Nancy Fetzer's Writing Connections

K-6 Program Overview & Assessment Guide
Featuring the At-A-Glance Writing Organizers, Assessment Descriptors, and Student Writing Samples

Narrative * Informative/Explanatory * Opinion/Argumentative
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Chapter 1
Overview
Overview: Types of Writing

Genres of Writing: The Common Core State Standards include three domains of writing:

1. Narrative (personal and imaginative)
2. Informative/Explanatory (to inform, describe, explain, or analyze)
3. Opinion/Argument/Persuasive.

Narrative

Personal Narratives: The author tells a true story about him/herself because it is memorable.

Imaginative Narrative: A person, animal, or imaginary character goes through unusual actions, actions, actions to get something, or to solve a problem.

Informative/Explanatory (IDEA)

I = Inform: Categorize or sort information into parts, types, kinds, things, ways, or attributes.

D = Describe: Vividly describe the subject and tell the function of its parts: how they work, what they do, or why they are important.

E = Explain: Sequence information to explain steps, how to, or to tell what happened.

A = Analyze: To Analyze the Subject for a Specific Outcome or Conclusion using cause & effect, similarities (compare), or differences (contrast).

Opinion (K-5)/Argument (6)

Opinion: The writer expresses an opinion about a topic or story and backs it up by presenting and analyzing evidence.

Argument: The writer argues for or against a claim, issue, or truth backed by relevant reasons and credible evidence.
Overview: K-6 Schoolwide Graphic Organizers

Genres: There are three major domains of writing in the Common Core Standards. These include: 1. Narrative (personal and imaginative); 2. Informative/Explanatory (to inform, analyze, describe, or explain); and 3. Opinion/Argument/Persuasive.

Organizers: For K-6 instruction, this unique and dynamic program utilizes three basic organizers to plan and write these three genres. Below are descriptions of the three organizers. The descriptions include the amount of writing (from one sentence to five paragraphs), the grade-levels, and the types of writing.

Free Downloadable: Go to nancyfetzer.com to download a free copy of Nancy Fetzer’s Common Core Writing At-A-Glance Booklet. Educators can utilize this guide for assessment, articulation, and planning of the CCSS within and across grade-levels.

1-Sentence, Multiple Sentences, or Paragraph Organizer

Grades K-3:
Narrative,
Informative/Explanatory,
or Opinion Writing.

1-Paragraph to Multiple Paragraphs Organizer

Grades K-6:
Movie Scripts

Grades 2-6:
Narrative Writing.

1-Paragraph to 5-Paragraph Organizer

Grades K-6:
Lecture Notes

Grades 2-6:
Narrative,
Informative/Explanatory,
or Opinion Writing.
At-A-Glance Pages: The at-a-glance pages provide administrators and teachers with a schoolwide tool for articulation, assessment benchmarks, and planning. This guide has four different chapters for the writing genres:

- Chapter 2: Narrative
- Chapter 3: Informative/Explanatory
- Chapter 4: Opinion
- Chapter 5: Argument

Each of these chapters begin with at-a-glance pages that display the organizers, brief descriptions, and suggested grade-levels. For example, At the beginning of the Narrative Chapter, the at-a-glance pages (below) provide a quick snapshot of the organizers utilized in K-6 narrative writing instruction. Notice each organizer is matched to specific grade-levels and assigned a writing stage. There are a total of eight narrative writing stages for K-6. Once teachers have assessed their students to a writing stage, they then go to the Nancy Fetzer Writing Institutes direct instruction lessons that are aligned to these stages. This provides a format for instruction to follow assessment.
Overview: Stages of Writing Assessment

Stages of Writing Assessment: Also included in the genre chapters are detailed descriptions of the different writing stages. Each page (sample below) identifies the characteristics of good writing: Content and Organization, Sentences, and Mechanics. Along with these descriptors are exemplar organizers and writing samples. Utilize these pages to assess student writing, and determine teaching points for writing lessons.

Rubrics: Elk Grove Unified School District has developed Common Core State Standard Writing Rubrics that can be downloaded from the following site: http://blogs.egusd.net/ccss/2012/01/12/ccss-aligned-rubrics-k-12/

Rubrics are highly recommended to grade student work. For ease of use, most rubrics are printed on one-page leaving little room for detailed descriptions. I suggest teachers use my stages of writing assessment pages as a resource for more specific understanding of standards-based writing.
Overview: Stages of Writing

Directions: The table (below) identifies the three domains of writing for grades K-6 and their Stages of Writing levels. Use this table to identify your grade-level stages, then flip to the listed pages for detailed descriptions. The content, organization, sentences, and mechanics are described at each stage, along with completed organizers and writing samples. Use these detailed descriptions to assess and determine each student’s writing stage.

Instruction: Assessment needs to drive assessment. After identifying a student’s Stage of Writing, the matching Stage of Writing lesson is utilized for instruction. These are highly-engaging direct instruction lessons that teach students how to plan their writing on their organizers. Organization and ideas, word choice, sentence fluency, and voice as well as mechanics are integrated into these lessons. (See Nancy Fetzer’s Online Writing Training for the lessons.)

Writing Stages Aligned to Common Core State Standards (K-6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Informative/Explanatory</th>
<th>Opinion (K-5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Stages: 1-2 (pp. 14-15)</td>
<td>Stages: 1-2 (pp. 32-33)</td>
<td>Stages: 1-2 (pp. 52-53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade One</td>
<td>Stages: 1-4 (pp. 14-17)</td>
<td>Stages: 1-4 (pp. 32-35)</td>
<td>Stages: 1-4 (pp. 52-55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Two</td>
<td>Stages: 4-5 (pp. 17-19)</td>
<td>Stages: 3-6 (pp. 34-37)</td>
<td>Stage: 5 (pp. 56-57)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Three</td>
<td>Stages: 4-6 (pp. 17-21)</td>
<td>Stages: 3-8 (pp. 34-39)</td>
<td>Stages: 5-6 (pp. 56-59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Four</td>
<td>Stages: 6-7 (pp. 20-23)</td>
<td>Stages: 7-11 (pp. 38-45)</td>
<td>Stages: 7-8 (pp. 60-63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Five</td>
<td>Stages: 6-8 (pp. 20-25)</td>
<td>Stages: 7-11 (pp. 38-45)</td>
<td>Stages: 7-8 (pp. 60-63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Six</td>
<td>Stages: 6-8 (pp. 18-25)</td>
<td>Stages: 7-11 (pp. 38-45)</td>
<td>Stages: 9-10 (pp. 68-71)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 2
Narrative Writing:
Organizers and Stages 1-8

Let's Write Narratives!
At-A-Glance Narrative Organizers (K-6)

Stage: 1
Kinder-First Grades

Content: One Sentence
Story Opening

Stage: 2
Kinder-First Grades

Content: Sentences/Paragraph
Story Opening
Actions
Story Closing (Ending Reaction)

Stage: 3
First Grade

Content: Paragraph
Story Opening
(Secret Formula)
Actions w/Transitions
Story Closing
(Ending Reaction)

Stage: 4
First-Third Grades

Content: Paragraph
Story Opening
(Secret Formula)
Actions and Dialogue w/Transitions
Story Closing
(Secret Formula)
At-A-Glance Narrative Organizers (K-6)

**Stage: 5**
Second-Third Grades

- **Content:** 1-3 Paragraphs
- **Beginning**
  - Story Opening (Secret Formula)
  - Action (A happening to start story)
  - Reaction (Dialogue/Thoughts)
- **Middle**
  - Actions and Reactions
- **End**
  - Actions and Reactions
  - Story Closing: Reflection (Secret Formula)

**Stage: 6**
Third-Sixth Grades

- **Content:** 1-3 Paragraphs
- **Beginning**
  - Hook: Secret Formula/Dialogue/Thoughts
  - Come Alive Box
- **Problem**
- **Middle**
  - Actions and Reactions to Solve Problem
- **End**
  - Solution: Actions and Reactions
  - Story Closing: Reflection (Secret Formula)

**Stage: 7**
Fourth-Sixth Grades

- **Content:** 1-3 Paragraphs
- **Beginning**
  - Hook
  - Come Alive Box
  - Problem
- **Middle**
  - Actions, Dialogue, Thoughts, and Descriptions that lead to the solution.
- **End**
  - Solution: Actions and Reactions
  - Story Closing: Reflection (Secret Formula)

**Stage: 8**
Fifth-Sixth Grades

- **Content:** 5 or more Paragraphs
- **Introduction**
- **Hook**
- **Come Alive Box**
- **Problem and Goal**
  - Actions, Dialogue, Thoughts, and Descriptions that lead to the problem.
- **Plot**
  - Actions: Obstacles, Crisis, Tragedies, Twists
  - Reactions: Dialogue, Thoughts, Descriptions
  - Climax: Most suspenseful event, last chance
- **Resolution**
  - Solution: Actions, Dialogue, Thoughts, Descriptions
- **Theme**
  - Theme: Reflection and Pledge

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A Note to Kindergarten Teachers: Developmentally, Kindergartners have great difficulty utilizing organizers to plan their own stories. Hence, the organizers are utilized ONLY for teacher modeling, interactive writing, or *Beginner-Level writing lessons. In these writing lessons, the teacher draws the organizers to plan stories. These organizer lessons expose students to the explicit steps to write narratives, with support from the teacher. They also expose students to the organizers, so they have the background and experience of using them when entering first grade.

