

STICKY DOT DETAILS



Most of our students do their first writing by simply labeling a picture. As they grow as writers, we want them to elaborate, or add more details to the topic. This mini lesson uses a manipulative – sticky dots – as an incentive to add details to a topic. Students are given two sticky dots and told to put a dot at the end of each detail. As they think of more details, they can add more dots.

DEVELOPMENTAL LEVEL: Early

WRITING TRAIT: Ideas

INTRODUCTION: Link this mini lesson to students’ understanding of topics and details. Tell them that today they will be adding more than one detail to a topic.

You have become very good at picking a topic to write about and adding a detail. But good writers usually have more than one detail on a topic. In fact sometimes they have lots of details! For example, if my topic is “Popcorn,” I might add details like: It is my favorite snack and it is white and fluffy like little clouds. Today you are going to learn about writing more than one detail on a topic.

INSTRUCTION: Go through the usual process for modeled writing. But this time, place two sticky dots on the back of your hand. Model telling your details before you write them. Tell the students that these dots are to help you remember to write two details.

I’ve got lots of ideas for topics in my head right now, but today I’m going to write about the topic “What I did on my summer holidays.” I know I’ve already used that topic, but sometimes I can use it again, if I have different ideas or more details to add. Just because you’ve used a topic once doesn’t mean you’ve used it up. I’m going to use it again because this time I have a few more things to tell.

So, that’s my topic – “What I did on my summer holidays” – and now I need two details. My first detail is “I went camping in the mountains.” My second detail is “I saw a bear.”

Pretell, then write, the first detail. Put one of your sticky dots at the end of the sentence (detail). Then review and write the second detail and place the other sticky dot at the end. Be sure to model rereading after every few words to keep track of your thoughts.

APPLICATION: Tell students that now it is their turn to choose a topic and write two details. Require them to pre-tell their two details, either to the group or to a writing partner, before they get two sticky dots on the back of their hand. When they can pre-tell what they are going

to write, and it is clear that they understand the concept of two details, give them their writing materials to begin. Give them a few minutes for writing before you “align” at each desk for a butterfly conference. As you visit each writer, ask him to read what he has written. Then ask a few questions and invite him to tell more. If the student can add another detail, offer to give him one more dot!

EXTENSION: Many of your students will pre-tell their details in complete sentences. Others will not; for example, a child who chooses a topic like “My Favorite Foods” might write more of a list, such as “pepperoni pizza,” “chocolate chip cookies,” etc. At this point, the lesson objective is to generate details, not write complete sentences

After the students have had practice adding several details to a topic, this is a good opportunity to start linking sticky dot details to sentence writing. Praise students who have written complete sentences, and invite others to see how they can turn a detail into a sentence. For example, *How can we turn that detail into a sentence? Maybe “I love all kinds of pizza, but I love pepperoni the best” or “Chocolate chip cookies are my favorite dessert.”* Eventually, the dots will be replaced by periods.

For more ideas on minilessons for beginning writers, see *Marvelous Minilessons for Teaching Beginning Writing, K-3* by Lori Jamison Rog (International Reading Association, www.reading.org).

