Rationale
The ability to write a good report can make or break a case. A report that a police officer writes in his squad car has the potential to make it to the United States Supreme Court.

Objectives
The student will be able to:
1. Define the different types of reports and their functions
2. Identify what makes a good police report
3. Investigate a burglary case and write a report on it
4. Compose a report on an aggravated robbery case as part of a multiple choice test

Engage
Put ten items in a box and have the students come up, one at a time, using as much time as they need to observe what is in the box. Then the students go back to their desk and write what they observed. Use the Writing Rubric for assessment.

Key Points
I. Observation is an important skill in law enforcement. The better an officer observes things, the better he or she can describe them.

II. The purpose of reports in law enforcement
   A. They provide a source of information while police carry out an investigation
      1. Allows passing of the case from one officer to another
      2. Provides a factual record of the work done on a case, eliminating duplication
      3. Is a requisite for the proper preparation and presentation of a case to the district attorney and to the court
   B. Helps a department stay organized
      1. The memory system of a department
      2. Serves as a written, permanent record of all department business
   C. A report is an administrative necessity; most official forms of communication are completed using reports.
   D. Other purposes
      1. The basis for maintenance of identification and criminal records in Austin
      2. Aid in the recovery of lost or stolen property
      3. Contain information used to apprehend criminals
      4. Used in civil suits
      5. Provide factual data to combat ill-advised or unreasonable demands on police
6. Furnish information to the news media

III. Types of reports
   A. Initial reports – can begin in the squad car and end up in the Supreme Court
      1. Arrest reports
      2. Incident reports – for documentation purposes only
      3. Offense reports – begin the investigation of criminal matters
      4. Initial reports – written by the assigned officer, covering the initial investigation, and lay the foundation for the whole case
   B. Supplemental reports
      1. All reports other than the initial report
      2. Written by an officer, other than the one assigned, about his or her participation in a particular case
      3. Concerned with follow-up work performed by inspectors, detectives, or investigators
      4. Submitted in connection with the investigation by specialists such as fingerprint technicians, photographers, drug lab analysts, etc.
   C. Attachments to reports including crime scene photos and sketches, notes, and other documents filed with the case report

IV. Styles of reports
   A. Narrative
      1. Most widely used
      2. Information written in a logical manner or sequence
   B. Chronological
      1. Events written in order of occurrence
      2. Time element is of prime importance
   C. Specialized
      1. Summary of reports about specialized law enforcement and police problems
      2. May be either narrative, chronological, or both

V. Essential qualities of a report
   A. Clear and complete sentences
   B. Proper grammar
   C. Detailed descriptions

VI. Rules for description
   A. Describe things without assuming.
   B. Use vivid language.
   C. Look for distinguishing marks, color, size, shape, texture, location, type, etc.
   D. Paint a picture of a place with words.
   E. Describe people from top to bottom and include characteristics such as manner of speaking, walking, moving, items they are
carrying, etc.
F. Four Corners Rule – if it's not within the four corners of the paper then it did not happen

VII. Four requisites of a good report
   A. Factual – detailed correctness
   B. Clear – distinct and unconfused
   C. Complete – having no deficiency
   D. Concise – expressing much in a few words

VIII. Questions to ask and answer
   A. Who?
   B. What?
   C. When?
   D. Where?
   E. Why?
   F. How?

IX. Essential components of a report
   A. Date
   B. Time
   C. Location
   D. Kind of call
   E. Description of surroundings
   F. Description of vehicle
   G. Description of suspect
   H. Chronological order

X. Preparing for the report
   A. Organize your evidence and information
   B. Check with dispatch for updated data
   C. Log in the evidence
   D. Begin the report

XI. Writing the report
   A. First Section
      1. Type of call
      2. Case number
      3. Date and time of the report
      4. Date and time of the offense
      5. Type of report (offense or incident)
      6. Caller information (name, date of birth, race, sex, hair and eye color, height, weight, driver’s license number)
      7. The complete victim or complainant address and phone number
      8. The victim or complainant’s employer
      9. Location of the offense
      10. Who it was reported by (complete information)
11. Employer contact information
12. Number of witnesses, number of suspects, etc.
13. The incident or offense
14. Probable cause or “MO”
15. The report writer
16. Supervisor’s approval
17. Stolen property entered by dispatch into the computer (over $2000 value only, or stolen vehicles)

B. Vehicle or evidence information
   1. Vehicle listing (stolen, recovered, abandoned, etc.)
   2. Vehicle type (make, model, year, license plate, state of registration, VIN)
   3. Value
   4. Condition
   5. Other Remarks

