



# Narrative Writing Guide

Grade 5

- 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**<sup>®</sup>  
Writers

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 5, 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 5. 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. 329-330.

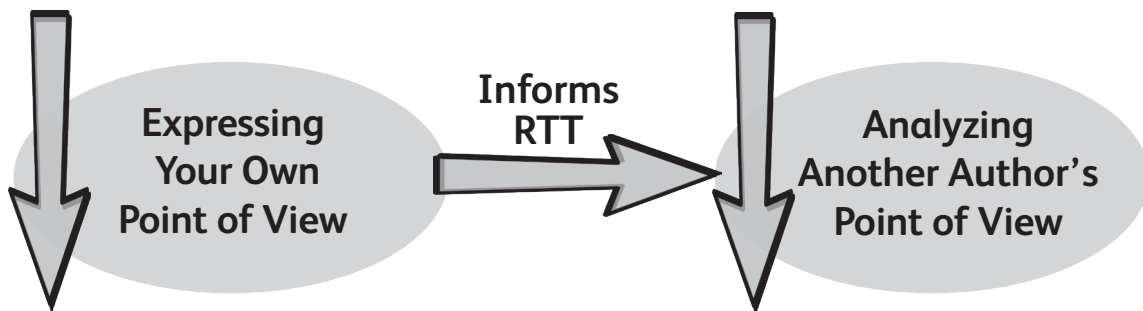
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## GENERATIVE VS. RESPONSIVE WRITING

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

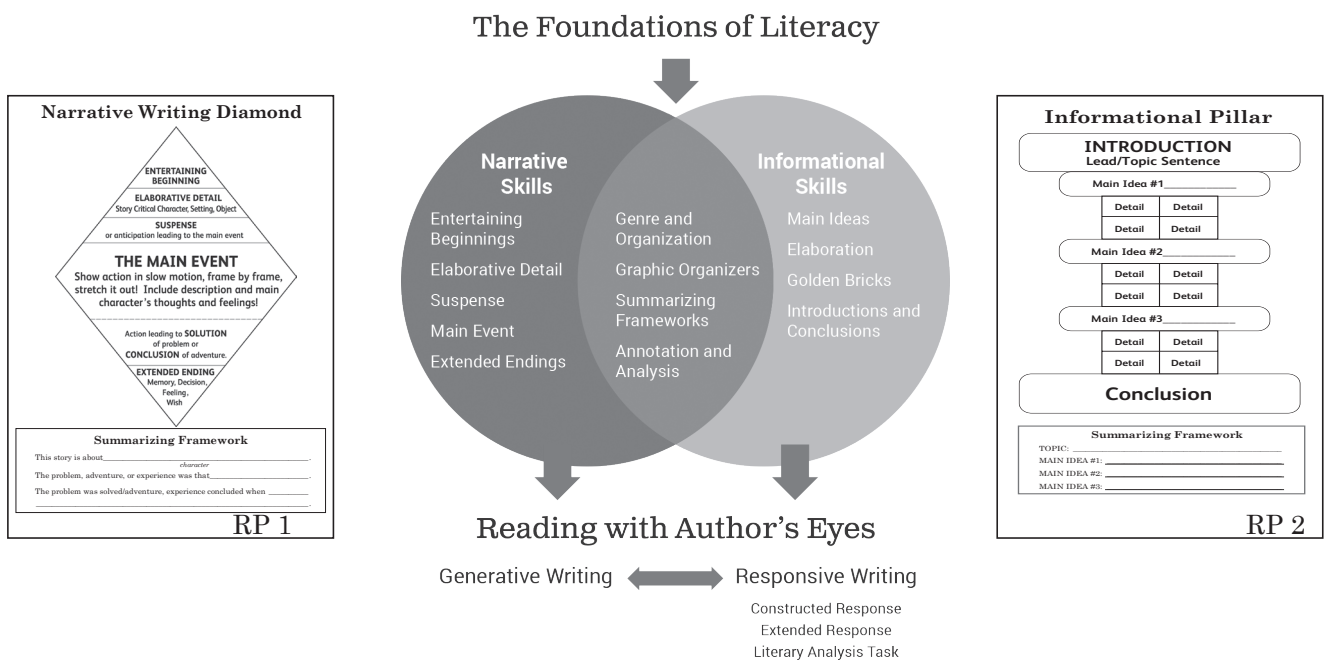
	INFORMATIONAL	OPINION	RESPONSE TO TEXT
<b>Organization</b>	Informational Pillar	Opinion Pillar	Informational Pillar
<b>Purpose</b>	To inform	To state a personal opinion	To demonstrate comprehension
<b>Introduction</b>	Lead/topic sentence	Lead/opinion statement	Summarize the source material Turn the Question 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.

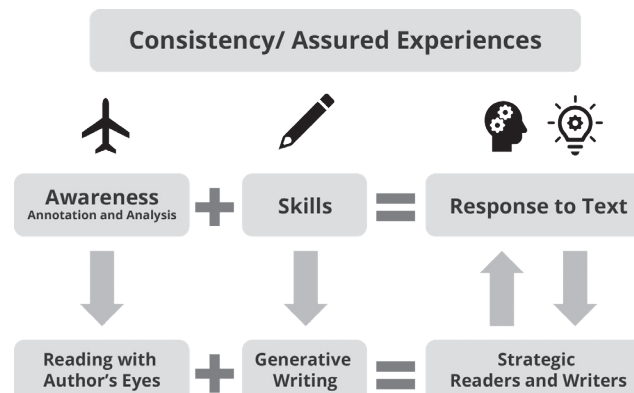
The Venn Diagram illustrates the Literacy Launch and the powerful writing-reading connection. The core of the diagram outlines the skills inherent in learning to recognize genre, organization, annotation and analysis, and the salient features of the various genres. By understanding how text is constructed, 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. Geologists classify rocks three ways. *Igneous rocks* come from deep within the earth and are formed from cooled magma. *Sedimentary rocks* are created when layers of sediment, plant and animal matter and rock fragments are pressed together. Finally, *metamorphic rocks* are produced when igneous or sedimentary rocks are exposed to intense heat or pressure.  
Narrative                      Informational                      Opinion
2. It was Monday morning and I was late for school. As I ran to catch the bus, I saw the glimmer of two sparkling green eyes peering out at me from within the overgrown bushes that circled our lawn. All day long, I kept remembering that set of playful, friendly eyes and I guessed that they belonged to a cat. I certainly hoped so; I'd been wanting a cat for a long time and I hoped that one had found me.  
Narrative                      Informational                      Opinion
3. Don't you agree that fall is the best of the four seasons? The season starts with the excitement of a new school year in September. In October, everybody loves dressing up like a witch or ghoul and celebrating a spooky Halloween. Veteran's or Remembrance Day falls in November and is usually celebrated with parades and moving tributes to war veterans. Of course, there are great holidays in the winter, spring and summer also, but the festivities of autumn will always be my favorites.  
Narrative                      Informational                      Opinion

