Using Writing to Learn Across the Content Areas

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What scares students most about writing? Why do students shrink from the task of writing? Why do teachers refrain from asking students to write? The answers are as varied as the students and educators that respond. “I don’t know what to say.” “I’m afraid that I might not get all of the punctuation and spellings right.” “Putting what I think into words might make me look stupid.” “I am a terrible writer—I’m just no good at it.” “It takes too much time to do or to correct.” “I just can’t find the right words to write what I am thinking.” “I get confused about how to organize my thoughts and get them down on paper.” Even professional writers have their fears. When Ernest Hemingway was asked what scared him most about writing, he said, “A blank piece of paper.”

Although writing can be scary, it is important for students to write about their learning. The learning process isn’t complete until the learners share their thinking with others. Writing is a way for students to review their own learning, organize their thinking, and evaluate how well they understand what has been taught. It is a tool students can use for exploring, processing, and expressing what they have learned or are learning. We teach writing to help students think for themselves, not just summarize what others have written. It is part of the process of making learning active.

Writing About Learning

There are many reasons for asking students to write:

- To clarify their thinking about what they’ve learned.
- To think deeply and clearly about the subject.
- To communicate what they have learned.
- To explore, extend, and cement ideas.
- To record learning.
- To evaluate the learning process.
- To explain ideas.
- To apply what’s been learned to new situations and problems.
- To evaluate what they have learned.
• To organize new information.
• To make connections between what they know and what they are learning.
• To build confidence about their knowledge of the subject.

Writing about what is being learned provides students with ownership of their learning. Because they choose the words to use in their writing, they control the written word and have the freedom to put on paper what is in their minds.

Students can’t write about what they don’t understand. Putting learning into one’s own words—that is, crafting communication that explains the invisible learning process—helps students make the information their own. It is the process of making one’s thinking visible to the world. Writing in the content areas is not a separate, optional activity. It is an essential part of the thinking and learning process.

Writing helps students make personal connections to the information they learn. No two students will have the same reaction to what they have learned or bring the same experiences and knowledge to the learning process. Writing, then, is a personal activity—students write to reflect and develop understanding for themselves. But it is also a public activity—students write to share new learning and ideas with others.

To learn how to write, students have to engage in the writing process on a regular basis. But just assigning papers doesn’t teach students to write. They need to have help in framing their thinking and in organizing how they will put their thoughts into words. They need to understand that there are many types of writing and that the form they choose makes a difference in how they will proceed. They must understand the audience with whom they will be communicating and take into account the audience’s needs as well as their own. They must find their own voice and style.

Using Writing in the Content Areas
How can teachers in the content areas help students become authors of their own learning? In providing the support and guidance students need, teachers can

• Provide extended periods of time in which students can organize, draft, and revise their writing.
• Let students choose their own topics and the formats in which to present their ideas.
• Monitor student work frequently, providing one-on-one conferencing as needed to reassure students and asking questions that cause students to think about their learning in deep and meaningful ways.
• Model their own writing, sharing their insights and struggles with students.
• Provide students with frameworks and ideas for organizing their thinking as they prepare to write.
• Provide a variety of audiences for student work.
• Share student work so that students can learn from one another’s insights into what is being learned.
• Encourage students to bring their own prior knowledge and insights to their written thoughts.
• Evaluate written projects both for content and for how well the writing communicates students’ understanding of the content.
• Allow students to find their own voice and style in what they write.
• Acknowledge that some writing is casual and some is done for informal or formal purposes by providing opportunities for varied purposes and forms of writing.
Through writing, students transform what they are learning—the experiments, the events, the observations, the problems, the ideas—into personal interpretations of their thinking. Writing gives students “the power of the pen” to achieve a wide range of purposes as they explore, revise, and think on paper. They become historians, scientists, mathematicians, poets, authors, and technical writers as they process and share their ideas.

**Using the Writing Tools**

The tools provided here are designed to help students get ready to write, organize their thinking in preparation for writing, use their thinking while writing, and reflect on how well their writing captures their ideas and learning. Many of the tools are used to produce writing that is short, unedited, informal, and personal. Others require students to create more formal and lengthy compositions. Some tools will assist students in the prewriting phase. Others provide guidance as students write or help them evaluate the completed writing task. Regardless of the purpose for the writing task, all of the tools help students clarify their thinking and deepen their understanding about the subject.

To gain the greatest benefit from using the tools, students must understand how the tools help them process and organize information to either extend their learning or communicate what they’ve learned. As you select tools for students to use with specific content, help them understand the thinking processes involved in using the tools. As students become proficient with the tools, they will be able to adapt them and make them their own, giving them the confidence they need to truly understand the power of writing.
Prewriting Tools

AND THE INFORMATION GOES ROUND AND ROUND

1. Gather ideas for writing
2. Make discoveries of what is known
3. Create relationships
4. Explore a chosen topic
5. Demonstrate story development

Note: This tool could be used for all of the above purposes; the question will dictate the purpose and the response.

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .
1. Identify a question to be answered, striving to develop a question about an issue that may have two or more sides. The student will then construct support for her response. Note: The teacher may prefer to provide the question in advance.
2. Jot down an initial response to the question, accessing as much prior knowledge as possible in the answer. Sometimes a student's prior knowledge can provide a great lead for the introduction, especially if the research differs from the student's original thinking.
3. Research at least three sources and summarize information that will help answer the question, striving to collect evidence to support the response—such as examples, quotations, or facts. Note: The teacher may prefer to provide the resources the student can use.
4. Answer the question, making sure to provide support for the response.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
1. Assist students in their understanding of the importance and method of constructing support for their response. Help them understand that constructing support not only helps them have a deeper understanding of the information but also gives them a lifelong skill of persuading.
2. Keep in mind that having students take a position and provide support for that position often increases their engagement in your content.
3. When constructing support involves information across content areas, consider working with other staff to provide a consistent process for students.
4. Offer a minilesson on citing direct quotations. Language arts teachers can be a great help to the other staff members in providing information and consistency in format.
5. Have students develop a “bank” of questions from which they may choose to write a response that requires constructing support.
6. Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
Organize your thinking and your writing to answer a specific question. Explore at least three sources of information, collecting details and examples to answer the question.

My Original Thinking: Jot down your initial response to the question. Access as much prior knowledge as you can to answer the question.

The Question: Identify the question for which you are going to gather information to make a well developed response.

Source 1: Using at least three resources, research your response to the question. Gather information and support for the answer, including examples, facts, and quotes.

Source 2:

Source 3:
AND THE INFORMATION GOES ROUND AND ROUND

Organize your thinking and your writing to answer a specific question. Explore at least three sources of information, collecting details and examples to answer the question.

My Original Thinking:
- Don’t eat.
- Exercise a lot.
- Stay away from anything that tastes good—e.g., candy, pop, junk food.

Source 1:
- Physical activity is a must for permanent weight loss.
- Get the hormones in balance.
- Drink water—lots of it.
- Manage your stress.

Source 2:
- Motivation is key—weight loss must be teen’s idea.
- Support from family and friends is important.
- Make environment work for you. You may need to leave your “junk food friends” for part of the day to hang out with your “exercise nuts”—especially during times of the day when you want to eat junk.

Source 3:
- Set realistic goals—not only number of pounds to lose but ways to lose, supports, lifestyles, supplements.
- Most girls need a well-balanced diet, but extreme overweight may require extreme diets. They call these “ketogenic diets” because the dieter has high levels of ketones.

The Question:
What’s the best weight-loss program for teen girls?
Organize your thinking and your writing to answer a specific question. Explore at least three sources of information, collecting details and examples to answer the question.
Prewriting Tools

AND THE POINT IS . . .

☐ 1. Compare/Contrast
☒ 2. Describe
☐ 3. Sequence/Order
☒ 4. Persuade
☒ 5. Cause and Effect
☒ 6. Problem and Solution
☒ 7. Reflect
☐ 8. Other

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☒ Determine the topic about which he is going to write.
☒ Determine the generalization/principle or main idea/thesis for a topic and for which he will construct support. This statement should answer the question, “What is it that I want to say about this topic?”
☒ Identify supporting details or examples. These may be causes that support a specific effect, or possible solutions to support a problem. They may include details, stories, and examples that construct support for a description.
  • Share the examples with his writing buddy.
  • Extend his thinking or details and examples.
☒ Prioritize the examples or details and use the best three to support the thesis or main idea.
☒ Proceed with the first draft, always checking the organization to ensure that he is achieving the purpose of the writing.
☒ Meet with writing buddy to develop and answer questions about the writing. Explore changes that will make the writing clearer.
☒ Complete next draft, adding thoughts and details that strengthen the paper.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☒ Help your students understand that good writing really does matter—and takes organization.
☒ Model for your students the selection of a topic; the development of a generalization or principle, main idea statement, or thesis; and the research or brainstorming necessary to provide quality examples.
☒ Encourage students to explore their own thinking and experiences as well as research to develop their examples and details.
☒ Provide minilessons on tasks that students find a challenge (e.g., identifying a topic, creating a topic sentence or thesis statement, finding or creating supporting details and examples, citing direct quotes). You could individualize these lessons for small groups or present them to the entire class.
Encourage students to keep a writing notebook in which they can write daily and keep banks of issues, questions, topics, ideas, and vocabulary.

Share students’ examples of quality writing or organization of ideas (with permission, of course).

Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
Write a paper in which you establish a generalization or principle, and support it with at least three examples and three supporting details for each example.

**Generalization or Principle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification of the main point you want to make. Some will call this a generalization, a principle, or even a thesis statement.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</table>
Write a paper in which you establish a generalization or principle, and support it with at least three examples and three supporting details for each example.

**Generalization or Principle**

If your body is to stay healthy, it is up to you!

**Example**

Exercise regularly.

**Details**

- Make it a daily routine! Start slow and increase!
- Pumps up your heart! Blood flows! More oxygen, less CO₂.
- Strengthens your muscles! And bones! Use or lose!

**Example**

Eat good food, especially fruits and vegetables.

**Details**

- Nine servings per day! Helps your metabolism.
- Low in calories—and fat! Makes your digestive system work!
- Gives you vitamins, minerals, and fiber—in the real form.

**Example**

Water! Water! Water! Drink more water!

**Details**

- Carry water! You need at least 64 oz. to keep from overheating.
- Water helps blood flow, joints move, and your metabolism run.
- Skip caffeinated beverages; caffeine in them is a diuretic, so you lose water.
Write a paper in which you establish a generalization or principle, and support it with at least three examples and three supporting details for each example.

**Generalization or Principle**

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### Prewriting Tools

**AS I READ, I THINK ABOUT WRITING**

1. **Jot down possible topics for writing based on readings and discussions in class.**
2. **Identify a possible purpose or goal for a writing about each topic.**
3. **Star or circle the topics that are of special interest for further exploration and writing.**
4. **Cross out a topic once she has written about it.**

**TIPS/VARIATIONS:**
- Encourage students to jot down possible topics for writing as they read the assigned materials in your class. They might also recognize topics based on class discussions or your minilessons. Even videos may give the students ideas for their writing.
- Have students keep this “brainstorming” tool in the front of their writing journal or class notebook.
- Consider adding other columns of information (e.g., date topic was generated, date topic was written about, date “published” topic was turned in, list of possible sources to support topic).
- Have students discuss topics on their list with their writing buddy or the entire class. Such discussions should increase possibilities of topics for students as well as help them clarify the purpose or goal for possible topics.
- Review regularly each student’s list of topics. Make comments or ask questions on sticky notes that will help students focus their writing.
- Share your own list of topics that you plan to further explore and write about. Doing a “think aloud” about your own determination of topics models for students an approach they might use in determining topics.
- Reflect with your students about how this tool helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
As you read or listen to information, identify topics that you might want to write about. Think about the purpose of that writing—why you would want to write about the topic you listed. You may want to star (*) or circle the ones that have a special interest for you. Once you have written about a topic, you should cross it off your list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible Topics</th>
<th>Possible Purpose</th>
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As you read, participate in class discussions, or listen to the teacher’s minilessons, identify topics you would like to explore further and write about.

Try to identify the purpose or the goal you would want to address about the topic. You might also want to jot down any key ideas you have about the topic.

Consider “starring” topics that are of special interest to you. Cross out topics once you have written about them.
As you read or listen to information, identify topics that you might want to write about. Think about the purpose of that writing—why you would want to write about the topic you listed. You may want to star (*) or circle the ones that have a special interest for you. Once you have written about a topic, you should cross it off your list.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Creating a Tool Box for Working on Cars**</td>
<td>Purpose: Identify the tools (and purpose) necessary to work on cars. Use visuals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: The “Fun” and “Fundamentals” of Working on My Car</td>
<td>Purpose: Provide “humorous” take on working on a car and still help my girlfriend understand the basics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Ten Musts for a Smooth-Running Car</td>
<td>Purpose: Top ten things every teen owner should do to maintain his or her car.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Safety Rules for Working on My Car</td>
<td>Purpose: To help the novice car mechanic stay “healthy.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Jack It Up!**</td>
<td>Purpose: Directions for changing a tire. Pictures would help many readers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Calming a Hothead**</td>
<td>Purpose: What to do when a car overheats!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Monthly To-Do List</td>
<td>Purpose: Summary of things to help the first-time teen car owner keep the car running smoothly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: How to Change the Oil</td>
<td>Purpose: Beginner’s guide to changing the oil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Putting the Spark into My Car*</td>
<td>Purpose: Taking a close look at the electrical system of a car.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: How the Fuel System Is like the Major Organs of My Body**</td>
<td>Purpose: Create an analogy of the fuel system and body organs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: No AAA—Now What?</td>
<td>Purpose: Provide “checks” for when a car isn’t working right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: “Tired” of Buying Tires**</td>
<td>Purpose: What to look for as you buy tires—could be persuasive essay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic: Finding the Right Guy (or Gal)*</td>
<td>Purpose: What to look for in a good mechanic (or body shop).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As you read or listen to information, identify topics that you might want to write about. Think about the purpose of that writing—why you would want to write about the topic you listed. You may want to star (*) or circle the ones that have a special interest for you. Once you have written about a topic, you should cross it off your list.

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Prewriting Tool

**HOW TO USE:**
The student will . . .

☛ Think about the subject being studied and identify a change that needs to be made or a goal that needs to be reached. The change or goal should result in a significant difference from the current situation.

☛ Identify potential obstacles to the change or blockers who might want to prevent the change from taking place or the goal from being reached.

☛ Present ideas about how the obstacles might be eliminated or minimized to facilitate the implementation of the change. Brainstorm how to persuade blockers to change their ways or how to minimize the effect they have on the process of change.

☛ Write an action plan for implementing the proposed change, outlining how potential obstacles will be handled.

**TIPS/VARIATIONS:**

☛ Use examples from everyday life or from a situation familiar to students to explain the concepts of obstacles and blockers. Help students understand the difference between obstacles that can be controlled or changed and ones that can only be minimized.

☛ Consider brainstorming a list of potential changes or goals that might be worthy of pursuit. Then allow students to select the change or goal for the basis of this activity.

☛ Allow students to conduct additional research relative to the change or goal, if necessary, to identify the obstacles or blockers or to determine effective ways to eliminate or minimize them.

☛ Allow students to work together in pairs or groups on a common change or goal.

☛ Have students share their plan of action in the form of a presentation in which the class acts as the legislative body who will be voting final approval or disapproval of the plan.

☛ Have students exchange and critique action plans with a partner or within a small group, looking for faulty reasoning or planning.
Whenever a major change is proposed, there are often many obstacles or blockers in the way of effectively making that change take place. In thinking about your subject, think of a situation that needs to be changed or a goal that needs to be reached. State the change or goal carefully so it is clearly understood. Then consider some obstacles that might interfere with making the change or achieving the goal successfully. Suggest some ways to eliminate or minimize each obstacle or blocker.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desired Change or Goal:</th>
<th>Clearly state the change or goal so the target for the result is very clear. What will be the results of the change?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Obstacles or Blockers</th>
<th>Ways to Eliminate or Minimize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select the obstacles or blockers that might have the greatest impact on stopping the change. They should also be the ones that those making the change have some control over even if controlling them is hard.</td>
<td>Try to find ways to address the obstacles and blockers that might have the potential for turning the negative into the positive. Be realistic in the methods you choose.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In your written plan, clearly state the desired change or goal. Then define each obstacle and how you would deal with it. Finally, describe the results you expect from implementing the change.

Write a plan of action for making the change or achieving the goal. Describe how you would implement the change and overcome obstacles and blockers.
BLOCKBUSTERS!

Whenever a major change is proposed, there are often many obstacles or blockers in the way of effectively making that change take place. In thinking about your subject, think of a situation that needs to be changed or a goal that needs to be reached. State the change or goal carefully so it is clearly understood. Then consider some obstacles that might interfere with making the change or achieving the goal successfully. Suggest some ways to eliminate or minimize each obstacle or blocker.

** Desired Change or Goal:**
Have daylight saving time all year round instead of just spring to fall.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Obstacles or Blockers</th>
<th>Ways to Eliminate or Minimize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It would be darker in the morning, so young students would have to walk to school in the dark.</td>
<td>Research shows that students are not as alert early in the morning. Therefore, starting school an hour later would solve both problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the winter, the afternoon daylight saving time advantage of energy savings is offset by the</td>
<td>Schools and businesses could all open later and stay open later in the day. There are only four darkest months of winter (November, December, January, February) versus the other eight months that would save energy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>morning’s need for more lighting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>If everybody doesn’t go to daylight saving time year round, there will be increased confusion</td>
<td>There are already many discrepancies that cause travelers and others problems with keeping track of time. Big signs could announce the borders between time zones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about what time it is in a given time zone.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write a plan of action for making the change or achieving the goal. Describe how you would implement the change and overcome obstacles and blockers.
Whenever a major change is proposed, there are often many obstacles or blockers in the way of effectively making that change take place. In thinking about your subject, think of a situation that needs to be changed or a goal that needs to be reached. State the change or goal carefully so it is clearly understood. Then consider some obstacles that might interfere with making the change or achieving the goal successfully. Suggest some ways to eliminate or minimize each obstacle or blocker.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desired Change or Goal:</th>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Obstacles or Blockers</th>
<th>Ways to Eliminate or Minimize</th>
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</table>

Write a plan of action for making the change or achieving the goal. Describe how you would implement the change and overcome obstacles and blockers.
BRAIN STORMING
THE VOCABULARY

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Identify the topic on which to brainstorm appropriate vocabulary. Consider identifying the thesis statement for this topic.

☛ Consider the question, “What are some terms that would make my writing sound more intelligent and help my readers understand my writing?”

☛ Brainstorm vocabulary terms.

☛ Consider organizing terms by areas to be addressed in the writing.

☛ Check the meaning of any unfamiliar terms before planning to include them in the writing.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

☛ Help your students understand the importance of the use of vocabulary in their writing.

☛ Provide a wall of vocabulary terms appropriate for the material you are studying. This will help students identify and connect with vocabulary terms important to their learning.

☛ Encourage students to check their understanding of terms with a writing buddy.

☛ Once students have written the first draft, have them circle in their writing the vocabulary terms they brainstormed; ask them to have their writing buddy pay special attention to the use of those words as they read the writing and share their understanding with the writer.

☛ Share examples of quality use of vocabulary in writing, so that students know what strong use of content-specific and supporting vocabulary in this area of writing looks, sounds, and feels like.

☛ Have students interview adults in the “real world” to seek vocabulary terms they use in the identified area for writing.

☛ Encourage students to keep a vocabulary area within their writing notebook—perhaps at the end of each unit or at the end of their writing journal.

☛ Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
Brainstorm the vocabulary terms that would be appropriate to include in your writing in this content area.

**Brainstorming the Vocabulary**

**Topic or Thesis Statement:**

Identify the topic or thesis statement that you are going to write about.

