

**A Model for Teaching  
Writing to  
Struggling Writers**

**Examples**

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These examples are based on the program *REWARDS Writing* currently in development.

**Example #1** Rubric for Descriptive Paragraph

No  
Not Evident  
**0**                      **1**                      **2**                      **3**                      **4**  
Yes  
Very evident

Fix-up Zone

**Descriptive Paragraph**

<b>Critical Attribute</b>	<b>You</b>	<b>Teacher</b>
<b>(Organization)</b>		
1. The first sentence tells what is being described.	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>
2. All the other sentences tell more about what is being described	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>
3. The length is adequate.	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>
<b>(Sentences)</b>		
4. Complete sentences are used.	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>
5. The sentences begin with different words.	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>
6. The sentences vary in length.	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>
<b>(Word choice)</b>		
7. Descriptive words are used.	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>
8. Overused words (e.g., nice, big, little) have been replaced with more precise or interesting words.	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>
<b>(Content)</b>		
9. The description paints a clear and accurate picture of what is being described.	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>
10. The description is easy for the reader to understand.	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>	<b>0 1 2 3 4</b>

**Example # 1 continued**    Descriptive Paragraph

**It was dusk when we entered the tiny grocery store on the edge of the deserted road. The store was lit by a single bulb hanging near the entrance. The aisles in the store were narrow allowing only one shopper at a time. Ancient wooden shelves lining the aisles were cluttered with dust-covered cans and boxes. Yellowed labels on the cans held the secret of the store.**

**Example #2** Writing Frame for Emerging Writers

My favorite city is \_\_\_\_\_.

This city is located in the state of \_\_\_\_\_.

I like this city because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

One of my favorite things to do in this city is

\_\_\_\_\_.

Another activity that I enjoy in \_\_\_\_\_

is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

**Example #3** Writing Frame to Accommodate Emerging Writers

\_\_\_\_\_ (State)

\_\_\_\_\_ is a very fascinating state. It is found in the \_\_\_\_\_ part of the United States. It is bordered by the following states: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ has a variety of land and water forms. In terms of landforms, this state has \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. The most dominant landform is its \_\_\_\_\_. The largest lake in \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ also has a number of rivers including \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ has a diverse economic base. One aspect of its economy is agriculture. Some of the crops grown in \_\_\_\_\_ include \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. Its most important crop is \_\_\_\_\_.

Another aspect of this state's economy is manufacturing. The following products are produced in \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_. \_\_\_\_\_ is the product most often associated with this state. If you visited this state and purchased either an agricultural or manufacturing product, you would probably buy \_\_\_\_\_.

There are many recreational opportunities in \_\_\_\_\_. First, there are a number of large state and federal parks. My favorite park is \_\_\_\_\_. This park would be a great place to visit because \_\_\_\_\_.

These are some of the recreational activities you might enjoy in \_\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

Of these, I would particularly enjoy \_\_\_\_\_.

One thing that this state is noted for is \_\_\_\_\_.

This is noteworthy because \_\_\_\_\_.

However, I thought the most interesting thing about this state was \_\_\_\_\_.

**Example #4** Writing frame for a story-problem explanation in math

In this problem, we were asked to figure out \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Some information was already given including \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

When creating a plan to solve this problem, I decided to follow a number of steps. First, I \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Next, I \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Then, I \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Finally, I \_\_\_\_\_.

After following these steps, I determined that answer to this problem was \_\_\_\_\_.

To check this answer I \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

Based on my verification of the answer, I am quite certain that it is accurate.

**Example # 5 – Summarization - Narrative**

\_\_\_\_\_ took place  
in/at \_\_\_\_\_.  
The main character of this story was \_\_\_\_\_.  
His/her major problem was \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_ tried to solve this problem by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
In the end \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**Example 5** continued – Summarization - Narrative

\_\_\_\_\_ title \_\_\_\_\_ was a narrative  
selection about \_\_\_\_\_ theme \_\_\_\_\_.

In this story, \_\_\_\_\_ name \_\_\_\_\_, a/an \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_, was the main  
character. Other critical characters included: \_\_\_\_\_ name \_\_\_\_\_,

\_\_\_\_\_,  
and \_\_\_\_\_ name \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.