**SP 1** 

3. Project and read each example together. 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. Point out the characteristics of each genre.  
5. Distribute Informational, Opinion, or Response to Text, SP 2, and proceed similarly.


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. Be ready to explain how you determined the genre of each.

1. Becoming a pianist involves many skills. You must learn to read music and develop an ear so that you can recognize the way the notes should sound. Just as an athlete needs muscle strength and dexterity, a pianist must strengthen her or his fingers and learn to move them independently across the keys. This is accomplished by practicing exercises and scales every day. It's also important to listen to music in a variety of styles – blues, jazz, classical, and rock so that you'll become skillful in addressing these styles in your own playing.

Informational                  Opinion                  Response to Text

2. In the text titled The Civil Rights Movement we learn about the struggles in the United States during the 1950's and 60's that attempted to end racial discrimination. The author describes the many forms of prejudice, inequality, and segregation that existed and, in some ways, continue to exist even today. In paragraph two we learn about the role of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his efforts to bring about change through peaceful protest, community organizing, and non-violent agitation. The author goes on to describe the violent responses to these efforts that included bombings, lynchings, and police brutality. We learn that the Civil Rights Act was signed by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964. It was designed to make discrimination based on race, color, religion, gender, or national origin illegal. The article ends by outlining the many strides we've made as a nation, as well as the many challenges we continue to face in defending the civil rights of all our citizens.

Informational                  Opinion                  Response to Text

3. In our town there is talk of changing the school schedule from a ten to twelve month calendar. Proponents believe that year-round school would provide more consistency and less "learning drop off" during the summer break. But, I disagree. Based on my experience, I know that by the time May and June roll around what I need most is some down time to relax, enjoy the out-of-doors, and to have some fun. There are many ways to learn, and not all of them are in the classroom! I think that kids need an extended break from all of the structured pressure we experience all year. I know year round schooling offers a greater number of shorter breaks, but from my perspective, there's nothing like two months of extended freedom to get my creative juices flowing!

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 Giant's Causeway and that they'll be learning some strategies for how to read more effectively.
2. Distribute and project SP 8-9. To build context and background begin by showing the students numerous online images of a variety of the Giant's Causeway (or, for the following lesson, Ice Cubes, SP 10-11) 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: \_\_\_\_\_


### Giant's Causeway

Close your eyes and imagine a mounded pathway of black hexagonal columns forming steps leading from misty stone cliffs that disappear into the sea. If you think you're envisioning the set of a movie about a prohibitive land or a strange planet in another solar system you'd be wrong. This place actually exists on the coast of Northern Ireland and it's called **The Giant's Causeway**. Let's explore this legendary landform, investigate how it was formed, and discover the legend that draws almost a million tourists every year.

#### Peculiar Landscape

The terrain or landscape of Giant's Causeway is unique - there are few places in the world that resemble it. This


Causeway curves around the shoreline and rises up into a small mountain-like mound overlooking the North Channel of the Atlantic Ocean between Northern Ireland and Scotland.



*Layers of basalt lava pillars the way it cooled, and as it hardened it contracted and*

area along the Antrim Plateau is made up of thousands of stone pillars. The pillars are shaped like polygons, and there are seven or eight sides to each pillar. These

people know little about the science of **geology** that would explain how the Causeway was formed. So, someone with a great imagination made up a story about a giant warrior named **Finn MacCumhail** (pronounced Finn MacCool) whose worst enemy was a Giant named The Red Man who lived across the sea in Scotland. Finn built the Causeway clear across the sea by hand so that he and the Red Man could meet for



*him and realized he might not be able to overpower him. So Finn had his wife wrap him up in a blanket and he jumped into a big cradle, pretending to be Finn's baby. When The Red Man saw how big Finn's "baby" was, he could only imagine the size of Finn himself. With that, The Red Man took off across the Causeway, back to Scotland, ripping up most of the rocky path behind him as he went. This is why, according to legend, the Causeway rocks seem to vanish into the sea.*

If you have an interest in geology or Irish legends, or if you like traveling to and photographing unusual places, you might consider a trip to Northern Ireland to visit the Giant's Causeway. The panoramic views, fascinating volcanic rock formations, and the entertaining legend that gave this scenic locale its name make it an amazing destination.

The people of Northern Ireland invented a story or **legend** to explain how this interesting terrain came to be. Early

giant. As the fierce, gigantic Red Man crossed the Causeway, Finn MacCool caught sight of

**Student Page**

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

### Ice Cubes - Before the Age of Freezers

These days we think nothing of reaching into the freezer, popping a handful of ice cubes into our glass and pouring ourselves a refreshing frosty beverage. Some of us even enjoy the convenience of an ice-maker built right into the refrigerator door - just press the lever and a seemingly endless supply of perfectly formed ice cubes cascade into the glass. But it wasn't always that way. You might be surprised to learn that ice was actually used long before the days when electricity and refrigeration was available. In fact, people have been using ice to keep their foods fresh and their drinks cold for thousands of years. Let's explore how ice was used in

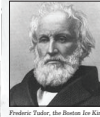
ancient times, and find out when and how it became commonplace. It apparently took an advantage of cold

**Student Page**

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

### The Business of Selling Ice

In the early 1800's a Massachusetts man named Frederic Tudor began the business of selling ice. He saw the thick ice that formed on the ponds and rivers in New England and decided to find a way to not only sell it, but to transport it to far-away places where ice was scarce. At that time large chunks of ice were cut with special saws and hauled out of the frigid waters. These would be sold to local businesses and to wealthy people who had **ice houses**. Ice houses were heavily insulated with hay and wood chips and filled with big blocks of ice used to keep food fresh and for use in cold drinks. Frederic Tudor later nicknamed "The Boston Ice King" figured out a way to **insulate** ships with sawdust, straw shavings, and straw to protect ice from extreme heat. He'd stack the large ice blocks like a brick wall and surrounded them with insulation. In this way he was able to ship ice to many southern U.S. cities and as far away as Cuba, Martinique, South America, India, and England. Later, special horse-drawn plows were invented to make the process called **ice harvesting** easier. In 1854 another Massachusetts man named Jacob Perkins invented a way to produce artificial ice. Other innovations followed that made ice available year-round.



