

Lesson Plan #5 – Writing

Title: Writing Tips: One, Two, THERE, you're OUT!

(Advanced level students)

Introduction: An excellent tip for stronger writing is to eliminate the use of “there is, there was, there has been, there will be.” This lesson is designed for **advanced** students to help them recognize the importance of active verbs and revision in strengthening writing skills

Objectives:

In this lesson, students will:

- Strengthen their writing by eliminating “there” and any form of the “to be” verb (is, was, were, will be, have been, etc.)
- Choose an appropriate active verb or verb phrase that strengthens the sentence without changing the meaning of the sentence, or
- revise (reword) the sentence to eliminate unnecessary words and to enhance clarity.

Session time: 50 minutes

Materials: the following practice handout and a pencil or pen

Procedures: (Note to teacher: You may want to pair students to work on this as a collaborative writing activity. Or, you may want them to work individually; it's up to you.)

Explain to students: You are to revise (rewrite) the following sentences to make them stronger. Your goal is to omit the “there” phrase that is underlined. To do this, you will have to revise (rewrite) the sentence. In some cases, you will want to choose a different verb. In some cases, you may be able to eliminate the underlined phrase without adding a verb. You decide. In any case, the meaning of the sentence must remain the same. When you are finished, we'll share our revisions with each other. We may find a variety of ways to revise these sentences. Here are some examples:

A: (eliminating underlined phrase and adding a different verb)

There was a ray of sunlight in the dark corner of the room.

A ray of sunlight appeared in the dark corner of the room.

B: (eliminating underlined phrase without adding a different verb)

Although many credit cards carry high interest rates, there are some that remain affordable. **Although many credit cards carry high interest rates, some remain affordable.**

Practice Handout:

Practice sentences – One, Two, THERE, You're OUT!

1. There is a real need for legislation that will change the way we all pay income tax.
2. The group was argumentative, but there was a definite change in their behavior when the young woman finally appeared on stage.
3. Our lab tests and scientific analyses showed that hydrogen peroxide was there in the test sample.
4. You will find that our bank's checking account options are excellent, and that there are many options available to you.
5. The weather is often stormy in the spring, but we hope there will be fewer tornadoes this year than last year.
6. Although many people remain skeptical, there have been enough recent instances of unexplained UFO sightings that scientists are now re-thinking the possibility of alien spacecraft.

One, Two, THERE, You're Out!

Teacher answer key: - (Please note all are **suggested** revisions; others may be acceptable as well as long as the meaning of the sentence does not change.)

1. *Legislation is desperately needed that will change the way we all pay income tax.*

or

We really need legislation that will change the way we all pay income tax.

2. *The group's argumentative behavior definitely changed when the young woman finally appeared on stage.*

or

When the young woman finally appeared on stage, the group's behavior definitely changed.

3. *Our lab tests and scientific analyses showed hydrogen peroxide in the test sample.*

4. *You will find that our bank offers excellent checking account services with many options.*

or

You will find that our bank's checking account services are excellent, with many options available.

5. *The weather is often stormy in the spring, but we hope for fewer tornadoes this year than last year.*

6. *Although many people remain skeptical, recent instances of unexplained UFO sightings now have scientists re-thinking the possibility of alien spacecraft.*

Conclusion:

- Ask students to share their responses with the larger group.
- Ask students if they think their revisions made the sentence stronger or more clear? Why or why not?
- Discuss other ways the sentences might be revised.
- Assign “homework” for students to be on the lookout for “there are, there is, there have been, there will be” in newspaper articles. Ask students to bring in the articles and suggest ways as to how to revise the sentence for stronger writing.
- Continue to use what students have learned in this lesson as you monitor their progress in writing.