In this story, \_\_\_\_\_ name \_\_\_\_\_'s major  
problem/conflict/goal was \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

First, \_\_\_\_\_ name \_\_\_\_\_ tried to resolve this  
problem/conflict/goal by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

In the end, the following happened: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**Example # 6 – Summarization – Expository**

**Viruses**

Viruses have some characteristics of \_\_\_\_\_ things and \_\_\_\_\_ things. In some cases, viruses are \_\_\_\_\_, but they can live and \_\_\_\_\_.

To live and reproduce, viruses must invade a \_\_\_\_\_ and use it. Viruses are NOT \_\_\_\_\_ but have genetic \_\_\_\_\_. Different viruses need different \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ coat helps the virus detect the right kind of host cell. In \_\_\_\_\_, the virus attaches to the outside of a host cell. In \_\_\_\_\_, the virus injects genetic information into the host cell. During \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, the host cell's enzymes obey the virus's genetic instructions. During \_\_\_\_\_ new virus particles leave the \_\_\_\_\_ in search of new host cells.

**Example # 7 - Writing Frame - Academic Language**

(Compare and Contrast)

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are similar  
in a number of ways. First, they both \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Another critical similarity is \_\_\_\_\_.

An equally important similarity is \_\_\_\_\_.

Finally, they \_\_\_\_\_.

The differences between \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_ are also obvious. The most important  
difference is \_\_\_\_\_.

In addition, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

In the final analysis, \_\_\_\_\_ differs from \_\_\_\_\_  
in two other major ways: 1) \_\_\_\_\_  
and 2) \_\_\_\_\_.

**Example #8 continued** (Using strategy to write a paragraph summary. This is taken from *REWARDS PLUS*)

Step 1. <b>LIST</b>	(List the details that are important enough to include in your summary.)
Step 2. <b>CROSS-OUT</b>	(Reread the details. Cross out any that you decide not to include.)
Step 3. <b>CONNECT</b>	(Connect any details that could go into one sentence.)
Step 4. <b>NUMBER</b>	(Number the details in a logical order.)
Step 5. <b>WRITE</b>	(Write the paragraph.)
Step 6. <b>EDIT</b>	(Revise and proofread your answer.)

Example # 8 continued

Greek Theater

- 1 - began as a religious ceremony
- 1 - honored the Greek god Dionysus
- ~~beliefs in Dionysus began to spread southward~~
- 2 - choruses chanted lyrics
- 3 - actors joined the choruses
- 4 - the Dionysus festival in Athens became a drama competition
- 4 - amphitheaters were built
- 5 - performed tragedies that taught lessons
- 5 - performed comedies that made fun of life
- 6 -declined when playwrights died and the government changed

**Example #8** continued

The roots of modern theater can be found in early Greek theater. Greek theater began as a religious ceremony that honored the Greek god Dionysus. At first, choruses chanted lyrics. When actors were added to interact with the chorus, theater was born. Later, the Dionysus festival in Athens became a drama competition, and amphitheaters were built to accommodate the event. Both tragedies, which taught lessons, and comedies, which made fun of life, were performed. Greek theater declined when the great playwrights died and the government changed.

<b>Rubric- Summary</b>	<b>Student Rating</b>	<b>Teacher Rating</b>
1. Did the author state the topic and the main idea in the first sentence?	Yes Fix up	Yes No
2. Did the author focus on the important details?	Yes Fix up	Yes No
3. Did the author combine details in some of the sentences?	Yes Fix up	Yes No
4. Is the summary easy to understand?	Yes Fix up	Yes No
5. Did the author correctly spell words, particularly the words found in the article?	Yes Fix up	Yes No
6. Did the author use correct capitalization, capitalizing the first word in the sentence and proper names of people, places, and things?	Yes Fix up	Yes No
7. Did the author use punctuation including a period at the end of each sentence?	Yes Fix up	Yes No

**Example #9**

**Compare/Contrast Think Sheet**

**Subject:** \_\_\_\_\_

**SAME**

**Groups**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>St. Bernard</b>	<b>Newfoundland</b>
<b>Use</b>	<b>Rescue</b>	<b>Rescue</b>
<b>Height</b>	<b>Full grown males same</b>	<b>Full grown males same</b>
<b>Type of Fur</b>	<b>Smooth dense that protects from cold</b>	<b>Smooth dense that protects from cold</b>

**DIFFERENT**

**Groups**

<b>Categories</b>		
<b>Weight</b>	<b>155 – 170 pounds</b>	<b>140 – 150 pounds</b>
<b>Place of Origin</b>	<b>Swiss Alps</b>	<b>Newfoundland</b>
<b>Different Clients</b>	<b>Climbers and skiers</b>	<b>People in Atlantic Ocean</b>