*Frederic Tudor, the Boston Ice King*

**MASSACHUSETTS LOCATIONS WHERE TUDOR ICE WAS HARVESTED**

- Holden Pond, Concord
- Spix Pond, Arlington
- Horn Pond, Woburn
- Sand Pond, Ayr
- Fresh Pond, Cambridge
- Spring Lake, Northfield
- Northam Lake, Northam
- Haggatt's Pond, Andover
- Daniel's Pond, Stoneham

So, the next time you head to the freezer for a glassful of clinking ice cubes think about all of the work your ancestors went through to cool their drinks and keep their food fresh. Since the olden days of gathering snow and ice, to the beginnings of the ice harvesting business, to the convenience of ice cubes in our own kitchens, none of us want to live without the many benefits ice offers.

SP 8

SP 9

**Student Page**

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

### Ice Cubes - Before the Age of Freezers

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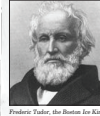
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SP 10

SP 11

# Strategic Reading - Informed Writing

3. Explain that it's important to look for certain cues that can provide valuable information to aid the reader's understanding. Project Common Informational Text Features, RP 5, and discuss. Direct their attention to the text and ask them to annotate it together, labeling the important parts. Use the Strategic Reading Guidelines, pp. 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.
7. Ask them to help you fill in the summarizing framework, based solely on the title and headings.

## Chart:

**TOPIC:** Giant's Causeway  
**MAIN IDEA #1:** Unusual Landform  
**MAIN IDEA #2:** Geology of the Region  
**MAIN IDEA #3:** Legend of Finn MacCool

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. (You'll follow the same process for the text titled Ice Cubes - Before the Age of Freezers.)

# Strategic Reading - Informed Writing

(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 **photographs, illustration, and captions**. Ask students why these are important.
10. Model how to use the information on the summarizing framework to write an extended summary using the 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

This text **provides information about** The Giant's Causeway. We'll **discover** the unusual land forms, **learn about** the geology of the region, and **become familiar** with the legend of Finn MacCool.

Or...

This informative piece **explores** ice cubes before the age of freezers. The author **delves into** the use of ice in the olden days, and **uncovers** how harvesting ice became a business.

# 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 Snow Days, each with a different purpose.
2. Review The Informational Pillar, as well as The Opinion Pillar. Project and read Safety First: The Necessity of Snow Days, SP 29-30, and Save Me from Snow Days!, SP 32-33. 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: \_\_\_\_\_

**SAFETY FIRST: THE NECESSITY OF SNOW DAYS**

While most students revel in a snow day, few know how difficult the decision to close schools because of bad weather can be. Schools face criticism if they close too readily due to bad weather or if they choose to remain open during a storm. When making this tricky decision, most schools consider the amount of snow, the timing of the storm, and any accompanying weather conditions.

Obviously, the amount of snowfall is an important consideration. After all, the heavier the snowfall, the longer it takes to clear the roads. As a general rule, most schools consider closing when there is more than three inches of snow on the ground. They are more likely to close school when the snow is heavy and wet because of the increased chance of power outages. Just imagine how parents would worry if their children were stranded at school without heat or lights!

The timing of the storm always needs to be taken into account. School officials must consider when the snow fell or when it is predicted to begin and end. If snow falls early in the morning, it is likely that schools will be closed because the roads will not be cleared in time for buses. If a substantial snowstorm is predicted to begin in the afternoon, a snow day may be called because travel conditions are likely to be treacherous by the close of school. However, the School Superintendents Association advises that snow days never be called just on the basis of a single weather forecast. Instead, it suggests that superintendents "rely on multiple sources of information including subscription weather alert systems, local radio and television meteorologists and their own judgment."

**SP 29**

**Student Page**

Finally, school closings are more likely when icy conditions, extreme cold or strong winds accompany the snowstorm. Strong winds may cause dangerous snow drifts as well as fallen tree branches in the roadways. Icy conditions cause cars to skid and people to sustain falls. On very cold mornings, school buses need time to warm up, so they are likely to run behind schedule. Children could get frost-bite while waiting for the school bus and, sadly some children just don't have the winter clothing they need to stay warm when the temperature drops dramatically.

While parents sometimes have to miss work when schools call a snow day, it is wise to stay home when winter weather becomes treacherous and unpredictable. A snow day is not just a happy surprise for students, but a genuine necessity, especially when a significant amount of snow falls, when the storm hits at an inconvenient time and when it is accompanied by other dangerous conditions.

**SP 30**

**Student Page**

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

**SAVE ME FROM SNOW DAYS!**

Imagine a gray winter day. Your fingers and toes tingle with the cold, your knees and elbows are sore and possibly bleeding (you can't tell for sure since you are wearing two sweaters and ski pants) because you slipped on ice-covered pavement. The hours roll by slowly since you are bored beyond belief. You can't enjoy your favorite winter sports, you could have a power outage at any minute and snow days can cut into your summer vacation.

On snow days travel is difficult making it challenging to get to your favorite winter sport. After all, how many of us live within walking distance of a skating pond, sledding hill or ski mountain? You can be sure nobody is going to give you a ride to any of these places because driving in the slushy mess of the road is dangerous. In my opinion, this is extremely frustrating because the freshly fallen snow usually makes conditions for skiing, snowboarding and sledding absolutely perfect.