Brainstorm vocabulary terms that would be important to your readers’ understanding of your topic or thesis statement. Consider terms that would answer the question, “What are the terms or vocabulary words that would make my writing sound more intelligent and informative and help my reader better understand the information or my position?”
Brainstorm the vocabulary terms that would be appropriate to include in your writing in this content area.

**BRAINSTORMING THE VOCABULARY**

**Topic or Thesis Statement:**
Building My Bike

- belt drive
- belt drive
- tap the axle
- tracking—shimmed and centered
- pressure tested—pinhole leaks
- press brake
- stealth
- exhaust pipes
- missile flaps
- grinding
- off-set spacers
- modification
- caliper
- mounting brakes
- design—mock-up, compromise, adjustments
- fabricate
Brainstorm the vocabulary terms that would be appropriate to include in your writing in this content area.

Topic or Thesis Statement:
**CHEM LAB**

**Prewriting Tools**

- [ ] 1. Compare/Contrast
- [ ] 2. Describe
- [x] 3. Sequence/Order
- [ ] 4. Persuade
- [ ] 5. Cause and Effect
- [ ] 6. Problem and Solution
- [ ] 7. Reflect
- [ ] 8. Other

**HOW TO USE:**

The student will . . .

- Identify the lab to be completed.
- Identify the intended learning that should be achieved as a result of this lab.
- In the first column, identify the materials needed for the lab as well as the steps that should be taken in the lab. If steps are not identified initially, the student should identify them while proceeding with the lab.
- Collect the data or new information in the second column—as the lab is completed.
- In the third column, draw possible conclusions while proceeding through the steps. The student might also identify predictions or clarifications needed.
- Keep additional information (e.g., data chart) as needed.
- Summarize the lab based on information collected. Include the materials and steps used as well as the new learning achieved.
- Reflect on how this process helped or hindered learning.

**TIPS/VARIATIONS:**

- Be sure to share the purpose of the lab. Students need to see the relevance of the lab and make connections to what they already know or will know as a result of the lab.
- Help students see the importance of organizing as well as reflecting on the process as they go.
- Try to use the format consistently throughout lab work to focus on creating purpose as well as reflecting on learning.
- Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
### CHEM LAB

Complete the information for your chemistry lab. Be sure to identify materials used as well as steps of the procedure. Your observations and data will help you draw valid conclusions.

Name/Title of Lab: _________________________________________  Identify the lab your teacher wants you to complete.

Purpose/Goal of Lab: _______________________________________________  Identify the intended learning of this lab. What should I know after the lab that I don't know now?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps of the Procedure</th>
<th>Observations/Data/Descriptions</th>
<th>Our Conclusions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 1:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify in this first column the materials you need as well as the steps you will complete in this lab.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 2:</td>
<td></td>
<td>It's important to organize your thinking as you go. Reflect on what you have learned, summarize that learning, and predict what may happen at the next step.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify the materials you need as well as the steps you will complete in this lab.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 3:</td>
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<td>Step 4:</td>
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<tr>
<td>As you complete the lab, jot down any observations you make, any data you collect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 5:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Reflection:** How did summarizing your notes as you proceeded help or hinder your understanding?
**CHEM LAB**

Complete the information for your chemistry lab. Be sure to identify materials used as well as steps of the procedure. Your observations and data will help you draw valid conclusions.

Name>Title of Lab: Checking for Starches and Glucose Purpose/Goal of Lab: Recognize the presence of chemicals—specifically glucose and starch—in foods we eat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps of the Procedure</th>
<th>Observations/Data/Descriptions</th>
<th>Our Conclusions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Materials:</strong> goggles, paper towels, iodine, test strips, brown paper, spoons, small cups, forceps, food (e.g., crackers, peanut butter, applesauce, bread)</td>
<td>At first we had to go to find different things—because we weren’t organized. Then we just stopped and got all our materials organized.</td>
<td>Having these all set out really helped in saving time. Organization is important in gathering consistent information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1:</strong> Place the crushed or torn-up food in small cups—a cup for 1/2 of each food. Add drops of water to each of the cups of food that aren’t already like a “liquid measure” to make the mixture as liquid as possible.</td>
<td>Be sure to have each food crushed or torn up (e.g., crackers need to be really crushed—peanut butter already was—applesauce, too—tear up food like bread). It took more water for some to make it “liquid-like.”</td>
<td>We are thinking now that there has to be a good reason that we have two samples of the food—probably one for glucose and one for starch?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2:</strong> Put the names of the foods on pieces of brown paper. Without touching the food, rub the brown paper against the food (one sample of each) and place the brown paper on a paper towel.</td>
<td>Oops, originally we forgot the forceps—but we definitely learned we didn’t want our fingers to damage our data.</td>
<td>It’s important to control the experiment as much as possible so that our findings are as nearly perfect as possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3:</strong> Label the test strips with names of food, and then dip into the cups of the remaining samples of food. Place the strips on the towel to dry.</td>
<td></td>
<td>It’s looking like we will need to create a little table for our findings—comparing the “brown-paper info” with the “test strip info.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reflection:** How did summarizing your notes as you proceeded help or hinder your understanding?

We recognized that organization is really important—and the need to keep consistent data. We will do much better next time. It also helped us to predict as we went along. Writing the summary will be much easier now.
Complete the information for your chemistry lab. Be sure to identify materials used as well as steps of the procedure. Your observations and data will help you draw valid conclusions.

Name/Title of Lab: _________________________________________  Purpose/Goal of Lab: __________________________________________________________

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<tr>
<td>Step 5:</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Reflection:** How did summarizing your notes as you proceeded help or hinder your understanding?
HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

- Identify two events, issues, or persons to compare.
- Explore and summarize how the two are alike, placing that information in the center rectangle.
- Search for and summarize ways in which the two are different, constantly looking for how the differences may be parallel.
- Write a comparative paragraph or essay based on the information.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
- Share with your students how to write comparative paragraphs and essays. Model the process, sharing your own writing by talking through the steps and processes you use.
- Provide minilessons on writing comparative paragraphs and essays. Be sure to address transitions, signal words, and parallel structure.
- Help your students understand that good writing really does matter—it provides meaning, stimulates clear thinking, and increases their understanding of your content.
- Share examples of quality in any and all of the areas listed, so that students know what it would look, sound, and feel like if they were strong in the area of comparative essays.
- Share examples of student work as well as the work of professional authors. Post these in the classroom if you wish.
- Have students interview adults in the “real world” about the issue, event, or person to seek how they use comparative writing in their work, what they struggle with, and what they have become good at as a result of perseverance.
- Encourage students to keep a writing notebook in which they can write daily and keep banks of issues, questions, topics, ideas, and vocabulary.
- Provide a rubric for the writing assignment that addresses your expectations and helps students focus their writing.
- Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
COMPARE THE TWO

Complete a comparison of two events, issues, or persons on the basis of your organization below.

In these three rectangles, note three key differences of this issue, event, or person, compared to the other.

Identify one of the two key persons, issues, or events in this octagon.

In this space, complete the key points of how your two events, issues, or persons are alike. Be sure to share things that are important, make a point, and would be of interest to your reader.

As you think about your opening paragraph, you will want to consider what you have seen as alike and different, and focus on a major point to “grab” your audience.

Identify one of the two key persons, issues, or events in this octagon.

Just as you did for the other issue, event, or person, identify three important differences for this issue, event, or person. Put one in each of the three rectangles.
Complete a comparison of two events, issues, or persons on the basis of your organization below.

**Adolf Hitler**
- Led the Nazi party. People were starving, but he promised they would be supreme—the world power. He believed himself to be the messiah of Germany—immortal.
- He killed many Jewish people in very inhumane ways. Anyone who didn’t believe in his ways was a target. We have read *The Diary of Anne Frank*, which is a perfect example.
- He believed he should rule the world. He used the weapons he had made to take over Austria in 1938.

**Benito Mussolini**
- A former pacifist and socialist, he (il duce) started the Fascist Party in Italy in the 1920s. He promised to make Italy strong again.
- In 1935 he attacked Ethiopia. He made this African nation part of his empire in 1936. He also controlled Albania and Libya.
- In 1945—Mussolini by execution and Hitler by suicide.
- Together they sealed a “pact of steel” in 1939.
- Both persecuted Jews.
- They killed people who didn’t support their ways.
- They offered the leadership for and promise of “good times” that the people were hungry for.
- Their actions caused another war—WWII.
- They were both dictators—they had all the authority, and no one could do anything unless they approved.
- Both were hungry for power—they took over other countries to prove how strong they were.
- Italians who didn’t like what Mussolini was doing were thrown into prison or killed.

**Compare the Two**

- They offered the leadership for and promise of “good times” that the people were hungry for.
- Their actions caused another war—WWII.
- They were both dictators—they had all the authority, and no one could do anything unless they approved.
- Both were hungry for power—they took over other countries to prove how strong they were.
- They killed people who didn’t support their ways.
- Together they sealed a “pact of steel” in 1939.
- Both persecuted Jews.
- They died in April 1945—Mussolini by execution and Hitler by suicide.
- They were starving, but he promised they would be supreme—the world power. He believed himself to be the messiah of Germany—immortal.
Complete a comparison of two events, issues, or persons on the basis of your organization below.


How to use:
The student will . . .

- Identify two or more persons, places, or events to compare.
- Identify characteristics on which to make the comparison.
- Compare the persons, places, or events based on the characteristics.
- Draw a conclusion by noting special likenesses and differences between the persons, places, or events, based on each characteristic.
- Conclude important details about each person, place, or event.
- Write a comparison essay, using the conclusions as well as the other details that have been noted.

Tips/Variations:

- Help your students understand that good writing really does matter—it provides meaning, stimulates clear thinking, and increases their understanding of your content.
- Assist students in their understanding of comparisons, noting the importance of looking at how the persons, places, or events are alike and different.
- Consider providing the characteristics on which you want your students to make their comparisons of the persons, places, or events.
- Consider providing the persons, places, or events for which you want students to determine characteristics and make the comparisons.
- Share students’ examples of comparisons and their resulting essays (with permission, of course).
- Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
Complete a comparison of two events, issues, or persons on the basis of your organization below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Identify two persons, places, or events to be compared.</th>
<th>Conclude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify characteris-tics on which you will make comparisons of the identified persons, places, or events.</td>
<td>On the basis of the characteristics in the first column, provide detailed information about each of the two things you are comparing in the next two columns. Add additional columns if you have additional persons, places, or events to compare.</td>
<td>On the basis of the characteristic, identify in the last column what the two being compared share in common as well as what is unique to each.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclude</td>
<td>Reflect on each of the ideas, persons, places, or events. Consider all characteristics and identify what is unique about each at the end of its respective column.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Compare to Conclude

Complete a comparison of two events, issues, or persons on the basis of your organization below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Salmonellosis</th>
<th>E.coli</th>
<th>Conclude</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong></td>
<td>Common bacterial infection—2,000 different strains.</td>
<td>Bacteria in intestines of animals and people—cause severe diarrhea and kidney damage.</td>
<td>Both are bacterial infections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Who gets it?</strong></td>
<td>More common in children, old people, and people with weak immune systems.</td>
<td>Anyone—but usually young children and elderly have most problems with it.</td>
<td>Both affect the young and elderly the most.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do they get it?</strong></td>
<td>By eating or drinking contaminated foods (e.g., raw poultry or eggs, unpasteurized milk or cheese) or by contact with infected people or animals.</td>
<td>By eating contaminated foods (beef, venison), rare meat, or raw meat juices; by not washing hands; by drinking contaminated water.</td>
<td>Both are caused by contaminated foods—one by eating raw chicken or unpasteurized milk, the other by eating rare beef or venison.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What are symptoms?</strong></td>
<td>Severe or bloody diarrhea, fever, chills, stomach pains, or vomiting 1 to 3 days after exposure.</td>
<td>For some, mild diarrhea or no symptoms. For most, severe diarrhea, stomach cramps, blood in stool 3–4 days after exposure.</td>
<td>Both result in diarrhea or stomach aches—one in 1–3 days, the other in 3–4 days.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is the treatment?</strong></td>
<td>Time—no medication; sometimes need intravenous fluid for dehydration.</td>
<td>No medication. Don’t take antibiotics for 5–10 days.</td>
<td>No medications needed. In fact, with E. coli, be sure no meds are given.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How do we prevent it?</strong></td>
<td>Wash your hands! Eat inspected eggs and pasteurized milk. Wrap meat in plastic at store—no blood on foods. Wash counters.</td>
<td>Cook meat properly. Wash counters and hands.</td>
<td>Wash your hands! Keep the kitchen clean! Cook good food properly!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclude</strong></td>
<td>Food-related illness that requires cleanliness; no meds to cure it.</td>
<td>Food-related illness that requires cleanliness; no meds to cure it.</td>
<td>It would be hard to tell which you had, unless you knew what you had eaten.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>Conclude</td>
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</table>

Complete a comparison of two events, issues, or persons on the basis of your organization below.
**Prewriting Tool**

**Conferencing About My Writing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Prewriting Tool</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>During-Writing Tool</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Postwriting Tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**How to Use:**

The student will . . .

Before the conference:

- Determine the goal of the conference. It may be to generate topics for writing; to determine other sources of information; to review the writing for choice of verbs, correct sequence of information, supporting details, and so on; or even to get assistance on the final editing of the writing.

- Brainstorm questions he would like answered to improve the writing.

During the conference:

- Summarize responses to the questions, making sure to have enough details to determine next steps.

- Identify “next steps” for the writing based on the goal of the conference, the questions, and the responses. Keeping a detailed “to do” list will increase the likelihood that the changes will be made and the writing will improve.

After the conference:

- Reflect on the conference and summarize the qualities that made the conference helpful.

- Identify what needs to be improved if the conference is to be more successful next time.

**Tips/Variations:**

- Have students use the conferencing tool in preparation for a meeting with you as well as with their writing buddies.

- Encourage the students to use conferencing for various purposes in all stages of the writing process (e.g., generating topics in the prewriting stage, reviewing use of verbs in the during-writing stage, final editing during the postwriting stage).

- Consider sharing the conference goal with the students and brainstorming together questions to be answered during the conference.

- Model for your students how to determine a conference goal and questions to be answered.
Model an actual conference for your students so that they can see how to focus on questions and answers and determine next steps.

When you conference with a student, be sure to select a location where the student feels safe—both physically and emotionally. Stay focused on the goal of the conference and the questions that have been developed. If time allows, you could brainstorm additional questions with the student and seek answers.

Consider having students with common questions or needs meet together with you. You can then provide focused guidance in answering the questions and determining next steps for improving their writing.

Consider having “desk-side conferences” with students. Such conferences can be helpful, be completed quickly, and still focus on the conference goals and questions, which students might write on note cards and place at the edge of their desks. If several students have the same questions identified, you could do a minilesson for them or for the entire class.

Be sure to have students reflect on the conference itself. Did it help them achieve the goal? Is their writing better as a result of the conference? What do they need to do to ensure that having a conference positively influences their writing?

Consider doing a “think aloud” of your own reflection on the conference, to help students see that the process they use is just as important as the outcome.

Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
CONFERENCING ABOUT MY WRITING

Plan for an upcoming conference about your writing. Determine your goal and questions you want answered during that conference. Take notes on the conference, determine next steps, and reflect on the value of the conference.

**Conference Goal:**
Identify the purpose of your conference with your writing buddy or teacher. It might be to generate topics, finalize key points for your paper, revise the content of your writing, complete final editing, and so on.

**Questions to Get Answered:**
List the specific questions you need to get answered to achieve your conference goal.

**Answers to My Questions:**
As you conference about the writing, summarize the responses to your questions. Be sure to be specific enough to be able to make necessary changes in your writing.

**Next Steps:**
Before you end your conference, identify the specific steps you will take in your writing based on the conference questions and responses. A “to do” list is helpful in making sure you get everything accomplished that will improve your writing. It’s also fun to check off the items as you complete the work.

**How Successful Was the Conference?**
Reflect on your conference. Did you have the right goal? Were the questions helpful in guiding the conversation? Did you stay focused? Did the conference positively influence your writing? What will you do differently (or the same) next time?
CONFERENCING ABOUT MY WRITING

Plan for an upcoming conference about your writing. Determine your goal and questions you want answered during that conference. Take notes on the conference, determine next steps, and reflect on the value of the conference.

Conference Goal:
- Transitions
- Action verbs
I want to improve my writing by focusing on transitions and making sure I have verbs that tell the story.

Questions to Get Answered:
1. What are good transition words? Where can I get them?
2. How can I spark up my paper with verbs that help the reader?

Answers to My Questions:
1. For transitions, I need to think about phrases or terms that connect with the organizational pattern of my paper.
2. I should use the thesaurus to “spark” my verbs.

Next Steps:
- Check out a thesaurus; circle my verbs, and then select some verbs from the thesaurus that give my paper more spark and clearer meaning.
- Do a second draft of my paper and add transitions.
- Have Juan read my second draft, focusing on clarity and verbs that really tell the story.

How Successful Was the Conference?
It was most helpful to determine the goal of the conference. I connected it with my goal for the quarter, so this helped that, too. Plus, we stayed on the topic!
CONFERENCING ABOUT MY WRITING

Plan for an upcoming conference about your writing. Determine your goal and questions you want answered during that conference. Take notes on the conference, determine next steps, and reflect on the value of the conference.

Conference Goal:

Questions to Get Answered:

Answers to My Questions:

Next Steps:

How Successful Was the Conference?
Creating a Metaphor

How to Use:
The student will...

☛ Reflect on how the thing or process being studied is like something in the real world.

☛ Identify the parts of each, placing the parts that are content-related in the first column and the corresponding parts of the real-world items in the second column.

☛ Summarize the relationship between the two items.

☛ Use the information to create a description or comparison for the reader.

Tips/Variations:

☛ Help your students understand that good writing really does matter—it provides meaning, stimulates clear thinking, and increases understanding of the content.

☛ Model the creation of a metaphor. Discuss in a “think aloud” the process you use to identify the parts of the content-related subject and the parts of the real-world connection.

☛ Provide opportunities for students to create metaphors to allow them to relate new information to something that they already know. Creating metaphors helps students construct meaning by making connections.

☛ Help students recognize the importance of metaphors in clarifying their understanding of information as well as assisting others in their understanding.

☛ Remember that creating metaphors is especially helpful in the sciences as you seek to explain systems.

☛ Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
When you create a metaphor, you point out how two quite different things or processes are really similar in many ways. List the main components of each item or process and determine how the parts are alike. If differences occur, note them as well.

**Focus of Metaphor:**

Identify the two things or processes to be compared.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>One</th>
<th>Two</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lists “parts” of the content-related thing or process in this column.</td>
<td>List “parts” of the real-world thing or process in this column.</td>
<td>Note the relationship between the two in this column. Although you focus on how they are alike, be sure to note differences if it would help the reader’s understanding to do so.</td>
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CREATING A METAPHOR

When you create a metaphor, you point out how two quite different things or processes are really similar in many ways. List the main components of each item or process and determine how the parts are alike. If differences occur, note them as well.

Focus of Metaphor: *Cell and a Factory*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>One</th>
<th>Two</th>
<th>Relationship</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nucleus</td>
<td>Executive offices</td>
<td>Runs the entire cell and controls all activity. This is where all the planning is done—and where the “history” is kept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cytoplasm</td>
<td>“Factory floor”</td>
<td>Where all the work takes place—the real activity—where things get assembled, completed, and shipped.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mitochondrion</td>
<td>Furnace room</td>
<td>The powerhouse of the cell, where energy is converted to meet the needs of the body.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Plasma membrane        | Shipping and receiving department and communication department | • Controls what comes in and goes out.  
                           |                                          | • Area that makes contact outside of cell. |
| Endoplasmic reticulum  | Shipping department                      | The shuttling area of movement of new production.                           |
| Golgi apparatus        | Packaging area                           | Where the products are made ready for shipping by being put into “sacs” ready to transport. |
| Ribosomes              | Planning department                      | Translate the plan into action.                                             |
| Chromosomes            | The plan or design                       | Contain the blueprint.                                                     |
When you create a metaphor, you point out how two quite different things or processes are really similar in many ways. List the main components of each item or process and determine how the parts are alike. If differences occur, note them as well.