### Example #9 continued

**The Saint Bernard and the Newfoundland are the same in several ways. Both dogs are large rescue dogs. The full grown males are about the same height. Both dogs have smooth dense fur that protects them from the cold while they are rescuing people.**

**Although the two dogs are similar, they also have differences. The Saint Bernard is much heavier, weighing 155 to 170 pounds. The lighter Newfoundland weights 140 to 150 pounds. The dogs originated in different places, so the types of rescues they perform are different. The Saint Bernard originated in the Swiss Alps and rescues climbers and skiers from the snow. The Newfoundland rescues people from the Atlantic Ocean. Both dogs perform important services for mankind.**

### Reference

Stephanie Gray and Catharine Keech. *Writing from Given Information: Classroom Research Study No. 3*. 1980. Bay Area Writing Project. Berkeley, CA: University of California.

## Compare/Contrast Think Sheet

Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

**SAME**

**Groups**

<b>Categories</b>		

**DIFFERENT**

**Groups**

<b>Categories</b>		

**Example #10 – (Essay to Persuade)**

**Essay Rubric**

**Author** \_\_\_\_\_ **Essay Topic** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Question</b>	<b>Student or Partner Rating</b>		<b>Teacher Rating</b>	
<p><b>INTRODUCTION</b></p> <p>1. Does the introduction tell the <b>topic</b> of the essay?</p> <p>2. Does the introduction state the <b>author’s position</b> on the topic?</p> <p>3. Does the introduction give two or more convincing <b>reasons</b> for the position?</p> <p>4. Does the introduction grab the reader’s <b>attention</b>?</p>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<p><b>BODY</b></p> <p>5. Does the body include at least <b>three major reasons</b> that support the author’s position?</p> <p>6. Does the author elaborate on and <b>explain</b> each of the major reasons using logical arguments, evidence and examples?</p> <p>7. Did the author acknowledge and respond to the <b>opposing side’s view</b>?</p> <p>8. Are the paragraphs <b>well-organized</b> and <b>easy to understand</b>?</p> <p>9. Are <b>transition words and phrases</b> used to connect ideas within and between paragraphs?</p>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<p><b>CONCLUSION</b></p> <p>10. Does the conclusion summarize the <b>author’s position</b>?</p> <p>11. Does the essay have a <b>definite conclusion</b>?</p>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<p><b>CONVENTIONS</b></p> <p>11. Did the author <b>correctly spell</b> words?</p> <p>12. Did the author use <b>correct capitalization</b>?</p> <p>13. Did the author use <b>correct punctuation</b>?</p>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<p><b>CONTENT</b></p> <p>14. Did the essay hold the reader’s <b>attention</b> from beginning to end?</p> <p>15. Is the essay clear and easy to <b>understand</b>?</p> <p>16. Did the author stay <b>focused</b> on the same position throughout the paper?</p>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>

**Example #10** continued (Example - Essay to Persuade)

**Prompt:** *In order to fight the rise of violence and use of drugs in schools, some faculties have implemented random searches of backpacks, book bags, lockers, and/or desks for weapons and drugs. Do you agree with these random searches or do you disagree? Write a letter to the faculty members at a school stating your opinion and justification for that opinion. Begin the letter with these words: Dear Faculty Members.*

Dear Faculty Members,

I am worried about the new random search policies that have been implemented at many schools in our area. I understand the danger of illegal drugs and weapons on campus, but I am more afraid of the consequences that these searches will cause. I know these policies only come from a real concern for the safety and quality of our school campus, but I think that they will cause more problems than solutions. Random searches threaten personal privacy and erode a student's trust in the faculty without solving the heart of the issue.

Random searches through a student's book bag, locker, or desk are a clear invasion of personal privacy. Our desks, book bags, and lockers are essentially our home away from home. Thus, they contain very personal items that are part of our non-academic life such as diaries, notes from boy or girl friends, pictures from non-school events, cosmetics, and dental retainers. We had no intent that anyone would ever see or touch these items, but now a teacher or security guard is holding it up for all to see. Do you realize how embarrassing this would be to a shy, sensitive student? How would you like the principal going through your desk, purse, or car?