During their own personal writing, most Kinders first plan their stories by drawing pictures on their writing papers, orally rehearse their sentences, then write.

*Beginner-Level Writers have the skills to write independently one or more sentences.
Narrative: Stage Two  
(Grades: K-1)

Narratives: Sentences and Simple Paragraphs

**Content and Organization**

**Story Opening:** Character + Action

**Events:** Sequenced actions. Reactions optional (emotions and dialogue/thoughts without quotation marks)

**Story Closing:** The main character’s reaction after the experience. What did the character feel, think, or wish?

**Sentences**

- Different sentence beginnings.
- Adjectives
- Transitions (optional)

**Mechanics**

- Capitals: Beginning of a sentence and “I”
- End Punctuation
- Spaces between words.
- Letters snuggled in words.

**Kinder Organizer and Sample Writing**

Teacher draws organizer for modeling, interactive writing, or for Beginner-Level writing lessons.

![Kinder Organizer](image)

A Beginner-Level student wrote the story, then drew a picture to match.

**First Grade Organizer and Sample Writing**

Students draw their own organizers to plan their stories, then write (sample below).

![First Grade Organizer](image)

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## Narrative: Stage Three
(Grade 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narratives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content and Organization</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story Opening:</strong> Secret Formula (Setting + Character + Action)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Events:</strong> Sequenced actions and reactions (dialogue/thoughts/emotions without quotation marks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story Closing:</strong> The main character’s reaction after the experience. What did the character feel, think, or wish?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different Sentence Beginnings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple &amp; Compound Sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitions (temporal words to signal event order)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commas: After common transitions (when needed).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Organizer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>рамка</td>
<td>рамка</td>
<td>рамка</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From out of nowhere, "Oh."

Quickly

When

Munch

"I’m lucky!"

### Sample Writing

**Lucky Squirrel**

On a worm nite near the moutuns a sleepy bird was snoring in his cosy nest. From out of nowhere, a hard egcorn hit him on the hed. Quickly, the bird flew to the seed to carry it back to his nest. When he flew by a squirrel, he aksidnly dropt the egcorn. Munch, the squirrel ran out and ate the nut. He that he was one lucky guy.
Narrative: Stage Four  
(Grades 1-3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content and Organization</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Story Opening:** Secret Formula (Setting + Character + Action)  
**Events:** Sequenced actions and reactions (dialogue/thoughts/emotions with quotation marks); Transitions signal event order.  
**Story Closing:** The main character’s reaction after the experience. What did the character feel, think, or wish?  
| **Expand Sentences.**  
**Different Sentence Beginnings.**  
**Adjectives**  
**Transitions (temporal words to signal event order)**  
| **Capitals and Stops.**  
**Commas:** After common transitions, series, conjunctions, and dates.  
**Quotation Marks** |

Organizer

Sample Writing

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**The Scarey Night**

On a dark windy night, I was sleeping like a baby in my cozy bed. Suddenly, I woke up when I herd a loud banging on my window. I screamed at the top of my lungs, “Help!” Quickly, my parents race into my room to save me. They shouted, “What’s wrong?” I cried, “Someone is breaking in!” My brave dad raced to the window and opened the curtains only to find a branch! Looking back, I decided to only wear earplugs during stormy night weather.
Personal Narrative: Stage Five  
(Grades 2-3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 5</th>
<th>Organizer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Narrative (real experiences)</td>
<td>![Organizer Diagram]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Content and Organization**

**Beginning**
Story Opening (Secret Formula: Setting + Character + Action)  
Actions and Reactions (dialogue/thoughts/feelings) related to the start of the story.

**Middle**
One well-elaborated event or short sequenced events using details to describe the Actions and Reactions (dialogue/thoughts/feelings).

**End**
Actions and Reactions  
Story Closing: Reflection (Transition + Character + Reflection)

**Sentences**
Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words  
Expand Sentences  
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
  - Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
  - Adjectives (modify important nouns)
  - Figurative Language (makes images pop)
  - Verbs (tell how action is performed)
  - Transitions (temporal words to signal order of events)

**Mechanics**
Indent Paragraph(s)  
Capitals and Stops  
Commas in a Series, Conjunctions, and Dates  
Commas after Transitions (if needed)  
Quotation Marks

---

**Sample Writing**

*My Kind Dad*

Last Saturday night, I grabbed my softest pillow and sleeping bag, then headed out the door to my friend's slumber party. When I left, I shouted, "I'm leaving! I hope I can stay up all night!" As fast as lighting, I raced to his house smiling and giggling. Knock, knock! There I was tapping my foot, but no one aspered. After awhile my friends mom opened the door and asked, "Why are you here?" Suddenly crocodile tears fell down my face because I came on the wrong night. Later that evening back at home, my amazing dad put up a tent so we could sleep in the backyard. Forever after I thought, "I'm lucky to have a great dad!"
Imaginative Narrative: Stage Five
(Grades 2-3)

Stage 5
Imaginative Narrative

Content and Organization
Beginning
Story Opening (Secret Formula:
Setting + Character + Action)
Actions and Reactions (dialogue/
thoughts/feelings) related to the start
of the story.

Middle
One well-elaborated event or short
sequenced events using details to
describe the Actions and Reactions
(dialogue/thoughts/feelings).

End
Actions and Reactions
Story Closing: Reflection
(Transition + Character + Reflection)

Sentences
Different Sentence Beginnings and
Important Words
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
Adjectives (modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (makes images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (temporal words to signal order
of events)

Mechanics
Indent Paragraph(s)
Capitals and Stops
Commas in a Series, Conjunctions, and Dates
Commas after Transitions (if needed)
Quotation Marks

Sample Writing

It was the moment when day meets
dusk across the arid desert. As the famished
snake proyed on a big, fat mouse. The terrified
rodent thought, “Oh no! I’m going to be sneaky snake’s
dinner.” Snake hissed, “Sssss! I love mouse dinners!”
Quickly, because mouse always did things fast, he ran behind
a gigantic cactus. Snap! Snake’s tongue popt out of his
mouth almost catching the helpless rodent. Mouse barely escape
what was a sure death. Usted and livid, Snake needed to
catch the mouse and thought, “I wonder where that warmant is
guy?” As mouse approached a cactus, he stuck out his
tongue at Snake. Angry, Snake chase Mouse in circles.
Before he realize what happened, Snake was tangled
around a prickly cactus. Pitter-patter, that trickey
mouse fooled Snake. From that day on, Snake only
ate day-old road kill.
Personal Narrative: Stage Six
(Grades 3-6)

Stage 6
Personal Narrative
(real experiences)

Content and Organization

Beginning
Hook: Dialogue, Thoughts, or Secret
Formula (Setting + Character + Action).
Come Alive Box to establish the
situation, and introduce narrator
and/or characters.
Problem/Want/Need established if a
part of the story.

Middle
Sequenced Event with Descriptive
Actions and Reactions (dialogue/thoughts/feelings) that develop the
experiences, events, and responses
of the characters to the situations.
Transitions include temporal words
or phrases

End
Actions and Reactions
Story Closing: Reflection
(Transition + Character + Reflection)

Sentences
Uses correct and varied sentence
structures
Different Sentence Beginnings and
Important Words
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise nouns)
Adjectives (modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (makes images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (cohesive and coherent phrases)

Mechanics
Demonstrates grade level appropriate
conventions; errors are minor and
do not obscure meaning.
Imaginative Narrative: Stage Six (Grades 3-6)

Stage 6
Imaginative Narrative

Content and Organization

Beginning
Hook: Dialogue, Thoughts, or Secret Formula (Setting + Character + Action).
Come Alive Box to establish the situation, and introduce narrator and/or characters.
Problem/Want/Need established if a part of the story.

Middle
Sequenced Event with Descriptive Actions and Reactions (dialogue/thoughts/feelings) that develop the experiences, events, and responses of the characters to the situations.
Transitions include temporal words or phrases

End
Actions and Reactions
Story Closing: Reflection (Transition + Character + Reflection)

Sentences
Uses correct and varied sentence structures
Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
  Nouns (precise nouns)
  Adjectives (modify important nouns)
  Figurative Language (makes images pop)
  Verbs (tell how action is performed)
  Transitions (cohesive and coherent phrases)

Mechanics
Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning
Organizer

Personal Narratives or Imaginative Narratives

Content and Organization

Beginning
Hook: Secret Formula/Dialogue/Thoughts
Come Alive Box to establish the situation, and introduce narrator and/or characters. Introduce a Problem/Need/Want

Middle
Sequenced Events with Descriptive Actions and Reactions (dialogue/thoughts/feelings) that vividly convey the experiences, events, and responses of the characters.
Transitions include a variety of transitional words and phrases that smoothly sequence the events.

