

# RPM LESSON WRITING TIPS

There are **4 goals** to every RPM lesson:

**Cognitive / Motor Skill / Sensory Tolerance / Communication**

Think about what these goals are for your child **before** you write your lesson!



## COGNITIVE

Learning age-appropriate concepts (filling in learning gaps as needed)  
Learning spelling & reasoning

## MOTOR SKILL

Learning to point with intention to paper choices, stencils, letterboards and growing towards independent spelling, typing, writing, speech

## SENSORY TOLERANCE

Adapt to each student's unique levels of visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic tolerance.  
Use a multi-sensory approach to improve weaker areas over time.

## COMMUNICATION

Expressing thoughts & opinions arising from the lesson  
Working from single words and growing it toward communicating in full sentences and paragraphs.

### Remember:

Lessons are **not a test**, they are a tool used to **practice** skills and build tolerance & stamina!



**Don't weigh down lessons** with paragraphs of information - it should feel more like a **conversation** than a lecture.

**Do** have a **balance between teacher and student** performance, create a **rythmic back-and-forth** with **short teaching points** between questions.

**USE YOUR QUESTIONS TO TARGET GOALS! DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE SENSORY ACTIVITIES AS WELL!**

NEXT

# TYPES OF QUESTIONS

**\*EVEN ADVANCED STUDENTS SHOULD BE ASKED A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF QUESTIONS THROUGHOUT THEIR LESSONS**

## SPELLING/DICTATION

- Use this to learn **new vocabulary** or just to practice the **skill of spelling**.
- “Today we’re going to learn about WHALING, the practice of hunting whales.” **Q - Let’s practice spelling WHALING**
- or: **Q - Whale hunting used to be so popular, but now it’s not - practice asking me WHY**
- You can use as much **prompting** as necessary, you know what they’re trying to spell and are teaching them how to do it.

## CHOICES

- Students learn to show their **reasoning** while being **exposed to spelling**.
- Try a direct question **Q- Whaling is the practice of hunting which animal? (WHALES or TIGERS)**
- Or a question with more reasoning **Q- Where do you think you might go to hunt whales? (FOREST or the OCEAN)**
- Or a question to express an opinion **Q- What do you think of the idea of whale hunting? (TERRIBLE / INTERESTING)**

**NOTE:** Reasoning is an auditory skill, students with low auditory tolerance may struggle with choices at first and will need to do more dictation and fill in the blank questions to start.

## FILL IN THE BLANK

- For students that are able to answer by spelling, this is a great introduction to being able to provide their own answers for questions without any choices.
- ie: **Q- Whaling is the practice of hunting \_\_\_\_\_**
- Now you may hold up a rolled letterboard with the “W” row showing, or hold up the S-Z stencil to narrow down their options as they learn to navigate the letterboards.

## CLOSED/OPEN

- These questions are the **gateway** to more open communication. They are questions that have an answer within a certain **subset** of reasonable answers so you can help students if they get stuck.
- ie: **Q- Besides whales, what is something else you might find in the ocean?**
- or **Q- What’s a word that goes with whale?**
- Give **hints** if necessary, student’s need to learn how to do this!

## OPEN COMMUNICATION

Once your student is able to answer on their own with **no prompting** beyond continuation prompts then they are ready for open communication! It is still your job to watch for **sensory fatigue**, just because they can spell openly does not mean it’s easy to do all the time!

**NEXT** 

# SENSORY ACTIVITIES

**SENSORY ACTIVITIES ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF EVERY RPM LESSON. RPM LESSONS ARE A MULTI-SENSORY EXPERIENCE!**

## KEYWORDS

Choose keywords for every teaching point. HIGHLIGHT them so you remember to **write them** out while you are teaching. In the examples below the keywords are capitalized.

This not only exposes students to spelling and vocabulary but it **engages all of the senses** from the visual of the writing, the sound of the pencil on the paper, the movement of the pencil - you'll **always** do this while you teach even for students that are great at spelling.

There should be a **balance** of sensory activities and questions in your lesson. It can help to mark **questions with Q** and **sensory activities with S** so that when you look back at your lesson you can make sure you have remembered to include sensory activities!

**Take a look at these examples for a lesson on whaling:**

**In the days before electricity, the world was lit by CANDLES and OIL LAMPS.**

**S - Let's draw a candle** (What this looks like when you're teaching will depend on the current motor skills and sensory tolerance of your student - perhaps you draw the candle and ask them to point to the fire, perhaps they can participate with some motor modelling or perhaps they have the skills to draw- do what makes sense for the skills and tolerance goals you are working on.)

**or**

**S- Let's practice blowing out a pretend candle** (Model and prompt your student to try a blowing out motion)

**HARPOONS were the weapon used to hunt whales. They are long, spear-like PROJECTILE weapons attached to ropes.**

**S - Take a look at this picture of a harpoon, point to the sharp end.**

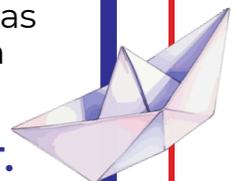
(Print out a picture of a harpoon to share with your student. Look over the picture with your student, if they need help drawing their eyes to it, you can use tapping or tape to help them find the sharp end in the pic.)

**or**

**S - Projectile weapons are weapons that are thrown. Let's make a paper ball into a projectile and throw it across the room.** (Adjust as necessary, some students may need help just learning how to open their hand to drop the ball or may not like touching paper, etc)

**Once the harpoon strikes the whale, the whale TOWS THE BOAT.**

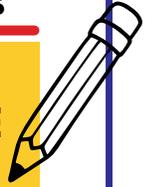
**S - Create a paper model of the large whale and small boat and demonstrate how they move together.**



**NEXT**

# END LESSONS WITH CREATIVE WRITING!

THINK OF THE WHOLE LESSON UP TO THIS POINT AS THE WARM UP FOR THE CREATIVE WRITING AT THE END OF THE LESSON.



**Creative Writing** can mean anything from **word games** to **writing stories and poetry** depending on what goals you are working on. You can use choices at first as your student works towards creating their own writing.

Check out the free lessons on our website to see a variety of creative writing ideas for the end of your lessons:

<https://rpmconnections.ca/free-downloads>



## FINAL TIP - BE INTERESTING!

You want to sound like you are **telling a story or having a discussion** **NOT reading a textbook!**

If you read through your lesson and you feel bored, it's too boring!



Whale oil was primarily used from the 16th century through the mid-19th century as a premium, bright-burning fuel for lamps, peaking in popularity in the 1800s.

\_\_\_\_\_ vs \_\_\_\_\_

Long ago, before electricity was invented, whale oil was used in lamps and candles to light up the world!



Think about what you remember from school, it's probably not every little detail. It's the **general concepts, how to think, how to reason, how to create** that we want to teach our students not cause **information fatigue** and boredom.

Now that you have a great lesson, **HOW** you teach it is what makes RPM so effective!

Check out these how-to videos:

<https://unlockingvoices.com/learning-rpm-videos/>



or contact an RPM Provider for help!  
<https://www.halo-soma.org/providers>