANDOUT #2

SOUND KEY   "A PLACE IN MY COMMUNITY"

INTRODUCTION

The first paragraph of your essay should be an INTRODUCTION. This part of your paper gets the reader familiar with what the topic of your writing will be. To make sure this is nice and clear, highlight the part of your introduction that most clearly states what your chosen place is, and add an *ambience* that somehow fits the location it describes!

The title of my introduction ambience is...

_____

NEW IDEA, NEW PARAGRAPH

Each time you start a new paragraph, it should represent a new idea beginning. Does your writing do that? Double-check. When you're sure you've got it, highlight the first word of your first paragraph. Pick an *effect* that you like that will be your NEW IDEA, NEW PARAGRAPH sound. Put the same *effect* on the first word of every new paragraph. (If you did it right, you'll hear this sound five different times, always at the start of a new paragraph.)

The title of my new idea, new paragraph effect is...

_____

IDEA #1

What's your FIRST IDEA about why people should visit your place? This idea should be covered in your first BODY PARAGRAPH, along with some supporting details that show what you mean. Highlight this whole paragraph and pick a *music* piece to put on this paragraph to stand for that first idea.

The title of my first idea music is...

_____

IDEA #2

Your SECOND BODY PARAGRAPH talks about a totally different IDEA, again supported by some great details. Highlight this paragraph, and choose a different *music* piece to go with it, to show your reader that this idea is different.

The title of my second idea music is…

_____

IDEA #3

Your third BODY PARAGRAPH presents yet another good, different IDEA about your topic! Highlight this paragraph, and choose another different *music* piece to go with it, to show your reader that this idea is new.

The title of my third idea music is…

_____

CONCLUSION

Your CONCLUSION should have some information that works as a CALL TO ACTION for the person reading your essay. This means that the reader should feel inspired by your words to get up off of their chair and go visit your amazing place! Highlight your final sentence and add the most attention-grabbing sound *effect* you can find!

The title of my call to action effect is…

_____