Focus of Metaphor: 

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HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .
☛ Select a character or person and an event—or those provided by the teacher—in completing this activity.
☛ Review how diaries are different from other forms of writing in that they reflect the thinking of the writer; therefore the facts are open to interpretation by the writer.
☛ Use context clues and facts from a text or presentation that support the thinking of the person from whose perspective the diary entry is written.
☛ Use the answers to each question as content for writing the diary entry.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☛ If students have selected different people or characters, assign them to groups of five and complete the activity in round-robin fashion by having each member of the group complete one of the questions for each person or character. After group members have shared their answers, each person writes the complete diary entry for his original person or character.
☛ Help students understand how they can make inferences about what the person or character might write in a diary by making “educated guesses” about what the person or character might think about the event. Make sure students understand that they need to use facts to support their inferences.
☛ Collect the diary entries and either read them aloud to the class or have students do so. You might also consider doing choral reading of some of the diary entries.
☛ Review the diary entries with the class and discuss whether or not class members agree with the writer’s interpretation of the events as seen through the eyes of the person or character. If more than one student has chosen the same person or character, compare the diary entries and discuss which ones the class feels most accurately reflect what the person or character might have actually written.
☛ Share with students primary sources of real diary entries made by characters or persons at the time of the event. You might consider doing this prior to the activity, to provide students with a model of a diary entry.
Pick an event in the life of a person or character you are studying. Imagine that you are that person or character, who is writing about the event in a personal diary.

In planning the diary entry, make notes about the following:

What you saw or heard: Include enough details to give the reader a clear picture of what happened.

Why you think the event happened: If you aren’t sure why, make an “educated guess” based on what you know or think you know.

How you felt about the event and why: You may have to interpret the writer’s feelings based on what you know about his or her personality.

What you think about someone else involved in the event: It’s OK to make an inference (guess) based on what you know about others involved in the event.

How you think the event will affect the future: Even if you know how the event turns out, try to imagine what the writer would think without knowing what happens in the future.

Now put your ideas together into a diary entry, as you think the person or character might have written it.
DEAR DIARY

Pick an event in the life of a person or character you are studying. Imagine that you are that person or character, who is writing about the event in a personal diary.

In planning the diary entry, make notes about the following:

What you saw or heard: __________________________
After the accident: Mom was scolding, in tears; “murderer”
sign; people in halls whisper while passing.

Why you think the event happened: __________________________
No one really thought of the consequences of
drinking and driving.

How you felt about the event and why: __________________________
Maybe it was meant to be. I’m not quite sure
why yet, but I’m sure I’ll find out sometime. Sometimes I feel like it’s my fault.
I should’ve been smarter.

What you think about someone else involved in the event: __________________________
I don’t think Robby would
want me to feel like it’s my fault.

How you think the event will affect the future: __________________________
I think I’ll value my life more and
take more time to think. I hope it will make other people think a little more,
too. People will never trust me again.

Now put your ideas together into a diary entry, as you think the person or character might have written it.

Source: Adapted with permission from a classroom example provided by Dawn Snyder, Horace Mann Middle School, Burlington, Iowa.
Pick an event in the life of a person or character you are studying. Imagine that you are that person or character, who is writing about the event in a personal diary.

In planning the diary entry, make notes about the following:

What you saw or heard: ________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Why you think the event happened: ______________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

How you felt about the event and why: ________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

What you think about someone else involved in the event: ________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

How you think the event will affect the future: _________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Now put your ideas together into a diary entry, as you think the person or character might have written it.
Prewriting Tools

1. Compare/Contrast
2. Describe
3. Sequence/Order
4. Persuade
5. Cause and Effect
6. Problem and Solution
7. Reflect
8. Other

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HOW TO USE:
The student will...
☛ Identify an issue or event about which there would be several points of view.
☛ Identify groups or individuals who might have different points of view.
☛ Summarize her own point of view, with supporting evidence or examples.
☛ Identify the point of view each of the individuals or groups would have about the issue or event. Be sure to provide evidence or support for their points of view.
☛ Use her understanding of the various points of view to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the content.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☛ Assist students in their understanding of the importance and method of constructing support for the issue or event (e.g., current, historical). Help them understand that constructing support not only helps them have a deeper understanding of the information but also gives them a lifelong skill of persuading.
☛ Help students understand the importance of recognizing and writing about several points of view. It helps them understand your content better.
☛ Have students develop a “bank of events or issues” as well as a “bank of individuals or groups” with different points of view. Students may then select from these to write about various points of view and thus better understand the content.
☛ Lead a class discussion in which the students take on the point of view of one of their individuals or groups. Their participation during the discussion would need to reflect their new persona.
☛ Have the students write an essay using the information developed in this prewriting tool.
☛ Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
After identifying an issue or event, share perspectives from different points of view.

**Issue or Event:** ______________________________________________________________________________

**My Point of View:** ___________________________________________________________________________

**Identify two or three other individuals or groups who would have a different point of view about the issue or event.**

**Point of View:** ___________________________________________________________________________

**Identify an issue or event (e.g., from current events, history, a novel, or a story) that could be looked at differently from several points of view.**

**Share your point of view about the identified issue or event. Provide support for your point of view with facts, evidence, examples, or quotations.**

**Point of View:** ___________________________________________________________________________

**For each individual or group identified, share their point of view and construct support for that point of view with quotations, facts, evidence, or examples. Looking “at the other side” helps you better understand the issue or event.**

**Point of View:** ___________________________________________________________________________
DEPENDS ON WHOSE POINT OF VIEW IT IS

After identifying an issue or event, share perspectives from different points of view.

Issue or Event: Some Internationalists’ Anger with the United States

My Point of View:

We aren’t good listeners. We often forget that half of communication is talking but the more important half is listening.

One Diplomat’s Point of View:

We haven’t done a good job explaining our side of the issue to their country. We haven’t told them very well what our foreign policy is and how it is designed for their own good. My comment—this is a “eurocentric” view!

Robert Fisk’s Point of View:

This British journalist recognized that our country often recognizes the “who” and “how” people react, but we rarely look at the “why.” We try to avoid the why—or explain it from our vantage point.

One International Leader’s Point of View:

The United States needs to look after its own interests—but not our interests. Let us take care of our own lands, our own people, our own honor. The United States needs to ask itself what it has done that forces us to defend ourselves against the United States.
DEPENDS ON WHOSE POINT OF VIEW IT IS

After identifying an issue or event, share perspectives from different points of view.

Issue or Event: ________________________________________________________________

My Point of View: _____________________________________________________________

____________________’s Point of View: ____________________________________________

____________________’s Point of View: ____________________________________________

____________________’s Point of View: ____________________________________________

____________________’s Point of View: ____________________________________________
Prewriting Tools

DESCRIBING A CHARACTER

Note: This tool can be used to develop a character for a fictional piece of writing or to describe a historical figure.

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Identify a person or character to develop or describe.

☛ Describe the physical traits of the individual in the “Looks Like” area, giving consideration to physique, dress, facial features, and so forth.

☛ Identify phrases and sentences the individual might say in the “Sounds Like” area, noting tone of voice and choice of words, making sure they are consistent with the character being developed or the person being described.

☛ Describe in the “Feels Like” area the aura created by this individual, noting how the person or character feels and makes others feel.

☛ Identify thoughts this individual might have, making sure to reveal the character of the individual described.

☛ Note activities in which this individual actually participated (if a real person) or might participate (if a fictional character), considering both work and play.

☛ Highlight activities that create or support the image of this person or character.

☛ Use all available information (about a real person) or ideas (about a fictional character) to describe the individual while developing the writing.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

☛ Help your students understand that characters take development—conscious development—if they are to remain true to themselves in the story being developed or even if a writing is describing a historical character.

☛ Model for your students how you might develop a fictional or nonfictional character. Post pictures in your classroom of various “characters” that might help the students as they develop their own characters.
Provide examples of character descriptions of various quality in order to show the effect of a character’s thoughts, remarks, looks, actions, and feelings on the reader.

Consider having students reflect on their character development or description with their writing buddy. The writing buddy should picture the character as characteristics are shared. The writer should then add details to the character description as identified or shared by the writing buddy.

Have students “watch people” and then develop character descriptions based on what they see and hear.

Encourage students to keep a character description section in their writing notebook, where they can further develop characters to use in their writings.

Share students’ examples (with permission, of course) of quality character development.

Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
DESCRIBING A CHARACTER

Share details about a fictional character or historical figure. Describe what the individual might look like and say, thoughts and attitudes he or she might have, feelings the individual might harbor, and actual things he or she might do. Use this information to write a fictional piece or to describe a historical figure.

Once you have brainstormed as many characteristics as possible, consider highlighting those that support the character you want to describe or create.

**Character:**
Name your character!

**Feels Like:**
Share the disposition of this individual, including how he or she makes others feel.

**Thinks Like:**
Share thoughts this individual might have—what does he or she dream or think about? Be specific.

**Does:**
Share things this individual does or might do. Consider hobbies or habits that might reveal personality. We are our actions—so let actions develop your characters.

**Looks Like:**
Determine physical characteristics of your nonfictional or fictional character. Identify his or her physique and clothing—anything that will be distinguishing.

**Sounds Like:**
Share things this character did or might say. Describe tone of voice. Include what that individual says that reveals his or her true character.

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DESCRIBING A CHARACTER

Share details about a fictional character or historical figure. Describe what the individual might look like and say, thoughts and attitudes he or she might have, feelings the individual might harbor, and actual things he or she might do. Use this information to write a fictional piece or to describe a historical figure.

Sounds Like:
- “If slavery is not wrong, then nothing is wrong.”
- Great sense of humor.
- Poked fun at self.
- High squeaky voice.

Feels Like:
- Complex.
- Air of sorrow.
- Often doubts himself.
- Many had a low opinion of him.
- Rally people for cause.

Character:
Abraham Lincoln

Thinks Like:
- Used people in best position.
- Capitalized on people’s strengths.
- Didn’t believe blacks and whites could live together.
- Higher value was to preserve the Union.

Does:
- Emancipation Proclamation.
- Ambitious, focused.
- Whatever necessary to save Union.
- Held 13,000 without a trial during war.
- Suspended publication of newspaper.
- Suspended voting in some areas.
- Disregarded Constitution.

Looks Like:
- 6' 4" tall.
- 180 pounds.
- Big hands and feet.
- Gaunt face; beard; black top hat.
- Dressed in black.

- • Great sense of humor.
- • Poked fun at self.
- • High squeaky voice.
DESCRIBING A CHARACTER

Share details about a fictional character or historical figure. Describe what the individual might look like and say, thoughts and attitudes he or she might have, feelings the individual might harbor, and actual things he or she might do. Use this information to write a fictional piece or to describe a historical figure.
DETERMINING THE BEST SOLUTION

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .
☛ Identify a possible problem.
☛ Determine the facts as he knows them. Exploring the text as well as notes and prior knowledge helps the student identify the real facts and get to the real problem. The student should jot down his initial response to the question, accessing as much prior knowledge as possible.
☛ State the real problem succinctly.
☛ Note several solutions to the problem and provide details about each.
☛ Identify the consequences of each solution, the plusses and the minuses.
☛ Determine the best solution for the problem.
☛ Proceed in writing the first draft of the paper.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☛ Caution students that people often solve the same problem over and over, simply because they are solving symptoms, not the real problem. Encourage them to be as clear as they can about the facts up front. They may find they have a different problem than they thought.
☛ Encourage students to identify as many solutions as possible. This is a good place to have students talk with their writing buddy to explore as many solutions as possible as well as details about each solution.
☛ Have students meet with their writing buddy to discuss the ramifications. Remind them that “we” really is smarter than “me.” The result will be increased ramifications—both negative and positive.
☛ Help students understand that if they choose one solution for the problem they may still use much of the information in the other solutions and ramifications to strengthen their solution.
☛ If the top three solutions will be shared in their paper, encourage the students to consider sharing the second-best solution first and save the best solution for last.
☛ Keep in mind that although this tool is great for “class content” issues, it also provides the opportunity to connect your content with the real world.
Model the process for your students. Having a wall mural of the problem-solving preparation can help students see how to organize their thinking before they begin to write.

Remember that having students solve problems and provide support for the solution often increases their engagement in your content. And when you connect the problems to issues students are concerned with in their world, you create passion for learning.

Have students develop a “bank of problems” for which they may choose to explore solutions.

Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
Determining the Best Solution

Determine the best solution by first identifying the facts as you know them. After summarizing the problem on the basis of the facts, determine possible solutions and consequences of each solution. This process will lead you to the best solution.

**Just the Facts:**
We often end up solving a problem many times because we didn’t solve the real problem. Look at all the facts first to ensure that you are solving the real problem.

**The Real Problem Is:**
Once you have reviewed the facts carefully, state the real problem. Get to the point! Be succinct!

**Possible Solution**
Come up with as many solutions as possible. Be as detailed as you can about each solution. This will give you valuable information once you select the solution and begin your draft. The solutions you do not use may provide information for your paper.

**Possible Consequences**
Identify all of the plusses and minuses for each solution. This will help you select the best solution for the problem and give you good information to include in your paper. In your draft, you might address each solution with its ramifications or just select one on which to focus. If you use all three, consider sharing the second-best first and save the best for last.
Determine the best solution by first identifying the facts as you know them. After summarizing the problem on the basis of the facts, determine possible solutions and consequences of each solution. This process will lead you to the best solution.

**Just the Facts:** I have just completed building a table in my woods class—it’s gorgeous. I want to put on “the best” finish—a finish that will bring out the grain of the wood and enrich the color. I also want the finish to protect the surface, so fingerprints and water won’t ruin all the work on this table. I also know humidity will affect the finish I choose.

**The Real Problem Is:**
So what is the best finish for the table I have made—oil or wax, shellac, or varnish?

**Possible Solutions**

- **Oil or Wax**
  - Simple to use, easy to apply, and “idiot proof”
  - Achieves natural, rich color
  - Brings out grain and beauty of wood
  - Inexpensive

- **Shellac**
  - Seals against stains
  - Easy to apply; looks beautiful
  - Easy to touch up
  - Low toxicity
  - Resistant to humidity in air
  - Enduring—will last a long time

- **Varnish**
  - Builds a thickness quickly
  - Resists water
  - Resists humidity changes
  - Resists chemicals
  - Resists wear and tear
  - Inexpensive
  - “Cures” fast
  - Available in spray

**Possible Consequences**

- **Oil or Wax**
  - Poor resistance
  - Needs extra-fine preparation of wood
  - Flammable—spontaneous combustion

- **Shellac**
  - It’s not great with water—“glass rings”
  - Susceptible to heat
  - Not good for table tops

- **Varnish**
  - Hard to apply
  - May turn yellow
  - Dries slowly
  - Darkens and cracks—alligator skin—after a period of time
  - Environmental Protection Agency has concerns
DETERMINING THE BEST SOLUTION

Determine the best solution by first identifying the facts as you know them. After summarizing the problem on the basis of the facts, determine possible solutions and consequences of each solution. This process will lead you to the best solution.

**Just the Facts:**

**The Real Problem Is:**

**Possible Solution**

**Possible Solution**

**Possible Solution**

**Possible Consequences**

**Possible Consequences**

**Possible Consequences**

**Possible Consequences**
EVALUATING MY OWN WRITING HABITS

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Rate herself or himself on a 4–1 basis for each of the areas.
☛ Subtotal each area’s score.
☛ Total the subtotals.
☛ Reflect on the data, addressing both the strengths and the challenges.
☛ Set a goal based on the information.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☛ Introduce the students to the concepts of reflecting on and evaluating their writing habits. Share and discuss the five areas on which you will be asking them to reflect. Be sure to explain the “definitions” of the 4–1 rating scale.
☛ Consider using this tool before you have students set goals in writing. It should enable them to reflect on various areas and help them determine a focus for their goal setting.
☛ Discuss each section with your students, or have small groups do so, before asking students to respond to the statements. This will increase their awareness of what it takes to be a good writer in your content area.
☛ Have students set a goal for writing in your class; give them opportunities to reflect often on their progress toward the goal.
☛ Celebrate accomplishments toward goals both with individual students and with the class as a whole. This will help students see how you value writing in your class—and how you value progress.
☛ Consider having students purposefully recognize what it would look, sound, and feel like if a writer in your class demonstrated a specific behavior. Also have them recognize what it would look, sound, and feel like if a writer didn’t demonstrate the indicator. This will assist in raising “red flags” for your writers and help them better understand what it takes to demonstrate quality in each area.
☛ Have the students redo the assessment quarterly or on a schedule in order to identify progress they are making in each area.
Provide reflective probes aligned with the various areas throughout the semester. This will help students continue to focus on developing their own strengths as writers in your content area.

Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
EVALUATING MY OWN WRITING HABITS

4—Excellent  3—Good  2—Fair  1—Poor

Evaluate your own writing habits to determine your strengths and to set goals for improvement. Find the subtotal for each area.

My Writing Habits:

1. I write “for fun” about 20 minutes every day. [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]
2. I can name at least two kinds of writing I like to do (e.g., journaling, short story, persuasion, narrative). [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]
3. I use different strategies and tools to write different kinds of text (e.g., journaling, short story, persuasion, narrative). [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]
4. I set a goal or purpose and determine the audience whenever I write. [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]
5. When I or others don’t understand what I write, I persist in making changes in my writing for clarity—both revision of ideas and editing of grammar and punctuation. [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]

__________ Subtotal of statements 1–5—My Writing Habits

Social/Situational Learning About Writing

6. I seek assistance from others (e.g., writing buddy, writing team, teacher) when my writing is confusing, when I am not achieving my goal or purpose, or when I have questions about my writing. [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]
7. I share with others (e.g., writing buddy, writing team, teacher) strategies that help me write better. [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]
8. I am an active participant in sharing with my classmates strategies that work for me in the writing process or assignment. [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]
9. I participate in small-group discussions about the writing assigned, sharing and listening so that we all get better at our writing. [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]
10. I participate in large-group discussions about the assigned writing, sharing and listening so that we all get better at our writing. [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]

__________ Subtotal of statements 6–10—Social/Situational Learning About Writing

Writing-to-Learn Strategies

11. I summarize or paraphrase in my own words what I have read or learned. [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]
12. I frequently check my own understanding of what I have written, and make corrections or additions to increase my understanding. [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]
13. I use different tools and styles to help me think about what I have learned (e.g., notes, graphic organizers, journals, reflections, letters, retellings). [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]
14. I take notes in my own words and use symbols to indicate what I already knew, what I have learned that is new, and what questions I still have. [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]
15. I recognize that writing about my learning helps make "fuzzy" thinking more clear. [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]

__________ Subtotal of statements 11–15—Writing-to-Learn Strategies
EVALUATING MY OWN WRITING HABITS (CONTINUED)

Content Writing Strategies

16. I use writing strategies and tools to connect the new content or learning to what I already know about the subject.
17. I paraphrase my new learning in my own words to help me remember the new content.
18. I use multiple sources to support my thesis or thinking when I write in the content area.
19. I use graphic organizers or other tools to organize my thinking before I begin to write my first draft.
20. I work with my writing buddy to help clarify my writing both in the revision and editing processes.

Subtotal of statements 16–20—Content Writing Strategies

Structure of My Writing

21. I identify the purpose of my writing as well as the audience for my writing.
22. I identify the organizational pattern that will best achieve my purpose (e.g., comparison/contrast, description, sequence/order, persuasion, cause/effect, problem/solution, reflection).
23. Before I begin to write, I determine key vocabulary words I need to know and use in my writing.
24. I develop supporting details and examples that provide clarity in my writing. I consider the addition of visuals to help my reader better understand what I have written.
25. I use transitional words (e.g., first, in comparison, most important, then) to help my readers better understand my writing.
26. I revise and edit my writing, often with the help of my writing buddy, to help my readers better understand my writing.