End
Solution: Actions, Reactions, and Descriptions
Story Closing/Conclusion: Character’s reflection after the experience (Transition + Sentences)

Sentences
Uses correct and varied sentence structures
Different Sentence Beginnings
Different Important Words
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise nouns)
Adjectives (sensory details that modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (makes images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (cohesive and coherent phrases)

Mechanics
Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning
"Hush! You're ruining this scenic moment! Sylvia blasted as she wagged her finger and snarled her upper lip at her squeaky shoes. Even though she was alone in the foothills of the majestic Sierra mountains, she spoke to objects without a second thought.

After her brief, one-sided argument she decided to turn her morning stroll into an adventure. Quickly, she turned down a narrow, dusty path smiling, humming, and gazing. Her pesty boots did not cooperate. They continued to moan and squeak at every step. Her cushy jacket and thick pants protected her from the thicket as she walked deeper into the woods. She marveled aloud, "The lush valleys and the crisp air make me feel alive! I feel like I am in heaven!"

Suddenly, from out of nowhere a little bunny dashed out from a low dense bush. Surprised and frightened, Sylvia bent over trying to catch her breath, and yowled, "My goodness, you silly little varmint! You scared the stuffing out of me!" After a few moments of terror, she pulled her wits together, took a deep breath, chuckled and thought, "It was only a bunny. Get a hold of yourself!"

She continued down the path, determined to enjoy the experience. Up ahead around the turn on the trail she spotted group of small trees shaking and stirring. Snap! Branches started breaking and leaves flew threw the air. Determined to quell her fear, she convinced herself it was another rabbit. Whoosh! Sharp, pointy claws flashed towards her face.

Terrified, yet prepared to save herself, she vaulted over a large rock, bolted through a stand of trees, then disappeared into a deep, dark cave. Splash! She wailed, "Oh no! Ewww! I'm wet and sticky!" Unknowingly, she landed in a pool of smelly mud situated in the middle of the cave. High above her, icy-cold droplets that felt like shards of glass landed on her face. After wiping her cheeks, dozens of bats darted past her, but one caught its wings in her hair as she cried, "Get off me you flying mouse!" Luckily the bat unfurled itself from her tangled locks. Panicked and confused, she lurched, flailed, and darted all around. After colliding in the wall of the cave, she stopped and thought, "I need to calm down!"

Carefully, she felt her way to the opening of the cave and exited relieved, but unaware of the ferocious bear lurking nearby. When she spotted the beast, she reacted like a pro. Quickly, she grabbed a sweet apple and succulent meat from her backpack and threw it at the bear to devour. Without a second's thought she hightailed it back to her safe and calm campsite. Bounding into her tent she promised herself, "I will never hike alone again. What was I thinking?"

Zipping her tent door shut, she tucked her weary body into her warm sleeping bag, laid her head on her soft pillow, and sighed with relieve. Before she closed her eyes, Sylvia thanked her lucky stars that she made it back by the skin of her teeth.
**Content and Organization**

**Introduction**
Hook: Pulls reader into story.
Come Alive Box: Establishes the situation. Develops the mood, and introduces narrator and/or characters
(APE = Appearance, Personality, & Emotions)

**Problem and Goal**
Conflict: Actions, Dialogue, and Thoughts that lead to the problem, need, or want.

**Descriptions**
Change Mood, Create Images

**Plot**
Events: Sequenced events (filled with actions, reactions, and descriptions) that lead to the resolution. Obstacles, Crisis, Twists, or Tragedies may also be included.
Pacing: A rhythm or beat created by interesting and convincing actions. The result creates a build-up, tension, and intrigue to the climax.

**Reactions**
Dialogue, Thoughts

Transitions include a variety of transitional words, phrases, or clauses that smoothly signal changes in time or place of the action or event.

**Resolution**
Solution: Actions, Reactions, and Descriptions
Conclusion: Reflection and Pledge

**Theme**
Theme: A Reflection and Pledge reveals the message of the story.

**Sentences**
Different Sentence Beginnings
Different Important Words
Expand Sentences

Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise nouns)
Adjectives (sensory details that modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (makes images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (cohesive and coherent phrases)

**Mechanics**
Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning
A Hero at Sea

It was a sunny afternoon out on the gentle rolling waves of the ocean, where an excited young girl and her father were gliding across the deep blue sea in their swift sailboat. Stretching from the crystal-blue sky were warm, shimmering rays of sunlight that seemed to reach down and hug the two maritime adventurers. Mary, standing proudly at the helm, gleefully asked her father, "Dad, do you think we can stay out longer?"

Zip-zip, whoosh! The father's outstretched arms pulled lines from the mast as he answered, "Of course, it's a beautiful day!" As Mary smiled from the good news, a gentle breeze tickled the sails and combed through her long brown hair.

After a bit, black ominous clouds filled the sky turning it from bright blue to dreary gray. Dad scratched his head and mumbled, "This doesn't make sense. The weather forecast was sunny and warm." Then out of nowhere the main sail boom shook and shuddered as a gale of wind and crashing waves whacked the boat. Whoo, whoo went the wind. The screaming sound of the monstrous storm made the girl shudder with fear as she thought, "I'm scared and dad looks worried!"

Splash! Without warning, a claw-like wave reached at their deck flinging their bodies into the treacherous ocean. When they landed in the icy water, salty sprays of seawater whipped across their faces. Both grabbed, clutched, and seized floating objects to try and stay afloat. Teeth chattering, the girl looked around, and panicked as she wailed, "Dad! Where are you?"

Through the darkness her dad grabbed her frozen, frail body with his strong arms, and pushed her up onto a floating cooler. Staring his daughter straight in the eyes, he demanded, "Whatever you do, don't let go!"

Off in the distance a lighthouse stood on the edge of the land like a soldier shining its bright light in their direction. It scanned and roamed, but didn't stop. Immediately, the dad ordered, "Kick hard! Just keep swimming to the lighthouse!" Huff-puff the current was too strong, keeping the two from moving.

"Oh no Dad," the girl cried, "What's going to happen? They can't see us and we can't move!" At that moment, the dad's eyes popped out of his head like two fists, then he lifted the lid on the cooler, pulled out a big metal spoon, and started beating on the floating cooler.

At once, they both gathered deep gulps of air in their lungs, then shrieked, "Help! Help!"

Within minutes their disaster ended. Through the thick fog, they heard a motor racing towards them, and saw a light peeking through the haze. A loud, yet comforting voice shouted, "I see you! You're safe!"

Although every inch of the girl's body felt like an ice cube, her heart was warm with love and gratitude. When the man pulled them into his boat, he joked, "I think that spoon saved your lives!"

On the shore crowds of people cheered and shouted with joy as the boat landed. "Yah, they're safe!"

After that treacherous day, the girl realized she looked death straight in the eyes and won. Never again would she take life for granted. Instead she decided she was going to make every day the most important day of her life. She would treat her life like she only had a day to live.
Chapter 3
Informative/Explanatory Writing:
Organizers and Stages 1-11
At-A-Glance Informative/Explanatory Organizers (K-6)

**Stage: 1**
Kindergarten-First Grades

Content: One Sentence
Big Idea

**Stage: 2**
Kindergarten-First Grades

Content: Sentences/Paragraph
Big Idea
Information (about big idea)

**Stage: 3**
First-Third Grades

Content: One Sentence
Topic Sentence
(Secret Formula)

**Stage: 4**
First-Third Grades

Content: Paragraph
Topic Sentence
(Secret Formula)
Details
(Information that tells about the Big Idea)
Conclusion
(Secret Formula)
At-A-Glance Informative/Explanatory Organizers (K-6)

Stage: 5
Second-Third Grades

Categories Organizer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>S</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content: Content: Paragraph
Topic Sentence
(Secret Formula)
Details
(Categorize the Information to tell about the Big Idea)
Conclusion
(Secret Formula)

Sequence Organizer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>S</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content: Paragraph
Topic Sentence
(Secret Formula)
Details
(Sequence the Information to tell about the Big Idea)
Conclusion
(Secret Formula)

Stage: 6
Second-Third Grades

Description Organizer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>S</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content: Paragraph
Topic Sentence
(Definition of the Subject)
Details
(Describe the Subject and Tell the Function of its Parts)
Conclusion
(Repeat the Definition using Different Words)
### Stage: 7
**Third-Sixth Grades**

#### Categories Organizer

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Content: Paragraph(s)**

- **Hook**
- **Topic Sentence/Big Idea (Secret Formula)**
- **Details**
  - (Categorize and Expand the Information to tell about the Big Idea)
- **Conclusion**
  - (Secret Formula)
- **Snappy Ending**

### Stage: 8
**Third-Sixth Grades**

#### Description Organizer

```
_________ is/are ___________.
```

```
_________ is/are ___________.
```

**Content: Paragraph(s)**

- **Hook**
- **Topic Sentence**
  - (Definition of the Subject)
- **Details**
  - (Describe the Subject and Tell the Function of its Parts)
- **Conclusion**
  - (Repeat the Definition using Different Words)
- **Snappy Ending**
At-A-Glance Informative/Explanatory Organizers (K-6)

Stage: 9
Fourth-Sixth Grades

Content: One Sentence
Thesis Sentence
(Secret Formula)

Stage: 10
Fourth-Sixth Grades

Content: Essay
Introduction
Hook (Grab reader's attention and provide a general observation)
Thesis Statement (If needed, include a definition and description)
Body
Main Idea Paragraphs or Sections
(If needed, include Headings and Graphics)
Conclusion
Repeat Thesis Statement
(Use different words)
Snappy Ending

Stage: 11
Fourth-Sixth Grades

Cause & Effect Organizer

Hook:
Big Idea:
Before
Describe or Explain
What was Before
the Change:

What Caused Change?
List Issues or Events:
1.
2.
3.
4.