Another problem with snow days is that you have to worry about power outages. This is a serious concern because you are stuck at home with nothing to do except watch dull daytime television and play computer games until your wrist aches. You won't even be able to rely on these simple diversions if the raging storm knocks out the electricity at your house. Picture yourself stuck in a cold, dark house with absolutely nothing to do. What could be worse?

**SP 32**

**Student Page**

In the darkest hours of this never-ending day, you remember that sometimes snow days have to be deducted from your summer vacation. So, you've traded in a sunny summer day that you could have spent fishing, swimming, bike riding and canoeing for this boring snow day. Instead of cutting days off summer vacation, some schools cancel their February vacations, shorten spring break or hold classes on Saturdays to make up for snow days. From my point of view, this makes snow days something to avoid at all cost.

Who needs snow days? I believe they should be outlawed. After all, studded snow tires and four-wheel drive vehicles are available and they make travel possible through the worst of winter weather. On these boring days, we can't enjoy winter sports and we run the risk of a power outage. The final insult is that these long, dreary days just may cost us some of the fair-weather fun we look forward to all year long.

**SP 33**

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

3. Annotate and analyze the text as students annotate their papers, identifying and labeling all key elements by following your lead.

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.

**Ex.** If the main idea sentence is: *Obviously, the amount of snowfall is an important consideration...* ask the students for a “blurb” that summarizes what the entire paragraph is about (*amount of snowfall*) and have them mark that in the margin. Then, as you read each subsequent detail **Ex.** *After all, the heavier the snowfall, the longer it takes to clear the roads...* ask the class if that detail supports the main idea. (yes) It’s important to emphasize this relationship between main ideas and details so that they’ll transfer this critical questioning to their own writing.

Finally, answer the accompanying questions, SP 31 and SP 34. Repeat the process for the partner piece, pointing out the differences in genre and purpose.

**Student Page**

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

**SAFETY FIRST: THE NECESSITY OF SNOW DAYS**

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** or **MAIN REASON** and label accordingly. 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: *Depending on the timing of the storm, schools may opt for a delayed opening or early dismissal rather than a full snow day.*  
Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # \_\_\_\_\_
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. If the piece is informational, circle “Main Idea”, if it’s an opinion piece, circle “Main Reason”:  
**TOPIC:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Main Idea/Main Reason #1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Main Idea/Main Reason #2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Main Idea/Main Reason #3 \_\_\_\_\_

SP 31

**Student Page**

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

**SAVE ME FROM SNOW DAYS!**

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** or **MAIN REASON** and label accordingly. 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: *If you have brothers and sisters, they’re likely to be just as bored as you are during a power outage and you’ll probably annoy each another.*  
Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # \_\_\_\_\_
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. If the piece is informational, circle “Main Idea”, if it’s an opinion piece, circle “Main Reason”:  
**TOPIC:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Main Idea/Main Reason #1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Main Idea/Main Reason #2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Main Idea/Main Reason #3 \_\_\_\_\_

SP 34

**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 11

### Objective

Students begin to consider questions that will lead them to think inferentially and evaluatively about the stories they read, citing examples from the text and drawing parallels from their own personal experience. They will respond verbally and in writing.

**\*\*Important:** Before beginning, select a story they've read, annotated, and analyzed earlier that will serve as the source text for this lesson. Be sure students have their copies handy for reference.

### Procedure

1. Discuss with students the fact that in the stories they read authors don't usually communicate everything they want to say in a straightforward way. Authors leave some of the work up to the reader! They *infer* or *imply* aspects of the story by showing rather than telling. It's a little bit like giving the reader hints that must be figured out and connected.
2. Begin a conversation about the way that people (and characters) express the way they are feeling. Ask them the following: Can you tell the way a person may be feeling or reacting if they didn't say a word? How might you know? Discuss, demonstrate, and have children pantomime a variety of feelings using both facial expressions and body language.

**\*NOTE:** See Teacher Background for more about "What Feelings Look Like", p. 91.

3. Tell students that strong readers notice the body language and facial expressions of the characters they read about and these clues provide valuable information about these characters. Authors include these kinds of powerful details to bring the story to life!
4. Distribute Thinking About Literature, RP 13. **Read through the questions together. Identify which questions are inferential and which are evaluative.** This will set a purpose for close, inferential reading. It will also inspire students to draw comparisons to their own personal experiences. (evaluative reasoning)



Student Page

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**DIGGING DEEPER – BE A TEXT DETECTIVE!**

To get the most out of a story, it's important to not just think about the action, but to consider why things happened in the story. What might the character's feelings have to do with it? What caused the character to feel as she or he felt? How did you feel about the events in the story? What about the things an author implies but doesn't actually explain? This involves looking for evidence in the text. Look at the questions below. Your teacher will select a story for you to read. Then, on another sheet of paper or at the keyboard, answer each of the questions below about the story using the sentence starters provided. You may also turn each question into a response by repeating the key parts.

1. In the story, how did (character) feel about his/her situation?
2. How do you know how (character) felt?
3. Did you ever have a similar experience? When?
4. How did you feel during your experience?
5. What did (character) learn from his/her experience?
6. What did you learn from your experience?
7. Why did you empathize with (character)?

**Sentence Starters**

1. It was clear \_\_\_\_\_ was feeling \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
2. This was evidenced by \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I understand the way \_\_\_\_\_ felt because \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I'll never forget the time \_\_\_\_\_ when \_\_\_\_\_.
5. A similar experience I had was \_\_\_\_\_.
6. I could really empathize with her/him because \_\_\_\_\_.
7. It's easy to understand why \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Although I never had an experience like this, I can imagine \_\_\_\_\_.
9. This scene kept my interest because \_\_\_\_\_.

**SP 53**



**THINKING ABOUT LITERATURE**

**Inferential Thinking**

This is the kind of reasoning you must use when the author hints at or *infers* something in a story, but doesn't state it outright.

*Ex. When Marc told his joke Claire rolled her eyes and shook her head.*

The reader *infers* that the joke wasn't very funny.

**Evaluative Thinking**

When we think in this way we compare what happened in the story to something in our own lives. This helps us empathize with and understand the story situation better.