Subtotal of statements 21–26—Structure of My Writing

Subtotal Scores:

Subtotal of statements 1–5—My Writing Habits
Subtotal of statements 6–10—Social/Situational Learning About Writing
Subtotal of statements 11–15—Writing-to-Learn Strategies
Subtotal of statements 16–20—Content Writing Strategies
Subtotal of statements 21–26—Structure of My Writing
Grand Total of statements 1–26—My Writing Habits

Identify and reflect on areas of strength and your specific practices that make you strong in these areas. Identify and reflect on challenging areas and two or three strategies you could use or practice to turn your challenge areas into strengths in your writing.

Be sure to reflect on your strengths and challenges and determine a focus for getting better as a writer.
EVALUATING MY OWN WRITING HABITS

4—Excellent  3—Good  2—Fair  1—Poor

Evaluate your own writing habits to determine your strengths and to set goals for improvement. Find the subtotal for each area.

My Writing Habits:

1. I write “for fun” about 20 minutes every day.
2. I can name at least two kinds of writing I like to do (e.g., journaling, short story, persuasion, narrative).
3. I use different strategies and tools to write different kinds of text (e.g., journaling, short story, persuasion, narrative).
4. I set a goal or purpose and determine the audience whenever I write.
5. When I or others don’t understand what I write, I persist in making changes in my writing for clarity—both revision of ideas and editing of grammar and punctuation.

____________ Subtotal of statements 1–5—My Writing Habits

Social/Situational Learning About Writing

6. I seek assistance from others (e.g., writing buddy, writing team, teacher) when my writing is confusing, when I am not achieving my goal or purpose, or when I have questions about my writing.
7. I share with others (e.g., writing buddy, writing team, teacher) strategies that help me write better.
8. I am an active participant in sharing with my classmates strategies that work for me in the writing process or assignment.
9. I participate in small-group discussions about the writing assigned, sharing and listening so that we all get better at our writing.
10. I participate in large-group discussions about the assigned writing, sharing and listening so that we all get better at our writing.

____________ Subtotal of statements 6–10—Social/Situational Learning About Writing

Writing-to-Learn Strategies

11. I summarize or paraphrase in my own words what I have read or learned.
12. I frequently check my own understanding of what I have written, and make corrections or additions to increase my understanding.
13. I use different tools and styles to summarize my learning (e.g., notes, graphic organizers, journals, reflections, letters, retellings).
14. I take notes in my own words and use symbols to indicate what I already knew, what I have learned that is new, and what questions I still have.
15. I recognize that writing about my learning helps make “fuzzy” thinking more clear.

____________ Subtotal of statements 11–15—Writing-to-Learn Strategies
## Evaluating My Own Writing Habits (Continued)

### Content Writing Strategies

16. I use writing strategies and tools to connect the new content or learning to what I already know about the subject.

17. I paraphrase my new learning in my own words to help me remember the new content.

18. I use multiple sources to support my thesis or thinking when I write in the content area.

19. I use graphic organizers or other tools to organize my thinking before I begin to write my first draft.

20. I work with my writing buddy to help clarify my writing both in the revision and editing processes.

Subtotal of statements 16–20—Content Writing Strategies

### Structure of My Writing

21. I identify the purpose of my writing as well as the audience for my writing.

22. I identify the organizational pattern that will best achieve my purpose (e.g., comparison/contrast, description, sequence/order, persuasion, cause/effect, problem/solution, reflection).

23. Before I begin to write, I determine key vocabulary words I need to know and use in my writing.

24. I develop supporting details and examples that provide clarity in my writing. I consider the addition of visuals to help my reader better understand what I have written.

25. I use transitional words (e.g., first, in comparison, most important, then) to help my readers better understand my writing.

26. I revise and edit my writing, often with the help of my writing buddy, to help my readers better understand my writing.

Subtotal of statements 21–26—Structure of My Writing

### Subtotal Scores:

- **13** Subtotal of statements 1–5—My Writing Habits
- **11** Subtotal of statements 6–10—Social/Situational Learning About Writing
- **14** Subtotal of statements 11–15—Writing-to-Learn Strategies
- **15** Subtotal of statements 16–20—Content Writing Strategies
- **14** Subtotal of statements 21–26—Structure of My Writing

**Grand Total of statements 1–26—My Writing Habits: 67 of 104**

Identify and reflect on areas of strength and your specific practices that make you strong in these areas. Identify and reflect on challenging areas and two or three strategies you could use or practice to turn your challenge areas into strengths in your writing. Reflection: Wow—this really helped me. I see I am strongest in writing-to-learn and content writing strategies—but I still need to focus on the structure of my writing. I think if I work hard here and then share with my writing buddy, I will see big improvement in my writing. I am really going to try to work on the use of transitions, identification of purpose and audience, and determining key vocabulary terms to include in my writing.
EVALUATING MY OWN WRITING HABITS

4—Excellent    3—Good    2—Fair    1—Poor

Evaluate your own writing habits to determine your strengths and to set goals for improvement. Find the subtotal for each area.

My Writing Habits:

1. I write “for fun” about 20 minutes every day.
   4 3 2 1

2. I can name at least two kinds of writing I like to do (e.g., journaling, short story, persuasion, narrative).
   4 3 2 1

3. I use different strategies and tools to write different kinds of text (e.g., journaling, short story, persuasion, narrative).
   4 3 2 1

4. I set a goal or purpose and determine the audience whenever I write.
   4 3 2 1

5. When I or others don’t understand what I write, I persist in making changes in my writing for clarity—both revision of ideas and editing of grammar and punctuation.
   4 3 2 1

___________ Subtotal of statements 1–5—My Writing Habits

Social/Situational Learning About Writing

6. I seek assistance from others (e.g., writing buddy, writing team, teacher) when my writing is confusing, when I am not achieving my goal or purpose, or when I have questions about my writing.
   4 3 2 1

7. I share with others (e.g., writing buddy, writing team, teacher) strategies that help me write better.
   4 3 2 1

8. I am an active participant in sharing with my classmates strategies that work for me in the writing process or assignment.
   4 3 2 1

9. I participate in small-group discussions about the writing assigned, sharing and listening so that we all get better at our writing.
   4 3 2 1

10. I participate in large-group discussions about the assigned writing, sharing and listening so that we all get better at our writing.
    4 3 2 1

___________ Subtotal of statements 6–10—Social/Situational Learning About Writing

Writing-to-Learn Strategies

11. I summarize or paraphrase in my own words what I have read or learned.
    4 3 2 1

12. I frequently check my own understanding of what I have written, and make corrections or additions to increase my understanding.
    4 3 2 1

13. I use different tools and styles to summarize my learning (e.g., notes, graphic organizers, journals, reflections, letters, retellings).
    4 3 2 1

14. I take notes in my own words and use symbols to indicate what I already knew, what I have learned that is new, and what questions I still have.
    4 3 2 1

15. I recognize that writing about my learning helps make “fuzzy” thinking more clear.
    4 3 2 1

___________ Subtotal of statements 11–15—Writing-to-Learn Strategies
EVALUATING MY OWN WRITING HABITS (CONTINUED)

**Content Writing Strategies**

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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>16.</td>
<td>I use writing strategies and tools to connect the new content or learning to what I already know about the subject.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17.</td>
<td>I paraphrase my new learning in my own words to help me remember the new content.</td>
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<td>19.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.</td>
<td>I work with my writing buddy to help clarify my writing both in the revision and editing processes.</td>
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**Structure of My Writing**

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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21.</td>
<td>I identify the purpose of my writing as well as the audience for my writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>22.</td>
<td>I identify the organizational pattern that will best achieve my purpose (e.g., comparison/contrast, description, sequence/order, persuasion, cause/effect, problem/solution, reflection).</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24.</td>
<td>I develop supporting details and examples that provide clarity in my writing. I consider the addition of visuals to help my reader better understand what I have written.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>25.</td>
<td>I use transitional words (e.g., first, in comparison, most important, then) to help my readers better understand my writing.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26.</td>
<td>I revise and edit my writing, often with the help of my writing buddy, to help my readers better understand my writing.</td>
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**Subtotal Scores:**

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<td>Subtotal of statements 1–5—My Writing Habits</td>
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<td>Subtotal of statements 6–10—Social/Situational Learning About Writing</td>
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<td>Subtotal of statements 11–15—Writing-to-Learn Strategies</td>
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<td>Grand Total of statements 1–26—My Writing Habits</td>
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Identify and reflect on areas of strength and your specific practices that make you strong in these areas. Identify and reflect on challenging areas and two or three strategies you could use or practice to turn your challenge areas into strengths in your writing.
FREEWRITING
IN STEPS

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

➔ Write the topic being considered as the focus for a formal composition on the top line of the page.

➔ Spend 3–5 minutes thinking about each of the following activities about the topic: describe it, compare it, analyze it, apply it, and argue for or against it. Write down thoughts in the form of notes for each area. Write as quickly and simply as possible, writing down every thought.

➔ Review the freewriting notes. Think about how useful it might be to write a more formal paper about the topic. Use the notes to narrow the topic of the writing and to determine the purpose that would be appropriate for the paper.

➔ Broaden, narrow, or change the topic if necessary to make it more appropriate as the focus for the writing.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
➔ Use freewriting to help students focus their thinking on a topic that can be used as the basis for a formal written composition.

➔ Encourage students to write down everything they are thinking and not try to “force” their thoughts. The purpose of the freewriting activity is to help students assess what they know about the topic and how well that topic might translate into a formal composition.

➔ Group students in pairs or small groups to either create their freewriting or share it. If students have different topics, consider grouping students by topics to share their freewriting with one another.

➔ Model the freewriting process with a topic that has been studied previously. Help students understand how to broaden or narrow a topic and how to choose a purpose for the writing that is appropriate for the topic.
Free Writing in Steps

Answer each of the questions in each block by writing down whatever comes to mind about your topic. Do not stop to analyze what you are writing. The goal is to get down all of the ideas you can. Spend 3–5 minutes on each question.

Topic: 

Describe It: What does the topic look like? Sound like? Feel like?

Use lots of rich detail that would help someone else picture the topic in their mind. Use all five senses—sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell—in your description. Use words that create vivid images.

Compare It: To what can the topic be compared? What makes it unique?

What makes the topic different? Why is it important? Is there something else with which it might be compared? How is it like something else with which you are already familiar?

Analyze It: What are the components of the topic? Describe each part or subtopic.

Break your topic into smaller parts and focus on each one, describing each part in detail. Which parts or subtopics are important to the overall topic?
APPLY IT: What is the significance of the topic? Why would people be interested in it?

Reflect on why this topic is important to study. Does it affect people's lives? Is it interesting? What rationale would you give for including the topic in the curriculum?

ARGUE FOR OR AGAINST IT: Give as many reasons as you can for your position.

Make a case for either including or not including the topic in a list of what every educated person should know. What reasons do you have for thinking as you do? Imagine that you are trying to convince someone else to think like you do.

Review your freewriting notes. Then use the following questions to determine whether your topic needs to be changed, reduced in scope, or expanded.

- Am I still interested in the topic?
- Do I have plenty to say about the topic?
- Will my audience be interested in what I have to say?

Use your freewriting notes to help draft your paper.

Is this topic worthy of being the subject of more formal writing? What purpose would you select as the focus for your paper? Do you need to broaden or narrow the topic?
**FREEWRITING IN STEPS**

Answer each of the questions in each block by writing down whatever comes to mind about your topic. Do not stop to analyze what you are writing. The goal is to get down all of the ideas you can. Spend 3–5 minutes on each question.

**Topic:** Mass Transit Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIBE IT: What does the topic look like? Sound like? Feel like?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Buses, planes, subways, trolleys, railroads, school buses, ferries</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Noisy, busy, all types of people, crowded, dirty</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Schedules, relatively cheap, dependable</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Big vehicles, advertising</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Smelling inside and out</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Safe in most areas</strong></td>
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<tr>
<th>COMPARE IT: To what can the topic be compared? What makes it unique?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Individual Transportation:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Expensive</td>
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<td>• Small vehicles</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Can go wherever you want</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Can go whenever you want</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Individual ownership</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mass Transit Systems:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cheaper than individual modes of transportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Larger vehicles that call for large areas to gather people</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Only go on specific routes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Run on a schedule</td>
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<td>• Many times are subsidized by a government agency</td>
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<tr>
<th>ANALYZE IT: What are the components of the topic? Describe each part or subtopic.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>How used:</strong> Transport large numbers of people</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Where located:</strong> Larger urban areas, except for school buses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Types:</strong> Land, water, air—need large infrastructures to support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Costs:</strong> Lower than individual means of travel</td>
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</table>
APPLY IT: What is the significance of the topic? Why would people be interested in it?

Tax dollars are used to support it, so taxpayers want to make sure money is spent wisely. Millions of people depend on mass transit to get where they need to go. Safety is a concern of those who use mass transit—accidents, terrorism, personal assaults. Tourism is often dependent on the availability of mass transit. Need to be able to read schedules to use mass transit.

ARGUE FOR OR AGAINST IT: Give as many reasons as you can for your position.

Without mass transit, highways would be clogged with cars and traffic would be snarled more than it is now. Mass transit helps keep energy use down. Safety measures are used to help make mass transit safer. Fewer accidents and deaths in mass transit than with individual transportation. Mass transit is fast and efficient.

Review your freewriting notes. Then use the following questions to determine whether your topic needs to be changed, reduced in scope, or expanded.

- Am I still interested in the topic?
- Do I have plenty to say about the topic?
- Will my audience be interested in what I have to say?

Use your freewriting notes to help draft your paper.
**FREEWRITING IN STEPS**

Answer each of the questions in each block by writing down whatever comes to mind about your topic. Do not stop to analyze what you are writing. The goal is to get down all of the ideas you can. Spend 3–5 minutes on each question.

**Topic:**

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FREEWRITING IN STEPS (CONTINUED)

**APPLY IT:** What is the significance of the topic? Why would people be interested in it?

**ARGUE FOR OR AGAINST IT:** Give as many reasons as you can for your position.

Review your freewriting notes. Then use the following questions to determine whether your topic needs to be changed, reduced in scope, or expanded.

- Am I still interested in the topic?
- Do I have plenty to say about the topic?
- Will my audience be interested in what I have to say?

Use your freewriting notes to help draft your paper.
GOAL SETTING FOR MY WRITING

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Identify a goal to improve her writing skills and write the goal in the present tense, as if it were happening already.

☛ Identify three things that she can do specifically on a daily basis to achieve that goal. The more specific the student is, the better the chance of completing the things that will make her a better writer.

☛ Identify two specific things that might keep her from attaining the goal. Sometimes we forget that it is the little things that we don't identify that keep us from our goal.

☛ Identify a writing buddy that would be a hero for her and her goal—a person the student trusts and from whom she is willing to take suggestions, congratulations, and even admonishments.

☛ Reflect weekly (and even daily) on the goal and what she has done to accomplish or miss the goal.

☛ Determine “next steps” that might become a new goal (if the original goal is achieved) or more specific things that could be done daily to become a better writer.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

☛ Share with your students samples of goals for writing. Encourage your students to select one that is doable but also challenging.

☛ Brainstorm with the students things they might do to help or hinder their achievement of the goal.

☛ Consider “assigning” a hero for each student if your students are comfortable with all members of their writing community.

☛ Allow time for students to reflect daily or weekly on the achievement of their goal. Celebrate accomplishments. If they are not achieving their goals, help students fine-tune the goals or actions needed to achieve them.

☛ Consider having a class goal; together with students, identify actions that will help or hinder the attainment of the goal. Allow each student to be the hero for any member of the class. Be sure to celebrate successes and adjust the class goal for the next week.

☛ Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
Set a goal for your writing. Then determine three things you can do on a daily basis to achieve that goal. Also determine two things that you might do that could keep you from achieving your goal. Finally, determine a hero or writing buddy to help you achieve your goal. Be sure to take time to reflect on your progress toward your goal.

1. Identify three specific things you could do daily that would improve your writing in this content area.

2. Identify two things you might do—but want to avoid—so that you achieve your goal.

3. Reflect weekly on your progress toward your goal. Recognize what has helped and hindered you in achieving your goal. Determine next steps—perhaps a new goal if you achieved this one—or focus your next week’s steps to attain your goal.

Weekly Reflection: What helped or hindered me in reaching my goal?

Goal: Identify a goal to improve your writing. Think carefully about what you need to get better at.

Hero: Identify a writing buddy who will help you achieve your goal. This should be a person you trust, one who can tell you when you are doing well and when you are not.

How can I get even better next week?
GOAL SETTING FOR MY WRITING

Set a goal for your writing. Then determine three things you can do on a daily basis to achieve that goal. Also determine two things that you might do that could keep you from achieving your goal. Finally, determine a hero or writing buddy to help you achieve your goal. Be sure to take time to reflect on your progress toward your goal.

1. Write a little each day; rewrite a piece each day, focusing on creating a visual picture in the reader’s mind.
2. Check my verbs!
3. Use a thesaurus to add descriptive words to my writing.

Goal: Use descriptive words in my writing.

Hero: Maria

1. Keep it to myself; not letting Maria be my other set of eyes!
2. Not reading about my subject—I can get lots of ideas by reading other authors.

Weekly Reflection: What helped or hindered me in reaching my goal?
Maria was the most help. She knew what I wanted to accomplish. And when my writing didn’t create clear pictures, she asked me lots of questions and wrote down my answers—which helped on the next draft.

How can I get even better next week?
I need to learn to ask myself a lot of those questions before I talk with Maria.
Set a goal for your writing. Then determine three things you can do on a daily basis to achieve that goal. Also determine two things that you might do that could keep you from achieving your goal. Finally, determine a hero or writing buddy to help you achieve your goal. Be sure to take time to reflect on your progress toward your goal.

1. 

2. 

3. 

Goal:

Hero:

Weekly Reflection: What helped or hindered me in reaching my goal?

How can I get even better next week?
HITTING THE TARGET

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Identify the topic about which he is going to write.

☛ Determine the main idea or thesis for which he will construct support. This statement should answer the question, “What is it that I want to say about this topic?”

☛ Identify supporting details or examples. These may be causes that support a specific effect; possible solutions to support a problem; or details, stories, or examples that construct support for a description.

• Share the examples with his writing buddy.
• Extend his thinking, details, and examples.

☛ Prioritize the examples or details to determine and use the best three to support the thesis or main idea.

☛ Proceed with the first draft, always checking the organization to assure he reaches the target of the writing.

• Meet with his writing buddy to develop and answer questions about the writing.
• Explore changes that will make the writing clearer.
• Complete the next draft, adding thoughts and details that strengthen the paper.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

☛ Help your students understand that good writing really does matter—and takes organization.

☛ Model for your students the selection of a topic, the development of a main idea or thesis statement, and the research or brainstorming necessary to provide quality examples.

☛ Encourage students to explore their own thinking and experiences as well as research to develop their examples and details.

☛ Provide minilessons on aspects that students find a challenge (e.g., identifying a topic, creating a topic sentence or thesis statement, finding or creating supporting details and examples, citing direct quotes). The minilessons might be designed for individuals, small groups, or the entire class.
Encourage students to keep a writing notebook in which they can write daily and keep banks of issues, questions, topics, ideas, and vocabulary.

Share students’ examples (with permission, of course) of quality writing or organization of ideas.

Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
After determining your topic, determine the main idea or thesis statement about that topic. Then, using several resources, find examples and details (the evidence!) that will construct support for your main idea or thesis statement.
After determining your topic, determine the main idea or thesis statement about that topic. Then, using several resources, find examples and details (the evidence!) that will construct support for your main idea or thesis statement.