Not only do these searches overstep boundaries of a person's private space, they break down valuable trust between students and teachers, the heart of that relationship. In order for a student to learn, they need to be comfortable with their teachers. If students are always worried about whether or not their teachers will look

through their book bags or lockers, they will be too anxious to learn. School faculty will become intimidating figures that students don't trust. Education is supposed to help students grow up, not bring them down and make them feel vulnerable. Random searches would dramatically change the environment of a school from academic to suspicious.

Finally, searches will not solve the problem on a permanent basis. There's no doubt that widespread random searches will uncover some illegal weapons or drugs in the beginning, but that doesn't mean that it is actually effective in the long run. Rather it will force offending students to be sneakier. Making more rules doesn't get to the root of the problem, but makes problems become more concealed. If students have drugs, they will just find different places to hide them. Even though these search efforts are well intentioned, they do little to solve the problem of illegal drugs and weapons in the school and may actually punish the innocent. For example, what if a nail file is found in a girl's locker and the security guards consider it a weapon? Would her future be jeopardized over a little manicure tool? What if a boy has Tylenol in his backpack because of a sprained ankle? These searches could punish the innocent while the guilty think of new and sneakier ways to hide their contraband.

Instead of random backpack searches, maybe schools could offer alternate solutions like counseling or advertising for anonymous help-lines. If students are using drugs or feel the need for weapons, they obviously need real help. Schools should point troubled kids to safe solutions instead of quick punishment. This way the students that aren't doing anything wrong won't be treated like criminals and schools can keep their focus on academics and education.

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**Example # 10** continued (Completed Think Sheet)

**Prepare**

Topic: <i>random searches</i>	Form: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> letter <input type="checkbox"/> essay <input type="checkbox"/> other
Audience: <i>faculty members</i>	Type of preparation: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> think OR <input type="checkbox"/> collect evidence
Purpose: Persuade <input type="checkbox"/> Pro <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Con	Brainstorm and select convincing reasons.

**Organize**

<b>Introduction</b>		
<b>Position on Topic:</b> <i>I disagree with having random searches of desks, lockers, and backpacks.</i>		
<b>Reason A.</b> <i>Invades personal privacy</i>	<b>Reason B.</b> <i>Destroys trust between students and faculty</i>	<b>Reason C.</b> <i>Doesn't solve problem</i>
<b>Body A. Explain</b>	<b>Body B. Explain</b>	<b>Body C. Explain</b>
1- <i>desks, book bags,</i>	1- <i>not comfortable with teachers</i>	1- <i>bad students sneakier</i>
<i>lockers are students' "home"</i>		2- <i>hide drugs in new places</i>
	3- <i>faculty intimidating</i>	
- <i>contain personal items</i>		
- <i>diaries</i>	2 - <i>students worried about searches</i>	3 - <i>may punish innocent</i>
- <i>notes</i>		
2 - <i>pictures</i>		4 - <i>example - nail file</i>
- <i>retainers</i>	4 - <i>feel vulnerable</i>	
		5 - <i>example - Tylenol</i>
	5 - <i>changes school environment</i>	
- <i>don't want people to see</i>		
3 -		
- <i>don't want people to touch</i>		
4 - <i>embarrassing</i>		
<b>Conclusion</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Summarize <input type="checkbox"/> Convince <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suggest an Action		





## Thanksgiving – A Day of Gratitude

(Introduction)

My favorite holiday is Thanksgiving for a number of reasons. First, Thanksgiving gives me an opportunity to visit and play with friends and family members. Of course, Thanksgiving is also a great day to enjoy a variety of wonderful foods. In addition, it is a chance to stop and express gratitude for the richness of our lives.

(Body)

First, Thanksgiving affords me the gift of gathering with friends and family members. Normally, I celebrate Thanksgiving on the Friday after the official holiday. Twenty-five to fifty people generally attend my Thanksgiving party. My guests include my sister and her family and an array of friends from across the country. We spend much of our time just visiting, but we also engage in numerous activities. For example, we entertain each other by telling a story, playing the piano or guitar, or singing a song. Guests who don't want to perform make up the attentive audience. As a group, we also sing traditional Thanksgiving songs and hymns. After eating, we play games, go on a group stroll through the neighborhood, and continue our conversations.

Thanksgiving is not only an excellent time to enjoy friends and family members, it is also a wonderful time to EAT. You should see the buffet table at our Thanksgiving party. Of course, we have all the traditional foods: turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, and gravy. In addition, we always have a variety of vegetables and a Pacific Northwest

specialty, salmon. The guests usually bring the desserts including pies, cakes, and cookies. My favorite Thanksgiving food may surprise you: bread covered with gravy. Late at night, once my guests have turned off their lights, I slip back to the kitchen for my private snack. I tear a piece of bread into small pieces, cover it with gravy, heat the mixture in the microwave, and sit down for the final feast.