After
Describe the Change:

Explain the Effects:

Conclusion:
Snappy Ending:

Compare or Contrast Organizer

Hook:
Big Idea:
Attribute:
A:
A:
A:

Compare

Effects:
E:
E:
E:

Conclusion:
Snappy Ending:

Content: 1-Paragraph or Multiple Paragraph Essay
Introduction: Hook, Topic Sentence or Thesis Statement
Body: Details or Main Idea Paragraphs. Choose Organizer.
Conclusion: Repeat Topic Sentence or Thesis Statement, and a Snappy Ending

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Informative/Explanatory: Stage One  
(Grades: K-1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content and Organization</th>
<th>Big Idea Sentence</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information Sentence:</strong> Form sentence by naming the Subject and Big Idea.</td>
<td><strong>Sentences</strong> One complete sentence. Adjectives (optional)</td>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong> Capitals: Beginning of sentence and “I”. Uses end punctuation. Spaces between words. Letters printed correctly and snuggled in words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Subject:** Who/What is the information about?

**Big Idea:** What information did you learn about the (subject)?

Picture matches information sentence.

---

Kinder Organizer and Sample Writing

Kinders draw a picture, forms a sentence, then writes.

First Grade Organizer and Sample Writing

Students make their own organizers to plan their sentences, then write.

---

A Note to Kindergarten Teachers: Developmentally, Kindergartners have great difficulty utilizing organizers to plan their own text. Hence, the organizers are utilized ONLY for teacher modeling, interactive writing, or *Beginner-Level writing lessons. In these writing lessons, the teacher draws the organizers to plan information. These organizer lessons expose students to the explicit steps to write informative/explanatory text, with support from the teacher. They also expose students to the organizers, so they have the background and experience of using them when entering first grade.

During their own personal writing, most Kinders first plan their information by drawing pictures on their writing papers, orally rehearsing their sentences, then writing.

*Beginner-Level Writers have the skills to write independently one or more sentences.
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Two
(Grades: K-1)

Big Idea Sentence and Details

**Content and Organization**

**Topic Sentence:** State the Big Idea about the Information. Tell the Subject + Big Idea.

**Details:** The information sentences that tell about the Big Idea. These detail sentences are organized in a sequence or categories.

**Sentences**

Different sentence beginnings.
Adjectives
Transitions (optional)

**Mechanics**

Capitals: Beginning of a sentence and “I”
End Punctuation
Spaces between words.
Letters snuggled in words.

---

**Kinder Organizer and Sample Writing**

Teacher draws organizer for modeling, interactive writing, or for Beginner-Level writing lessons.

A Beginner-Level student wrote the information, then drew a picture to match.

---

**First Grade Organizer and Sample Writing**

Students draw their own organizers to plan their stories, then write (sample below).

---

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Informative/Explanatory: Stage Three  
(Grades 1-3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content and Organization</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting = Time and Place</td>
<td>Simple &amp; Compound Sentences</td>
<td>Commas: After common transitions (when needed).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject = Who/What is the information about?</td>
<td>Adjectives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Idea = What about the (subject)? What information is the paragraph telling about the (subject)?</td>
<td>Transitions (Temporal words to signal order of events, Category words to signal different details.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Topic Sentence Organizer**

```
During stormy weather in the tall mountains, sediment flows, slides, and moves down the hills causing landslides to change.
```

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Informative/Explanatory: Stage Four  
(Grades 1-3)

**Content and Organization**

**Topic Sentence:** Big Idea of Information: Setting + Subject + Big Idea

**Details:** Information is about the big idea, and organized in a sequence or categories.

**Expand Details:** Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about details.

**Conclusion:** Repeat the Topic Sentence (Subject + Big Idea) using different words. (Setting usually omitted.)

---

**Sentences**

**Expand Sentences.**

**Different Sentence Beginnings.**

**Adjectives**

**Transitions (Temporal words to signal order of events, Category words to signal different details.)**

---

**Mechanics**

**Capitals and Stops.**

**Commas:** After common transitions, series, conjunctions, and dates.

**Quotation Marks**

---

**Organizer**

---

**Sample Writing**

---

Coastal Erosion

All year long on the coastline, erosion changes the landforms. Day after day, violent waves crash against the land. The turbulent surf devours hill sides like a shovel scooping up dirt. Whoosh, sizzle! The baking sun and strong winds break away sediment of rocks, pebbles, and plants. Finally, large chunks of land weaken and crack, then fall into the sea. Erosion transforms the ocean lands.
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Five
(Grades 2-3)

Categories or Sequencing Paragraph: Topic Sentence, Details, and Conclusion

**Content and Organization**

**Topic Sentence:** Tells the big idea of the information. Use the Secret Formula:
Setting + Subject + Big Idea.

**Body:** Information or the details about the big idea (topic sentence). Identify the text structure for the details (categories or sequence). Draw the organizer and label details.

**Details:** Decide what information needs to be written about each detail. Types of information about details:
1. Define It
2. Describe It
3. Tell About It
4. Back It Up (examples)

**Expand Details:** Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about each detail sentence.

**Conclusion:** Repeat the Topic Sentence (Subject + Big Idea) using different words. (Setting usually omitted.)

**Sentences**

Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words

Expand Sentences

**Effective and Accurate Word Choices:**

- **Nouns** (precise, specific nouns)
- **Adjectives** (modify important nouns)
- **Figurative Language** (images pop)
- **Verbs** (tell how action is performed)
- **Transitions** (Temporal words to signal order of events; Category words to signal different details.)
- **Linking Words** Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

**Mechanics**

Capitals and Stops
Commas: In a Series, Conjunctions, and Dates
Commas after Transitions (if needed)
Quotation Marks

---

**Sample Writing**

Matter

The planet earth is a mixture of solids, liquids, and gases. One type of matter is a solid. The molecules are tightly packed so it keeps its shape. When molecules are moving loosely past each other and take the same shape as the container then it's a liquid. The last type of matter is gas because it has no shape.

Instead, it takes up the entire space of its container and moves freely. Is it possible that all living and non-living things are made up of liquids, solids and gases?

---

Please Note: Write paragraphs to stand on their own, or write paragraphs with headings and graphics to make books about the topic.
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Six  
(Grades 2-3)

Description Paragraph: Topic Sentence, Details, and Conclusion

**Content and Organization**

**Topic Sentence:** Tells a definition of the Subject. Use the Secret Formula:

Subject = Define It.

**Body:** Draw a picture of the subject, label the important parts, describe each part, then tell the function of the parts.

**Functions:** Types of information about each part of the subject:

1. How the part works
2. What the part does
3. Why the part is important

**Expand Details:** Add more information to sentences.

**Conclusion:** Repeat the Topic Sentence (Subject = Define It) using different words.

---

**Sentences**

Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words

Expand Sentences

Effective and Accurate Word Choices:

- **Nouns** (precise, specific nouns)
- **Adjectives** (modify important nouns)
- **Figurative Language** (images pop)
- **Verbs** (tell how action is performed)
- **Transitions** (Temporal words to signal order of events, Category words to signal different details.)
- **Linking Words** Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

**Mechanics**

Capitals and Stops

Commas: In a Series, Conjunctions, and Dates

Commas after Transitions (if needed)

Quotation Marks

Please Note: Write paragraphs to stand on their own, or write paragraphs with headings to make books about the topic.
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Seven
(Grades 3-6)

Categories or Sequencing Paragraph(s): Hook, Topic Sentence, Details, and Conclusion, Snappy Ending

Content and Organization

Hook: Grabs the reader’s attention.
Topic Sentence: Tells the big idea of the information. Use the Secret Formula:
Setting + Subject + Big Idea.
Body: Information or the details about the big idea (topic sentence). Identify the text structure for the details (categories or sequence). Draw the organizer and label details.
Details: Decide what information needs to be written about each detail. Types of information about details:
1. Define It (Definitions)
2. Describe It (Concrete and Vivid)
3. Tell About It (e.g. Facts, Explanations)
4. Back It Up (e.g. Examples, Quotes)
Expand Details: Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about each detail sentence.
Conclusion: Repeat the Topic Sentence (Subject + Big Idea) using different words. (Setting usually omitted.)
Snappy Ending: Interesting Ending.

Sentences

Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)
Expand Sentences

Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
Adjectives (modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)

Linking Words: Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

Mechanics

Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.
In Informative/Explanatory: Stage Eight (Grades 3-6)

Description Paragraph(s): Hook, Topic Sentence, Details, and Conclusion, Snappy Ending

**Content and Organization**

**Hook:** Grabs the reader’s attention.

**Topic Sentence:** Tells a definition of the subject. Use the Secret Formula: Subject = Define It.

**Body:** Draw a picture of the subject, label the important parts, describe each part, then tell the function of the parts.