C. Weapons description
   1. Quantity
   2. Appearance
   3. Caliber
   4. Serial Number
   5. Model
   6. Value

D. Burglary information
   1. How the suspect entered the home
      a. Home accessible (unlocked)
      b. Forced entry
      c. Inside job
   2. How the suspect left the home

E. Summary
   1. Restate the probable cause or “MO” (see example).
   2. State whether dispatched or on view.
   3. Describe the crime scene.
   4. Tell the story.
   5. Identify yourself as the reporting officer (R/O) (not your name).
   6. Use R/O for the rest of the report.
   7. Identify the victim, suspect, and witnesses in the report.
   8. Take pictures of everything.
   9. No pronouns used

Activities
Burglary case: The instructor reads the Burglary Case Scenario to the students while they take notes. The instructor plays the part of each actor in the story. The students ask the instructor questions related to the crime. The students then fill out a report and write a narrative based on the notes they have taken about the crime. For full credit it must include address, time of
day, detailed description of the scene, suspects, suspect vehicle, property taken, detailed accounts of the witnesses’ and victim’s stories, how the suspects approached and departed the scene, and entered into the system as stolen. It must have creative aspects and be at least one page in length. Use the Writing Rubric for assessment.

Assessments
Report Writing Quiz (open note)
Report Writing Exam
Individual Work Rubric
Writing Rubric

Materials
Report Writing computer-based presentation
Burglary Case Scenario
Offense/Incident Report (blank)

Resources
Federal Law Enforcement Training Center http://www.fletc.gov/
Do an Internet search for the Calendar for Law Enforcement Training policetraining

Accommodations for Learning Differences
For reinforcement, students will write a report or letter in their own voice, then translate it into the format described in the Report Writing computer-based presentation. Use the Individual Work Rubric for assessment.

For enrichment, students create scenarios for the other students to write a report or letter as described above. Use the Individual Work Rubric for assessment.

State Education Standards
Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Career and Technical Education §130.296. Court Systems and Practices (One to Two Credits).
(3) The student recognizes communication skills needed for courtroom policies and procedures. The student is expected to:
   (C) use writing skills to facilitate effective field note taking and report writing.

College and Career Readiness Standards
English Language Arts
I. Writing
   A. Compose a variety of texts that demonstrate clear focus, the logical development of ideas in well-organized paragraphs, and the use of appropriate language that advances the author’s purpose.
      1. Generate ideas and gather information relevant to the topic and purpose, keeping careful records of outside sources.
      2. Evaluate relevance, quality, sufficiency, and depth of
preliminary ideas and information, organize material generated, and formulate a thesis.
Burglary Case Scenario

You are dispatched to a residential burglary alarm at 125 Bird St. on [the current date], at 8:30 AM. When you get to the house you see that the front door has been pried open and a black pry bar is lying on the ground. You and your partner clear the house, and find the dresser drawers and closet door were left open in the master bedroom. The house has been ransacked, but you do not find the burglar. You have dispatch notify the homeowner of the situation. While you are waiting for the homeowner, two neighbors come to you and give you some information. The owner later shows up and tells you what is missing. I will play the part of each person, and you as a class will ask me questions for your report. You will need to use your own paper for a one-page narrative in addition to filling in the blanks on the report. *Turn in your notes for part of the grade.*

Witnesses:
- We were drinking coffee and watching T.V. in our house.
- We heard a loud noise like a door being opened, then heard the burglar alarm next door go off.
- We looked out our living room window and saw a white male entering the front door. He was tall (6' 0") and thin. He looked like he was in his early 20s. He had a mustache, and a scar on his forehead. He was wearing all black, and had a "Buzz" haircut.
- Two or three minutes later he came out of the house, and a beat-up grey 1980s large sedan pulled in front of the house, driven by a black male. It had a license plate number of 3F5GH6. The first guy had various items in a bag that he must have gotten from the house. They left in the car.

Joe Smith
2/3/45 W/M
TX DL# 10394856
123 Bird St.
Burleson, TX 75138
817-123-4567
No work

Sally Smith
5/6/46 W/F
TX DL# 10592760
123 Bird St.
Burleson, TX 75138
817-123-4567
No work

Owner:
I was at work when the alarm company called and told me that my house had been burglarized. I left for work at 7:30 AM.

