

# 10

## Using titles, subtitles and paragraphs to structure and design a text

### Goal

The students should learn how to write clear and appropriate titles and how to create paragraphs for clarity in their writing. Titles, subtitles and paragraphs all contribute to the attractiveness and enhance the readability of a text. Illustrations and presentation (layout) serve the same purpose, and the students should also gain experience with these elements.

### 1. Creating precise and attractive titles: didactic ideas

3<sup>rd</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> grade

20 minutes



Materials:  
Picture book stories, newspaper reports or similar (see right).

Variants:

- The instructor reads a short story to the class and then asks what kind of title would be suitable for the text. Each student writes one or two title suggestions on a strip of paper. The suggestions are then discussed: which titles are attractive and why? Which ones are rather boring, and why?
- The instructor then presents a (fictitious) project of creating a poster or flyer for tourism in their native country (its capital city or areas of natural beauty, etc.). What would be an attractive title or eye-catching slogan for this poster? (If there is time to complete the task, the idea should naturally be implemented.)
- The instructor distributes a picture story, a newspaper report, or a short story without a title to the class. The students should consider clear, attractive titles for the story, either in pairs or as individuals. The suggestions are then written on strips of paper and discussed.
- Discussions (whole class or at group level) of the question: to which given title would you like to write a text? Think about exciting titles and topics! The suggestions are then discussed, collected, and put into practice, if possible.
- From the 4th grade on: the instructor collects examples of attractive book titles (with the class, if at all possible), and invents a few boring titles, such as ("Susi, the lovely girl", "Flower poems"). The titles are then discussed and the students try to determine what makes a title boring or exciting.

### 2. Structuring a text with subtitles and paragraphs

3<sup>rd</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> grade

30 minutes



Materials:  
Prepared texts (see right).

Variants:

- The instructor prepares two texts that are photocopied (A4 size each): Text A lacks the title and subtitles, and has no paragraphs either (or hardly any). Text B (e. g. a factual text about a country or an animal) is structured with a clear title, paragraphs and subtitles. Discussion: why is text B easier to read and what is the purpose of the subtitles and paragraphs? How could this be improved still (e. g. with illustrations)?

	<p><u>Trip to the old ghost castle.</u></p> <p>Picnic at the prison tower.</p>	<p>Scared by a feathery "ghost"</p> <p>Return journey with a surprise</p>
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- The instructor distributes a picture story (4–5 pictures). Task: in pairs, the students are to find an attractive title for the whole story as well as a subtitle for each picture.
- The instructor randomly distributes a text without paragraphs or titles (max. 2/3 page). Task: find a title for the text, organize it into paragraphs and formulate subtitles!
- The instructor distributes a story which has been cut into strips (one paragraph on each strip of paper). Task: find the right sequence and put the story development in the right order, decide on subtitles. Then, glue the strip on a piece of paper and write the titles and subtitles on it!
- The instructor provides the class with a topic, e.g. “A presentation about our capital city”, “An important personality from our culture” or “My life in two cultures”. Task: if you had to write a text, or give a presentation about one of the topics, what kind of a title and subtitles would you choose?
- Task (possibly in conjunction with the previous suggestion): write a text, structure it with appropriate subtitles and at least four paragraphs!

### 3. Illustrations and layout as means of design

3<sup>rd</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> grade

30 minutes



- The above suggestions can be easily expanded with further questions: how could we make the text clearer and easier to read with illustrations? Which design and layout would enhance the text?
- Self-experimentation and tryouts (also on the computer) should most certainly be encouraged. In addition to the above ideas, worksheets which students create for one another in conjunction with non-fiction texts and presentations may be suitable for this purpose.

# 11 Techniques for revision and self-correction

## Goal

*The students should learn how to review and revise their texts to improve them. This pertains to content on the one hand (clarity, logical structure, attractive presentation to the reader), and formal aspects of the text (grammar, syntax, correct forms) on the other hand. The careful revision and optimization of the texts furthers students' competence in the written and standard form of their first language as well as the general awareness of the written form. Working with others in this process is preferable to revising text independently, as it promotes language awareness through interactive communication and, parallel to this, the linguistic resources of two or three students are being used to advantage.*

### 1. Writing conference: editing texts together

2<sup>nd</sup>–9<sup>th</sup> grade

30 minutes



Materials:  
reference books and dictionaries.

This interactive process of text editing is known to many students from their regular classes. Moreover, it is particularly well suited for teaching in the heritage language, as it promotes awareness of, and competence in, the standard language.

a) As a prerequisite for this task, the students must have composed a text (preferably not more than one page). Those who are finished with their text, practice reading it out loud. Then they seek out one or two partners with whom to practice and improve the drafts. (Variant: the instructor creates editorial teams.)

b) The students take turns, slowly reading the whole text to the others in the group and posing the following three questions (they can be written on the board, on pieces of paper, or provided as copies): Did you understand