**Functions:** Types of information about each part of the subject:

1. How the part works
2. What the part does
3. Why the part is important

**Expand Details:** Add more information to sentences.

**Conclusion:** Repeat the Topic Sentence (Subject = Define It) using different words.

**Snappy Ending:** Interesting Ending.

---

**Sentences**

**Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)**

**Expand Sentences**

**Effective and Accurate Word Choices:**

- **Nouns** (precise, specific nouns)
- **Adjectives** (modify important nouns)
- **Figurative Language** (images pop)
- **Verbs** (tell how action is performed)
- **Transitions** (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)

**Linking Words:** Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

**Mechanics**

Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Nine
(Grades 4-6)

Thesis Statement

Content and Organization
Thesis Statement: Secret Formula (Setting + Subject + Big Idea)
Setting = Time and Place
Subject = Who/What is the information about?
Big Idea = What about the (subject)? What information is the paragraph telling about the (subject)?

Sentences
Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
Adjectives (modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)
Linking Words: Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

Mechanics
Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.

Organizer: Formal Thesis Statement

In the year 1848 along the South Fork of the American River, John Marshall (a foreman) discovered gold that caused a population explosion, forever changing the state of California.
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Nine  
(Grades 4-6)

Thesis Using Inquiry Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content and Organization</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thesis: Three questions formed from the inquiry question starters. The description question is always first (if needed).</td>
<td>Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>Expand Sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.</td>
<td>Effective and Accurate Word Choices:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Nouns</strong> (precise, specific nouns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Adjectives</strong> (modify important nouns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Figurative Language</strong> (images pop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Verbs</strong> (tell how action is performed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Transitions</strong> (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Linking Words:</strong> Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizer: Inquiry Questions for Thesis

Choose three inquiry questions about the Subject or Topic:

**DESCRIBE IT:** What does (subject) look like? or What is/are (subject)?

**TELL WHERE:** Where do/does...?

**TELL WHEN:** When do/does...?

**TELL WHAT:** What if...?

**EXPLAIN WHY:** Why do/ does (subject)...?

**EXPLAIN HOW:** How can or do/does...?

Inquiry Questions formed about comets:

1. What is a comet made of?
2. Where do they come from?
3. What if Earth collided with a comet?
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Ten
(Grades 4-6)

Essay: Introduction, Body (Categorize or Sequence) Paragraphs, Conclusion

**Content and Organization**

**Introduction**
Hook: Grabs the reader’s attention.
Thesis Statement: Tells the big idea of the information. Use the Secret Formula:
Setting + Subject + Big Idea.

**Body**
Organization: Paragraphs organized by Description, Categories, Sequence, Cause and Effect, Compare/Contrast. Draw the organizer and main ideas.
Details: Decide what information needs to be written about each detail. Types of information about details:
1. Define It (Definitions)
2. Describe It (Concrete and Vivid)
3. Tell About It (e.g. Facts, Explanations)
4. Back It Up (e.g. Examples, Quotes)
Expand Details: Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about each detail sentence.

**Conclusion**
Repeat the Thesis Statement: (Subject + Big Idea) using different words. (Setting usually omitted.)
Snappy Ending: Interesting Ending.

**Sentences**
Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
Adjectives (modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)
Linking Words: Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

**Mechanics**
Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.

Please Note: Write essays to stand on their own, or write essays with headings and graphics to make books about the topic.
Comets

I see comets! They're everywhere! Most comets can be seen with the naked eye. Although they often appear very faint, they can look like a small, fuzzy object in the sky. However, someone might ask, "What is a comet made of? Where do they come from?" What would happen if the Earth went through the trace of a comet? Comets are made of many things, and they come from two main places in space. Astronomers do know what will happen if the Earth goes through a tail of dust left by a comet.

Some people think that comets are made of a few simple ingredients. These are frozen gases, dust, and rock particles. Although when comets get too close to the Sun, they can develop tails. The tails are made of gas and dust. A dust tail looks white or yellow. It's made of tiny particles that are about the size of the particles in smoke. Plasma tails are often look blue because they contain carbon monoxide ions. Solar ultra violet light breaks down the gas molecules, making the tails glow. No matter what direction the comet is moving, the tail always points away from the Sun. The interesting facts can show us why the comet is moving, which might tell us where it came from.

Comets are observed to come to the Solar System from all directions of the outer planets, the Oort Cloud, and the Kuiper Belt. The Oort Cloud was named after Jan Oort, who suggested its existence in 1950. This cloud is located on the outskirts of the Solar System. Although, some comets come to the Solar System from closer in. This place is called the Kuiper Belt which is located past the orbit of Pluto. Long period comets (which take more than 200 years to completely orbit the Sun) come from the Oort Cloud. The Oort Cloud may hold as many as a trillion comets. Short period comets take less than 200 years to orbit the Sun, and they come from the Kuiper Belt. No matter where comets come from or how long they take to orbit the Sun, they leave comets leaving trails of dust.

What will happen when Earth gets caught colliding with the trace of a comet? Shooting stars! Also known as a meteor or meteoroid! The particles from the dust and gas enter the Earth's atmosphere and most burn up in a bright, lovely light show. However, some meteors are broken up when they hit or burn up in Earth's atmosphere and often applauded by people of all ages.

Comets are shocking in so many ways-they are made of many things, including dust, gases, rock particles, and "tails! They come from all directions from the Oort Cloud or the Kuiper Belt, and the particles in the tails become "shooting stars" when hit by the Earth. It's so amazing how comets go through so many things in their short lives. However, what do you think would happen if a comet itself hit Earth?
Compare/Contrast Paragraphs: Hook, Topic Sentence, Details, and Conclusion, Snappy Ending

Organizer

Hooks and Snappy Endings are planned separately.

Sample Writing

Young Sitting Bull was a Leader

Young Sitting Bull was very different from the boys in his tribe because he was a born leader. Everything he did was “careful and deliberate.” Leaders always do their best and try to do things correctly. They are also brave like when he killed a buffalo at 16 years old. No other brave had done this. Again he stood out, Sitting Bull’s father was the chief. Most sons follow in the father’s footsteps because their fathers show them how to lead. The other brave fathers were followers, so there were no expectations to lead. In the story Sitting Bull’s actions were very different from the other tribal members. Sitting Bull stood out and was a special brave warrior. After that, he always stood out as a special brave warrior, a leader.

Please Note: Write paragraphs to stand on their own, or write paragraphs with headings and graphics to make books about the topic.

Content and Organization

Hook: (Optional) Gets reader’s attention.

Topic Sentence: Tell the big idea of the information (to determine which is best or to explain similar or different outcomes.). Use the Secret Formula: Setting + Subject + Big Idea.

Body: Information or the details that tell about the change or why the event occurred.

Details: Each Box Includes:

Attributes: List characteristics to compare/contrast about the big idea.

Compare/Contrast: Use a T-Graph to list differences for each attribute.

Effects: Explain which is better, and why. or Explain outcomes for each attribute.

Expand Details: Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about each detail sentence.

Conclusion: Repeat the Topic Sentence (Subject + Big Idea) using different words, then state the results of the similarities or differences.

Snappy Ending: Interesting Ending.

Sentences

Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)

Expand Sentences

Effective and Accurate Word Choices:

Nouns (precise, specific nouns)

Adjectives (modify important nouns)

Figurative Language (images pop)

Verbs (tell how action is performed)

Transitions (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)

Linking Words: Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

Mechanics

Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Eleven  
(Grades 4-6)

Cause and Effect Paragraphs: Hook, Topic Sentence, Details, and Conclusion, Snappy Ending

---

Content and Organization

Hook: (Optional) Gets reader’s attention.

Topic Sentence: Tells the big idea of the information (to explain a change, or why an event happened). Use the Secret Formula: Setting + Subject + Big Idea.

Body: Information or the details that tell about the change or why the event occurred. Draw the Cause & Effect organizer and label “Before”, “What caused the change?”, and “After”.

Details:

“Before” Box: Describe conditions before the change; or Tell what was happening before the event.

“What caused the change?” Box: List the issues or sequence the events that led to the change or the event.

“After” Box: What are the consequences or the effects of the change or the event?

Expand Details: Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about each detail sentence.

Conclusion: Repeat the Topic Sentence (Subject + Big Idea) using different words. (Setting usually omitted.)

Snappy Ending: Interesting Ending.

Sentences

Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)

Expand Sentences

Effective and Accurate Word Choices:

Nouns (precise, specific nouns)

Adjectives (modify important nouns)

Figurative Language (images pop)

Verbs (tell how action is performed)

Transitions (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)

Linking Words: Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

Mechanics

Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.

---

Organizer

---

Sample Writing

Bacon’s Rebellion

Back in 1675 in the Virginia settlement of Jamestown, frontier settlers were willing to fight for freedom and less government control due to the rebellion led by Nathaniel Bacon, a wealthy plantation owner. Before the rebellion, an increasing number of commoners were experiencing a phenomenon in the colonies. Free men had many privileges not available to them in Britain: They voted, owned land, freely worshiped, and increased their wealth. Over a sixteen year period, Governor Berkeley, elected by the King, greatly decreased or stopped these freedoms. He raised taxes, ended voting, limited land ownership, and refused protection in the frontier. This drastic change caused the colonists to risk their lives to keep their freedoms, instead of being controlled by the government. Nathaniel Bacon led the frontiersmen in the rebellion. Although the men were unsuccessful in the end, this event was one of the first of many times colonist would risk their lives for freedom.

---

Please Note: Write paragraphs to stand on their own, or write paragraphs with headings and graphics to make books about the topic.
Chapter 4
Opinion Writing:
Organizers and Stages 1-8

Let’s Write Opinions!
At-A-Glance Opinion Organizers (K-5)

Stage: 1  
Kinder-First Grades
What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!  
Draw a picture about your favorite part of the book.

Title: _________________________

Content
Picture: Opinion and Reason  
Writing: Title

Stage: 2  
Kinder-First Grades
What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!  
Draw a picture and write about your favorite part of the book.

My favorite book is ___________________________.

One of the ___________________________ parts is when ___________________________.

Back It Up! Tell about your favorite part of the book.

Content: 2-3 Sentences
Picture: Opinion  
Writing: Title, Opinion, Reason

Stage: 3  
First Grade
What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!  
After reading your book, fill in the boxes below.

Write the Author's Name.

Write the Title of the Book.

Introduce the book you read and tell the interesting, funny, exciting, sad, scary, etc.

My favorite book is ___________________________.

Back It Up! Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Make a Connection! Draw a picture of you connections.

Opinion:

Circle what you felt or what you thought of the book: interesting, funny, exciting, sad, scary, etc.

In my opinion, ___________________________.

Details: 1-2 Reasons that Support Opinion

Content: 1-Paragraph
Introduce Book: Title  
Topic Sentence: Tell Opinion  
Details: 1-2 Reasons that Support Opinion  
Conclusion: Repeat Opinion

Stage: 4  
First Grade

Content: 1-Paragraph
Introduce Book: Title  
Topic Sentence: Tell Opinion  
Details: 1-2 Reasons that Support Opinion  
Conclusion: Repeat Opinion

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At-A-Glance Opinion Organizers (K-5)

Stage: 5
Second-Third Grade

Content: 1-Paragraph

**Topic Sentence:** Tell Opinion about a Topic

**Details:** Three Reasons that Support Opinion

**Conclusion:** Repeat Opinion

---

Content: 1-Paragraph

**Introduce Book:** Author and Title.

**Topic Sentence:** Opinion

**Details:** Three Reasons that Support Opinion

**Conclusion:** Repeat Opinion or Give a Recommendation of Book.
At-A-Glance Opinion Organizers (K-5)

Stage: 6
Third Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content: 1-3 Paragraphs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Summary or Topic Background Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Expanded Reasons to Support Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeat Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection, Reflection, or Recommendation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stage: 7
Fourth-Fifth Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content: 1-2 Paragraphs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S: Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O: Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Transition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M: Make a Connection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OTEAM! What is Your Opinion?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QS:</td>
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<td>E:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### At-A-Glance Opinion Organizers (K-5)

**Stage: 8**  
Fourth-Fifth Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S = Quick Summary of the Book or Topic</th>
<th>O = Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T:</td>
<td>T:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E:</td>
<td>E:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A:</td>
<td>A:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M:</td>
<td>M:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**C = Conclusion:**  
**R = Reflection**

---

**Content: 5-Paragraph Essay**

**Introduction**
- S: Quick Summary
- O: Opinion

**Body**
- T: Transition
- E: Evidence
- A: Analysis
- M: Make a Connection

**Conclusion**
- C: Conclusion
- R: Reflection
Opinion: Stage One
(Grades: K-1)
Opinion Picture about a Topic or Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content and Organization</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Picture: Opinion and Reason</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Capitals: Title of a Story / Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing: Title</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizer and Sample Writing

What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!
Draw a picture about your favorite part of the book.

Title: __________________________

What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!
Draw a picture about your favorite part of the book.

Title: Penguins!
Opinion: Stage Two
(Grades: K-1)

Opinion and Proof about a Topic or Text

Content and Organization
Title of the Book
State Opinion or Preference about the book.

Sentences
Different sentence beginnings.
Adjectives
Transitions (optional)

Mechanics
Capitals: Title of a Story/Text.
Beginning of a sentence and “I”
End Punctuation
Spaces between words.
Letters snuggled in words.

Organizer and Sample Writing

What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!
Draw a picture and write about your favorite part of the book.

My favorite book is ___________.

Title: Underline it.

One of the __________ parts is when

Back It Up! Tell about your favorite part of the book.

My favorite book was The Little Red Hen. One of the saddest parts was when the animals took a nap and the hen did all the work.
Opinion: Stage Three
(Grades 1)

Content and Organization
Write: Author’s Name and Title of Text
Pictures: Opinion, Reason, Connection

Sentences
n/a

Mechanics
Commas: After common transitions (when needed).

Organizer and Sample Writing

What’s Your Opinion and Back It Up!
After reading your book, fill-in the boxes below.

Write the Author’s Name.

What’s Your Opinion and Back It Up!
After reading your book, fill-in the boxes below.

Write the Title of the Book.

Capitalize the first word and all the important words in the title. Don’t forget to Underlining it.

Opinion!
Circle how you felt or what you thought about the book: interesting, funny, exciting, sad, scary, etc.

Back It Up!
Draw a picture of your favorite part.

What’s Your Opinion and Back It Up!
After reading your book, fill-in the boxes below.

Write the Title of the Book.

Capitalize the first word and all the important words in the title. Don’t forget to Underlining it.

Opinion!
Circle how you felt or what you thought about the book: interesting, funny, exciting, sad, scary, etc.

Back It Up!
Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Make a Connection!
Draw a picture of your connection.

What’s Your Opinion and Back It Up!
After reading your book, fill-in the boxes below.

Write the Title of the Book.

Capitalize the first word and all the important words in the title. Don’t forget to Underlining it.

Opinion!
Circle how you felt or what you thought about the book: interesting, funny, exciting, sad, scary, etc.

Back It Up!
Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Make a Connection!
Draw a picture of your connection.

Cannonball!
Opinion: Stage Four
(Grades 1)

Opinion Paragraph about a Topic or Text

Content and Organization
Introduce Topic/Title of Book
Topic Sentence: State Opinion
Details: Two Reasons to Support Opinion
Conclusion: Provide a Sense of Closure
(Repeat Opinion using different words, or give final thoughts of topic/text.)

Sentences
Expand Sentences.
Different Sentence Beginnings.
Adjectives
Transitions: Temporal words to signal order of events, Category words to signal different details, Linking words to connect opinion, reasons, and conclusion.

Mechanics
Capitals and Stops.
Commas: After common transitions, series, conjunctions, and dates.
Quotation Marks

Organizer and Sample Writing

I read Johnny Appleseed

In my opinion, I loved Johnny.

To start

Choose:
Start,
To begin,
First,

Also

Choose:
Next,
Also,
Then,

I think Johnny was nice man

Reject your opinion, but use different words.

I read Johnny Appleseed. In my opinion, the people and animals loved Johnny. To start, the bear let him walk in the forest and didn't eat him. Also, the Indians helped him find roots and plants to eat. I think Johnny was a nice man so everyone loved him.
# Opinion: Stage Five
## (Grade 2-3)

### Content and Organization
- State an Opinion about a Topic
- List Three Reasons to Support Opinion
- Conclusion: Repeat Opinion using different words

### Sentences
- Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words
- Expand Sentences
- Effective & Accurate Word Choices:
  - Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
  - Adjectives (modify important nouns)
  - Figurative Language (images pop)
  - Verbs (tell how action is performed)
- Transitions (Temporal words to signal order of events, Category words to signal different details.)
- Linking Words: Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

### Mechanics
- Capitals and Stops.
- Capitalize Titles and Proper Nouns
- Commas: After common transitions, series, conjunctions, and dates.
- Quotation Marks

---

**In my opinion, the Pilgrims had very difficult lives for many reasons.**

**To start**, they built their plank houses by hand. Also, these settlers cleared big rocks and tall trees before they grew crops. Finally, many died from starvation, cold, and disease.

**On the whole, I think the Pilgrims had tough times.**

---

**The Pilgrims**

**In my opinion, the Pilgrims had very difficult lives for many reasons. To start,** they built their plank houses by hand. **Also,** these settlers cleared big rocks and tall trees before they grew crops. Finally, many died from starvation, cold, and diseases. **On the whole,** I think the Pilgrims had tough lives.
Opinion: Stage Five
(Grade 2-3)

Content and Organization
Identify the Author and Title
State an Opinion
List Three Reasons to Support Opinion
Conclusion: Repeat Opinion and Give a Recommendation.

Opinion Paragraph about Text

Sentences
Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words
Expand Sentences
Effective & Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
Adjectives (modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (Temporal words to signal order of events, Category words to signal different details.)
Linking Words Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

Mechanics
Capitals and Stops.
Capitalize Titles and Proper Nouns
Commas: After common transitions, series, conjunctions, and dates.
Quotation Marks

My Book Review
Judy Nayar wrote Digging Dinosaurs. I think these creatures were fascinating for many reasons. To begin, some of the biggest ones only ate plants. Additionally, the carnivores had sharp teeth, big brains, and walked on two feet and legs. Last, some of the dinosaurs could fly even when their wings were made of skin. I feel these giant lizards are interesting. This book will make you dino smart!
Opinion: Stage Six
(Grade 3)
Opinion 1 or 3 Paragraphs about a Text

Content and Organization

Introduction
Quick Summary of the Text:
Narrative: Title, author, main character and the problem or main event of story.
Information: Title, author, subject and big idea of the information.
Topic Sentence: Tells the big idea of the information. Use the Secret Formula: Subject + Big Idea.

Body
Details: List Reasons that Support Opinion
Expand Details: Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about each detail sentence.

Conclusion
Repeat the Thesis Statement: (Subject + Big Idea) using different words.
Snappy Ending: End with a connection, reflection, or recommendation.

Sentences
Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
- Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
- Adjectives (modify important nouns)
- Figurative Language (images pop)
- Verbs (tell how action is performed)
- Transitions (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)
- Linking Words: Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

Mechanics
Capitals and Stops
Capitalize Titles of Text
Commas: In a Series, Conjunctions, and Dates
Commas after Transitions (if needed)
Quotation Marks
# Opinion: Stage Six
(Grade 3)

## Opinion 1 or 3 Paragraphs about a Topic

### Content and Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hook + Background:</strong> Grabs the reader’s attention, then tells about the event, problem, issue, trend, idea, rule, claim, or value that led to the opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic Sentence:</strong> Tells the big idea of the information. Use the Secret Formula: Subject + Big Idea.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Details:</strong> List Reasons that Support Opinion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expand Details:</strong> Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about each detail sentence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repeat the Thesis Statement:</strong> (Subject + Big Idea) using different words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snappy Ending:</strong> End with a connection, reflection, or recommendation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sentences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expand Sentences</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effective and Accurate Word Choices:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nouns</strong> (precise, specific nouns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjectives</strong> (modify important nouns)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Figurative Language</strong> (images pop)</td>
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<td><strong>Verbs</strong> (tell how action is performed)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transitions</strong> (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Linking Words:</strong> Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.</td>
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### Mechanics

<table>
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<th>Capitals and Stops</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commas:</strong> In a Series, Conjunctions, and Dates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commas after Transitions</strong> (if needed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quotation Marks</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Organizer and Sample Writing**

**Did you know kids need to exercise everyday?**

**Opinion:** I think my class should get equipment.

**Transition:** To begin,

**Reason:**

**Expand:**

|   |
|---|---|
| **Also,** | **Reason:**
| | |
| **Expand:** | **Reason:**
| **Finally,** | **Reason:**

**Conclusion:** I know my class needs toys.

**Snappy Ending:** I hope our equipment tub fills up with fun stuff.

---

**Als,j we need tons of balls,**
**but make sure they are not flat.**
**Bouncing balls means kids will kick, run, and catch. Finally,**
**we want hoopla hoops to spin around and around on our bodies and arms.**

**I know my class needs these toys to get healthy. I hope our equipment tubs get packed with fun stuff!**

---

**Recess Fun**

Did you know kids need to exercise? I think my class should get more equipment to play with at recess so we can get healthy.

To begin, we need more jump ropes so we can sing songs and do tricks while we jump.
Opinion: Stage Seven  
(Grades 4-5)

Content and Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QS: Quick Summary</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>O: Opinion</td>
<td>Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T: Transition</td>
<td>Expand Sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Evidence</td>
<td>Effective and Accurate Word Choices:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A: Analysis</td>
<td>Nouns (precise, specific nouns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M: Make a Connection</td>
<td>Adjectives (modify important nouns)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizer and Sample Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Back It Up! Back It Up! SO-TEAM!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judy Alleruzza (Co-host Garden Time #1 show)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Prescription for a Healthy Home&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am convinced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One compelling reason Nasa research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87% Bad gases clean air in 24 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If remove then healthy twirk pretty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often, discoveries improve</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Plants and the Workplace

Judy Alleruzza, the co-host of a top-rated gardening show, wrote the article, “Prescription for a Healthy Home” to tell her readers about plants in the workplace. After reading this material, I am convinced that plants can transform unhealthy work environments into healthy, productive settings.

One compelling reason that backs my opinion, is the research conducted by NASA. The author explained how this government agency discovered that plants remove 87% of bad indoor gases, and replace them with clean air. Did I mention that this occurs every twenty-four hours? That’s amazing! Let’s think about the benefits. If plants remove the pollutants, then people will be healthier and more productive. Isn’t it incredible how often discoveries can improve people’s lives and our world. Now bring on the plants!
Opinion: Stage Seven
(Grades 4-5)

Content and Organization

QS: Quick Summary
O: Opinion
T: Transition
E: Evidence
A: Analysis
M: Make a Connection

Opinion Paragraph about a Topic

John Wesley Powell

Some people may think it impossible for a one-armed man to battle raging rapids and starvation, but it is true. Back in the late 1860’s, the first boat expedition through the passage of the Grand Canyon was led by such a man. In my opinion, John Wesley Powell is a role model of a person who follows his dreams no matter the obstacles.

The most important factor to support this claim are his actions during the dangerous trip. The expedition became grueling when a boat crashed and sank, taking with it many supplies. Many of his men deserted the group, but Powell believed in his journey and kept going until he reach the Grand Canyon. Let’s face it! Beyond a doubt, Powell could have easily quit. No one would have blamed him. As a matter of fact, some of his men (all of them had both arms) left when things got rough. Yet, Powell with his “can-do” attitude didn’t even consider quitting. He was determined to reach his goal. Surely, people today should honor, admire, and learn from a person who looked danger in the eye in order to make a dream come true.

Sentences

Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
Adjectives (modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)
Linking Words: Words or phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

Mechanics

Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.
Opinion: Stage Eight  
(Grades 4-5)

Opinion Essay about a Topic or Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content and Organization</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)</td>
<td>Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>QS: Quick Summary</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Linking Words: Words or phrases (e.g., consequently, specifically) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Body</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
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<td>C: Conclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>R: Reflection</td>
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</table>

Organizer


T: One compelling reason

Enslave force war heavy bricks

E: Up force war heavy bricks

A: Make our decisions

M: Why treat us respect

C: Our tribe turn back leave.

R: Sometimes, change can destroy. Beware of outsiders who don't listen, don't cooperate!
Opinion: Stage Eight
Sample Writing

Stop the Explorers!

Imagine making a mistake that will hurt our people until the end of time? Recently, strange men sailed into our world, landed on our shores, and offered us friendship. As time has gone by, they are now turning into foes, not friends. My brave tribe, I believe we should turn these strangers away and tell them to leave, or they will destroy our people.

One compelling reason why these explorers should go is something we never questioned, our freedom. They don’t think of us as equals. Instead, they will enslave us, and force us to feed, shelter, and cloth all them. Some of our people have been captured and now work in their fields growing food and collecting wood, or carrying heavy bricks to build their missions. As a rule, every one of our people have always made their own decisions and choices. Yet, these outsiders want total power over us all. Why can’t these visitors treat us the way they want to be treated, with respect?

While the thought of slavery is terrible, their smallpox is a lethal weapon. These men bring strange illnesses that we can not see. Hence, germs will kill more of our people than their weapons. These germs can hide on clothing, blankets, even in these men’s sneezes. Once the germs find us, we will die a slow, painful death. Please understand that this invisible killer may cause our people to disappear from our mother earth forever.

An additional point for rejecting these strangers is our beloved land. We are the caretakers of our world, not owners. However, the explorers have traveled all over the world killing others for land. What makes us feel they won’t kill us. If any of us do survive, we will lose rights to live and go where we please. As a rule, we hunt, sleep, and travel where we choose because the land belongs to no one. In contrast, these men will control the land and our people because they believe they have the right. Definitely, their different point of view will change how things are done in our world. No teamwork. No understanding. They will never accept our ways.

I know we should turn our backs on these strangers, or we are doomed. Sometimes, change can destroy a group. Beware of outsiders who don’t listen or cooperate.
Chapter 5
Argumentative Writing:
Organizers and Stages 9-10

Let's Write Arguments!
At-A-Glance Argument Organizers (Grade 6)

Pick a Side! Now Start Arguing!

B: Background: Why should I care?
Introduce the issue and why it is important.

A: Argument: Pick a side!
Choose and state your debatable argument:
1. POLICY: Argue for/against a policy:
   Due to the [explain problem], [proposed action] should be...
2. CLAIM: Argue the causes or effects of what happened:
   [Name the person, place or thing] caused [name what thing or event happened].
3. ISSUE: Argue the value of something:
   [Name the subject of the argument] is [give your opinion].
4. FACT: Argue if something is a fact:
   Although many people believe [fact from opposition], actually [your claim about fact].

T = Transition: Smooth transition!
Words that smoothly transition to the paragraph.

R = Reason:
This better make sense!
Give a relevant reason for the argument.

E = Evidence:
Back it up! Back it up!
What credible evidence backs up your reason?

E = Explain:
What does that evidence mean?
How does it support your argument?

Citation:

Content: 1-2 Paragraphs
B: Background
A: Argument
T: Transition
R: Reason
E: Evidence
E: Explain
At-A-Glance Argument Organizers (Grade 6)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Stage: 10</strong></th>
<th><strong>Sixth Grade</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>B = Background. Start with a Hook!</strong></td>
<td><strong>A = Argument</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C = Conclusion</strong></td>
<td><strong>S = Snappy Ending</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Introduction:**
- **B:** Hook: Grab the reader's attention to read the essay.
  - Background: Who cares? Why should I have to care about this? Introduce the issue and why it is important.

**Body (Repeat for all 3 Reasons):**
- **T:** Transition: Words that smoothly transition to the paragraph.
- **R:** Reason: Give a relevant reason for the argument (claim or issue).
- **E:** Evidence: Back the reason up with credible evidence.
- **E:** Explain: Explain how the evidence supports the claim or issue.

**Conclusion:**
- **C:** Conclusion: Restate the Thesis using different words. Highlight the reason and evidence from the body.

**Content: 5-Paragraph Essay**
- **Introduction**
  - **B:** Background
  - **A:** Argument

- **Body**
  - **T:** Transition
  - **R:** Reason
  - **E:** Evidence
  - **E:** Explain

- **Conclusion**
  - **C:** Conclusion
  - **R:** Reflection

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# Argument: Stage Nine

(Grade 6)

## Argument Paragraph about a Topic

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<td>Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)</td>
<td>Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A: Argument (Claim)</td>
<td>Expand Sentences</td>
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<td>Effective and Accurate Word Choices:</td>
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<tr>
<td>E: Evidence</td>
<td>Adjectives (modify important nouns)</td>
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<tr>
<td>E: Explain</td>
<td>Figurative Language (images pop)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Verbs (tell how action is performed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transitions (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linking Words: Words, phrases and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.</td>
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## Organizer and Sample Writing

### Pick a Side! Now Start Arguing!

**B: Background:** Why should I care? Introduce the issue and why it is important.

**A: Argument:** Pick a side! Choose and state your debatable argument:

1. **POLICY:** Argue for/against a policy: *Due to the [explain problem], [proposed action] should be...*
2. **CLAIM:** Argue the causes or effects of what happened: *(Name the person, place or thing) caused [name what thing or event happened].*
3. **ISSUE:** Argue the value of something: *(Name the subject of the argument) is [give your opinion].*
4. **FACT:** Argue if something is a fact: *(Although many people believe [fact from opposition], actually [your claim about fact].*

**T = Transition:** Smooth transition! Words that smoothly transition to the paragraph.

**R = Reason:** Smooth transitions! Give a relevant reason for the argument.

**E = Evidence:** Back it up! Back it up! What credible evidence backs up your reason?

**E = Explain:** What does that evidence mean? How does it support your argument?

### Pick a Side! Now Start Arguing!

**B: Why is it that, when people are hungry they often turn to fast food to feed their cravings? These meals are inexpensive, save time, and are quite tasty.**

**A: Although most people think fast food is unhealthy, actually it has many nutritious benefits.**

**T: One convincing reason people should continue this diet**

**R: is the increase in the number of salads on the most popular restaurants’ menus.**

**E: Angela Ogunjimi from the National Institute of Health reports,**

**E: “According to the New York Times, McDonald’s sells more salads that any restaurant in the country.”**

**E: This news report demonstrates that high numbers of people still eat fast food, but their choices are changing from greasy, fatty foods to healthy choices.**

**Citation:** *Advantages and Disadvantages of Fast Food, 15 Decemebr 2012. www.livestrong.com*
Argument: Stage Ten  
(Grade 6)

**Content and Organization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| B: Background  
| A: Argument  

| Body |  
| T: Transition  
| R: Reason  
| E: Evidence  
| E: Explain  

| Conclusion |  
| C: Conclusion  
| R: Reflection  

**Sentences**

| Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words |  
| Domain-Specific  
| Expand Sentences  

**Effective and Accurate Word Choices:**  
- **Nouns:** (precise, specific nouns)  
- **Adjectives:** (modify important nouns)  
- **Figurative Language:** (images pop)  
- **Verbs:** (tell how action is performed)  
- **Transitions:** (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)  

**Linking Words:** Words, phrases and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.

**Mechanics**

Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.

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**Organizer**

**B: Background**

"Something amazing is coming! The 21st Century but some archaic tools are used for preparing the future. Budget problems and no training hinders classrooms from reaching the future."

**A: Argument**

"Cell phones are valuable educational tools. 1. Save money, 2. Increase teaching time, and 3. Increase parent participation."

**T: Transition**

"The first benefit"

**R: Reason**

"Educator's pocketbooks"

**E: Evidence**

"Merriam-Webster’s website, the average cost of a hardback dictionary is slightly over $20."

"C+R research, 22 percent of young children and 60 percent of tweens own a cell phone."

"Cell phones have apps for dictionaries, thesaurus, calculators, and so much more. Updates keep cell phones up-to-date while paper tools become out-of-date info."

**T: Transition**

"While monetary costs compelling"

**R: Reason**

"Increase instructional minutes"

"The Journal of Educational Research, E: Leonard Staley, "Limiting the number of intrusions into the classroom setting is essentially protecting the learning environment from potential negative effects of the surrounding environment. "TESS Journal, Weischler and Pits from "Our students could lose up words 23% faster with electronic devices."

"Decrease lost time when students need to get up and get learning tools. Also avoid behavior problems. Cell phones are small and can be stored in desk to quickly retrieve."

**T: Transition**

"The most exciting and convincing reason"

**R: Reason**

"Home-school partnerships"

"New Common Core State Standards & Technology allow for 24/7 access to information, constant social interaction, and easily spread digital content."

"Parents can easily access digital information. Blogs can be used to communicate with teacher. Paper assignments are lost and don’t come with easy access to the teacher. Sites to assist parents."

**C: Conclusion**

"All teachers should promote cell phones as a valuable learning aide to increase learning time and parent partnerships.

Don’t go backwards, leap forward into the future. Become classrooms that prepare students for the 21st Century, not the 20th century."
Cell Phones in the Classroom

The 21st Century is coming! No, wait! Believe it or not, that time is now. Yet, walk into classrooms across America and students are using the same archaic tools to prepare for their futures. Budget problems and lack of professional development hinder classrooms from operating like futuristic learning centers. A simple and effective solution to this problem comes in a small package. Cell phones are valuable educational tools. These amazing devices will save teachers money, increase their teaching time, and develop home-school partnerships.

The first benefit immediately affects educators’ pocketbooks. Most teachers spend a great deal of personal funds purchasing learning aides and tools for their students. According to the Merriam-Websters’ website, the average cost of a hardback dictionary is slightly over twenty-dollars. To equip one class set of the necessary reference tools (thesaurus, atlas, etc.) exceeds hundreds of dollars, possibly closer to one-thousand dollars. These are essential resources every student utilizes on a daily basis. Yet, many classrooms lack these aides or have out-of-date copies. The cell phone, on the other hand, includes these common resources as well as calculators, and the internet. Imagine students utilizing the most up-to-date learning tools every year with no monetary cost to the teacher. Teachers don’t need to imagine because the tools are already available. According to the marketing company C&R Research, “...22 percent of young children (ages 6 to 9) own a cell phone and 60 percent of tweens (ages 10 to 14) own a cell phone.” These devices, not only provide students with learning aides, but also supply instant updates. This is a must for every twenty-first century. Without this modern tool in the classroom, students are forced to utilize out-of-date materials, or educators will need to fork-out big bucks to stock their classrooms with more current editions.

While the monetary costs are compelling, the increase in instructional minutes is a cogent reason for this tool. The time students waste retrieving reference tools and other aides is alarming. As a matter fact, in The Journal of Educational Research, author Lawrence Leonard states “Limiting the number of intrusions into the classroom setting is essentially protecting the learning environment from potential negative effects of the supporting environment.” Cell phones are hand held devices easily stored in student’s desks. These tools will virtually eliminate the wasted time students spend to retrieve resources from book shelves. Another time
saver is the phone itself. In a TESL journal publication, authors Weschler and Pitts conducted an experiment to measure the differences between paper dictionaries and electronic dictionaries. They reported, “Our students could look up words about 23% faster with electronic dictionaries.” This tool provides every teacher with more instructional time and less hassles from transitions.

The most exciting and convincing reason for cell phones is the home-school partnerships they will build. National researcher and advisor, Tanya Roscorla reports, “In English language arts, the standards call for students to use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing, as well as to interact and collaborate with others. This includes writing blog posts and commenting on blogs…” Parents will be thrilled to access digital information and communicate via classroom blogs eliminating the hassles and confusions caused by paper assignments. Parents and teachers can easily partner in the education of their students.

All teachers should promote cell phones as valuable learning aides to increase learning time and home-school connections. The time is now to take advantage of this valuable tool that most students already own. Don’t take baby steps into 21st Century learning. Instead, soar through the process with these valuable tools.

Works Cited