This is what is missing:
• Living Room
  o Black name brand lap top computer – Serial # 12345678 – $500
  o Video Game System – black, no serial number – $200

• Master Bedroom
  o 5 sliver rings - $200 a piece – top drawer of dresser
  o 1 gold necklace – $100 – top drawer of dresser
  o 1 black .357 pistol – Serial Number G46784 – $800 – in closet

Matthew Johnson
4/6/56 W/M
TX DL #67489205
125 Bird St.
Burleson, TX 75138
817-567-4367

Work Info:
Any Company
123 Pioneer Pkwy.
Arlington, TX 76014
817-355-2575

Suspect Vehicle return:

Stolen
Owner is:
Mark Matthews
345 Peter St.
Ft. Worth, TX 75364

1987 Large Sedan Four Door
VIN – FURR87IEL9GN684598
Texas license plate – 3F5GH6
Registration expires 9/09
Report Writing Exam

1. What is a skill in law enforcement that helps an officer describe things?
   a) Observation
   b) Memory
   c) Picture taking skills
   d) Binoculars

2. What is a use of a police report?
   a) Allows passing of the case from one officer to another
   b) Helps a department stay organized
   c) Provides a factual record of work done on a case
   d) All of the above

3. What kind of report will an investigator do when he does something on a case he received from a beat officer’s report?
   a) Initial report
   b) Supplemental report
   c) Attachment of report
   d) Incident report
   e) Offense report

4. What kind of report will begin the investigation of criminal matters?
   a) Supplemental report
   b) Attachment of report
   c) Arrest report
   d) Incident report
   e) Offense report

5. Which of the following is an initial report?
   a) Supplemental report
   b) Attachment of report
   c) Arrest report
   d) Incident report
   e) Both C and D

6. What kind of report is an incident report?
   a) Initial report
   b) Supplement report
   c) Attachment of report
   d) Arrest report
   e) Offense report
7. Which of the following would be considered an attachment to a report?
   a) Supplemental report
   b) Photos
   c) Arrest report
   d) Incident report
   e) Offense report

8. What style of report is the most widely used and sets forth information in a logical
   manner or sequence?
   a) Narrative
   b) Chronological
   c) Specialized
   d) None of the above

9. What is needed in a report?
   a) Clear and complete sentences
   b) Proper grammar
   c) Good descriptions
   d) All of the above
   e) None of the above

10. What rule says that if it is not written in the paper, it did not happen?
    a) Four corners rule
    b) Four sides rule
    c) Four papers rule
    d) Four reports rule

Report Writing in Practice
Read the following scenario. Imagine that you are the reporting officer and, on a separate sheet
of paper, write a report. Include the essential components for the report. All the case details may
be created by you. You will receive points for writing the information for the imaginary report, not
listing what should be in it. Creativity will also be assessed. It must be a minimum of one page
long. Also, be certain to fill in ALL the blank spaces on the report.

You are dispatched to an ATM machine in order to take an aggravated robbery report. The
victim, Tony Unlucky, was robbed at gunpoint by two suspects while he was in his car at the
ATM machine. The robbers took Mr. Unlucky’s personal belongings and then took his car.
There were two witnesses.
Report Writing Exam Key

1. A
2. D
3. B
4. E
5. E
6. A
7. B
8. A
9. D
10. A

Report Writing in Practice answers will vary.
Report Writing Quiz

What is a skill that helps a police officer describe things?
1. ______________________________________

Name three uses of a police report?
2. ______________________________________
3. ______________________________________
4. ______________________________________

What are the three types of reports used in law enforcement?
5. ______________________________________
6. ______________________________________
7. ______________________________________

What does an initial report do?
8. ______________________________________

What are three types of initial reports?
9. ______________________________________
10. ______________________________________
11. ______________________________________

What type of initial report is for documentation purposes only?
12. ______________________________________

What kind of initial report begins the investigation of criminal matters?
13. ______________________________________
An example of this kind of report would be a detective writing a follow-up report to a report that an officer took about a crime.

14. ______________________________________

An example of this kind of report would be photographs taken of a crime scene and put with the initial report.

15. ______________________________________

What style of report is the most widely used, and sets forth information in a logical manner or sequence?

16. ______________________________________

What three things are needed in a report?

17. ______________________________________
18. ______________________________________
19. ______________________________________

What rule says that if it is not written in the paper, it did not happen?

20. ______________________________________
Report Writing Quiz Key

1. Observation
2. Provides a source of information (factual record)
3. Helps a department stay organized
4. Allows passing of the case from one officer to another/administrative necessity
5. Initial report
6. Supplemental report
7. Attachments to reports
8. Lays the foundation for the case/begins the investigation
9. Arrest report
10. Incident report
11. Offense report
12. Incident report
13. Offense report
14. Supplemental report
15. Attachment of reports
16. Narrative
17. Clear and complete sentences
18. Proper grammar
19. Good descriptions
20. Four corners rule
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Writing Rubric

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<td>The writing has all required parts from introduction to conclusion in smooth transition.</td>
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**Total Points (28 pts.)**

Comments: