



# Narrative Writing Guide

Grade 4

- Personal Experience
- Character/Problem/Solution
- Narrative Essay
- Literary Analysis Tasks
- Response to Text

Expanded Edition  
Literacy Launch  
Section Included



Updated & Expanded Edition  
by Dea Paoletta Auray

**Empowering**  
Writers<sup>®</sup>

Write. Read. Succeed.



The upper elementary years are exciting. By this time, most students have acquired basic academic skills as well as a body of general knowledge that expands their world and broadens their point of view. The focus begins to shift from learning to read to one of reading to learn. As students develop into strong strategic readers, glean information and insight from a variety of texts, writing becomes a tool for further exploration, helping them clarify, differentiate, sort and express information and opinions about what they've learned. In other words, writing becomes, more and more, a vehicle for clear thinking. This solidifies the reading-writing connection. In addition, learning to become strong informational and opinion writers and writing in response to text requires students to read more closely, which improves reading comprehension.

**In the lessons that follow, your students will learn to:**

- Recognize and distinguish between genres (narrative, informational and opinion writing). They will be able to spot the subtle differences between informational and opinion writing.
- Annotate and analyze text to become strategic readers.
- Organize information in a logical manner so that their writing is easily understood and well paced.
- Develop broad yet distinct main ideas and main reasons.
- Generate a variety of rich supporting details.
- Conduct relevant research and enhance their writing with quotes, statistics, amazing facts, descriptive segments and anecdotes.
- Write compelling introductions with powerful leads and clear topic sentences.
- Creatively restate their main ideas and main reasons in conclusions that sum up the whole piece and end with decisive, memorable statements.
- Respond, in writing, to a variety of texts in order to demonstrate deep comprehension (including Short Constructed Response, Extended Constructed Response and Literary Analysis).

The activities provided here were developed for grade 4, as students acquire the writing skills they need to produce essays with multiple body paragraphs as well as effective introductions and conclusions.

Also included are a variety of more challenging activities that will guide more advanced students through the process of further developing and refining their writing skills. In each section you'll find a variety of lessons to meet the needs of the range of students in your class. Some lessons are largely teacher directed, others require greater independence on the part of the students. This allows you to differentiate to best meet the needs of all students.

In addition to the multitude of writing opportunities incorporated throughout this text, you will also find foundational lessons necessary to inform writing tasks. These critical thinking exercises (such as sorting details into main idea categories, recognizing fact from opinion, analysis of text, etc.) build the awareness level. Without this prior knowledge and experience students cannot be expected to effectively complete writing tasks.

Lastly, given the demands of the latest standards and testing trends, it is critical for students to generate their writing in both the traditional pen to paper mode and on a computer or other device. It is important to note that the latest research suggests that each modality stimulates the brain differently. Pen to paper is a slower, more multi-sensory process, which reinforces the assimilation of knowledge and skills in a wider variety of ways.



# Introduction

## What You'll Find in this Resource

This book was designed to provide everything you'll need to teach informational and opinion writing as well as response to text in Grade 4. It includes not only opportunities for writing informational and opinion texts, but more importantly, we've deconstructed effective writing into all of the foundational concepts and discrete skills students need in order to be successful. Doing so empowers students to be able to analyze and annotate texts and respond to these texts in writing.

Writing is a complex task. Simply discussing the attributes of powerful texts as a prerequisite to writing is not enough. **Students must learn, through explicit, objective-driven instruction, the salient features of the genre, author's purpose, and have a strong grasp of basic concepts that inform these understandings.** For example, before asking students to organize their writing by arranging like details into paragraphs, they must know how to sort and categorize, to use inductive and deductive reasoning. Before we suggest the use of more powerful vocabulary in their writing we need to have students use it comfortably in spoken language. They need scaffolding to grasp and apply these concepts to the writing task. Skipping any of the foundational skills only results in frustration.

**This resource includes clear, objective-driven lessons that cover the all-important foundational concepts, and then build writing lessons on this firm base of understanding.** Then, we begin teaching all of the specific skills that are the hallmarks of effective informational, opinion, and response to text writing.

This approach is extremely powerful for teachers and youngsters alike. Teachers begin to look at writing in more objective terms, in relation to specific skills taught. Students gain by having what can be an overwhelming process broken into manageable parts.

**For ease of use, the book is divided into skill sections.** Within each section you'll find a wide range of lessons – some very directed, others requiring more independence on the part of the student. These can be used at your discretion based on the needs of your students.

### The Skill Sections are as follows:

Literacy Launch\*

Section 1: Broad Yet Distinct Main Ideas/Reasons

Section 2: Elaboration - Detail Generating Questions

Section 3: Research

Section 4: Introductions and Conclusions

Section 5: Authentic Writing Tasks

\*This essential jumping-off point to writing instruction and reading comprehension is the prerequisite to understanding all genres of writing and reading purposes. For that reason, we suggest that whatever genre you begin teaching, all students are first introduced to the Literacy Launch. Then, regardless of what genre they are interacting with, whether in reading or writing, there will be a necessary fundamental understanding. *(Note: The Literacy Launch is presented in the same manner in both our Informational Writing Guide and Narrative Writing Guide. It only needs to be taught once and when concepts are mastered, teaching can move directly to Section 1. If for example, you begin with Informational writing, when you move to Narrative, the Literacy Launch instruction does not need to be repeated. Instead, move right to Section 1.)*

Additionally, the foundational skills learned during the Literacy Launch provide students with the tools needed to address text-dependent and constructed response tasks. Note that Response to Text (R) activities are interspersed throughout this Guide. To find specific skills, see the Response to Text Index, pp. 332-333.

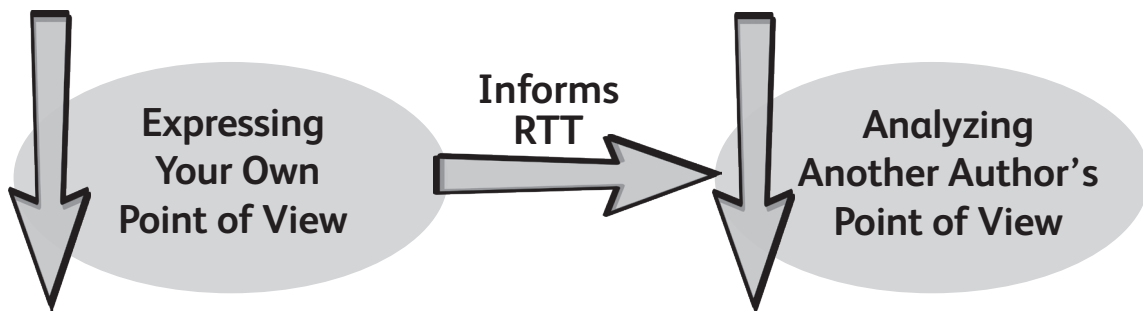
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## GENERATIVE VS. RESPONSIVE WRITING

In the real world, and now, more and more often in school, writing can be either motivated largely by the writer's interests, imagination, and personal experience (**generative writing**) or it can be in response to a source text or number of texts (**responsive writing**). Both approaches have value and one should not be overlooked at the expense of the other. Writing assessments in many places have moved away from generative writing in favor of responsive writing. **Ex.** A student must read several texts on a topic and then respond to what they read in an evaluative way, demonstrating not only literal comprehension, but critical thinking and personal reflection in response to a question or task. They must back their ideas, conclusions, or positions by citing evidence in the text. *The challenge is that success in this type of task really is rooted in reading comprehension.* Students who are challenged readers have a distinct disadvantage that they don't experience in many generative writing tasks. For these reasons we have included both generative and responsive writing tasks throughout the book. See chart below and note how one genre of writing informs the other.

## GENERATIVE VS. RESPONSIVE WRITING



- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crafting original work</li><li>• Nurturing tomorrow's authors</li><li>• Understanding Informational writing</li><li>• Increasing deep comprehension</li><li>• Creative, stylistic, critical thinking</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing to express reading</li><li>• Simulating research</li><li>• Academic writing</li><li>• Defending conclusions</li><li>• Pragmatic, deductive, inductive reasoning</li></ul> |
|--|---|

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## Let's Compare Informational, Opinion, and Response to Text

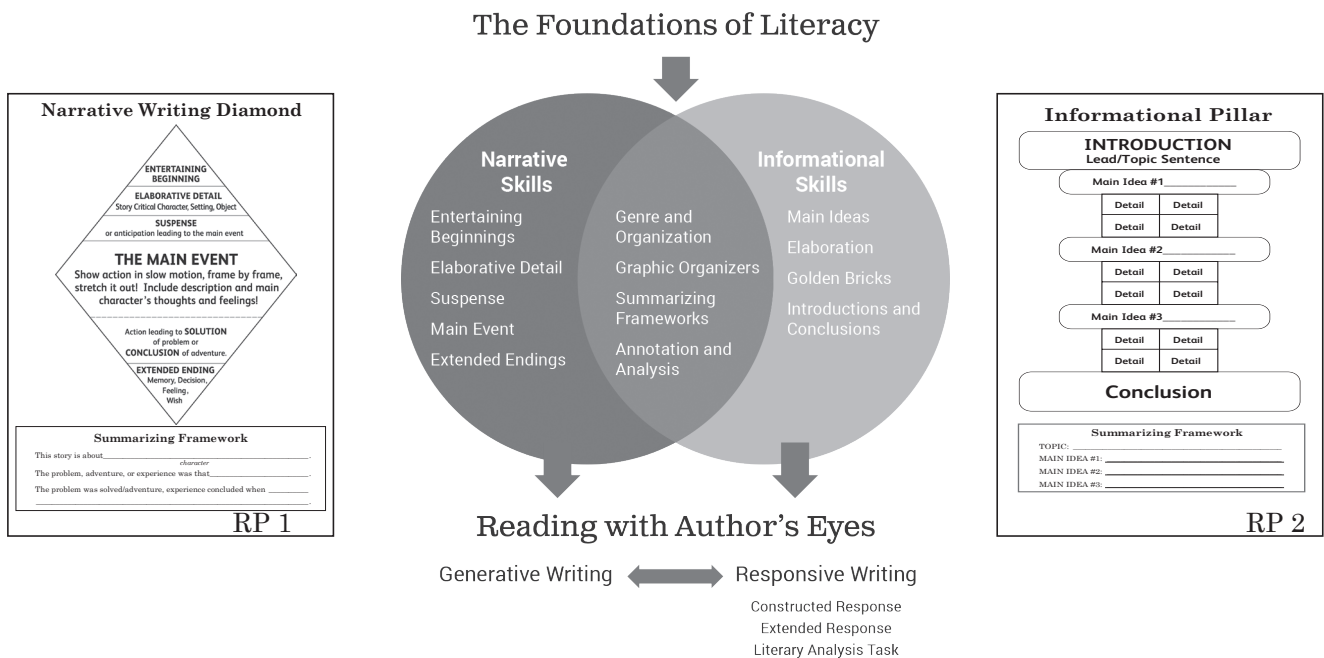
	INFORMATIONAL	OPINION	RESPONSE TO TEXT
<b>Organization</b>	Informational Pillar	Opinion Pillar	Informational Pillar
<b>Purpose</b>	To inform	To state a personal opinion	To demonstrate comprehension
<b>Introduction</b>	Lead/topic sentence	Lead/opinion statement	Summarize the source material Turn the Question into the Response
<b>Body of Piece</b>	Main ideas	Main reasons	Main ideas
<b>Supporting Details</b>	What does it "look" like? Why is that important? Did you give a specific example? Quotes, statistics, anecdotes, amazing facts, descriptive segments	What does it "look" like? Why is it important? Did you give a specific example? Quotes, statistics, anecdotes, amazing facts, descriptive segments, personal experience	Cite evidence: Quotes, statistics, amazing facts Paraphrase Compare/Contrast information Use evidence from all source material
<b>Conclusion</b>	Creatively restate each idea	Creatively restate each reason Restate the opinion	Reiterate topic and main ideas Synthesize information & draw conclusions Evaluate how information inspires or challenges

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## Where do we begin?

The Literacy Launch is the starting point! Before students can write or even read strategically, they need to be clear about genre and purpose. The lessons in this section help students develop the foundational concepts they need for both reading and writing. They'll be exposed to multiple genres of writing during this time frame, in much the same way as they are exposed to many types of text over the course of a day in content areas. They'll learn to recognize and identify the key characteristics of each genre, the organizational structure and author's purpose. You may worry that the time spent on these foundational skills might be better spent writing, pencil to paper. However, these core lessons are essential if students are to write with intention, a clear sense of purpose, with examples of strong writing to guide them. Too often we press students directly into writing tasks that overwhelm them because they don't have a clear understanding of how text is organized, nor do they have the skills to apply to the task. This will come in time but begins on the awareness level of understanding what authors do.

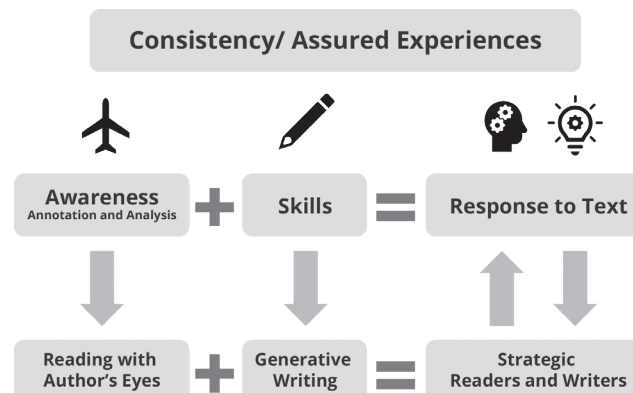
The Venn Diagram illustrates the Literacy Launch and the powerful writing-reading connection. The core of the diagram outlines the skills inherent in learning to recognize genre, organization, annotation and analysis, and the salient features of the various genres. By understanding how text is constructed, students can begin to read more strategically. We call this "Reading with Author's Eyes." Through the Literacy Launch, students are introduced to the graphic tools and summarizing frameworks first on the awareness level and then on the generative level. Students also learn to proactively interact with the text through the annotation and analysis process for each genre of writing and then apply that process to their independent reading. Each step in the foundational learning process creates a predictable approach to literacy that students can rely on and internalize.



(continued)

# Teacher Background: The Literacy Launch

Once students have completed the foundational learning presented in the Literacy Launch, they can move seamlessly into narrative, informational, or opinion/argument writing. The discrete skills of each genre are broken down into manageable components and taught through the Empowering Writers methodology. This is presented in incremental steps that begin with the awareness level and then provides students with the capacity to generate and craft original writing, while also preparing them to respond in writing. The synergistic nature of the awareness level understanding, coupled with genre specific skill development allows students to respond to text and become strategic readers and writers. Once the Literacy Launch is completed, you'll move directly into skill development.



## Defining Genre

**Narrative Writing** - Narrative writing is written to entertain an audience of others through storytelling. The author's focus is on a main character in a setting who has a problem to solve or an adventure or meaningful experience to share. The main character typically grows or changes in some way as the story develops.

**Informational Writing** - The purpose of informational writing is to inform an audience of others. The organization is linear, typified by an introduction, several body paragraphs that include a main idea with supporting details, and a conclusion. The tone of the informational piece is usually straightforward and the author works hard to present information in an organized, sequential fashion. The focus of informational writing is on a topic.

**Opinion Writing** - The purpose of opinion writing is to share a personal opinion. The successful opinion author uses information strategically, showcasing facts that support the opinion. With an organizational structure similar to informational writing, opinion writing focuses on an issue or position that can be looked at from multiple perspectives. To do this, students must be able to distinguish between fact and opinion.

**Argument Writing** - The purpose of argument writing is to organize and present a well-reasoned, logical argument demonstrating the writer's position, belief, or conclusion on an issue. The writer makes a claim and supports it with sound reasons and evidence. Additionally, the author must defend the claim using credible sources and address a counterargument. The organizational structure of argument writing mirrors informational writing with an introduction, several body paragraphs, and a conclusion.

**Response to Text Writing** - The purpose of this type of writing is to demonstrate deep comprehension of source material. There are two types of response to text - Short Constructed Response (SCR) and Extended Constructed Response (ECR). In SCR, the organizational structure is one paragraph with an introduction statement, several pieces of evidence that are either cited directly from the source text or paraphrased, and a conclusion statement. ECR is a multi-paragraph response to source text and takes the shape of informational writing with an introduction paragraph, several body paragraphs, and a conclusion paragraph. In both types of response writing, students must use the given source text(s) to support their answer to a question or task and provide their analysis.



## LESSON 2

### Objective

Students recognize and identify narrative, informational, opinion and response to text paragraphs in terms of author's purpose and salient features.

### Procedure

1. Discuss genre with your students, using the definitions below.

**Narrative:** Purpose – to entertain (focus on a main character in a setting with a problem, adventure or interesting experience).

**Informational:** Purpose – to give information (focus on a TOPIC)

**Opinion:** Purpose – to share a personal opinion (focus on a point of view)

**Response to Text:** Purpose – to demonstrate deep comprehension as illustrated by evidence from the text.

Chart these definitions. You might want to use some of the fiction and nonfiction books in your classroom as examples.

2. Reproduce and distribute Narrative, Informational, or Opinion?, SP 1.

### LESSON AT A GLANCE:

#### Whole Class and Independent Activity

- Define genres.
- Read paragraphs and identify genre.

**Student Page**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**NARRATIVE, INFORMATIONAL, OR OPINION?**

Read the following paragraphs. Determine whether each paragraph is Narrative, Informational, or Opinion. Circle your response.

1. As I crept through the garden, I heard a cat hiss and felt the chill of an angry wind at my back. "You can do this," I told myself. My hands were shaking as I snapped the magical pumpkin from its vine. "Hold it right there," came an angry voice from the darkness. I started to run and the heavy pumpkin slipped from my grasp.  

Narrative	Informational	Opinion
-----------	---------------	---------
2. In my opinion, oatmeal is the most delicious and nutritious breakfast there is. It's warm and it fills you up better than cold cereal. It's amazing how many different ways you can serve it. Many people like to sprinkle their oatmeal with cinnamon and mix it with applesauce. Other people enjoy their hot cereal with brown sugar and sliced bananas. Served with fruit or just with milk and sugar, oatmeal is the world's best treat on a blustery winter morning. Don't you agree?  

Narrative	Informational	Opinion
-----------	---------------	---------
3. The rainforest has four levels. At the very top is the *emergent layer*, where the tallest trees tower above all the others and get most of the sunlight. Then the tops of all the other trees form the thick *canopy*. The branches of the trees in the canopy are usually covered with vines that provide camouflage for many rainforest birds. The next level is called the *under story* and it is a dark place where young trees as well as plants that need little light grow. The last level is the *forest floor*, which is even darker than the under story and covered with fallen branches, leaves, seeds and fruits.  

Narrative	Informational	Opinion
-----------	---------------	---------

SP 1

3. Project and read as you identify each paragraph as either Narrative, Informational or Opinion writing. If students need guidance, ask the following questions:

Is there a character in a setting?

Are you getting information, learning something about a person, place or thing?

Is the author stating and supporting a personal opinion?

Are other sources being cited?

4. Proceed similarly with Informational, Opinion, or Response to Text, SP 2.


Key:

### Narrative, Informational or Opinion?, SP 1

1. Informational 2. Narrative 3. Opinion

### Informational, Opinion, or Response to Text, SP 2

1. Informational 2. Response to Text 3. Opinion

**Student Page**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**INFORMATIONAL, OPINION, OR RESPONSE TO TEXT?**

Read the following paragraphs. Determine whether each paragraph is Informational, Opinion, or Response to Text. Circle your response.

1. Building a house is a complicated process. First, a plot of land must be located on which a home can be built. An architect draws a plan that shows every nook and cranny of the proposed house, inside and out. The builder has to receive approvals from the town before beginning the build. The lot must be cleared so that large equipment can be brought in to dig the foundation and pour concrete. The house needs to be framed, walls built, and the roof raised. Electricians and plumbers must install wiring and pipes. Depending on the size of the house, the build could take six months to over a year.

Informational                      Opinion                      Response to Text

2. In the text titled Goldendoodles the author discusses the history of this hybrid "designer dog." We learn that this crossbreed was introduced in 1992 by breeding Golden Retrievers with Standard Poodles. The author explains that "the combination of the gentle disposition of the Golden with the intelligence of the Standard Poodle results in a highly desirable family pet." Due to the popularity of this breed, we learn, on page 2, about GANA – the Goldendoodle Association of North America, whose goal is to establish reliability in Goldendoodles' coats, type, health, and temperament.

Informational                      Opinion                      Response to Text

3. While there are exciting and entertaining outdoor activities during each season of the year, in my view, summer provides the very best opportunities to be active outside. There's nothing better than a swim in the lake or a plunge in the ocean during a day at the beach. I love every imaginable water sport, from swimming and diving to kayaking, boogie boarding, and paddle boarding. The warm sun on my shoulders and the refreshing splash of cool water makes a summer afternoon what I long for throughout all four seasons. Planning a picnic at the park, a hike in the woods, or a bike ride on a nature trail are best enjoyed during the summer. Winter sledding and skiing may be fun, but what can beat all of the opportunities available during June, July, and August, when school is mostly out, and the days are long?

Informational                      Opinion                      Response to Text

**SP 2**

## LESSON 5

### Objective

Students learn strategies for close reading that provide valuable information about organization that will later inform their writing.

Strategies include:

- skimming and scanning for an overview of the entire text
- recognizing the importance of headings, keywords, diagrams, illustrations
- writing a summary based on information provided (text conventions)

### Important Vocabulary

*title, topic, headings, bold-face print, italicized print, key words, diagram, photograph, illustration, caption*

### Procedure

1. Explain to the class that they will be reading a selection titled Bears and that they'll be learning some strategies for how to read more effectively.
2. Photocopy SP 8-9, distribute and project. *To build context and background begin by showing the students numerous online images of a variety of bears (or, for the following lesson, Scarecrows, SP 10-12) and discuss what, if any, prior knowledge they might have.* Read the piece aloud This will give them a sense of what the text is all about.

### LESSON AT A GLANCE:

#### Whole Class and Independent Activity

- Introduce students to text conventions.
- Modeling skimming, scanning.
- Point out how cues improve reading.
- Summarize the piece.

**Student Page**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Bears

It's hard to believe that these large, often ferocious relatives of the dog, raccoon, and panda are the inspiration for millions of cuddly soft stuffed toys! There are many kinds of bears, living in numerous places the world over. Their behavior and shared traits fascinate their human neighbors all around the globe.

**Kinds of Bears and Where They Live**

Many kinds of bears can be found in a wide variety of places, mostly in wild mountain, forest, and arctic areas. In fact, bears inhabit every continent except Africa, Antarctica, and Australia. The largest bear, the **Kodiak**, which weighs almost a ton is found in the

wilderness and wide open grasslands of Alaska. The Kodiak is related to the **Grizzly**. Grizzly bears, with their dark fur edged in white, live in many areas of the United States and Canada. **Brown Bears**, which are smaller than the Kodiak and Grizzly, and the **North American Black Bear** (which isn't always black, but brown, white, gold, even bluish tinted) also live in the United States and Canada. The coast of the Arctic Ocean is home to the distinctive white **Polar Bear**, thriving in the snow and ice. Asia is where the slow-moving **Sloth Bear** is

found, with its short black fur and bib of light colored fur.

**Common Traits**

What do all bears have in common? Scientists group them into a family of creatures called **Ursidae**. All bears are classified as **caniforms** meaning "dog-like" creatures. They have long snouts and **non-retractable** claws, just as dogs do.



Grizzly bear  
(about 8 ft. long)

SP 8

**Student Page**

Of course, bears are larger than dogs. These large furry mammals have thick, weighty bodies and can stand on their hind legs. You can recognize bears by their rather squared off snouts, short rounded ears, and short stubby tails. Their feet are similar to human feet, complete with a heel and a sole. In fact, bears' hind feet also have five toes. Their long curved sharp claws are used to tear food and to move nimbly - they can even climb trees. Bears are **carnivores** meaning that they eat mostly meat. This is why they have numerous large teeth that can grind,

crush, and tear meat. However, bears also eat vegetation.

**Bear Behavior**

Bear's behavior has always interested people. Some bears **hibernate**, retreating to their dens, doing without food, and entering a deep sleep state in which their **metabolism** (body function) slows down dramatically. These large animals, which may appear rather clumsy and slow, are actually very fast runners. A mother bear may charge at any threat to her cubs, human or animal. In order to fuel their hefty bodies bears must eat a lot. They've been known to raid campsites and cottages, **foraging** or digging through supplies and trash in order to find something edible. Bears also love

honey and have no problem batting down a bee's nest, swiping at it with their claws, and scooping out gobs of thick, sweet, honey. Their thick fur makes it difficult for bees to sting them, although bears gladly endure stings in order to eat the bee larvae in the honey. These amazing creatures communicate through a complicated **marking system** in which they claw, gnaw, or chew at tree trunks as a means of warning other bears to stay clear of their territory.

In your world travels, if you ever find yourself in a National Park, or hiking in a nature preserve, keep your eyes open for a member of the Ursidae family. If you spot any type of bear, stay calm and move quietly away. These beautiful, yet sometimes menacing creatures, and the habitats they live in certainly deserve our respect.



SP 9

# Strategic Reading - Informed Writing

7. Ask them to help you fill in the summarizing framework, based solely on the title and headings.

Chart:

**TOPIC:** Bears  
**Main Idea #1:** Kinds of Bears and Where they Live  
**Main Idea #2:** Common Traits  
**Main Idea #3:** Bear Behavior

Discuss the way that identifying the topic and headings can set a purpose for learning. As readers they already have a good idea what they'll be reading about, which aids in comprehension. Discuss how a summary such as this might be an excellent way for an author to begin. (Helps with organization and focus.)

8. Next, in each paragraph, have them locate all **bold-faced** or *italicized* words. Explain that these are key vocabulary words that might be new to the reader. These keywords are usually either preceded or followed by a definition to aid in understanding. Point out that these specially marked words indicate some of the important **details** in the piece.

(**Option:** For homework, have students create a key word vocabulary chart, listing each key - words followed by a definition they craft from the information provided in the text.)

9. Point out the **photograph** and its **caption**. Ask students why both are important.
10. Model how to use the information on the summarizing framework to write an extended summary using the following sentence starters coupled with Informative Verbs, RP 6.

## Sentence Starters:

This text provides information about \_\_\_\_\_.

This informative piece \_\_\_\_\_.

In this text, the author \_\_\_\_\_.

The author reveals \_\_\_\_\_.

The reader discovers \_\_\_\_\_.

In this paragraph/piece \_\_\_\_\_.

It was clearly \_\_\_\_\_.

## INFORMATIVE VERBS

recognize	understand
learn about	become aware of
discover	report upon
uncover	reveal
study	examine
observe	analyze
investigate	find out
focus on	emphasize
research	know
delve into	consider
determine	remember
explore	become familiar with
chronicle	become acquainted with
discussed	be on the lookout for
debated	heard about

RP 6



**Student Page**  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Scarecrows, Yesterday and Today

Drive through your neighborhood in October, and chances are you'll see a straggly bunch of hay-stuffed scarecrows surrounded by pumpkins and haystacks, slumping across porches and hitched up on front lawns. But besides being a favorite part of autumn décor, scarecrows have served a long and useful role in the lives of people all over the world. Let's take a look at the history of scarecrows, the various kinds of scarecrows, and at the ways we celebrate scarecrows nowadays.



*A scarecrow perched in a field.*

**The Need for Scarecrows**

Thousands of years ago when people began to plant crops instead of hunting and gathering wild foods they realized they needed to protect their harvest from birds and animals. Anyone who has a garden knows that not only birds, but rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, even foxes and bears can venture in and in a single swoosh eat all of the food! At first people probably hid around their fields and jumped out to scare away any varmints that decided to dine there. In fact, in England and other places, people hired children to be **bird shooters**. Bird shooters or bird scapers had special wooden gadgets called **clappers** that they'd shake and smack together. The racket they made would scare the critters away. The problem was, people would get tired sitting by the field. They'd get distracted or fall asleep, allowing the hungry animals to have a feast. So, it became clear that another solution was necessary. They needed bird scapers who could frighten away birds and animals at all hours of the day and night. Soon the idea of fooling the crop stealers with **mannequins** or models of people made from wood and cloth caught on. Historians say that the scarecrow's history goes back at least 3,000 years and that they have been used all over the world to protect grain, vegetables and fruits from birds and animals.

**Scarecrows around the World**

You can find scarecrows just about anywhere people grow food! In ancient Egypt people planted wheat along the shore of the Nile River. Pump birds called

quail would fly in and eat the grain. Farmers began to place wooden stakes in the ground hung with nets that flapped in the wind. The movement would frighten some of the quails, but others persisted in eating the wheat. The Egyptian farmers would hide and scare the quails into the nets. Then they'd capture the quail and eat them for dinner. These ancient net contraptions were perhaps the first scarecrows. The Greeks fashioned wooden life-sized statues to look like their god of the gardens, **Priapus**, who had a frightening angry appearance. They placed these Priapus statues in their vineyards to frighten off birds and animals. In Japan, farmers protected their rice fields by hanging old clothes and rags, rotting meat and fishbones to tall poles. The wind moved these around, frightening any would-be diners - and if the motion didn't discourage them the smell would! These smelly scarecrows were called **Kakashis**. In Italy during the Middle Ages, between the years 1154-1485, farmers placed animal skulls on the end of a post to scare away critics. During this same time period German farmers crafted wooden witches to stand guard in their fields. When German immigrants came to the U.S. in the 1800's they made scarecrows they called **hootsammon** or the **bogeyman**. These scarecrows were dressed very much like farmers, in overalls and an old coat or shirt, its head covered in a floppy hat, the body stuffed with hay, a red bandana tied around its neck. Clearly, these influenced our image of what scarecrows look like.


Guests come in Halloween costumes and are treated to games, face-painting, and story-telling. Of course, scarecrows are displayed and enjoyed by over 10,000 visitors who attend each year. The Annual Scarecrow Festival in West Kilbride, Scotland, featured a competition for the best hand-made scarecrow. Likewise, at the Scarecrow Festival in St. Charles, Illinois, spectators can see scores of unique and creative scarecrows, while enjoying music, dancing, and fun. These are just a few of the thousands of scarecrow celebrations people flock to throughout the autumn season.

This fall, as you walk through your neighborhood or take drive in the country, see if you can spot a scarecrow. Think about their long and interesting history, imagine their counterparts all over the world, and perhaps plan on a little fall fun by making a scarecrow of your own. Scarecrows have certainly been a source of creativity and necessity for thousands of years.

SP 10

**Student Page**

## Scarecrow Names Around the World




America: Scarecrow	Japan: Kakashis
England: Hooymann	Malaysia: Orang-orang
Greece: Priapus	Philippines: Tao-tao
Italy: Spaventapasseri	Scotland: Tattyleg

SP 11

**Student Page**

## Fun with Scarecrows

Scarecrows seem to have captured the imaginations of people all over the world, as evidenced by the many scarecrow celebrations that take place. Artists and craftspersons, both professional and amateur, enjoy gathering old clothes, rags, and stuffing in order to make their own scarecrows, just for fun. Some find creative materials such as pumpkins and gourds for their heads, and use paint and other materials to create expressive faces. People display these in front of their houses in the autumn or use them as part of their Halloween displays. Scarecrows are the inspiration for fall festivals all over the world. Edmonton, Alberta, in Canada hosts a Scarecrow Festival every October.



SP 12

3. Model how to skim and scan the piece for text features using Common Informational Text Features, RP 5. Annotate it together, labeling the important parts using the procedure below. Use the Strategic Reading Guidelines, RP 38-39, to inform your discussion.

**Common Informational Text Features**

<b>Title/Topic</b>	Usually names the topic
<b>Table of contents</b>	A list of main ideas, chapters, or sections at the front of the book
<b>Index</b>	Page numbers for locating specific information about the topic
<b>Glossary</b>	List of words from the text related to the topic, and their definitions
<b>Headings</b>	Names the main ideas or sections related to the topic. May correspond to the Table of Contents
<b>Keywords:</b> <b>Bold faced words</b> <b>Italicized print</b>	These highlighted words indicate important vocabulary about the topic. The author generally gives the definition within the text.
<b>Photographs, illustrations, captions</b>	Images to enhance the text along with a short description of the picture
<b>Inset photos</b>	Gives a close-up view of something about the topic showing specific detail
<b>Labeled diagrams</b>	Important information about the topic in a diagram, with labels to name parts, sections, or details
<b>Charts, graphs, tables</b>	Shows data about the topic
<b>Maps</b>	A representation of an area (land or sea) that is discussed in the text

Text features are the building blocks for text structure in informational writing, just as literary elements are the building blocks for narrative.

RP 5

4. First, circle the **title**. Ask them what the **title** reveals. (the **topic**) Remind them that the topic tells the reader what the entire piece will be about. **Model** this for students and have them do the same.
5. Next, for reference purposes, number each paragraph.
6. Point out and underline the **headings**. Explain that the headings allow you to quickly skim and scan the piece and get a sense of the **main ideas** of the piece.

# I Want More – Analyzing and Annotating Opportunities for Informational Texts

## Objective

Students learn to identify the salient features of informational and opinion writing and recognize the organizational structures of each without the benefit of headings, photographs, or diagrams.

## Procedure

1. Explain to students that you'll be looking at two different pieces of writing about Siamese cats, each with a different purpose.
2. Distribute The Informational Pillar, RP 2, as well as The Opinion Pillar, RP 3. Review each pillar emphasizing the similarities and differences. Distribute Siamese Cats, SP 33, and The Unique and Beautiful Siamese, SP 34. A great way to help with comprehension is to build background by showing an appropriate online video that illustrates the topic. You can also gather vivid online images to inform their reading.

**Informational Pillar**

**INTRODUCTION**  
Lead/Topic Sentence

Main Idea #1

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

Main Idea #2

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

Main Idea #3

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

**Conclusion**

**Summarizing Framework**

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA #1: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA #2: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN IDEA #3: \_\_\_\_\_

RP 2

**Opinion Pillar**

**INTRODUCTION**  
Lead/Opinion Statement

Main Reason #1

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

Main Reason #2

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

Main Reason #3

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

**CONCLUSION**  
Creative Restatements of Main Reasons

**Summarizing Framework**

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN REASON #1: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN REASON #2: \_\_\_\_\_

MAIN REASON #3: \_\_\_\_\_

RP 3

**Student Page**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**SIAMESE CATS**

One of the oldest cat breeds in the world, the Siamese cat is a popular pet in the United States today. Let's learn more about the regal history, elegant appearance and unique needs of this charming breed.

Siamese cats were brought to America from Thailand back when it was called Siam. It is believed that the royal family of Siam kept these exotic felines as pets and that they were sometimes used to guard ancient temples. The breed arrived in America in 1878 when a Siamese cat was given as a gift to the wife of President Rutherford Hayes, who was a well-known cat lover. Mr. Hayes said that the "mahogany-colored feline enjoyed making grand entrances" when she was entertaining at the White House. By the early 1900s, Siamese cats were exhibited in American cat shows.

These beautiful animals are known for their distinctive appearance. They move gracefully with their tails held high as though they know just how lovely they are. The royal cats of Siam have sparkling, bright blue eyes with a slight slant that adds to their exotic appearance. They have short, cream colored fur that darkens to a rich chocolate brown on their ears, face and toes. This elegant breed takes good care of its slim, muscular body so that it needs very little extra grooming. In some Siamese, the bright eyes are closely set and they can appear cross-eyed.

Unlike most cats, a Siamese is not an independent creature. They crave the company of their owners and will meow loudly and persistently to get it. If left alone too often, they are likely to get into mischief. I know of a Siamese who shredded a large quilt with its claws one lonely afternoon. All are capable of such destructive behavior, so be prepared to spend lots of time playing with your pet. Like a dog in a cat body, some even play fetch and most can be trained to walk on a leash.

With their interesting history and undeniable beauty, Siamese cats can be great companions to those who understand their unique needs. They are an excellent choice for people who have lots of time to devote to a pet.

SP 33

**Student Page**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL SIAMESE**

There is no doubt that dogs, big or small, make wonderful pets. However, I believe cats are an equally good choice. My absolute favorite is the regal Siamese cat. After all, who wouldn't love a pet with an elegant beauty, a melodic voice and a loving nature?

Once you see the gorgeous blue eyes of a Siamese, you will surely agree that this is a positively beautiful animal. Its short, silky fur is cream-colored with rich brown highlights around the face, toes and ears. I love the proud way they walk with their heads and tails held high and I also appreciate their good grooming habits. Shedding is never a problem with a Siamese and they always keep their fur very clean.

Siamese are not only lovely to look at, but they've got surprisingly expressive voices. These cats will yowl and meow to let you know when they need food or attention. It is amazing how effectively they communicate with their people. It is very hard to understand why some people find the vocalizations of Siamese shrill and annoying. Even at top volume, my cat's voice is nothing less than music to my ears!

With a Siamese, you will never be lonely. More than any other pet, these cats crave your company. I enjoy the way my Siamese cuddles up on my lap and looks at me with adoration in her eyes. Agile and energetic, they'll play with you for hours and you can even teach them to walk on a leash. But the absolute worst thing you can do is leave your Siamese at home alone too often. They will surely become restless and anxious which can result in all sorts of destructive behavior.

Do you appreciate exotic beauty? Can you tolerate a noisy pet? Do you have lots of time to devote to your cat? If you answered yes to these three questions, a Siamese is definitely the pet for you. Without a doubt, these big-mouthed beauties are just as loyal and loving to their owners as any dog.

SP 34

# I Want More – Analyzing and Annotating Opportunities for Informational Texts

3. Project the text and ask them, at a glance, what’s different about this piece than the previous pieces they’ve analyzed. (This piece appears in basic paragraph form, not in columns, and is missing the main idea headings.) Explain that the job of the reader is to determine what each main idea might be, even without the headings.
4. Read the entire piece aloud to familiarize students with the content. Project the student copy of the piece. Explain that they will be annotating the text. Use the annotated teacher pages and guiding questions to inform your discussion, pp. 67-68. Demonstrate how to mark all of the designated parts of the writing. Have students annotate their papers, identifying and labeling all key elements by following your lead. (Help students notice that the first sentence of each body paragraph usually contains the main idea.)

**Pay particular attention to the relationship between the main idea/reason and supporting details in each paragraph of the body of the piece.** Ask the class if each detail supports the main idea/reason blurb in the margin - we call this the “mantra.”

Finally, answer the accompanying questions, SP 35 and SP 36. Repeat the process for the partner piece, pointing out the differences in genre and purpose. Use the annotated pages to guide your instruction.

**Student Page**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**SIAMESE CATS**

1. This is an example of what kind of writing? Circle one:  
Informational      Opinion
2. Number each paragraph.
3. Circle the **introduction**.
4. Box the **conclusion**.
5. Circle the **title** and identify the **topic**.
6. Underline the **lead** in red.
7. Underline the **topic sentence** in blue.
8. Underline each **MAIN IDEA** sentence. Write a blurb (a word or two) in the margin next to the paragraph explaining what the entire paragraph is about.
9. Read this detail: *Owners will need to spend a great deal of time at home so their furry friends don't get depressed.*  
Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # \_\_\_\_\_
10. What word referent for “cat” is used to describe the Siamese in the second paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Number the references to each main idea restated in the conclusion. Use paragraph numbers.
12. Fill in the summarizing framework/author’s prewriting plan:  
TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_  
MAIN IDEA #1: \_\_\_\_\_  
MAIN IDEA #2: \_\_\_\_\_  
MAIN IDEA #3: \_\_\_\_\_

SP 35

**Student Page**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**THE UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL SIAMESE**

1. This is an example of what kind of writing? Circle one:  
Informational      Opinion
2. Number each paragraph.
3. Circle the **introduction**.
4. Box the **conclusion**.
5. Circle the **title** and identify the **topic**.
6. Underline the **lead** in red.
7. Underline the **author’s position** in blue.
8. Underline each **MAIN REASON** sentence. Write a blurb (a word or two) in the margin next to the paragraph explaining what the entire paragraph is about.
9. Circle all of the **opinion language**.
10. Number the references to each main idea restated in the conclusion. Use paragraph numbers.
11. Fill in the summarizing framework/author’s prewriting plan:  
TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_  
MAIN REASON #1: \_\_\_\_\_  
MAIN REASON #2: \_\_\_\_\_  
MAIN REASON #3: \_\_\_\_\_

SP 36

**NOTE:** Because the organizational frameworks of opinion and informational writing are so similar, your students might need extra practice in distinguishing between the two and that is the purpose of this activity.

# Lesson 9: Introduction to Literary Analysis

## LESSON 9

### Objective

Students learn to identify the literary elements in a text and when responding orally or in writing to repeat key elements of a question in the beginning of their response. They will provide evidence from the text to support their answers.

**\*\*Important:** Before beginning, select a story they've read, annotated, and analyzed earlier that will serve as the source text for this lesson.

### Procedure

1. Explain to students that one way to demonstrate what they've comprehended from reading a text is to answer questions about it, both verbally and in writing. The important thing is to respond in complete sentences. Tell them that an easy technique for this task is to repeat the important parts of the question as they begin their response. Project RP 11 and discuss how the diamond and literary elements are connected.
2. Distribute copies of Student Reference sheet Literary Elements, RP 10.

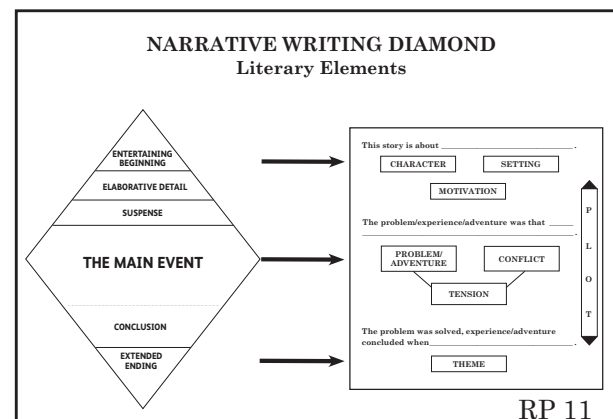
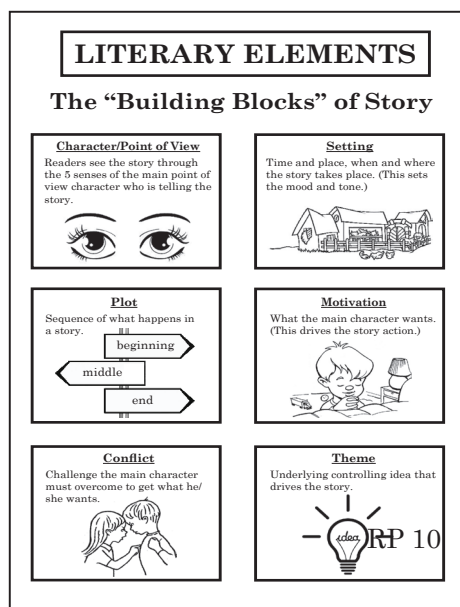
Chart the following literary elements on the board and discuss each one.

- Character
- Setting
- Problem/adventure (the main event of the story)
- Motivation (what the main character wants)
- Conflict (what stands in the main character's way)

### LESSON AT A GLANCE:

#### Whole Class and Independent Activity

- Select a story previously read and annotated.
- Review literary elements.
- Distribute Turning Questions into Responses.
- MODEL
- Students apply skill





# Lesson 9: Introduction to Literary Analysis

Explain that these are called **literary elements** and that these are the basic building blocks of stories. Ask them to silently reread the story you selected and to see if they can pick out the literary elements listed. Discuss their findings. Have them underline, highlight or color-code the evidence from the text that supports their answer. Use RP 12 for finding evidence.

**LITERARY ANALYSIS QUESTIONS**

Locate evidence from the text to identify character, setting, motivation, plot, conflict and theme. Color code the evidence when you find it. Remember that in some stories there will be more than one piece of textual evidence.

**Main point of view character:** Who was the main character(s)? (red)  
**Setting:** Where and when did the story take place? (blue)  
**Plot:** What was the problem or adventure? (yellow)  
**Motivation:** What did the main character(s) want? (green)  
**Conflict:** What kept the main character(s) from getting what he/she/they wanted? (purple)  
**Theme:** What was the big idea of the story? (orange)

Use this summary every time you read a story:

**Summarizing Framework:**  
This story is about \_\_\_\_\_.  
The problem/adventure/experience was \_\_\_\_\_.  
The problem was solved, experience or adventure concluded when \_\_\_\_\_.  
The theme of the story was \_\_\_\_\_.

**Sentence Starters for Providing Evidence:**

- The author shares \_\_\_\_\_.
- We see this as the main character \_\_\_\_\_.
- The text states, "\_\_\_\_\_".
- The reader realizes this when \_\_\_\_\_.
- The theme is clearly shown when \_\_\_\_\_.
- In paragraph \_\_\_\_\_, the author writes \_\_\_\_\_.
- "\_\_\_\_\_" writes the author to show \_\_\_\_\_.

RP 12

3. Distribute copies of Turning Questions into Responses, SP 51. Demonstrate how to use the key parts of the question to begin their response. Demonstrate verbally, then in writing. Move through each response to text question in the same way, having students frame their responses, first verbally, then in writing.

**Student Page**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**TURNING QUESTIONS INTO RESPONSES**

An easy way to answer response to text questions is to turn the important parts of the question into the beginning of your response. Look at the questions below, followed by the beginning of a response. Using this technique ensures that your answers will be written in complete sentences. Your teacher will select a story for you to reread. Then, answer each of these questions about the story, by turning the question into the beginning of your response. The first two have been started for you.

1. Who was the **main point of view character**?  
The main point of view character was \_\_\_\_\_.
2. What was the **setting**?  
The setting was \_\_\_\_\_.
3. What was the **problem or adventure**?  
\_\_\_\_\_.
4. What was the **main character's motivation**?  
(What did the main character want?)  
\_\_\_\_\_.
5. What caused the **conflict in the story**?  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**KICK IT UP A NOTCH!**

To improve the writing, try varying the way each of above sentences begin. On another sheet of paper, or at the keyboard, REVISE the complete sentences you created by using the sentence starters below.

In this story \_\_\_\_\_  
In the story titled (title here) \_\_\_\_\_  
The author introduces us to \_\_\_\_\_, our main character.  
We immediately meet (main character's name) \_\_\_\_\_, the hero of the story.  
The story took place \_\_\_\_\_.  
The story was set \_\_\_\_\_.  
The protagonist, (main character's name) wanted \_\_\_\_\_  
(Main character's name) was trying to \_\_\_\_\_.  
The author created tension when \_\_\_\_\_ (conflict) \_\_\_\_\_.  
The problem began when \_\_\_\_\_.

SP 51

## Lesson 9: Introduction to Literary Analysis

4. Finally, (or on a subsequent day) point out that while the answers all appeared in complete sentences, the sentence variety was repetitive and redundant. MODEL how using the sentence starters can provide a series of more interesting responses. Have the students continue on their own. (GUIDED PRACTICE) Circulate as they work, offering encouragement and guidance.
5. Ask students to go back to the text and locate the specific evidence from the text that they underlined or highlighted. Model how to add this text evidence to support their answers.

**OPTION:** Have students write these revised sentences, one following the other in paragraph form. This is a good way to structure a constructed response. You may provide them with the following beginning sentence:

*I recently read the story*\_\_\_\_\_. Follow this with the sentences they wrote.

**Here are some additional sentence starters that are useful for this purpose:**

The reader discovers that\_\_\_\_\_.

The author reveals\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_ contributed to the story conflict.

In this story\_\_\_\_\_.

At the beginning it's clear that\_\_\_\_\_.

The plot centers around\_\_\_\_\_.

It isn't long before we discover\_\_\_\_\_.

Clearly, the theme was \_\_\_\_\_.

The author definitely shows \_\_\_\_\_.

We recognize\_\_\_\_\_.

(Character's name) was motivated by\_\_\_\_\_.

I believe that\_\_\_\_\_because\_\_\_\_\_.

The reader realizes\_\_\_\_\_.

As the story unfolds we learn that\_\_\_\_\_.

In the story, evidence suggests that\_\_\_\_\_.

Through the text we learn that\_\_\_\_\_.

From my point of view, \_\_\_\_\_.

We see this when\_\_\_\_\_.

**NOTE:** Use this technique every time students read as a simple way to practice responding to text.

**Turn and Talk:** Discuss with a partner why complete sentences in a response are important. Why would you use a sentence starter? Together, choose one literary element and answer the question using a book you've read independently. Remember to add sentence variety.

# Lesson 4: Literary Analysis Task - Beginnings

## Objective:

Students read and analyze a source text and write an analysis of the author's craft when creating a compelling beginning.


## Procedure:

1. Have students read, analyze and annotate Taking the Plunge, pp. 128-130, according to SRP 6, pointing out the way the story follows the “shape” of the Narrative Writing Diamond.

Student Reference Page

### Annotation and Analysis Process for Narrative Stories

1. Label the **title** – what *genre* does the title hint at?
2. Circle the **entertaining beginning**, identify, label the technique.
3. Identify the **purpose of the story action** and main character's **motivation**.
4. Find **elaborative detail** describing the **setting** – mark and label this.
5. Underline and label suspense, **story tension, conflict**.
6. Bracket the **main event**.
7. Underline and label the **conclusion/solution** or conclusion of adventure.
8. Circle the **extended story ending** and label each technique.
9. Identify the **theme**. Have students highlight the parts of the story that indicate theme.
10. Fill in **summarizing framework**. Allow students to prompt you.  
This is a story about \_\_\_\_\_.  
The problem/experience was \_\_\_\_\_.  
The problem ended/concluded when \_\_\_\_\_.



The diagram is a diamond shape divided into four quadrants. The top quadrant is labeled 'ENTERTAINING BEGINNING' and contains the instruction 'Identify the technique used to begin the story.' The right quadrant is labeled 'THE MAIN EVENT' and contains the instruction 'Show action in clear action, focus by frame, events in order. Include description and main character's thoughts and feelings!' The bottom quadrant is labeled 'ACTION/ENDING SOLUTION' and contains the instruction 'Show action in clear action, focus by frame, events in order.' The left quadrant is labeled 'ELABORATIVE DETAIL' and contains the instruction 'Focus on descriptive details that help create the setting.' Below the diamond is the text '©2018 Empowering Writers, LLC'.

SRP 6

Discuss the literary elements in the text, drawing verbal responses from the class, and/or chart them. Have students refer to Literary Analysis Questions, SRP 13. OPTIONAL: Color code evidence from the text to identify *character, setting, motivation, and conflict*.

Student Reference Page

### Literary Analysis Questions

Locate evidence from text to identify **character, setting, motivation, and conflict**. (Optional: Color Code)

- Who is the main **point of view character**? \_\_\_\_\_ (red)
- What is the **setting**? \_\_\_\_\_ (green)
- What is the main character's **motivation**? What does she/he **want**? \_\_\_\_\_ (blue)
- What is the **conflict**? \_\_\_\_\_ (orange)
- What is the **plot**:  

This story is about _____ .
The problem/adventure/experience was _____ .
The problem was solved, experience or adventure concluded when _____ .
- What is the **theme**? \_\_\_\_\_ (purple)

SRP 13

## Lesson 4: Literary Analysis Task – Beginnings

2. Project the Literary Analysis Task: Taking the Plunge, pp. 134-135, read the assignment out loud, and discuss with the class. Ask the class to identify each question they must address. Based on the questions, guide them in filling out the summarizing framework as a prewriting tool.

**You've read the story Taking the Plunge. What techniques does the author use to create a compelling beginning? What do you learn about the main character's motivation and conflict? Provide evidence from the text.**

**Ex. TOPIC:** Taking the Plunge

**MAIN IDEA #1:** Beginning Techniques

**MAIN IDEA #2:** Main Character's Motivation and Conflict

3. Have the class discuss their ideas in response to the questions, finding evidence in the text.
4. MODEL the use of sentence starters to turn their verbal responses into writing.
5. When you feel confident that the students understand the process, have them proceed on their own. As they work, circulate, offering guidance and encouragement. At any point, you may stop and pick up again the next day. The idea is not to overwhelm them, but to build their confidence.
6. Remind students that one way to strengthen the writing is to provide evidence from the text to support each written response. Have them skim and scan to find each piece of evidence in their copy of the source text, highlighting or placing a (✓) above it. Circulate as they work, checking for accuracy.
7. Remind students to use the sentence starters, p. 135, because these phrases help the writer to smoothly and fluently express ideas and cite evidence.
8. Close the lesson by having students reiterate the steps necessary for a well-supported written response.



## Taking the Plunge

title  
Genre: Character/Problem/Solution

I stepped up on the diving board, dripping wet and shivering. My swim coach called, "Remember what you learned, Gavin! Give it a try!" Reluctantly I drew my arms over my head, hands overlapping, fingers slanting toward the water. I bent my knees and tucked my chin. My heart raced and I pressed my eyes shut. A wave of dizziness came over me.

action

dialogue

main character

motivation

entertaining  
beginning

"Come on already," shouted the others in the class. Their voices echoed through the huge open room. Others in the pool swam laps, the sun reflecting off the crystal clear water. Children splashed and played in the low end, their happy voices mocking me.

elaborative  
detail

I just couldn't do it. It was like I had turned into a statue. My face grew hot, "Chicken!" someone yelled. I could feel their eyes on me. I stepped off the diving board and plunged, feet-first, into the pool, swam as quickly as I could, climbed out, and headed to the locker room. I could hear the thwack of the diving board followed by a splash as each of the others did their dive. Ashamed, I got dressed without even drying off so I could get out of there before the others.

conflict

feelings

Out in the car Grandpa looked up from his book. "You're early," he said with a smile. "And you're soaking wet! Did you forget your towel?"

suspense

I sighed. Tears burned the backs of my eyes.

story questions

"Hey buddy," Grandpa said. "What's the matter?"

I took a deep breath and bit my bottom lip. "I can't do it," I said. "The dive. I just freeze up there."

"Everyone's scared at first," Grandpa said.

"No," I argued. "They all can do it except me." I swiped a tear that escaped from the corner of my eye. "I'm not going back there, no matter what."

dialogue

main event

Grandpa looked at me kindly. "Not so fast," he said gently. "Would you take a lesson with your old Grandpa?"

"You dive?" I asked.

"I used to compete, back in the day," he said with a wink.

dialogue

(continued)

“I don’t know...” I began.

“Saturday, you and me,” Grandpa said. “I’ll take you to my buddy’s pool. Nobody watching. I promise you’ll come out of there a diver!” He dropped me off in front of the house. “See you Saturday at 10:00 sharp!” he yelled. I managed a wave and slunk into the house. The last thing I wanted was to disappoint Grandpa.

*thought*

Friday night I thought about calling Grandpa and telling him I had a cold. But I couldn’t bring myself to do it. So, Saturday morning came, and at 9:55 I heard the beep of the horn outside. My stomach felt queasy and my knees like rubber as I climbed into the car. “Have a donut,” Grandpa said, throwing me a bag. I groaned and Grandpa eyed me with narrowed eyes. “You’ve got yourself in quite a state,” he said. “Gavin,” he said, “it’s all up here...” He tapped his finger on the side of his head. “Courage is a state of mind,” he said. “It’s all about how you think.”

*feelings*

I rolled my eyes and stared straight ahead. In no time we were at his friend’s pool. It wasn’t huge, but it must have been deep. There, at one end, was the highest diving board I’d ever seen, a huge ladder leading to the platform. Surprisingly, we didn’t head for the diving board. We went to the edge of the pool. Grandpa was wearing his funny golf hat and a pair of baggy plaid swim trunks. “Now,” he said, “Show me your form.”

*description*

*dialogue*

“I can dive in from the side,” I said. “That’s not the problem!”

“Shut it and show me your form,” Grandpa barked. I shrugged and stood, poised, hands overhead, chin tucked, knees bent. “Now, when I say ‘dive’ push off like a spring! Focus on aiming with your hands and let them lead the way. ‘Now DIVE!’”

I cut through the water like a knife, surfaced and shook the water from my hair. *action*

“Great job!” Grandpa yelled, applauding. “Now, ten more times – except for this. Use your imagination. Imagine you’re climbing the ladder, walking to the edge of the board. Pause, let your toes grasp the edge, stare straight down into the water. And DIVE!” *dialogue*

*main event continued*

I tried it. Pretending to climb the ladder I lifted my right, then left leg. I walked to the edge of the pool, imagining I was on the narrow diving board. Clinging to the edge of the imaginary board with my toes, I stared into the water. "You're sixteen feet up," Grandpa called. "Same water down below!" I played along. When he yelled "DIVE" I did it again. And again. Each time I allowed myself to get more into the fantasy. Pretty soon I started to believe it.

main event continued

action

dialogue

The next swim practice Grandpa came to watch. Before I headed into the locker room he tousled my hair and said, "Remember...courage is all about how you think!" He tapped the side of his head and nodded.

When it was my turn I went through all the familiar motions, remembering what it felt like from the edge of the pool. It all felt familiar. "Focus!" I said to myself. "It's just water. Same as always."

conclusion

I climbed the ladder, walked to the edge just like I had at the pool. "DIVE!" the coach yelled. And I did! All it took was an instant. SPLASH! A perfect dive!

Everyone cheered. I heard Grandpa yell, "That's my boy!"

As I climbed out my coach said, "Good form Gavin!" But I knew my success wasn't about form. I waved to Grandpa and climbed the ladder for another high dive.

defining action

Possible Theme: Practice makes perfect  
Perseverance pays off  
Courage to try something new

extended ending

**SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK:**

This story is about Gavin.

The problem/adventure/experience was that Gavin was afraid of the high dive and chickened out when it was his turn.

The problem was solved, adventure/experience concluded when he's Grandpa practiced diving with him and he overcame his fear.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

### LITERARY ANALYSIS TASK: TAKING THE PLUNGE

You've read the story Taking the Plunge. What techniques does the author use to create a compelling beginning? What do you learn about the main character's motivation and conflict? Provide evidence from the text.

**THINK ABOUT IT:** Is this a narrative or expository assignment?

Your teacher will walk you through the following STEPS:

1. Read, annotate, analyze, and summarize the story.
2. Fill in the following:
  - Who is the main **point of view character**? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What is the **setting**? \_\_\_\_\_
  - What is the main character's **motivation**? (What does she/he **want**?) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - What is the **conflict**? \_\_\_\_\_
  - Fill in the summarizing framework that outlines the **plot**.

*This story is about* \_\_\_\_\_ .

*The problem/adventure experience* \_\_\_\_\_ .

*The problem was solved, experience or adventure concluded when* \_\_\_\_\_ .

- What is the **theme**? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Consider the questions in the assignment, below:

What techniques does the author use to create a compelling beginning?

What do you learn about the main character's motivation and conflict?

Repeat the underlined part of the question in your response. This makes a strong first sentence!
  4. Your teacher will MODEL this process with you. You may use the sentence starters to help you cite examples in the source text.

In the story Taking the Plunge the author created a compelling beginning using two techniques. To begin the author used action. She writes: "I stepped up on the diving board, dripping wet and shivering." The author also uses dialogue when the coach calls, "Remember what you learned Gavin! Give it a try!" Then we see Gavin on the diving board getting ready to take the plunge. That's action again. Both techniques help get the story rolling and bring the story to life.

In the story we see Gavin's motivation and conflict. He really wanted to dive from the diving board, but he was afraid. The reader understands this when Gavin shivers, his heart races, and he feels dizzy as he prepares to dive. He must have felt embarrassed when, in paragraph 3, the other kids called him a "chicken." So, even though Gavin wanted to dive, the conflict was that he was too afraid.

**\* NOTE:** In this sample, we don't see an introduction or conclusion paragraph. As the year unfolds, students will be guided into a more complete response, including introduction and conclusion.



# Lesson 1: Story Critical Characters, Setting, Objects

## Objective:

Students recognize and identify story critical characters, settings, and objects and understand that authors freeze the story action in order to describe these elements.

## Procedure:

1. Photocopy and distribute student activity sheet Story Critical Characters, Setting, Objects, p. 145, and project. Provide students with red, blue, and green markers.
2. Explain that the class will be reading a number of story plans. Point out that, in each plan, there are certain characters, settings, and objects that are in some way extraordinary, interesting, or thought provoking. These are the things that an author would take the time to describe.
3. Read through the first example together. Ask them to point out the story critical *character*. (I) Underline this in red. Approach the setting (amusement park) and object (roller coaster) in similar fashion, as directed. Discuss each.

## CREATIVE CONNECTIONS:

- Have students use the following template to create interesting story plans (or summaries) of their own which feature story critical characters, settings, and objects:

This story is about _____ .		
<i>character and setting</i>		
The problem was that _____		
<i>main event</i>		
The problem was solved/adventure concluded when _____ .		
_____	_____	_____
<i>character</i>	<i>setting</i>	<i>object</i>

- For more activities of this kind, go to section 7 of this book and use narrative prompts in similar fashion.

**Turn and Talk:** Discuss with a partner why the author “freezes” the story action for purposes of elaboration.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## STORY CRITICAL CHARACTERS, SETTINGS, OBJECTS

In every story there are certain people, places and things that are especially important. These are called **story critical characters, settings and objects**. Authors highlight these story critical characters, settings and objects by stopping and taking time to **describe** them. Read each story plan below. Think about the characters, settings and objects that would be most interesting to the reader.

**Underline story critical characters in RED, settings in BLUE, and objects in GREEN.**

1. I head to an amusement park for the first time and ride the biggest roller coaster.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. On a beautiful spring day, I take a bike ride through the woods. I am surprised when I see a bear on the trail.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. This is a story about the time my family rode the rapids on a raft down the river.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. I've wanted a new puppy for the longest time and finally there is a pet adoption day in my town where I get to choose my new puppy.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. A cardinal is building a nest right on my windowsill.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Jesse unloads her beach bag and surf board from the car and heads towards the crashing waves.

\_\_\_\_\_

## Lesson 2: Word Referents

### Objective:

Students learn that there are numerous ways to refer to a story critical character, setting or object without directly naming them. Instead they can use pronouns (he, she, it, his, her, its) or a variety of combinations of adjectives and synonymous nouns, word referents..

### Procedure:

1. Project the student page.  
or....
2. Chart the example given.
3. Encourage students with some directed questioning to help generate a list of synonymous nouns or word referents:

**Ex. Shark** - In order to generate a number of nouns, say: “A shark is a kind of a...Sharks swim where \_\_\_\_\_, on the back of a shark is a ...” etc.

4. Explain how word referents such as those generated and those given as examples are used in place of a story critical character or object. Discuss that each word referent is made up of an adjective (describing words) and a noun. Both are essential when replacing a character, object or setting.
5. As a class, discuss and chart the other examples provided.

### Here are some examples of word referents for each character setting, character, or object:

- p. 232 Ocean: vast blue expanse, salt-water home, briny deep  
Boat: sailing vessel, marine vehicle, motor-driven cruiser, ocean-going vessel
- p. 233 Winter: cold season, snowy wonderland, barren expanse  
Sled: snow rocket, hill cruiser, wooden toboggan  
Snowman: winter person, frosty being, icy individual
- p. 234 Wildfire in the Woods: blazing forest, heated woodland, burning hillsides  
Firefighter: fearless hero, courageous fighter, blaze destroyer  
Fire Truck: red vehicle, blaze cruiser, hose transporter
- p. 235 Baseball Stadium: diamond-shaped field, ball park, field of dreams  
Pitcher: flame thrower, lefty specialist, ballgame closer  
Baseball Bat: wooden stick, homerun maker, batter’s best friend

**Turn and Talk:** Discuss with your partner why the use of word referents builds suspense in a story.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**WORD REFERENTS (1)**

Imagine that the author wants to build suspense before revealing a story critical element. One way to do this is by using word referents instead of immediately naming the setting, character or object. Using word referents makes the reader wonder exactly what kind of setting, character or object will be revealed. See how many different ways you can refer to each story critical setting or object.

**Ex. Story critical character (animal): Shark**

Adjective

large  
swimming  
gray  
sharp-toothed  
sea  
finned

Noun

fish  
menace  
beast  
giant  
predator  
hunter

Now, it's your turn:

Story critical setting: **Ocean**

Adjective

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Noun

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Story critical object: **Boat**

Adjective

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Noun

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## BEFORE AND AFTER REVISION ACTIVITY (1) - MAIN EVENT

Read this summary of a **main event**. It rushes through the most important part of the story way too quickly! It is BORING!

**I got lost in a corn maze.**

**Revise** this by writing a fully elaborated **main event** with a balance of action, description, dialogue, thoughts and feelings - and just for fun, a sound effect.

Be sure to:

- Show slow motion action. Ask: What did I do?  
S-T-R-E-T-C-H I-T O-U-T!
- Include an exclamation. Ask: What did I exclaim?
- Show how the main character is feeling.  
Ask: How did I feel?
- Include a description of the setting.  
Ask: What did I see, hear, feel, smell?



Name \_\_\_\_\_

**ANALYZE THIS ENDING! (1)**

Read this story ending.

- Underline the main character’s memories of the main event in BLUE.
- Underline the main character’s feelings about the main event in RED.
- Underline a decision that the main character made in BLACK.
- Underline the main character’s hope or wish in GREEN.

**Tim leaned back against the building and heaved a sigh of relief. It had been close, that’s for sure. When he shut his eyes he could still see the huge, slobbering dog snarling and snapping at him. He knew that if he ever wanted to explore the junkyard again, he’d check first to see if the dog was there. And he’d come armed with some dog biscuits or a very big bone!**

**THINK ABOUT IT:**

What do you think this story was about? Use this ending to summarize what probably took place in the story!

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# Lesson 1: Analyzing Prompts for Givens & Variables

## Objective:

Reading prompts in order to identify given and variable elements necessary for successful responses.

## Procedure:

1. Project the example prompt below for the class or choose one of the prompts pp. 362-369.

*Imagine that one winter day you took a ride in a horse drawn sleigh. Write a story about your sleigh ride experience, including something beautiful that you saw.*

2. Explain to the class that at some future point they will be presented with a prompt such as this as a means of giving them an opportunity to showcase the specific writing skills they have learned. Discuss the testing process in a matter-of-fact way, explain that everyone will respond to the same prompt, that there are several story elements provided, (givens) and several decisions that each individual author would need to make (variables). It is helpful to stress that this is an opportunity for them to have a positive writing experience, rather than a pressure situation in which they need to compete.
3. Read the prompt together. Ask - does it sound as though it might be a realistic personal experience, (realistic fiction) or an imaginative or fantasy story? In this case, the prompt is realistic, fiction or something that could actually happen.
4. Discuss the GIVEN elements - those included in the prompt itself that need to be included in the response. For example, GIVEN elements might include a particular setting, a particular character, or object, and/or an activity or experience of some kind. Pick these out and discuss the fact that everyone's response should include the GIVEN elements.

GIVENS: character - first person "I"

setting - winter

object - horse drawn sleigh

Discuss the VARIABLE elements. These include the obvious decisions the author needs to make. The variables are the elements that will set each author's story apart.

## Lesson 1: Analyzing Prompts for Givens & Variables

In this case:

VARIABLES: particular beautiful sight

5. Point out that their main event must include the variable.
6. Chart the following PREWRITING FRAMEWORK, which is essentially a summarizing framework:

This is a story about \_\_\_\_\_.  
*character - GIVEN*

The adventure, problem, or experience is that \_\_\_\_\_.  
*main event - GIVEN and VARIABLE*

The adventure concluded/problem solved when \_\_\_\_\_.  
*VARIABLE*

7. MODEL what this framework might look like, brainstorming possible variables.
8. Additionally, have the class focus on one of the prewriting plans and based on the plan, identify at least two elements (character, setting, or object) that demand a vivid elaborative segment.  
**Ex.** *the winter landscape/setting and the horses or sleigh.*  
This reminds them to focus on story critical elements to which they must apply elaboration during the drafting process.
9. Explain that this analysis is the process they would use to read a prompt and plan for their response. Also ask the class to name and list all of the writing skills they've been taught in your class. List these, and explain that you would be looking for these skills in their responses.
10. For this objective, there is no reason to actually have the students write to the prompt. You might even go through this procedure with numerous prompts, simply for the purpose of analyzing and planning. (prewriting)