*Ex. It was just like the time when I got separated from my family at the amusement park. I know what it's like to feel scared.*

**RP 13**



## Introduction to Inferential and Evaluative Thinking

5. Have students silently reread the selected story. Discuss each question verbally, asking students to cite evidence from the text by highlighting or underlining the sentences (or, in the evaluative questions from their own lives) to back their responses. Finally, MODEL how to apply the sentence starters in order to write their responses. When you're confident students know how to proceed, let them continue with GUIDED PRACTICE.
6. On another day, have students combine their sentences in paragraph form. Close the lesson by having students discuss the ways that authors hint at the way characters feel without simply stating it.

NOTE: This is an **ANYTIME and ALWAYS** lesson - use this technique often when students read to ensure that they know how to think inferentially and evaluatively and know how to respond to these types of questions in writing. This must be done often in order for students to feel comfortable with it.

# 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. Together as a class, read, analyze and annotate Footprints, pp. 127-128, according to SRP 6, pointing out the way the story follows the organizational structure 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 MAIN EVENT**  
Show action in this section. Name by whom, what it was, where, description and why. Character's thoughts and feelings.

Character's Motivation  
Character's Setting  
Character's Conflict  
Character's Conclusion/Solution  
Character's Extended Story Ending

SRP 6

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## LESSON AT A GLANCE:

### Whole Class Activity

- Read and annotate story for the literary elements.
- Project and discuss the task - what needs to be included in the response.
- Reread the story and mark the parts that identify the techniques the author used to create an entertaining beginning and where the main character's motivation and conflict show up. (Highlight or underline)
- MODEL how to respond to the first main idea in the task - answer the questions "What does it look like? Why is it important?"
- Guide students through the writing process.
- MODEL and practice the second main idea.

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. Color code the evidence from the text to identify *character, setting, motivation, and conflict*. NOTE: You may set this annotation and analysis aside to use again for the Narrative Extension Task, p. 136.

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**? (Who or what stands in the way of the main character's motivation?) \_\_\_\_\_ (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

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## Lesson 4: Literary Analysis Task – Beginnings

- Project the Literary Analysis Task: Beginnings, p. 132, read the assignment out loud, and discuss with the class. Remind students that in the task there are elements to look for – the givens are what everyone needs to address and the variables are the decisions the writer needs to make.

**You've read the story Footprints. Write an essay identifying the techniques the author uses to create an entertaining beginning and explain why this is important for the reader. Explain what you learn about the main character's motivation and conflict. Provide evidence from the text to support your ideas.**

- Ask the class to identify what they need to address. Highlight or color code the key words in the task. Based on the task, guide students in filling out the summarizing framework as a pre-writing tool. (Refer to the Expository Pillar, p. 27, as the organizational structure.)

**Givens** – Must identify the techniques used to create an entertaining beginning AND what the reader learns about the main character's motivation and conflict.

**Variables:** The specific evidence from the text each student chooses as proof of the beginning techniques and specific evidence that points to motivation and conflict.

**Ex. TOPIC:** Footprints

**MAIN IDEA #1:** beginning techniques

**MAIN IDEA #2:** main character's motivation and conflict

- Have the class discuss their ideas in response to the first main idea – What beginning techniques does the author use to hook the reader in and create an entertaining beginning? Underline or highlight the evidence in the text as students respond.

*Example responses: The author uses the thoughts and feelings of the main character, Troy – Evan's wild imagination, he told Tall Tales, he was never boring that's why Troy liked Evan.*

- Now ask students Why is it important to capture the reader's attention this way? (You are asking students to explain their answer using the detail-generating question - Why is it important?)

*Example responses: The beginning sets up the rest of the story, we are introduced to Troy and Evan and we start to like them right away, the reader is curious about what will happen in the story.*

- MODEL the use of sentence starters, p. 133, to turn their verbal responses into writing.

*Ex. In the story, Footprints the author created an entertaining beginning by focusing on the thoughts and feelings of the main character, Troy. Troy describes his unique friend, Evan, and shares that he has a wild imagination. He tells tall tales of suspense and is*

Entertaining  
Beginning:  
Thoughts

Title  
Genre: Narrative Personal Experience

Footprints

My friend Evan was known for his wild imagination. Tall tales of suspense and sorcery seemed to be swirling around in his head 24/7. As a result, he was never boring and that was one of the things I liked best about him. I only wished others could see the greatness of Evan's wild imagination, but few did and I was his only friend.

He and I were building a fort in the woods behind my house on a Saturday morning in January. We cleared vegetation from the ground and pounded old boards onto thick tree trunks to make walls. As we worked, Evan chattered away about the warm summer nights we'd spend sleeping in the fort. Describing the haunting calls of owls and the bright, flickering lights of fireflies, he made the experience sound somehow spooky and serene at the same time.

purpose of  
the story  
action,  
motivation

We worked steadily and made good progress. Back and forth, we ran along the path that led from the woods to my garage, retrieving the tools we needed and nails of all sizes. By the end of the day, dozens of pairs of our footprints were scattered along the length of the snow-dusted path.

Elaborative detail  
re: setting

Elaborative detail  
re: setting

We were just about to get started making a sturdy roof for our fort when my mom called us in. It was that time of the year when daylight disappeared by late afternoon and we hadn't even noticed that it was almost dark. Bummer. There was so much more we wanted to accomplish.

I had to go to a family gathering the next day, but Evan said he wanted to continue working on the fort, even if he had to do so by himself. My parents had no problem with him coming over and working in the woods while we were gone, so our plan was all set: Evan would work on the roof the next day.

It was Monday morning before I saw Evan again. The instant I sat down beside him on the school bus, he burst out with a fantastic story.

main event

"So I walking around the woods yesterday, gathering wood for our roof and I saw what had to be the biggest footprint in the world — and I am not kidding. It was as

(continued)

long as a refrigerator is tall, and almost as wide with five toes and even the littlest one was the size of a hotdog. It had to be a Big Foot!”

He was breathless with excitement, but unlucky enough to be sitting right in front of Martin Macabe, a 7th grader with a mean-spirited sense of humor.

“It had to be a Big Foot,” Martin repeated, mimicking Evan’s enthusiastic tone. “A Big Foot with toes the size of this school bus. Run for your life!” His friend guffawed.

Evan looked confused. He turned and confronted them. “That’s not what I said.”

Martin and his friend just laughed again. “There’s no such thing as a Big Foot, kid.”

“There could be,” Evan said, turning red with anger. “Tell them, Troy.”

conflict:  
story tension

Oh, no. The last thing in the world I wanted to do was defend what had to be a figment of Evan’s hyperactive imagination to these guys. I wasn’t afraid of Martin, but I’d always tried to steer clear of him just to be on the safe side. I looked at Evan’s outraged face and knew that was no longer an option.

conflict:  
story tension

“Knock it off,” I said. “Anything’s possible.” I know it’s unlikely, but there could be

highlight - theme

a Big Foot lurking in the woods around here.” The two older boys laughed and, for the rest of the week, taunted both Evan and me every chance they got. By Friday

afternoon, I was feeling annoyed with Evan for making us the target of teasing.

story tension

I changed my mind the next morning when I walked through a sprinkling of newly fallen snow to our fort in the woods and saw a footprint — not just any footprint but the biggest footprint I’d ever seen. It was, just as Evan had described it, “as long as a refrigerator is tall, and almost as wide with five toes and even the littlest one was the size of a hotdog.” By the time my friend arrived, hammer in hand, the snow had melted away and the footprint disappeared forever.

conclusion

extended ending technique: memory and decision

I never learned the truth about that gargantuan footprint, but my friend is still convinced that a Big Foot lives in the woods behind my house. When I think back on the experience I feel really proud of myself for being loyal to Evan. I’m going to take a lesson from him and always keep my mind open to the many wonderful mysteries of the world. From Evan, I learned just about anything really is possible!

highlight - theme

Theme: Loyalty

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### LITERARY ANALYSIS TASK: BEGINNINGS

You've read the story Footprints. Write an essay identifying the techniques the author uses to create an entertaining beginning and explain why this is important for the reader. Explain what you learn about the main character's motivation and conflict. Provide evidence from the text to support your ideas.

**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**? (Who or what stands in the way of the main character's motivation?) \_\_\_\_\_
  - 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 an entertaining beginning?
    - Why is this important to the reader?
    - What do you learn about the main character's motivation for the story?
    - What do you learn about the conflict the main character faces?
  4. Your teacher will MODEL this process with you. You may use the sentence starters to help you cite examples in the source text.

# Lesson 5: Creating Elaborative Segments

## Objective:

Students apply detail generating questions to create segments of elaborative detail describing a story critical character, setting, or object. They learn to apply and internalize specific detail generating questions, and use a variety of specific sensory details within the context of strong sentence variety.

**NOTE:** There are numerous lessons of this type in this section of the book. A general procedure will be outlined here for use with all of the lessons.

**Specific detail generating questions which vary activity to activity, as well as sentence starters and creative connections, will FOLLOW each student page. You will need chart paper, markers and copies of the student activity sheets for each lesson.**

## Procedure:

1. Distribute copies of Menu of Detail Generating Questions, SRP 14. In each activity, have the class identify the story critical character, setting, or object.

*Student Reference Page*

Below, you will find a generic list of detail generating questions that you may apply when creating elaborative segments of story critical characters, settings, objects:

**MENU OF DETAIL GENERATING QUESTIONS**

**QUESTIONS ABOUT A STORY CRITICAL CHARACTER -**

- How tall/big was this character? • What color hair/eyes? • How old was the character? • What kind of eyes/nose/mouth/ears did he/she have? • What kind/color of hair did he/she have? (long, short, curly, straight, etc.) • What kind of marks, scars, or distinguishing characteristics did he/she have? • What was he/she wearing? • What kind of expression was on his/her face? • How did this character make you feel? • Who or what did this character remind you of?

**QUESTIONS ABOUT A STORY CRITICAL SETTING -**

- What was the temperature/weather like? • What kinds of trees/plants grew there? • How did the air feel? • What kinds of animals were there? • What kinds of buildings were there? • What kind of objects were around? • What kinds of sounds did you hear? • How did you feel about being there? • What did you smell?

**QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT A STORY CRITICAL OBJECT -**

- What color was it? • What did it feel like? • What was its shape? • What size was it? • How old was it? • What was it made of? • What did it smell like? • What kind of sound did it make? • How heavy was it? • Who did it belong to? • Where did it come from? • What did it remind you of?

Notice that none of these are yes/no questions! Detail generating questions must be specific and must ask for particulars – not true/false/positive/negative! These are just some suggestions. Not all of them are applicable all the time, nor are these the only questions you can ask - you can think of other effective questions to add to this list.

SRP 14

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- OPTION FOR DIFFERENTIATION:** Students create an artistic rendering of the character, setting, or object they will be writing about. In this way, students will have many concrete details in front of them to reference in their writing. See the list of CREATIVE CONNECTIONS following each activity for a variety of content area connections and related literature which can be used BEFORE the activity to build background. Also, most examples are in first person point of view (I). This is because young writers seem to write most often in first person. However, feel free to restate or model any example in third person (He/She/Katie, etc.). Changing the point of view can be a valuable exercise for all students and prepare them for possible narrative extension tasks. Authors have been known to rewrite entire novels in different points of view.
- MODELING:** Gather the class, generate and chart a list of detail generating questions about the character, setting, or object. Have students refer to Menu of Detail Generating Questions, SRP 14. This should be done during the first two experiences with this technique (elaborative detail). Later, students will have internalized the questioning, and this step can be simply presented as a reminder of what they are to do independently. From time to time, even after students seem to have grasped the technique, teachers will want to revisit this charting activity with the entire class for the purpose of review and reinforcement of the questioning technique.
- As students call out their answers to each question, chart the wide variety of student responses. Ask more specific questions when necessary in order to pinpoint specific vivid information. Provide students with powerful descriptive words that are implied in their responses. (See the sample chart, next page - student responses appear in italics, teacher translation in bold print.)

### STORY CRITICAL CHARACTER: A BASKETBALL PLAYER

**HOW BIG/SMALL? (COMPARE).** *As tall and thin as a Palm Tree. As tall and thin as the trunk of a tropical Palm Tree. Taller than my dad. Towering over my 6-foot tall Dad. Like a piece of string. As long and thin as a stretch of string.*

**WHAT WAS HE/SHE WEARING?** *Baggy red shorts made of a stretchy fabric. Loose-fitting red shorts made of a stretch fabric that hung down below his knees. A sweaty white top. A sleeveless white cotton shirt with sweat stains around the neck or a white tank top drenched in sweat.*

**WHAT KIND/COLOR HAIR?** *Black hair (Teacher asks, what about the length and condition of his hair?) Short black hair wet with sweat. Black curly hair. His head was topped with a mass of black curly hair.*



Name \_\_\_\_\_

### UNDERWATER SCENE

- REMEMBER:** • When you elaborate, you STOP THE ACTION and observe.
- Use the five senses to describe!
  - Your elaborative segment should make the reader feel as though he or she is *right there* with the main character.
  - Use specific rather than general details.
  - Remember that sentence variety is important!

Write an ELABORATIVE SEGMENT of the **setting** below. Tell what she saw, smelled, felt, and heard. Do NOT write a grocery list. Use interesting words and make it entertaining! Decide if you want to create REALISTIC FICTION based on what she might actually see, or a FANTASY of something fanciful or magical.

Catherine dove under the water and was amazed at the scene beneath the ocean surface.

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Be sure to point out that this example is in **THIRD PERSON** point of view - the author must “get inside” Catherine’s head. The third person “Catherine” or the pronoun “she” may be used. Some young writers, in the process of “getting inside the main character’s head” when writing in third person have a tendency to revert to first person “I.” An interesting exercise involves writing the elaborative segment two ways - once in third person and again in first person. Compare the two versions. Published authors have been known to rewrite entire novels in third and/or first person point of view.

## **Possible Detail Generating Questions:**

- What did the water feel like?
- What could she hear?
- What kinds of animals, fish did she see?
- What plant life did she see?
- How did she move beneath the water?
- How did she feel while swimming? (physically, emotionally)
- And . . . any others you can think of!

## **Sample Sentence Starters (Chart these for guided practice):**

The water felt \_\_\_\_\_.

She felt \_\_\_\_\_.

Catherine heard \_\_\_\_\_.

Underwater, things sounded \_\_\_\_\_.

The sea was full of \_\_\_\_\_.

Many creatures \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ swam /crawled/ floated by.

\_\_\_\_\_ grew along the ocean bottom.

\_\_\_\_\_ waved in the water.

Seaweed \_\_\_\_\_.

Catherine squinted and \_\_\_\_\_.

Seeing underwater was \_\_\_\_\_.

She felt \_\_\_\_\_.

# Lesson 10: Narrative Extension Task - Elaborative Detail

## Objective:

Students apply their knowledge of techniques for creating elaborative detail (using productive questions) by using elements from the source text to write a new elaborative detail segment.


## Procedure:

1. If you haven't already, as a class, read, analyze and annotate The Cutest Kitten in the World, pp. 196-197, according to SRP 6, pointing out the way the story follows the organizational structure 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 \_\_\_\_\_



**SRP 6**

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Discuss the literary elements in the text using SRP 13, drawing verbal responses from the class, and/or chart them. Highly recommended: 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**? (Who or what stands in the way of the main character's motivation?) \_\_\_\_\_ (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**

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(continued)

## Lesson 10: Narrative Extension Task – Elaborative Detail

2. Distribute copies of Narrative Extension Task: Elaborative Detail, p. 206, read and discuss the Narrative Extension Task with the class:

**You've read the story The Cutest Kitten in the World in which Daisy, the main character, adopts a new pet on her birthday. Now, fast forward one year and write an elaborative segment describing Bernadette now that she's healthy.**

3. Reread the segment of elaborative detail describing Bernadette, the kitten. Determine the questions the author asked herself in order to elicit the specific detail and chart those questions. (What kind/color fur? What kind color eyes, ears, mouth, tail? etc.)
4. Reread the task and ask students what they are being asked to do. Are they writing a narrative segment or an expository piece? (narrative segment of elaborative detail) What does the task require all students to write about? These are the **Givens** – everyone must describe Bernadette a year later when she is healthy. What are the **Variables** that students can choose to write – the specific details to describe the cat.
5. Review the techniques for generating elaborative detail, p. 152, using the questions about a story critical character as a guide. Think about Bernadette one year later. Chart a list of detail generating questions in order to generate specific detail.

*Ex. How did Bernadette change over the course of the year? What kind/color fur? What kind/color eyes, ears, nose? How did Daisy feel about the cat Bernadette had grown into?*

**Student Reference Page**

Below, you will find a generic list of detail generating questions that you may apply when creating elaborative segments of story critical characters, settings, objects:

**MENU OF DETAIL GENERATING QUESTIONS**

**QUESTIONS ABOUT A STORY CRITICAL CHARACTER -**

- How tall/big was this character? • What color hair/eyes? • How old was the character? • What kind of eyes/nose/mouth/ears did he/she have? • What kind/color of hair did he/she have? (long, short, curly, straight, etc.) • What kind of marks, scars, or distinguishing characteristics did he/she have? • What was he/she wearing? • What kind of expression was on his/her face? • How did this character make you feel? • Who or what did this character remind you of?

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**QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT A STORY CRITICAL OBJECT -**

- What color was it? • What did it feel like? • What was its shape? • What size was it? • How old was it? • What was it made of? • What did it smell like? • What kind of sound did it make? • How heavy was it? • Who did it belong to? • Where did it come from? • What did it remind you of?

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SRP 14

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

**NARRATIVE EXTENSION TASK:  
ELABORATIVE DETAIL**

You've read the story The Cutest Kitten in the World in which Daisy, the main character, adopts a new pet on her birthday. Now, fast forward one year and write an elaborative segment describing Bernadette now that she's healthy.

**THINK AND DISCUSS:** How does descriptive detail bring a story to life?

**REMEMBER:** The answers to productive questions provide powerful elaborative detail!

- How had Bernadette changed over the past year?
- How did Daisy feel about the cat Bernadette had grown into?
- What kind/color fur?
- What kind/color eyes?
- What kind/color ears?
- What kind/color nose?

**SENTENCE STARTERS:**

- Bernadette had \_\_\_\_\_.
- Bernadette purred when \_\_\_\_\_.
- I wondered if \_\_\_\_\_.
- Looking closely \_\_\_\_\_.
- I felt \_\_\_\_\_.
- I remembered \_\_\_\_\_.
- A year ago, \_\_\_\_\_.
- Eyes, the color of \_\_\_\_\_.

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# Lesson 4: The Magic of Three

## Objective:

Students recognize the convention of the “Magic of Three” for suspense building and identify the elements of the technique.

## Procedure:

1. Read the example of the Magic of Three on p. 227. You might also want to review the passage from Jean Hiatt Harlow’s novel Thunder from the Sea, p. 218, to help students recognize the “Magic of Three.”
2. Be sure your students understand the terms “hint,” “red flag words/phrases,” “reaction,” and “revelation.”
3. Copy and distribute the student activity sheet The Magic of Three, p. 227. Project the activity sheet, read aloud discuss and color code together. Be sure to point out how the author stretches out the suspense in order to entertain and build tension. Also, talk about how the main characters shows his/her reaction (What feelings look like.)
4. Copy and distribute the “Magic of Three” template, SRP 16. Have students work independently or in small cooperative learning groups to write their own suspenseful segment using the Magic of Three.

*Student Reference Page*

**THE MAGIC OF THREE TEMPLATE**

Red Flag word/phrase \_\_\_\_\_, 1st. HINT: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

No discovery: \_\_\_\_\_

Reaction: \_\_\_\_\_

Red Flag word/phrase \_\_\_\_\_, 2nd. HINT: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

No discovery: \_\_\_\_\_

Reaction: \_\_\_\_\_

Red Flag word/phrase \_\_\_\_\_, 3rd. HINT: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Revelation/Discovery: \_\_\_\_\_

**RED FLAG WORDS AND PHRASES**

Suddenly	Just then	All of a sudden
A moment later	In the blink of an eye	Without warning
The next thing I knew	Instantly	To my surprise
(add your own)		

SRP 16

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

**THE MAGIC OF THREE**

One way that authors build suspense is by using “the Magic of Three.” Read the suspenseful segment below:

- Underline *red flag words* or phrases in RED.
- Number and underline each *hint* in regular PENCIL.
- Underline the *main character’s* reactions to each hint in BLUE.
- Circle the *revelation*.

Oh, why had I let Molly talk me into this. That’s what I was asking myself as squeezed my long legs into the little wooden cart. I buckled my seat belt with trembling fingers. A motor revved loudly and the tiny car lurched forward. Molly let out a shriek of joy. I screamed even louder but for the opposite reason. Why weren’t we wearing helmets? Why didn’t our cart have a roof? We were going faster by the second and I didn’t feel safe. Not at all.

In the wink of an eye, we’d reached a frightful speed. Clanking, banging sounds filled the air as we rushed up a steep stretch of track. Wind slapped my cheeks and whipped through my hair. My stomach felt funny as we careened high into the air, quickly approaching the very top of the track. I closed my eyes and swallowed hard. Beside me, Molly shouted “Faster! Faster!”

The next thing I knew, we were flying down the other side of the track, bouncing along “faster and faster,” just as Molly had hoped. I crossed my fingers, thinking “please, let this be over soon.” We reached the bottom of the track and there was one more surprise in store for us: a twisty turn that set my heart to pounding.

A moment later, I breathed a sigh of relief as I climbed out of the little cart. I’d survived my first — and last — roller coaster ride.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**THE MAIN EVENT (2)**

**REMEMBER:** • The main event is the MOST IMPORTANT part of a story!

- The main event should take up the largest amount of writing within a story.
- The main event should occur as though in slow motion - with every small detail told.
- The main event is a time for the author to show off and really entertain!

**Directions:** Read the summary of the main event below. Imagine what is happening. Then, in order to ELABORATE on the main event, ask:

- What did you do? (action) • What did you see, hear, feel? (description)
- What did you wonder/worry? (thoughts/feelings)
- What did you say? (dialogue/exclamation) • SOUND EFFECT?

**I visited a farm with my cousins.**

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## Lesson 2: Extending this Ending

### Objective:

Students recognize effective endings and boring endings, and learn the following techniques to revise boring endings:

- a memory of the main event
- the main character's feelings about the main event
- a decision the main character makes
- the main character's wish or hope

### Procedure:

1. Begin by presenting this example to the class:

*It sure would have been nice to win the championship.*

Model the process of extending this ending by using the four techniques above.

For example:

*So we'd lost the championship. No wonder. It was sad to think about, but everything that could have gone wrong had, in fact, gone wrong. The soccer field was wet, the grass slippery. Our star player fell and sprained his ankle. A heckler on the sidelines distracted our goalie at a crucial moment. I was definitely off my game. Eager to put this day to rest, I got into bed and switched off the light. Tomorrow, I promised myself, things would go my way and next year, the championship would be ours!*

2. Then, photocopy and distribute the student activity sheets, Extend this Ending (1) - (2), pp. 297-298. Circulate and read effective revisions aloud.
3. **Make-it-Your-Own:** Use the template on p. 299, to complete this activity using a story summary and ending of your choice. You may chose to relate it to a theme you or exploring or a book you are reading together as a class.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**EXTEND THIS ENDING! (1)**

**REMEMBER:** Story endings should sum up the story and show how the main character has grown and changed. Extended endings often include:

- A memory - What do you remember most?
- A feeling - How did you feel after everything that happened?
- A decision - What did you decide to do after everything that happened?
- A wish or hope - What did you wish or hope for?
- A defining action - What did you do to show how you felt, or what you decided?

Read this story summary:

*This is a story about a boy who lives on a farm but dreams of exploring the big city. Disobeying his parents, he takes the train into the city by himself and gets lost.*

Now read the way the author ended the story. It is abrupt and unsatisfying.

**For now, I was happy just to be home. THE END**

REVISE this story ending. Include the main character’s memories, feelings, decisions, hopes, or wishes.

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