



## Writing Essentials - Prewriting Strategy

### ELABORATION

#### Lesson 2, Teacher Resource 2

## The Final Word/USA Today

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### Cell Phone Bullies Change the Tone at Airports, August 4, 2008

It was 6 in the morning in Las Vegas. I had not been up all night like most everyone else in town, but I felt as if I had, mainly because everything was surreal, even by Vegas standards. I was at the airport, drinking my coffee, wondering why I had booked such an early flight home, when a man appeared out of nowhere and began screaming into his cell phone that “the fools” at the gate area would not give him the seat he was always assigned. It was *his* seat, after all, in the emergency exit row. He *always* sat there. I know this because he was telling not only the person on the phone, but also all of us in the 702 area code.

What he had done was call the airline’s customer service number. He was unhappy with the answers he was getting from the gate agent who was standing right before him.

I haven’t seen anyone his age, or size, throw such a temper tantrum in a long time. In fact, I’m not sure I’ve ever seen anyone throw such a tantrum.

And then he was gone. Poof.

Maybe angry gods swept him away, or the security guards shuffled him out, or maybe his own two feet were embarrassed for him and carried him off, but he was gone—much to the relief of everyone waiting to board.

It could just be bad timing on my part, but I’m running into more cell phone jerks these days. They’re everywhere.

Just the other day, a man regaled a boarding area at Washington’s Reagan National Airport with his business of the day. It was very clear very early that he was very important. He was berating one of his underlings for all the world to hear.

Being a bit of a jerk myself, I decided to try a little experiment. Instead of fleeing, as I would usually do, I remained next to the man. He continued to lecture—staring at me on occasion as if I shouldn’t be eavesdropping!—then moved a few feet away. So I quietly moved with him. I followed him for three more moves until he finally told the person on the phone he’d call back. Some jerk was following him around, he said. Actually, *jerk* wasn’t the word he used.

I chuckled all the way to New York's LaGuardia.

A number of airlines are looking into the possibility of cell phones being allowed in flight. The Federal Communications Commission and Federal Aviation Administration have to agree before it can happen, but reports indicate it could come to pass as early as next year. Heaven help us all.