But most importantly, I love Thanksgiving because I take time to reflect on my life and express gratitude for my abundance. Even as I prepare for Thanksgiving, I contemplate my many blessings. As I set the table, I remember many of my relatives: my mother who gave me the salt and pepper shakers, my grandmother who once cherished the pitcher with an autumn leaf design, my sister who brought me the blue serving dish for this party. As I prepare the food, I am reminded of all the gifts that I have in my life that others lack: joyful work, abundant food, the shelter of a house, and warm clothing. My final preparation activity, creating floral arrangements for each of the tables, always carries me into deep gratitude for the beauty of nature. And then my friends arrive and I experience the greatest blessings of my life.

(Conclusion)

As you can see Thanksgiving is my favorite holiday. But it should also be your favorite for Thanksgiving is the only holiday that will never disappoint you. On Christmas, you may not get the gift you hoped for. On Valentine's Day, you may not have a girl or boy friend. On the Fourth of July, the fireworks may be cancelled due to dry conditions. However, on Thanksgiving, you expected turkey and you got it!

Example # 12 - Short Story

## Think Sheet – Story

**(7) Title**

**(3) Setting**

**(1) Main Character(s)**

**(2) Problem**

**(4) Beginning**

**(5) Middle**

**(6) End**



## Autobiographical Incident Think Sheet

<b>(5) Title</b>	<i>Give Heart</i>
<b>(1) Incident</b>	<i>Fifth grade with Mrs. Finkle -- Heart pin</i>
<b>(3) Settings</b>	<i>Mountain View Elementary School</i>
<b>(4) Events</b>	
	<i>1. Arrive at Mountain View.</i>
	<i>2. Difficulty adapting to new fifth grade class.</i>
	<i>3. Decided to be silent.</i>
	<i>4. Mrs. Finkle was kind and caring.</i>
	<i>Talked to me.</i>
	<i>Patted my back.</i>
	<i>Smiled at me.</i>
	<i>5. Class got better.</i>
	<i>Made friends.</i>
	<i>Participated in class.</i>
	<i>6. Mrs. Finkle caught heart pin in hairnet.</i>
	<i>7. Helped Mrs. Finkle remove pin.</i>
	<i>8. She gave me the pin and told me to “give heart” as a teacher.</i>
	<i>9. Today I wear on Valentine’s Day.</i>
	<i>10. Wear hearts every day ... and try to “give heart”.</i>
<b>(2) Lesson learned</b>	
	<i>Give heart to all people. Show love and care.</i>

## Give Heart

Being a teacher was not even a consideration at the time, but Mrs. Finkle, my fifth grade teacher, taught me my first lesson about teaching. Even now, it is the lesson that I try to practice every day.

Mountain View was the second school of my fifth grade, the eighth school of my short school career. After so many moves, the prospect of making new friends, of learning about a new teacher, of once again learning the classroom routines, brought me to total silence. For an outgoing person, silence was a new experience. I just didn't want to try again.

However, Mrs. Finkle was not about to lose my mind or soul. I will never forget the little things she did each day to reach out to the silent one: talking with me as we lined up for music, patting my back as I worked on math problems, quietly praising my efforts, writing comments on my papers. Best of all, when I was reading or working, I would look up and there would be her smile...greeting me, making me feel safe.

Gradually, the scary life of fifth grade in a new school began to fade. I did make friends. I did begin to talk in class. I began to write long stories and to read them to my class. All of this occurred because of the love and care shared by Mrs. Finkle.

And one day, she shared a symbol of that love. It was right before recess and most of the kids were already out the door. Mrs. Finkle and I were both at the cloakroom pulling on hats, gloves, and coats as protection against the February cold. As she put on her coat, Mrs. Finkle caught her hairnet on her red heart pin that always rested on her collar. After struggling for a moment, she beckoned, "Anita, would you help me." Soon I had separated the heart pin from her hairnet. However, instead of replacing the pin, she handed it to me and gently directed, "You take it. You will be a teacher someday. Remember to give heart...always."

Forty years later, I wear that heart each Valentine's Day. But everyday, I wear at least one heart and try to remember her message as I teach. "Give heart." Thanks, Mrs. Finkle.