Supporting Detail/Example:
The Food and Drug Administration introduced approval in late 2002 for a combination vaccine called Pediarix. This immunization combined into a single injection several vaccines. One is DTaP, which is a vaccine for diphtheria, tetanus, and acellular pertussis. In addition, the injection contains the vaccine for hepatitis B (HBV-Hib) and polio (IPV). A child would receive this vaccination at ages 2 months and 4 months. Additional DTaP injections would be given at 6 months, 15 months, and 5 years. The polio injections would be given at 9 months and 5 years. Polio, while still a problem throughout the world, has minimal occurrences in the United States, due to vaccination.

Supporting Detail/Example:
The Varivax vaccination is for chickenpox, or varicella. Besides immunizing against chicken pox, this vaccination eliminates the side effects of the disease, including skin infection, scars, pneumonia, and brain damage and death. A person who gets chicken pox may also get shingles in later years.

Main Idea/Thesis:
Immunizations are one of the best ways parents can protect their children from serious illness.

Topic/Concept/Subject:
Immunizations

Supporting Detail/Example:
The PCV is the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine. Four injections are given, one when the child is about 2 months old, again at 4 months, 6 months, and finally at about 15 months of age. More people die of pneumococcal diseases than all of the vaccine-preventable diseases combined—and the disease may lead to infections of the lung, blood, and brain.
HITTING THE TARGET

After determining your topic, determine the main idea or thesis statement about that topic. Then, using several resources, find examples and details (the evidence!) that will construct support for your main idea or thesis statement.
THE INTERVIEW

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Select a real or fictional person that is important to the story or topic being studied.

☛ Identify key details about the person and his or her background. Who is this person? Why is this person important to the subject? Why is it appropriate to interview this person on the subject?

☛ Create questions to ask during the interview. Each question should require more than a short answer. Because the interview will result in a magazine article, think about what readers might want to know about the person being interviewed.

☛ Either conduct or imagine conducting the interview. Take notes about how the person responded to each question. Use quotation marks around any information that is a direct quote from the person. Note other information in own words.

☛ Use the notes from the interview to write a magazine article about the person who was interviewed. Include the reasons that the person was chosen.

☛ Conclude with a paragraph or statement that summarizes what was learned from the interview.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

☛ Provide students with sample interview articles from popular magazines. If possible, find examples that use different formats for presenting the interview information, such as question-and-answer or narrative styles.

☛ Review rules for punctuation when using a direct quote in a piece of writing. Conduct a class discussion on how and when to use direct quotes appropriately. Discuss the effect that the use of a direct quote might have on the reader.

☛ Have students discuss potential audiences. What kind of person might choose to read an interview with this subject? Why?

☛ Help students understand how to write good questions by modeling with a person or character that they have studied previously.

☛ Have students develop questions and then conduct research about the subject to determine how that person might have responded.
THE INTERVIEW

Select someone you could interview about the topic being studied. If it is not possible to use a real person, create a fictional character to interview. Make notes about what you know about the person’s background (or create a fictional background). Then develop questions you will ask that person. Conduct the interview, taking notes about the responses to your questions.

**Person to Be Interviewed:** ________________________________________________________________________________

**Background of the Person:** _______________________________________________________________________________

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions to Ask</th>
<th>Notes from Interview</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Create questions that require answers that call for explanations and not just one-word responses.</td>
<td>If you are conducting an interview with a real person, take careful notes about the answers given. If you use a direct quote from the person, use quotation marks and be sure you capture the quote exactly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In framing your questions, think about what a potential audience might want to know about this person.</td>
<td>If the person you are “interviewing” is fictional, try to create responses that reflect how the person would have responded, given his or her background and connection to the topic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Think about your audience as you write your article. What will interest them? What do they want to know? Why would they trust the person being interviewed?

Use your notes to write a magazine article about your interview. You can use a question-and-answer format, but be sure to write a concluding paragraph that summarizes what you learned from the interview.
THE INTERVIEW

Select someone you could interview about the topic being studied. If it is not possible to use a real person, create a fictional character to interview. Make notes about what you know about the person’s background (or create a fictional background). Then develop questions you will ask that person. Conduct the interview, taking notes about the responses to your questions.

Person to Be Interviewed: Bob Hope

Background of the Person: Famous comedian

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<tr>
<td>What do you like best about being a comedian?</td>
<td>You work at night, so you can play golf or go sailing all day. “There’s nothing like making people laugh.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>What was the hardest job you ever had?</td>
<td>At the Paramount Theatre in New York City in 1950. We had to do six shows a day and seven on weekends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where do you get your jokes?</td>
<td>Uses the newspaper a lot because he likes to do fresh material about things that are in the news. He writes most of his material himself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How has humor changed over the years?</td>
<td>Old jokes are still good. Sometimes he “uses old jokes to see if people still think they’re funny.” It’s “wide open” now—anything goes, but he doesn’t do “stuff that’s too far over the line.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who did you like working with the most?</td>
<td>Bing Crosby, when they were making the “Road” movies. They had lots of friends and visitors who stopped in while they were taping.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use your notes to write a magazine article about your interview. You can use a question-and-answer format, but be sure to write a concluding paragraph that summarizes what you learned from the interview.
The Interview

Select someone you could interview about the topic being studied. If it is not possible to use a real person, create a fictional character to interview. Make notes about what you know about the person's background (or create a fictional background). Then develop questions you will ask that person. Conduct the interview, taking notes about the responses to your questions.

Person to Be Interviewed: ____________________________________________________________

Background of the Person: _____________________________________________________________

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Use your notes to write a magazine article about your interview. You can use a question-and-answer format, but be sure to write a concluding paragraph that summarizes what you learned from the interview.
Prewriting Tools

IT TEARS
ME APART

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .
☛ Identify an issue that has at least two sides or perspectives.
☛ Explore both sides of the issue, identifying details, examples, and ideas for each.
☛ Use the information to write a persuasive or comparative essay about the issue.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☛ Model for your students how you look at two sides of the issue, looking closely at details, examples, and ideas that support each side.
☛ Help your students understand that digging deeper on the perspectives will help them better understand the issue.
☛ Share students’ examples (with permission, of course) of looking at both sides of the issue as well as the resulting essays.
☛ Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
Organize your thinking as you prepare to share two sides of an issue.

The Issue: ____________________________________________________________

Identify an issue about which there are two sides.

Explore your thinking for two sides of an issue.

One Side of Me Thinks:

Look at the issue from one side. Explore examples, ideas, and details that support this side of the issue.

The Other Side of Me Thinks:

Now take a look at the issue from another perspective. Again, explore examples, ideas, and details—but those that support “the other perspective” or side of the issue.
IT TEARS ME APART

Organize your thinking as you prepare to share two sides of an issue.

The Issue: Should I become a “whole-body donor” when I turn 18?

Explore your thinking for two sides of an issue.

One Side of Me Thinks:

YES—
Lots of bodies are needed to teach the medical profession—anatomy, surgery, cardiology, neurology, orthopedics, etc.
Bodies are also needed for research.
Medical schools have to rely on donated bodies—they can’t purchase them from families.
My religion is supportive—recognizes it as expression of my religious values.

The Other Side of Me Thinks:

Maybe—
This is a big decision—if I choose to be an organ donor, then I can’t donate my entire body to medical research (except I could do my corneas and still donate my body).

If my body isn’t accepted for whole-body donation (like if I am in a serious accident and my body wouldn’t be usable) and I haven’t gone the “organ” route, then everybody loses out. This is the part that worries me most. I like the idea of someone getting a second chance on life because of a heart or liver donation.

Big decision!
Organize your thinking as you prepare to share two sides of an issue.

The Issue: _____________________________________________________________

Explore your thinking for two sides of an issue.

One Side of Me Thinks:

The Other Side of Me Thinks:
Prewriting Tools

**IT'S COMING TOGETHER**

**HOW TO USE:**
The student will . . .
- Identify a generalization or principle for which to provide support.
- Identify areas of support or examples for the generalization or principle.
- Include details, explanations, or examples for each area that support the generalization.
- Write the draft based on the organization.

**TIPS / VARIATIONS:**
- Model for your students the development of a generalization or principle. Provide examples and explain how you developed them.
- Consider developing students’ skills in using this tool in large-class, small-group, or individual settings.
- Provide opportunities for students to use multiple resources in gathering support for their generalization.
- Encourage students to work together to develop and discuss their generalizations and supporting information.
- Help your students understand that good writing really does matter—it provides meaning, stimulates clear thinking, and increases their understanding of your content.
- Encourage students to keep a list of generalizations in their writing notebooks for your content area. If a generalization or principle is appropriate for several units of study, have students continue to add examples and details as they encounter new information.
- Share students’ examples (with permission, of course) of quality writing or reflection on their writing habits.
- Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
In the center of the tool, determine a generalization or principle for which you are going to organize support. Consider sharing at least three—or, ideally, four—different areas to support your thinking. Summarize details for each area of support.

Identify the support for the generalization. Do this in each area.

Provide details for each area of support. Consider examples and quotes as well.

Determine a generalization or principle for which you are going to focus the support.
In the center of the tool, determine a generalization or principle for which you are going to organize support. Consider sharing at least three—or, ideally, four—different areas to support your thinking. Summarize details for each area of support.

**What to Wear**
- Hot and humid—so “casual” is usually OK—but get permission.
- Men—no jackets but dark pants and long-sleeved shirts and ties (unless it’s really hot).
- Women—pants or skirt and blouse (with sleeves!). No revealing clothes or excessive jewelry.
- No shorts!
- No sweats!

**Making Appointments**
- BE ON TIME! Singaporeans are insulted when you are late.
- Set up appointments at least one week in advance.
- 9:00–5:00 Monday–Friday; some Saturday mornings.
- Be a little late for lunch—don’t look greedy.

**Demonstrating appropriate business etiquette in Singapore is important and courteous.**

**Giving Gifts**
- Definitely not to bribe—very much against corruption.
- Small gifts to everyone—not expensive—chocolate.
- Expect refusal at first; when they accept, thank them for accepting.
- Expect them to open gift later—they never want to look greedy.

**Using Names**
- When in doubt, ask what they prefer to be called.
- Share with them what you would like to be called.
- If person is a lot younger than you, OK to call them by first name.
In the center of the tool, determine a generalization or principle for which you are going to organize support. Consider sharing at least three—or, ideally, four—different areas to support your thinking. Summarize details for each area of support.
A LETTER TO
THE EDITOR

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Think about personal feelings and opinions about the topic being studied and determine her position on it.
☛ List all of the reasons or compelling arguments that would help others understand her position.
☛ Use her notes to write a letter to the editor defining and explaining her position. If the topic is of current interest to the public, the student can send it to a local or regional newspaper.
☛ Reflect on how the public would view the editorial and write about the reactions it might generate if it were published.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☛ Prior to the activity, hold a class discussion on the difference between fact and opinion.
☛ Share real letters to the editor and have students identify which arguments presented are fact and which are opinion. Discuss how readers of the editorial might react to what is written in the editorial.
☛ Have students role-play being writers and readers of the editorials produced. Have students exchange letters, asking their partners to read and react as they think various facets of the public might react. If there are many differing views on the subject, you might have different students role-play different viewpoints in expressing how they would react to the editorial. If there are editorials that express diverse views, you might ask one person to role-play how various audiences might react.
☛ Consider having students send their letters to real newspapers or magazines. The best chances for publication are at the local and regional levels. If the topic is very controversial, be cautious in putting students in an uncomfortable position with a public sharing of their views.
A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor are usually written to try to persuade the readers to think or act in a certain way. Take a position related to the topic you are studying and frame a summary of your opinion by completing the following sentence:

I think that _____________________________________ should ___________________________________________
___________________________________  because  ______________________________________________________.

In preparation for writing your letter to the editor, list all of the reasons or compelling arguments that you will use to support your position:

Reason 1: _______________________________________________________________________________________________
Reason 2: _______________________________________________________________________________________________
Reason 3: _______________________________________________________________________________________________
Reason 4: _______________________________________________________________________________________________
Reason 5: _______________________________________________________________________________________________

Your reasons or arguments should have a basis in fact. Refer to supporting facts whenever possible.

A compelling argument is one that contains either an emotional appeal or such obvious evidence that it cannot be ignored.

Include your position statement and the reasons or arguments that support it in a letter that you might send to the newspaper. Underline the facts you use to support your position.

What do you think the public's reaction might be when they read your letter?

If your topic is of current interest to the public, consider actually sending it to a local or regional newspaper.

Is your opinion consistent with the opinion of the majority of potential readers, or is it contrary to popular opinion? Consider this when you predict audience reaction.
A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor are usually written to try to persuade the readers to think or act in a certain way. Take a position related to the topic you are studying and frame a summary of your opinion by completing the following sentence:

I think that ________________________________ should ________________________________ because ________________________________.

In preparation for writing your letter to the editor, list all of the reasons or compelling arguments that you will use to support your position:

Reason 1: _______________________________________________________________________________________________
Reason 2: _______________________________________________________________________________________________
Reason 3: _______________________________________________________________________________________________
Reason 4: _______________________________________________________________________________________________
Reason 5: _______________________________________________________________________________________________

Include your position statement and the reasons or arguments that support it in a letter that you might send to the newspaper. Underline the facts you use to support your position.

What do you think the public’s reaction might be when they read your letter?

I think that most of them would agree with me.

Source: Adapted with permission from a classroom example provided by Ingrid Brownlee, Fort Madison Community School District, Fort Madison, Iowa.
Letters to the editor are usually written to try to persuade the readers to think or act in a certain way. Take a position related to the topic you are studying and frame a summary of your opinion by completing the following sentence:

I think that ______________________ should ______________________
__________________________ because ________________________________.

In preparation for writing your letter to the editor, list all of the reasons or compelling arguments that you will use to support your position:

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Include your position statement and the reasons or arguments that support it in a letter that you might send to the newspaper. Underline the facts you use to support your position.

What do you think the public’s reaction might be when they read your letter?

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________
HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

- Identify the topic about which he is going to take a position.
- Determine his position, providing the main idea or thesis for which he will construct support. This statement should answer the question, “What is it that I want to advocate about this topic?”
- Identify supporting details or examples. These may be causes that support a specific effect; possible solutions to support a problem; or details, stories, or examples that construct support for a description.
  - Share the examples with his writing buddy.
  - Extend his thinking or details and examples.
- Prioritize the examples or details to determine and use the best three to support the thesis or main idea.
- Proceed with the first draft, always checking the organization to ensure reaching the goal of the writing.
  - Identify the audience to whom he is appealing.
  - Assure that the first paragraph “grabs” the audience and states his position.
  - Write the supporting paragraphs with examples and details. Consider prioritizing the paragraphs in a 2-3-1 fashion, saving the strongest appeal for the final example.
  - Summarize the entire essay in the fifth paragraph, advocating for what was said in the first paragraph and supported by paragraphs two through four, and leaving the audience with no choice but to agree with his position.
- Meet with his writing buddy to develop and answer questions about the writing.
- Explore changes that will make the writing clearer.
- Complete next draft, adding thoughts and details that strengthen the paper.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

- Help your students understand that good writing really does matter—and takes organization.
- Model for your students the selection of a topic, the development of a main idea or thesis statement, and the research or brainstorming necessary to provide quality examples that construct support for the position taken.
Encourage students to explore their own thinking and experiences as well as research to develop their examples and details.

Provide minilessons on things that students find a challenge (e.g., identifying a topic, creating a topic sentence or thesis statement, finding or creating supporting details and examples, citing direct quotes). The lessons might be designed for individuals, small groups, or the entire class.

Encourage students to keep a writing notebook in which they can write daily and keep banks of issues, questions, topics, ideas, and vocabulary.

Share students’ examples (with permission, of course) of quality writing or organization of ideas.

Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
MAKE IT FIVE!

Write a five-paragraph essay that advocates your position on an issue, event, place, idea, or person. Be sure your first and last paragraphs summarize the point you are seeking to make and “grab” and “leave” your audience with your position. The middle three paragraphs should provide the examples, support, and details for your position.

Introduce your position in this paragraph. Think about your audience—“talk” to them in your writing. Be sure to grab their attention and state your position clearly.

If the first and last paragraphs are the “bun” of your paper, then these middle three paragraphs are the meat—with all the pickles, lettuce, tomatoes, and onions to spice up this “hamburger.”

Think about saving your best example for the third paragraph in the middle (fourth paragraph in the essay), and putting your second-best and third-best in paragraphs two and three of the essay.

Say it again, Sam! Take a good look at your introduction and the three supporting paragraphs you have written. Make sure that your summarizing paragraph ties them all together and that you advocate again for your position.
MAKE IT FIVE!

Write a five-paragraph essay that advocates your position on an issue, event, place, idea, or person. Be sure your first and last paragraphs summarize the point you are seeking to make and “grab” and “leave” your audience with your position. The middle three paragraphs should provide the examples, support, and details for your position.

Six-pack abs! Running a marathon! Starter on the hockey team! Swimming in the school’s relays! Dancing all night at prom! Walking and chewing gum at the same time! Whatever level of health is your goal, keeping your muscles in shape is the key.

Developing your muscle strength means working your muscles against resistance. Push-ups and pull-ups are two of the best exercises for developing strong muscles. Rowing, lifting weights, and bike riding “pump up” your muscles, too. Swimming is another exercise that forces your muscles to “resist” water.

Once you have developed that muscle strength, you want to keep it. Muscle endurance means keeping those muscles in tip-top shape so that you are strong for a long time. Aerobic exercise develops endurance. Jumping rope, distance running, swimming, and basketball develop your endurance.

And the muscle that needs your most care is your heart muscle. Exercising 30 minutes a day three or four times a week keeps your heart in good shape, helping it to do even better its main job of delivering oxygen to all parts of your body. Walking, dancing, running, swimming, and skating are healthy (and fun!) ways to maintain a healthy heart. Keep moving and your heart keeps ticking!

Developing your muscle strength and endurance along with a healthy heart will also increase your body’s flexibility—an added plus in staying fit. None of us wants a weak body—or a stiff one. Put together now a plan that will give you muscle strength and endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular endurance. You (and your body) will appreciate it forever.
MAKE IT FIVE!

Write a five-paragraph essay that advocates your position on an issue, event, place, idea, or person. Be sure your first and last paragraphs summarize the point you are seeking to make and “grab” and “leave” your audience with your position. The middle three paragraphs should provide the examples, support, and details for your position.
MY OWN “THINK ALOUD” — BEFORE I WRITE

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Select those items on the tool for which she needs to have an “internal conversation” or a conversation with a writing buddy before proceeding.

☛ Think aloud on the selected items, always digging deeper to clarify any questions, increase her understanding, or develop next steps to be successful with the writing.

☛ Complete a plan for the writing that reflects the conversation she has had about the assignment.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

☛ Help your students understand that good writing really does matter—it provides meaning, stimulates clear thinking, and increases their understanding of your content.

☛ Help your students understand that planning for writing is as important as the writing itself and is instrumental in increasing their success with the writing.

☛ Provide students with alternative roles for their writing, as well as formats and audiences. Consider providing large wall charts with these. Allow students to add to the lists as the year progresses.

☛ Provide minilessons on any areas that seem to concern the students as they think about their writing.

☛ Model for your students how you think through the process of writing as you prepare to write, as well as how you think during and after writing.

☛ Assist students in their understanding of the importance of assessing their progress in writing.

☛ Interview people in the community or writers, via the web or e-mail, so that your students realize that others plan for their writing and often use thinking aloud as a way to internalize what is important for their writing to be successful.

☛ Encourage students to keep a writing notebook in which they can keep their “think aloud” summaries for reference in future writings. Encourage them to also keep a list of possible topics, ideas, roles, formats, and audiences for future reference.
Provide feedback to your students on their “think alouds.” Strive to increase the quality of their questions and the depth of the clarifications, and celebrate the effect of the “think aloud” on their writing.

For each writing assignment, provide rubrics that address the purpose as well as your expectations.

Share students’ examples (with permission, of course) of quality writing or reflection on their writing habits, including planning for their writing.

Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
## MY OWN "THINK ALOUD"—BEFORE I WRITE

Use the following information to guide your thinking before you begin to write your paper. Think seriously about how each of the areas will help you achieve the writing assignment.

### Writing Assignment:
Identify the assignment your teacher has given you. Be specific so that you achieve the intended learning or goal.

### Before I write . . .

- **Topics/Ideas I Could Write About:** Brainstorm as many as possible and then determine and prioritize those that might work for you.

- **Purpose (Question I Am Trying to Answer) and Audience:** Your teacher might give you a certain role and format you must use. If not, be creative. Let your voice show in your paper and consider other formats, such as a journal article, newspaper account, or television advertisement.

- **My Role and Format to Achieve Purpose and Meet Needs of Audience:** Be explicit in the purpose. Identify the question that you are seeking to answer and the audience for whom you will write—it might be your teacher, your classmates, someone from the community, and so on. Being specific here will help focus your writing.

- **Vocabulary to Support the Content and Purpose:** Identify vocabulary terms that will be important in this writing. Make sure you understand and use them appropriately.

- **Resources:** Knowing your resources and using multiple resources increases your content knowledge and provides needed information for your paper. Don’t limit yourself to just print resources—check the web; interview real people; and access DVD, video, and television resources. Be sure you know how to cite direct quotes from these resources.

- **Development of Organization/Plan to Achieve Purpose:** This “think aloud” is a good start to a plan for your writing. You may also want to consider a graphic organizer to organize your thinking and determine a time line to ensure you have addressed during- and post-writing needs as well.

- **Content Knowledge/Expertise and Connections:** It never hurts to think about what you know and don’t know about the subject, and then determine a plan for increasing your expertise in the area as well as make connections with the real world and your own beliefs and values.

- **Checking the Expectations:** Think about the expectations. Review any guidance, such as a rubric, that your teacher may have given you. What questions do you still have? Where can you go to get the answers?

- **Other:** Something else always comes up—identify it here and think it through.
MY OWN “THINK ALOUD”—BEFORE I WRITE

Use the following information to guide your thinking before you begin to write your paper. Think seriously about how each of the areas will help you achieve the writing assignment.

Writing Assignment: Share the impact of Watergate on the United States, making sure the reader knows the events of Watergate, the causes, and ultimately the impact on the nation.

Before I write . . .

□ Topics/Ideas I Could Write About: Mr. Takasuka has really defined the topic and pretty much spelled out the expectations. I need to review the rubric to be sure that I meet the expectations of the content.

□ Purpose (Question I Am Trying to Answer) and Audience: The Big Question: What impact (Cause/Effect) did Watergate have on the nation? I probably could/should write this for my teacher—but I wonder if there is another audience that might make it a little more interesting in my approach. I need to talk to Mr. T about this.

□ My Role and Format to Achieve Purpose and Meet Needs of Audience: Depending on my audience choice, my role might change. I think it would be kind of fun to write it like I was part of 60 Minutes or an investigative reporter for a television station in 1974.

□ Vocabulary to Support the Content and Purpose: Watergate, listening devices, cover-up, wiretaps, indicted, articles of impeachment, obstructing justice—that’s just a few brought up in class. Many more will show up, I’m sure, as I continue my research.

□ Resources: I know our text gives us good information, but I need to really look at our national history “after the fact.” I would think looking at the presidency of Gerald Ford would help me understand the impact better.

□ Development of Organization/Plan to Achieve Purpose: I need to get a good handle on explaining the events that led up to Watergate, as well as the sequence of events of Watergate (June 1972–August 1974) and then dig into impact by looking at post-1974 events. I think I will use a cause-and-effect organizer and then adjust it for effect and impact.

□ Content Knowledge/Expertise and Connections: I feel really comfortable about sharing the “what”—the sequence of events that led up to Watergate, and the sequence of events that led up to the impeachment. I know that I am going to have to really think, learn, explore to get a better handle on what happened—the real impact on our nation.

□ Checking the Expectations: My goal will be to review the rubric often and to take advantage of Mr. T’s offer for conferences along the way.

□ Other: Go to the library, search the Internet, and try to interview several people—such as my parents—about the impact of the impeachment on real people.
MY OWN “THINK ALOUD”—BEFORE I WRITE

Use the following information to guide your thinking before you begin to write your paper. Think seriously about how each of the areas will help you achieve the writing assignment.

Writing Assignment: ____________________________

Before I write . . .

☐ Topics/Ideas I Could Write About: ____________________________

☐ Purpose (Question I Am Trying to Answer) and Audience: ____________________________

☐ My Role and Format to Achieve Purpose and Meet Needs of Audience: ____________________________

☐ Vocabulary to Support the Content and Purpose: ____________________________

☐ Resources: ____________________________

☐ Development of Organization/Plan to Achieve Purpose: ____________________________

☐ Content Knowledge/Expertise and Connections: ____________________________

☐ Checking the Expectations: ____________________________

☐ Other: ____________________________
HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

- Reflect on experiences with the identified content area.
- Respond to the questions that ask about prior knowledge and experiences in the content area.

TIPS / VARIATIONS:
- Help your students understand that the more you know about them and their experiences with your content area, the easier it will be for you to ensure a positive learning experience for them.
- Consider adding other questions specific to your content area. For example, an art teacher might ask questions such as the following: What experiences have you had in painting, sculpting, or drawing? What media (e.g., oil, watercolor) have you experienced? Have you ever been to an art museum? If so, what impressed you? What bored you?
- Review all the students’ responses and share a summary. Help the class learn about common experiences and unique experiences.
- Be sure to note how students feel about this content area. They may have had some negative experiences. By knowing about them ahead of time, you can adjust comments and experiences to ensure a more positive opportunity this time and build the confidence of your students in your content area.
- Use the information as you work with the students during the semester. Make connections for students, teaming their past experiences with what they will be experiencing in your class.
- Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
MY PERSONAL HISTORY

Share your prior knowledge and experiences you have had with this specific content area. This will help you and your teacher with future learning in the class.

My personal history with _____________________________.

Questions to consider: What do you enjoy about this content area? What other classes have you taken in this area? What is your best experience in this area? Your worst? What has caused your interest to grow or lessen in this area? What do you like to do most in this content area? What are things you have done outside of school that are related to this area?

There are no right or wrong answers! You are reflecting on your prior knowledge and prior experiences with this content area. Think about the questions provided by your teacher, and add other questions that you might want to answer.
MY PERSONAL HISTORY

Share your prior knowledge and experiences you have had with this specific content area. This will help you and your teacher with future learning in the class.

My personal history with art

Questions to consider: What do you enjoy about this content area? What other classes have you taken in this area? What is your best experience in this area? Your worst? What has caused your interest to grow or lessen in this area? What do you like to do most in this content area? What are things you have done outside of school that are related to this area?

I loved art as a little kid. My mom and dad always gave me art things for presents. I remember I had my own palette of water colors and an area in the garage just for me to paint.

But when I got to school, I remember one of my teachers scolding me because I didn’t stay in the lines. I didn’t like art in elementary school—the time was always so short and we all had to do the same thing—but I still painted in the garage. My grandma has one of my pictures hanging in her bedroom. It’s a picture of her and me at the zoo. My lion is still awesome!

One time on vacation in Washington, D.C., we went to the art museums. My favorites were the caricatures in one museum. It was fun to see how newspapers have influenced our thinking in history through those “cartoons.” I also liked the work of Georgia O’Keefe. I love the detail she has in such big flowers. I wish I could paint like that.

I am a little afraid to take art, but two of my friends absolutely loved this class last year so I am going to give it a try.
MY PERSONAL HISTORY

Share your prior knowledge and experiences you have had with this specific content area. This will help you and your teacher with future learning in the class.

My personal history with ____________________________________________________________

Questions to consider: What do you enjoy about this content area? What other classes have you taken in this area? What is your best experience in this area? Your worst? What has caused your interest to grow or lessen in this area? What do you like to do most in this content area? What are things you have done outside of school that are related to this area?
H O W  T O  U S E:
The student will . . .

☛ Select a person or character that is important to understanding what is being studied.

☛ Review the life of that person or character, identifying specific events or factors that contributed to the person’s personality or view of life. Events or factors should be identified for each stage of life. The student may need to conduct additional research on the person. If a fictional character is chosen, the student might create a biography for that character, using clues about the subject that would help support the fictional background.

☛ Explain why or how each of the details or factors chosen had an effect on the person’s life or the kind of person he or she became.

☛ Write a biography of the person or character, focusing on factors that were important at various stages of their lives.

T I P S /  V A R I A T I O N S:

☛ Help students make critical choices about the details they choose to include about the subject’s life. The choices should be those that made a real difference in the subject’s life or that provide a perspective on the personality of the subject.

☛ Ask students to practice using the tool by thinking through their own lives. Have them think about the things that affected their lives and personalities and break their thoughts down into sequences of five years or according to preschool, primary, upper-elementary, middle school, and high school years. Conduct a class discussion on what a “significant life event” is.

☛ Define the stages of life by age so that all students understand the stages in the same way. What is “senior” to some may be “middle” to others!

☛ Have students use the tool as the basis for a research activity. Individuals, pairs, or teams can work together to gather the facts and information, with each person using the information to write his own biography.

☛ In lieu of a written final paper, ask students to present their stories to each other in speeches or in nonlinguistic ways such as posters, storyboards, or other visual methods.

☛ Provide a list of potential subjects for the activity, from which students would make their choices.
OVER THE YEARS

Select a person or character that you have been studying. In preparation for writing a biography about that person, complete the chart below. When you are finished, write the biography, including the details from the chart and your reflection on why the events you chose are important in understanding that person or character. If the character is fictional and you do not have facts for some phases of his or her life, use the facts you do have to make educated guesses about what that life might have been like.

The Life of: _____________________________________________________________________________________________

Identify the person or character you chose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage of Life</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Why Important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood</td>
<td>Select details about each stage in the person’s life that helped shape the kind of person he or she is. What events might have helped form the person’s opinions or attitudes? What factors contributed to the person’s personality? Did the person change over the years? If so, what events or factors contributed to the change? What role did the person’s relatives, friends, or others play in the type of person he or she became? Did the environment in which the person lived have an effect on his or her life?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen Years/ Adolescence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adulthood</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Help your reader understand the person or character by providing significant details. Include only the information that is important to know about the person because it made a significant impact on his or her life.
Select a person or character that you have been studying. In preparation for writing a biography about that person, complete the chart below. When you are finished, write the biography, including the details from the chart and your reflection on why the events you chose are important in understanding that person or character. If the character is fictional and you do not have facts for some phases of his or her life, use the facts you do have to make educated guesses about what that life might have been like.

The Life of: _____________________________________________________________________________________________

<table>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early Childhood</td>
<td>• Raised in Hannibal, Missouri.</td>
<td>The Hannibal area serves as the background of many of Twain’s books and writings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Born in 1835.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen Years/Adolescence</td>
<td>• Often traveled on makeshift rafts or swam in swimming holes.</td>
<td>• Gave him ideas for Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Explored caves and woods.</td>
<td>• Became an apprentice typesetter; might have made him interested in writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Father died when he was 12—had to quit school.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adulthood</td>
<td>• Had a series of jobs.</td>
<td>Name “Mark Twain” is from Mississippi River boat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Printer’s apprentice (1853–1857).</td>
<td>Twain’s business failures led him to travel, giving him a lot of information to use in his stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>– Mississippi River boat pilot (1857–1859).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Had a series of business failures with brother.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Age</td>
<td>• 2nd Lieutenant in Civil War.</td>
<td>Moved from journalism to travel writing and then to fiction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1869—The Innocents Abroad—made fun of wealthy people.</td>
<td>Popularity might have come from how the common man identified with him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1876—Tom Sawyer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 1885—Huckleberry Finn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Fled to San Francisco to avoid fighting in a duel.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior Years</td>
<td>• Became a public speaker and toured widely.</td>
<td>Twain’s writings became sad after his wife’s death, due to his depression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wife, Olivia, died in 1904.</td>
<td>Speaking became the bulk of Twain’s income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Made many bad investments.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Two daughters died.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Died 1910 of heart failure.</td>
<td>Became bitter and pessimistic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Help your reader understand the person or character by providing significant details. Include only the information that is important to know about the person because it made a significant impact on his or her life.
Select a person or character that you have been studying. In preparation for writing a biography about that person, complete the chart below. When you are finished, write the biography, including the details from the chart and your reflection on why the events you chose are important in understanding that person or character. If the character is fictional and you do not have facts for some phases of his or her life, use the facts you do have to make educated guesses about what that life might have been like.

The Life of: ____________________________________________

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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Help your reader understand the person or character by providing significant details. Include only the information that is important to know about the person because it made a significant impact on his or her life.
Pre-writing Tool

**HOW TO USE:**
The student will . . .

- Break the topic into main ideas from which paragraphs might be developed.
- For each main idea, write a topic sentence that tells about that main point. Use complete sentences and make certain that the main point is clear.
- Think about information or facts that support the main point expressed in each topic sentence and make notes about them. Complete sentences are not necessary.
- Review the topic sentences that have been written to ensure that all main ideas are included. If not, continue to add new topic sentences.
- Use the topic sentences and details as the basis for writing a paper about the topic. Each paragraph of the paper should consist of one topic sentence and other sentences that include the details that support it.

**TIPS/VARIATIONS:**
- Use this activity to help students think about the topic's important concepts and to provide information they need to organize their thoughts into an essay.
- If students are using text to obtain information about the topic, insist that they do not copy directly from the text. They must write in their own words.
- After students complete their topic sentences, consider collecting them and having a class discussion on which sentences best reflect the important ideas about the concept. The class can select the top sentences, which everyone in the class can then use to find supporting details. The resulting papers will be similar but may contain slightly different details and facts.
- Encourage students to bring their own knowledge base to the task. Not all information recorded has to be from the text or teacher presentation. You may even want to assign students the task of conducting additional research about some of the topic sentences and sharing their new information in pairs or small groups.
- Consider using the approach of a “group paper.” Break the class into groups with the same number of members as there are topic sentences. Each person in the group writes a paragraph that is then woven into the group paper.
**PARAGRAPH OUTLINE**

Think about the main ideas you want to address in your paper. Then compose a topic sentence that states each idea and enter this sentence in the column on the left. In the column on the right, enter notes about the details that will explain the topic sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Sentence</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The topic sentence makes a main point about the topic. It expresses the most important information in the paragraph.</td>
<td>Not all paragraphs begin with the topic sentence, but it frequently is used as the first sentence of the paragraph. The rest of the paragraph is used to provide details that will help the reader understand the topic more completely.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review your topic sentences and details. Collectively, do they provide the most important information to learn about the topic?</td>
<td>Enter the details that you might use in developing a paragraph from the topic sentence. What facts or evidence would be useful in providing details to support the topic sentence?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Greek Myths**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic Sentence</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The word “myth” comes from the Greek word “mythos,” which means “story.”</td>
<td>• People have been telling stories since the beginning of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Greek myths, created by ancient Greeks, have had a great effect on literature today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• There are many references from Greek myths in use today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A myth usually involves gods and goddesses.</td>
<td>• Gods and goddesses were used to explain things in nature and about human nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Myths were often connected to celebrations and ceremonies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Ancient Greeks believed the gods and goddesses interfered in human lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Gods and goddesses lived on Mount Olympus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myths were told by common people, who passed the stories along over generations.</td>
<td>• Since the stories were told and retold over generations, the stories changed over time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The myths helped explain the beliefs, history, and interests of the ancient Greeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Myths explained the gods’ relationship to human beings on earth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Myths explained what was happening in nature.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myths helped people feel in control of their world.</td>
<td>• People thought they could appeal to the gods to intercede in their lives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• People believed that gods and goddesses could be helpful to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• People could blame their problems on the gods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Because people didn’t have much knowledge of science, the myths helped them to explain their world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Think about the main ideas you want to address in your paper. Then compose a topic sentence that states each idea and enter this sentence in the column on the left. In the column on the right, enter notes about the details that will explain the topic sentence.

<table>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prewriting Activities

PASS AROUND

How to Use:
The student will . . .

☛ Select a topic related to what is being studied in class. It might be necessary to limit the scope of the topic by using one component or aspect of the overall unit of study. Write the selected topic at the top of the page.

☛ Pass the paper to the person on the right. This person will spend 3–5 minutes writing questions about the topic, suggestions for ideas to include in a paper on the topic, or personal comments or opinions about the topic.

☛ After time is up, pass the paper again to the next person in the small group, and so on until everyone in the group has had an opportunity to add ideas and thoughts. The paper is then returned to its original owner.

☛ Use the questions, suggestions, and comments to help in organizing and writing a paper on the topic.

Tips/Variations:

☛ Divide students into small groups of four or five for this activity. If possible, include students with varying abilities and background knowledge in each group.

☛ Consider asking students to each write in a different color, so students can ask questions about the meaning of various entries. This also allows you to evaluate each student’s participation in the activity.

☛ Consider providing students with the topics to be addressed, giving each group the same number of different topics as there are participants in the group. After the completion of the activity, ask all students who have the same topic to get together and share the contributions of their groups. After the topic-related groups have shared, each student can use all of the information to write a paper about the topic.

☛ Have students identify the purpose of the writing they will do as well as the topic. This may focus their questions, suggestions, and comments more precisely on the writing task that will follow.

☛ Model the activity with a common topic. Pay particular attention to forming and discussing good questions and identifying fact versus opinion.
Pass the paper around to your classmates, asking them to respond to your topic by making notes about ideas in each of the areas below. You can use everyone’s input to help you think about and organize your topic.

**Topic:** Write the topic being studied here.

**Questions about the topic:**

Questions should cause the person answering them to think deeply about the subject. Each should require an answer that is more than one word.

**Suggestions for ideas to include:**

Suggestions can include ideas from the text, from the teacher’s presentation, or from your own background knowledge and experience. The suggestions might call for the author to research the idea or to review the information that has been presented.

**Comments/opinions about the topic:**

Comments and opinions do not have to be proven, but should have a basis in fact. They can include emotional responses to the topic, informed opinions about the topic, or general observations related to the topic.
**PASS AROUND**

Pass the paper around to your classmates, asking them to respond to your topic by making notes about ideas in each of the areas below. You can use everyone's input to help you think about and organize your topic.

**Topic:**  
Adolescent Obesity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions about the topic:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• How serious is the problem of adolescent obesity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is causing the rise in adolescent obesity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Why is there so much attention on it now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Who's at fault in letting kids become overweight?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What needs to be done to solve the problem?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What is the role of society in promoting adolescent obesity?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions for ideas to include:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Explain how serious the problem is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Define obesity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Give ideas for how to reduce or eliminate adolescent obesity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explain how schools can help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide ideas for nutritious alternatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop a plan for how an obese adolescent might lose weight.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments/opinions about the topic:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Too much fast food and handy snacks are too available to adolescents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teenagers don’t always have time to eat nutritious meals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School lunches have too much fat and sugar and are not very nutritious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their children eat well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Television and video games cause children to be pretty inactive, which leads to obesity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improve health and physical education programs to promote healthy lifestyles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pass the paper around to your classmates, asking them to respond to your topic by making notes about ideas in each of the areas below. You can use everyone's input to help you think about and organize your topic.

### Topic:

#### Questions about the topic:

#### Suggestions for ideas to include:

#### Comments/opinions about the topic:
Prewriting Tools

**PERSUADE ME!**

- Select a person or persons that will serve as the audience for the activity.
- Define or describe the thinking or action that is being asked of the audience.
- List all relevant facts that support the action or thought being promoted.
- List ways in which a writer might appeal to the emotions of the audience to cause them to act or think as the writer directs. These emotional or personal appeals need to have a grounding in fact, but don’t necessarily have to be provable.
- Write a letter to the target audience, using the facts and emotional appeals in asking that person or persons to make the desired changes in action or thought.

**H O W T O U S E:**
The student will . . .

- Select a person or persons that will serve as the audience for the activity.
- Define or describe the thinking or action that is being asked of the audience.
- List all relevant facts that support the action or thought being promoted.
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- Write a letter to the target audience, using the facts and emotional appeals in asking that person or persons to make the desired changes in action or thought.

**T I P S / V A R I A T I O N S:**
- Discuss the concept of “position” with students. Explain how people make decisions on how they feel about a topic or issue on the basis of many factors. Sometimes the factors have a basis in facts that can be proven; other factors are purely emotional.
- Model persuasion by using an example from students’ everyday lives. When did someone try to persuade them to do something or think differently than they usually do? What arguments or facts were used? What was most effective in helping change their minds or actions?
- If appropriate, students’ letters could be published in the school newspaper or sent to a regional newspaper. If neither is available, publish them by posting them in the classroom or by creating a classroom newspaper.
- Ask students to exchange their letters and have each partner evaluate the persuasive power of the other’s arguments and facts. Allow students to rewrite their letters reflecting the input from the reader.
- Use sample student letters with the class to model how to evaluate a writer’s powers of persuasion.
**PERSUADE ME!**

When you try to persuade someone to think or act in a certain way, you need to use facts to back up your position, as well as appeal to the person's emotions. Think about what you might want to persuade another person or persons to think or act upon in relation to the topic being studied. Express your viewpoint by completing the sentence below.

How would you persuade _______________________________________ to _____________________________________?

Now list the facts and emotional appeals you might use in persuading the identified audience to think or do as you want.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts</th>
<th>Emotional or Personal Appeals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List the facts that you think would best help to convince the audience. Make sure that what you list are truly facts and not opinions. Be prepared to provide the sources for your facts.</td>
<td>Consider your audience's personal opinions and knowledge about the topic. List the emotional or personal appeals you might use that would be meaningful to the person or persons.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use the facts and emotional appeals you listed to write a letter in which you try to convince your reader or readers to do something or think a certain way. Reread your letter, trying to predict how your arguments will affect the audience.

Use the facts and emotional appeals you listed to write a letter in which you try to convince the audience to think or act in the way you want.
PERSUADE ME!

When you try to persuade someone to think or act in a certain way, you need to use facts to back up your position, as well as appeal to the person's emotions. Think about what you might want to persuade another person or persons to think or act upon in relation to the topic being studied. Express your viewpoint by completing the sentence below.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Each year 180,000 Americans die from smoking-related cancer; that’s 1/3 of all cancer deaths.</td>
<td>• We want you to be around when you have grandchildren.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• There are 4,000 toxic substances in a cigarette.</td>
<td>• Second-hand smoke hurts us too!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resting heart rates of young adult smokers are 2–3 beats per minute faster than nonsmokers’.</td>
<td>• The house smells awful and all our clothes smell, too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Smoking increases the chance of having a stroke.</td>
<td>• Smokers’ hair goes gray earlier and men who smoke go bald younger.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nicotine makes the heart pump harder and raises blood pressure.</td>
<td>• 19 out of 20 women who give up smoking find no problem with weight gain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Smokinghardens and weakens arteries.</td>
<td>• Your fingers can turn yellow from tar stains.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Smoking reduces the body’s ability to fight germs and cancer cells.</td>
<td>• Almost none of my friends’ parents smoke.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Skin is thinner and wrinkles earlier in life in smokers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Smoking removescalcium from bones, so they become less strong.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use the facts and emotional appeals you listed to write a letter in which you try to convince the audience to think or act in the way you want.
PERSUADE ME!

When you try to persuade someone to think or act in a certain way, you need to use facts to back up your position, as well as appeal to the person’s emotions. Think about what you might want to persuade another person or persons to think or act upon in relation to the topic being studied. Express your viewpoint by completing the sentence below.

How would you persuade ___________________________ to ___________________________?

Now list the facts and emotional appeals you might use in persuading the identified audience to think or do as you want.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facts</th>
<th>Emotional or Personal Appeals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use the facts and emotional appeals you listed to write a letter in which you try to convince the audience to think or act in the way you want.
Planning a Cause-and-Effect Paper

How to Use:
The student will . . .

☛ Select a topic or subtopic for which cause-and-effect thinking is appropriate. It should be very clear that one or more events caused one or more things to happen.

☛ Determine whether the topic had more causes or more effects, and then select the appropriate graphic organizer.

☛ List the cause or causes of the event clearly, including important details.

☛ List the effect or effects that happened as a result of the causes, including sufficient details.

☛ Use the information gathered to write a paper on the topic. Include enough detail so that the reader will understand the connections being made between cause and effect.

Tips/Variations:

☛ Model cause-and-effect thinking by providing students with multiple examples from daily life as well as from the subject area.

☛ Work through a definition of “cause” and “effect” with students. Help them see that there is a direct relationship between the two. This is different from two events happening at the same time by chance.

☛ To help students see how many events are a continuous chain of cause-and-effect events, have them use the “effect” from the top chart as the “cause” in the bottom chart.

☛ Allow students to work together in pairs, with one looking at a topic through the “Causes to Effect” organizer and one looking at the “Cause to Effects” organizer. The two should then share how that subtle change made a difference in their answers. Alternatively, you could assign one half of the class to think about the topic in terms of the effect that several causes had and the other half to look at multiple effects from a single cause.

☛ Link several charts together to show students how much impact a single event or cause can have in the future.
PLANNING A CAUSE-AND-EFFECT PAPER

Some things happen for a lot of reasons; sometimes something happens that causes a lot of effects. It is often helpful to think about the causes and effects in both ways: what things or events led up to or caused another event and which thing or event created several different effects. Two graphic organizers are presented below. Select the one that best matches the topic you are studying and take notes about its causes and effects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Causes are reasons why something happened. Think carefully about whether one event caused another or was the effect of something else that happened.</td>
<td>Effects are things that happen only because other things happened first. Effects usually happen only because something else caused them to happen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If there is more than one cause, try to determine which was the main cause, or focus only on one cause and its particular effects.</td>
<td>Make sure that the effects you list are really the results of the cause or causes listed on the left.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Be sure to include enough details in your writing to clearly explain the causes and effects.

Use the information you gathered above to write a paragraph or paper that summarizes the cause(s) and effect(s) related to the topic.
PLANNING A CAUSE-AND-EFFECT PAPER

Some things happen for a lot of reasons; sometimes something happens that causes a lot of effects. It is often helpful to think about the causes and effects in both ways: what things or events led up to or caused another event and which thing or event created several different effects. Two graphic organizers are presented below. Select the one that best matches the topic you are studying and take notes about its causes and effects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not washing hands frequently.</td>
<td>Cold viruses spread quickly and infect large numbers of people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not covering your mouth when coughing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not getting enough sleep and becoming run-down.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not eating nutritious food.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spending time in crowded areas.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cold viruses spread and infect a large number of people.</td>
<td>Large numbers of people are absent from work or school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Infected people infect others at work or school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Insurance costs rise as people go to the doctor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Productivity goes down as people miss work because of illness or are sick at work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cold viruses continue to spread as infected people come into contact with others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Use the information you gathered above to write a paragraph or paper that summarizes the cause(s) and effect(s) related to the topic.
PLANNING A CAUSE-AND-EFFECT PAPER

Some things happen for a lot of reasons; sometimes something happens that causes a lot of effects. It is often helpful to think about the causes and effects in both ways: what things or events led up to or caused another event and which thing or event created several different effects. Two graphic organizers are presented below. Select the one that best matches the topic you are studying and take notes about its causes and effects.

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</tbody>
</table>

Use the information you gathered above to write a paragraph or paper that summarizes the cause(s) and effect(s) related to the topic.
HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .
☛ Either select or be given two items or people to compare.
☛ Determine some categories of characteristics or attributes that the two have in common.
☛ For each category or characteristic, determine how the two things or people being compared are alike or different, making notes about the similarities and differences. Complete sentences are not necessary.
☛ Write a paragraph or essay using the notes. If there are a lot of details, a separate paragraph might be developed for each characteristic, with a summary paragraph that concludes the essay.
☛ Include a conclusion as to whether the two things or people being compared are more alike or more different.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☛ Help students identify the categories of characteristics they will use to compare the two items or people. Help them look for areas in which the two have some similarities as well as differences.
☛ Assign the two items or people to compare, allow students to select their own pair, or allow them to choose one of the pair.
☛ Have students complete this activity individually or in pairs or small groups. If different comparisons are being made, groups might exchange their work for review and additions by others prior to the writing of the essay.
☛ Provide a model essay in which two items are compared. Help students understand how they might structure the essay by developing a comparison for each characteristic in either sentences or paragraphs. Be sure the model essay has a concluding paragraph that summarizes the comparison and explains whether the two items being compared are either more alike or more different.
**PREPARE TO COMPARE**

Write the two items you are going to compare in the spaces below. Then identify various characteristics of the two that are alike and different. Use the information in the chart to write an essay in which you develop a paragraph on each of the characteristics, followed by a summary paragraph.

**Item #1:** Write the first item to be compared here.

**Item #2:** Write the second item to be compared.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>How Alike</th>
<th>How Different</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think about various characteristics or components that the two items have in common. List those in this column.</td>
<td>You do not need to use complete sentences in your comparisons.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide details about how the two items are <em>alike</em> in regard to each characteristic or component listed in the column to the left.</td>
<td>Provide details about how the two items are <em>different</em> in regard to each characteristic in the left-hand column.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When you write your essay using this information, devote one sentence (or paragraph) to each characteristic. Then write a summary paragraph explaining why you think the two are more alike or more different.
PREPARE TO COMPARE

Write the two items you are going to compare in the spaces below. Then identify various characteristics of the two that are alike and different. Use the information in the chart to write an essay in which you develop a paragraph on each of the characteristics, followed by a summary paragraph.

**Item #1:** Bacteria  
**Item #2:** Virus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>How Alike</th>
<th>How Different</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Shape**      | Both can take several shapes.  
Both can be spherical in shape. | **Bacterial cells:** spherical, rod-shaped, spiral-shaped.  
**Virus:** spherical, needle-like, cubical, and many-sided. |
| **Reproduction** | Both multiply via some form of reproduction. | **Bacteria:** Use asexual reproduction; offspring produced by a single parent.  
**Virus:** Reproduction requires a host cell, as it cannot reproduce by itself; it is a parasite. |
| **Structure**  | Both have an outer coat.  
Both have DNA. | **Bacteria:** Enclosed by a cell wall. DNA called plasmids.  
**Virus:** Outer coat of protein and an inner part of nucleic acid. Can have either DNA or RNA. |
| **Movement**   | Both can move. | **Bacteria:** Move on their own, by means of flagella.  
**Virus:** Cannot move on its own, but is attached to the host cell, which can move. |

When you write your essay using this information, devote one sentence (or paragraph) to each characteristic. Then write a summary paragraph explaining why you think the two are more alike or more different.
**PREPARE TO COMPARE**

Write the two items you are going to compare in the spaces below. Then identify various characteristics of the two that are alike and different. Use the information in the chart to write an essay in which you develop a paragraph on each of the characteristics, followed by a summary paragraph.

**Item #1:** ____________________________________________ **Item #2:** ____________________________________________

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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When you write your essay using this information, devote one sentence (or paragraph) to each characteristic. Then write a summary paragraph explaining why you think the two are more alike or more different.
HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

SELECT A CONTROVERSIAL TOPIC THAT IS RELATED TO WHAT IS BEING STUDIED AND PHRASE IT AS A QUESTION.

Without taking sides, try to think of all of the facts, ideas, and information that would support a positive response to the question, considering how people from different perspectives might view the topic. List these reasons. Complete sentences are not necessary.

Think about the topic from the perspective of people who might be against it or might answer the question in a negative way, again considering multiple perspectives to be as complete and comprehensive as possible. List these reasons, facts, and ideas.

If some ideas can be seen as both positive and negative, include supporting notes explaining why.

Take a position in regard to the topic or question and write a paper defending it, using the lists and notes compiled.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

Have students work in pairs to complete this activity, assigning one person the “pro” position and the other the “con.” When they share their lists, have them check to see whether they each have captured the same points about the topic or one found arguments that the other did not consider.

Use the information for a debate in class.

Help students understand how to disagree agreeably. Discuss how having different opinions about a subject is all right and that others’ opinions need to be respected even if one disagrees with them.

Build prior knowledge about debate by providing a recorded example or written text of a famous debate. Point out how the debaters move through the discussion one point at a time, addressing various parts of the topic from their own perspectives and reacting to the opinions and perspectives of the other person.
PREPARING FOR DEBATE

Select a topic about which there are two viewpoints. Imagine that you are preparing to debate the topic. To prepare, you must consider what the pros and cons are for each side. You can use your notes to help write a paper that either promotes one viewpoint over the other or that is balanced in presenting the ideas.

Write the topic of your debate here. Frame it as a question about which there might be differing opinions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROS: (Supporting Ideas/Positives)</th>
<th>CONS: (Opposing Ideas/Negatives)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As you think about the pros and cons related to this topic, do not try to take sides. Think from multiple perspectives about what others might consider to be positive about the topic. Later, you will select from this list the ones that support the position on the topic that you have decided to take.</td>
<td>List in this column the reasons why you think people might be against the question being asked. What reasons would they give to have a negative response to the question or idea? Again, think from multiple perspectives and not just from your own position.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sometimes a “positive” to some can be a “negative” to others, so an idea might fit on either side. If you include an idea like this, be sure to also include notes about why a person would see it as either positive or negative.

When you are finished listing the pros and cons on this issue, take a position and defend it by writing a position paper in which you use some of the arguments from this list.
Select a topic about which there are two viewpoints. Imagine that you are preparing to debate the topic. To prepare, you must consider what the pros and cons are for each side. You can use your notes to help write a paper that either promotes one viewpoint over the other or that is balanced in presenting the ideas.

**Topic:** Global Warming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROS: (Supporting Ideas/Positives)</th>
<th>CONS: (Opposing Ideas/Negatives)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Since the industrial revolution began, we’ve been loading the atmosphere with heat-trapping gases.</td>
<td>• 57% of Americans believe that global warming is either not serious or only fairly serious.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Worldwide temperatures have climbed more than 1 degree F over the past century.</td>
<td>• It is natural for Earth’s temperature to rise over time and in temperate zones; this warmth will make crops flourish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The 1990s were the hottest decade on record.</td>
<td>• Methane, nitrous oxide, and carbon monoxide levels have all decreased during the decade of the 1990s—methane and nitrous oxide are two “greenhouse gases” that are supposedly responsible for global warming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Glaciers are disappearing from mountain-tops around the world.</td>
<td>• According to Accu-Weather, global air temperatures show an increase of about .45 degrees Celsius over the past century. This is a “normal climatic variation.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coral reefs are dying off as seas get too warm.</td>
<td>• Satellite data indicate a slight cooling in the climate in the last 18 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Drought is increasing in parts of Asia and Africa.</td>
<td>• Computer models that predict projections of future climate changes are very limited; they are far from perfect representations of reality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• El Niño events are more frequent and are causing more severe weather.</td>
<td>• 98% of total global greenhouse gas emissions are natural; only 2% are from man-made sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Arctic permafrost is starting to melt.</td>
<td>• Only 17% of members of the American Meteorological Society and the American Geophysical Society think the warming of the 20th century is due to greenhouse gas emissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lakes and rivers in colder regions are freezing later and thawing earlier.</td>
<td>• The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is 30% above pre-industrial levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is 30% above pre-industrial levels.</td>
<td>• It took only a 9 degree F shift in temperature to end the last Ice Age.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Select a topic about which there are two viewpoints. Imagine that you are preparing to debate the topic. To prepare, you must consider what the pros and cons are for each side. You can use your notes to help write a paper that either promotes one viewpoint over the other or that is balanced in presenting the ideas.

**Topic:**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prewriting Tools

PUT IT TOGETHER

H O W T O U S E:
The student will . . .

☛ Think and write notes about what was known about the topic prior to instruction.
☛ Process what was learned through instruction and write additional facts and information.
☛ Review all information listed to make sure that all important concepts and ideas have been included.
☛ Use the information to write about the important ideas and concepts about the topic, connecting prior knowledge with the new learning.
☛ Provide a title that helps the reader understand the topic.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☛ Discuss the role of prior knowledge in helping a learner create connections to new learning. Stress the importance of taking time to recall what is already known so that the new connections can be made more easily.
☛ Have students brainstorm what they already know about the topic prior to instruction. Allow them to continue to add to this list as the new information jogs their memories.
☛ Allow students to develop their lists of information in pairs, in small groups, or as a whole class. Have them discuss which points on the list might be the most important to remember about the topic.
☛ Recognize that all students’ compositions will be different because everyone’s background knowledge is different. Make sure students are comfortable with the concept of bringing different background knowledge to the learning task.
☛ Conduct a discussion on how the brain makes connections and how these connections help with recalling new information.
PUT IT TOGETHER

In the table below, enter information or facts that you already knew about the topic in the left-hand column. Then enter the information you learned (that was new to you) in the right-hand column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I Knew . . .</th>
<th>What I Learned . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You might want to complete this section before instruction begins. If you do not, then try to recall which information you believe you already knew about the topic and which information was new.</td>
<td>Include the facts and information you learned that you consider most important to remember.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now combine the two columns into new text that integrates your own knowledge about the subject with what you learned about it. What you write should give the reader a good overview of the subject.

**Topic:** Write a title for your new text here.

As you write about the topic, pulling together your own knowledge of the subject and what you have learned about it, think about how your brain might connect the two types of information. Review what you have written and reflect on how you have made connections with your new learning.
PUT IT TOGETHER

In the table below, enter information or facts that you already knew about the topic in the left-hand column. Then enter the information you learned (that was new to you) in the right-hand column.

**Stocks and Bonds**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I Knew . . .</th>
<th>What I Learned . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Change in value.</td>
<td>• Stocks represent ownership of companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Buy shares of companies.</td>
<td>• Bonds represent loans made to companies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Can lose a lot of money or make a lot of money.</td>
<td>• Different classes of stocks (common/preferred) give variable voting rights and dividend rights to stockholders.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People buy them to help save for retirement.</td>
<td>• Dividends are the shareholder’s part of the company’s profits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stock certificates show proof of ownership in the company.</td>
<td>• Different stocks and bonds have different levels of risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Dow Jones Average helps show if values are going up or down.</td>
<td>• Bonds generally pay lower than stocks but are usually safer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now combine the two columns into new text that integrates your own knowledge about the subject with what you learned about it. What you write should give the reader a good overview of the subject.

**Topic:** Investing in Stocks and Bonds

Investors often use stocks and bonds to save for retirement. They must choose stocks and bonds carefully, because each has risks and benefits that are unique to it. If a person is willing to take more risk for a potentially higher return, she will usually select stocks. Bonds generally carry a lower risk, but do not often pay as high of a return as bonds. Either one can result in losses as well as gains, depending on how well the economy performs and the type of stocks or bonds chosen. Dividends, which come from the profits of the company, can help increase returns to the stockholder. Overall, stocks and bonds can be great investments, but the buyer must make wise choices.
PUT IT TOGETHER

In the table below, enter information or facts that you already knew about the topic in the left-hand column. Then enter the information you learned (that was new to you) in the right-hand column.

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Now combine the two columns into new text that integrates your own knowledge about the subject with what you learned about it. What you write should give the reader a good overview of the subject.

**Topic:** ____________________________________________________________
Prewriting Tools

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Note: This tool could be used for all of the above purposes; the question will dictate the purpose and the response.

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

Identify a question to be answered or use a teacher-provided question—one with two or more sides to the issue—and construct support for one side.

Jot down all prior knowledge of the subject or issue, based on the question.

Research at least three sources and summarize information that will help answer the question. Collect evidence to support the response, making connections between the question and prior knowledge about it.

Answer the question, providing support for the response.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

Assist students in understanding the importance and method of constructing support for their response to the question. Help them understand that constructing support not only helps them have a deeper understanding of the information but also gives them a lifelong skill of persuading.

Keep in mind that having students take a position and provide support for that position often increases their engagement in your content.

When constructing support is used across the content areas, consider working with other staff to provide a consistent process for the students.

Offer a minilesson on citing direct quotations. Language arts and English teachers can be a great help to other staff by providing information and consistency in format.

Consider giving the students the question as well as the sources you want them to use. Vary the resources—perhaps a text in your content area, a journal or magazine article, a poem, or an essay.

Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Organize your thinking and evidence to answer a specific question. Determine your thinking and gather information from at least three sources. Use all this information to draft your answer to the question.

**The Question Is:**
__________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________

My Thinking/Knowledge Prior to Reading

Based on the question you are seeking to answer, summarize your prior knowledge. What do you already know that will influence your response? What evidence do you have?

My Writing

Use your prior knowledge and the new learning from the resources you researched to answer the question above. Be sure to organize your thinking so that you answer the question and support your response with valid evidence. Your evidence might include specific facts, examples, or quotes.

Summary of Information from My Research

**Source 1:**

Using at least three different sources, summarize information that will help you write the answer to the question. Be sure to watch for details and evidence that will support your response—for instance, specific examples, facts, and quotes.

**Source 2:**

**Source 3:**
Organize your thinking and evidence to answer a specific question. Determine your thinking and gather information from at least three sources. Use all this information to draft your answer to the question.

**The Question Is:** What inventions have had the greatest impact?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My Thinking/Knowledge Prior to Reading</th>
<th>My Writing</th>
<th>Summary of Information from My Research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| I cannot imagine my life without my game boy or my basketball—not to mention my computer and cell phone. And how could I eat without the microwave? Are there inventions that are more important to me than these? How about to others? | What do Jacob Davis, Philo Farnsworth, and the Pentagon have in common? They invented things that affect you and me every day! Jacob Davis has influenced the world of fashion—and work—since 1873. It was in Reno, Nevada, that he put the first metal rivets in pants made of denim to make them wear longer. Blue jeans were born! Davis had no money for the patent so had to negotiate with Levi Strauss to share the patent, and the rest is history. Blue jeans have ruled the fashion world for teens since the 1950s and for the blue collar workers for more than a century. What do wheat and television have in common? | **Source 1:** Blue jeans—Jacob Davis—1873—Reno, Nevada. Put metal rivets on pants made of denim. No money for patent so met with Levi Strauss—share the patent—rest is history.  
**Source 2:** Television—Philo Farnsworth—Idaho wheat farmer—1920—imagined a pix in horizontal lines (like wheat field)—1927—got a patent—1939 TV was introduced in New York World’s Fair—Farnsworth was really forgotten.  
**Source 3:** Internet—1960s—Pentagon financed research on nodes (centralized research center)—1969—4 universities were connected and Internet was born. |
Organize your thinking and evidence to answer a specific question. Determine your thinking and gather information from at least three sources. Use all this information to draft your answer to the question.

The Question Is: _____________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Source 1: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
Source 2: ________________________________________________________________________________________________
Source 3: ________________________________________________________________________________________________

My Thinking/Knowledge Prior to Reading

My Writing

Summary of Information from My Research
**PUTTING THE PUZZLE TOGETHER**

**Prewriting Tools**

- Identify the reading assignment and the date of discussion.
- Jot down prior knowledge about the topic.
- Summarize in own words key information from the reading. (If the teacher shares a specific purpose, then the summary will focus on that purpose.)
- Note key learning from the discussion or minilecture that extends and refines the learning from the reading. (If the teacher shares a specific purpose, then the key learning should be additional information to support that purpose.)
- Synthesize the information from the three areas.

**TIPS/VARIATIONS:**

- Share a purpose for the writing. For example, you may want students to compare two processes that you are using in a science class, or sequence the steps in a lab. You may want them to defend one side of an issue in a debate in a social studies class, or describe in detail a character in a novel being discussed.
- Consider having the students use note cards—one to summarize the key points of what they already know about the topic, another for key points from their reading, and a third for key learnings from the discussion or minilecture. They can then synthesize their information on a fourth note card or use notebook paper to write the summary.
- Have students use various formats for the synthesis of their learning. For example, they might write you a letter or complete a journal entry. You might also have them complete the Ticket Out of Here activity from *Reading Strategies for the Content Areas, Volume 1*. They might write a more formal document that addresses the purpose (e.g., description, sequence, persuasion, cause and effect).
- Keep in mind that having students synthesize information helps them make connections between what they already know, what they learn from the reading, and what they learn from discussing information with their peers. It also helps you assess their understanding of the information.
- Reflect with your students about how each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
Summarize your key learnings by identifying your prior knowledge, key points from the sources you have read, and information gained from discussion of the material.

**Reading Assignment:** Identify the text source and the pages read.

**Discussion Date:** Identify the date of the class discussion.

**Key Points I Already Knew**
Jot down ideas and knowledge you already have about this topic.

**Key Points from the Reading**
Summarize key notes from your reading. Be sure to use your own words.

**Key Points from the Discussion**
Identify key learnings from the discussion or minilecture.

**What I Now Know**
Put the puzzle together by “synthesizing” the information you already knew, things you learned from the reading, and new learnings and connections you made during the discussion or minilecture. Consider a format that would help you remember the information—perhaps a letter to the teacher, a journal entry that summarizes the information, or a storyboard that “pictures” the information.
PUTTING THE PUZZLE TOGETHER

Summarize your key learnings by identifying your prior knowledge, key points from the sources you have read, and information gained from discussion of the material.

**Reading Assignment:** Acting in Your Community  
**Discussion Date:** October 30

### Key Points I Already Knew

Our small community offers ways to get involved in acting:  
- High school plays  
- Community musical—annual—actors and making sets  

Benefits include experience and getting to work on something from beginning to end.

### Key Points from the Reading

- Community theaters  
- Storytelling—good way to begin acting—in public library; work on inflection, do Civil War reenactments, visit nursing homes  
- Extras  
- Volunteer at museum  
- Public access TV—produce own show and do talk show or variety show  
- Internet show

### Key Points from the Discussion

- Improvisational groups  
- Charity plays  
- Student films—writer, director, producer, actor  
- Donna Reed Festival

### What I Now Know

Opportunities are all over my community for me to get involved in acting. I’ve already tried the high school play and had a “bit part” in our community’s annual musical. However, I had never thought about the role that storytelling could have in developing my acting skills. And who knew that I could write, direct, produce, and even act in my own student film—and then put it on public access TV, my own Web site, or offer it at our public library. And if I want to rub elbows with the “real” world of acting, the Donna Reed Festival is a great place for us novice actors. They even offer scholarships to help more of us participate.
PUTTING THE PUZZLE TOGETHER

Summarize your key learnings by identifying your prior knowledge, key points from the sources you have read, and information gained from discussion of the material.

Reading Assignment: ___________________________ Discussion Date: ___________________________

Key Points I Already Knew

Key Points from the Reading

Key Points from the Discussion

What I Now Know
Prewriting Tools

QUESTIONS IN SEARCH OF ANSWERS

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Prior to the new learning, think about quality questions that might be asked about the topic. If a textbook is being used, consider turning the headings and subheadings into questions that might be answered.

☛ While progressing through the instruction and uncovering the answers to the questions, develop summary statements that answer the questions. Use complete sentences, including enough details to ensure complete answers.

☛ After completing the activity, review the scope of the questions asked and determine whether there are still any main points that have not been summarized. If so, create new questions and summary statements.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☛ Use the questions and answers generated to develop a game of Jeopardy. The game can be played during a review of the topic or can be used to guide class discussion of the topic.

☛ Consider having students switch papers and answer each other’s questions. Partners can then discuss the quality and comprehensiveness of the answers.

☛ Prior to starting the activity, model how to write good questions that call for more than a simple answer. Use Bloom’s taxonomy to help students understand different levels of thinking required by different kinds of questions.

☛ Use questions framed by students as actual test questions to evaluate student understanding of the instruction.

☛ Gather all of the students’ questions on note cards. Distribute the cards randomly to groups of students to use as a review of the content.

☛ If students have difficulty developing good questions, consider developing the questions as a class activity or providing students with the questions at the beginning of the instruction.
Questions in Search of Answers

Think about questions that you might want to have answered about the topic you will be studying. List those questions in the left-hand column of the chart below. As you learn more about the topic, answer each question in the right-hand column with a sentence that summarizes the answer to the question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Summary Sentence That Answers the Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write good questions—ones that require answers that need explanation.</td>
<td>Include enough details in your sentence to help fully answer the questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you are using a textbook, consider using the headings and subheadings as the basis for the questions you develop.</td>
<td>If the answers to your questions are not answered by the text or the teacher's presentation, you may need to do some additional research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use your own words in answering the questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluate the questions you developed. Did they focus your learning on the most important information? What additional questions might you have asked?
Think about questions that you might want to have answered about the topic you will be studying. List those questions in the left-hand column of the chart below. As you learn more about the topic, answer each question in the right-hand column with a sentence that summarizes the answer to the question.

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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How large is South America?</td>
<td>South America is the fourth largest continent, consisting of 12 independent countries and stretching 4,750 miles from north to south; it covers 12% of Earth’s lands.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do natural resources affect the economy of South America?</td>
<td>Although a scarcity of coal was an early obstacle to industrial growth in South America, hydroelectric plants now produce most of the continent’s energy, allowing for more heavy industries to be developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What major issues or problems does South America have?</td>
<td>The destruction of the Amazonian rain forests and the illegal drug trade are two problems in South America that have captured international interest and concern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What areas of the continent are most populated?</td>
<td>Generally, the national capitals have the largest populations and the population density ranges from 10 million in Sao Paulo, Brazil, to an interior of the country being virtually uninhabited.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluate the questions you developed. Did they focus your learning on the most important information? What additional questions might you have asked?
Think about questions that you might want to have answered about the topic you will be studying. List those questions in the left-hand column of the chart below. As you learn more about the topic, answer each question in the right-hand column with a sentence that summarizes the answer to the question.

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</table>

Evaluate the questions you developed. Did they focus your learning on the most important information? What additional questions might you have asked?
REFLECTING ON
MY READING

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Note the assigned reading, making sure to identify the source as well as the pages to be read.

☛ Identify the purpose of the reading by seeking to answer the question, “What am I supposed to learn from this reading?” (Note: The teacher may provide the purpose.)

☛ Note vocabulary terms that will be important in summarizing the reading. Look up any unfamiliar words and write a brief description for each.

☛ Jot down key ideas in the reading that support the purpose of the reading and writing, using own words or quotation marks around direct quotes and citing page numbers of the sources.

☛ List questions about the reading and seek answers to those questions before summarizing the reading.

☛ Summarize the reading based on the purpose.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

☛ Provide a purpose for your students’ reading and writing until they have developed skill in identifying purpose on the basis of context clues or standards and benchmarks. You may want to state the purpose as a question students will answer in their summary.

☛ Allow students to share their vocabulary, key ideas, and questions with their writing buddy or others in the class. This will help them clarify their thinking as well as extend and refine it.

☛ Encourage students to write the key ideas in their own words. Show them how to use direct quotes if necessary, including the identification of the source. You may want to set a rule that if they have more than three words of the original text, they must rewrite their key idea. This will help them think more about the reading and actually increase their understanding before they write the summary.

☛ Have students share their summaries and connections with their writing buddy. Have them discuss how their writing reveals the purpose of the reading; includes supporting details and appropriate vocabulary; and helps clarify, extend, and refine their thinking. You may want to have them rewrite their summaries based on their learning.

☛ Reflect with your students about how the tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
Check your learning by reflecting on what you have read. After identifying key information, summarize your thinking and learning.

**Assigned Reading:**
Jot down your reading assignment. Include source and page numbers.

**Purpose of Reading:**
Note the purpose of your reading. Ask yourself, “What am I supposed to learn from this reading?” Your teacher might also share the purpose of the reading with you or give you a question to answer as a result of your reading.

**Key Vocabulary Terms:**
Identify vocabulary words that are important to understanding this information and sharing it with others. Look up the words you do not know and write a brief description. Strive to use these terms in your summary.

**Key Ideas Revealed in the Reading:**
Note details that support the purpose of the reading. Try to write them in your own words. Otherwise, be sure to put the note within quotation marks and indicate the source and page number.

**Questions I Have About What I Read:**
Keeping in mind the purpose of your reading and preparing yourself to summarize your reading, identify key questions you still have about the reading. Then seek answers by rereading the text, reading other material on the subject, or discussing the questions with others. You might want to add the answers here or summarize them under “Key Ideas” above.

**A Summary of My Reading/Connecting My Reading:**
Summarize what you have read. Be sure that your summary addresses the purpose for the reading. It’s a good idea to incorporate the key vocabulary terms within your writing. Remember, the purpose of this writing is to clarify your own thinking about the reading. You want to be sure that you have a clear understanding of the intended learning. You may want to compare your summary with your writing buddy’s and then rewrite after your discussion.
Check your learning by reflecting on what you have read. After identifying key information, summarize your thinking and learning.

**Assigned Reading:** How Valuable Are My Values?

**Purpose of Reading:** Reflect on role of values in my life—get ready to discuss in my psych class.

**Key Vocabulary Terms:**
- Value
- Needs vs. wants = happiness
- Hedonism = focus on pleasures, feeling good
- Neuroscientists
- Intrinsic

**Key Ideas Revealed in the Reading:**
- Need to systematically and honestly determine what matters to me!
- Values are revealed in how we live—how we treat people, what we focus on.
- We must take responsibility for inventing/creating our future.
- We all have same basic values—but we demonstrate them in different ways.

**Questions I Have About What I Read:**
- Do values change over time?
- What influences our values most?
- How can I be sure my values stay positive?
- Do I influence others’ values?
- How do TV and other media affect our values?
- Do we all really have same values? Do terrorists value life the way I do?

**A Summary of My Reading/Connecting My Reading:**

Describing my values can probably be summed up best by thinking about what I would do if I knew we all had only two weeks left of time on earth. Just thinking about that tells me what matters most in my life—and it also tells me what actions I might consider changing if I wanted my life and activities today to reveal my true values. The hard part for me is how to live (lead) my own life and not let others—like my friends (or even my enemies or the media)—negatively influence my values.
Check your learning by reflecting on what you have read. After identifying key information, summarize your thinking and learning.

Assigned Reading: ____________________________________________________________

Purpose of Reading: __________________________________________________________

Key Vocabulary Terms:
•
•
•
•

Key Ideas Revealed in the Reading:
•
•
•
•

Questions I Have About What I Read:
•
•
•
•

A Summary of My Reading/Connecting My Reading:
### SPOTTING A TOPIC

**Prewriting Tool**

- Select a topic from what is currently being studied. The topic should be fairly broad and comprehensive.
- For 3–5 minutes, as directed by the teacher, write notes about everything that is known about the topic. Complete sentences do not have to be used.
- Review the written notes and select one idea to continue to think and write about for an additional 3–5 minutes.
- Continue the process one more time, choosing one idea from what was written and continuing to write about it for 3–5 minutes.
- Evaluate the final subtopic. Is it broad enough to use in writing an essay? What purpose would the essay have?

**Tips/Variations:**
- Make sure that students start with a broad enough topic, so they will be able to continue to narrow it throughout the activity.
- Model the process of freewriting by selecting a topic and working through it with the class. Don’t evaluate any ideas that are given. During freewriting, it is most important for students to “empty their minds” about the topic and freely associate other ideas with the topic.
- Determine how much time to allow students for each freewriting session on the basis of how much students know about the topic or how much has already been presented on the topic.
- Use this tool as a pre-instructional activity, with students adding information to each subtopic as they continue to learn about the subject. Make sure that students understand that the purpose of doing this before instruction is to have them examine what they already know. They should not be expected to have a great deal of knowledge about the subject at this point.
- Conduct a class discussion about how to select an appropriate subtopic for a paper and how to select a purpose for the writing. If desired, have students select one of their levels of the topic and write a formal paper about it.
**SPOTTING A TOPIC**

Freewrite about your topic by writing continuously for 3–5 minutes about whatever comes to mind. Stop and review what you have written. Pick one aspect of what you have written and freewrite for another 3–5 minutes on that aspect. Repeat the process at least one more time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Topic:</strong> _ Begin by identifying a fairly broad topic that you are currently studying.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtopic:</strong> _ Review your freewriting notes above. Select one idea from what you’ve written to continue to explore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtopic:</strong> _ Select one idea from your second round of freewriting that again narrows the topic.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For 3–5 minutes, write down everything you know or think you know about the topic. Don’t worry about whether or not you are right. Think about information that is related to the topic or details about the topic. Don’t force your thinking; just write down whatever comes to mind. Pictures or diagrams are OK, too!

Repeat the process above, writing continuously about everything that you know or think you know about the narrowed topic. Try not to stop writing—let your mind think freely.

One more time, write down more details about the newly narrowed topic. As you do so, you will be searching your brain for details and it may get harder to think of things to write. Don’t give up!

Evaluate the subtopic you ended with—is it appropriate to use in developing an essay? What purpose would the essay have?
### SPOTTING A TOPIC

Freewrite about your topic by writing continuously for 3–5 minutes about whatever comes to mind. Stop and review what you have written. Pick one aspect of what you have written and freewrite for another 3–5 minutes on that aspect. Repeat the process at least one more time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: Picking a Career</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are many careers available to young people today. Some careers call for years of training and some require only a short training. Some jobs provide lots of opportunities for advancement and others are dead-end jobs with no possibility for growth. It is difficult to find just the right career. Young people must think and plan carefully when considering their future. Equally important to traditional schooling in picking a career are the student’s interests and natural abilities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtopic: Matching a Career to the Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Things that students should take into account in planning their careers are the amount of training and schooling they are willing to take, the kind of work they enjoy, and their own personalities. For example, if someone is not very personable or is really shy, then a career working with a lot of people (like a salesperson) might not work out. If a student is not academically oriented or doesn’t like school, then going to a four-year college might not be the best either. The student must pick a career that matches his or her personality and that requires the kind of training that the student is willing to take.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtopic: Four-Year College: It’s Not for Everyone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not all great careers require a four-year college degree. Many technical careers, such as electricians, plumbers, and technicians, require only a couple of years of specialized training. These jobs can also pay very well and can lead to advancement in the field. For example, a person might become a master plumber or even own his or her own plumbing company. People can also work their way up through the ranks in a career by starting at the bottom and using experience as the basis for advancement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## SPOTTING A TOPIC

Freewrite about your topic by writing continuously for 3–5 minutes about whatever comes to mind. Stop and review what you have written. Pick one aspect of what you have written and freewrite for another 3–5 minutes on that aspect. Repeat the process at least one more time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th></th>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtopic:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| Subtopic: |  |
HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Create a title for the event or process that will be described.

☛ Brainstorm the list of steps or events and organize them into the sequence in which they occur.

☛ Draw a picture or create a visual that represents each step of the process or each event, using one “screen” for each step or event and developing as many screens as needed to include all of the important steps or events.

☛ Write captions that summarize in words what the visual represents, using complete sentences.

☛ Use the completed storyboard as an outline to write an essay or story about the event or process.

☛ Ask someone else to read the essay or story and describe what they envision as they read. Compare the pictures they create from the essay with the pictures used to create it.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

☛ Post students’ work and have students review one another’s work to determine how accurately the storyboards captured the most important steps or events.

☛ Have students develop their storyboards into storybooks or technical manuals, adding additional details as needed to adequately communicate the process or event.

☛ Encourage students to use as many “screens” as they need to comprehensively summarize the event or process.

☛ After students have finished their storyboards, make copies and cut them into individual pieces. Have students share the pieces with others, whose task it will be to organize them into the correct sequence.

☛ Model the storyboard process with the whole class before students begin to develop their own.

☛ Have pairs or small groups of students complete the activity together. Consider pairing a visual learner with an auditory learner so both can build their strengths.
STORYBOARDIN’

Television scripts are often first written as a series of still pictures that outline the series of events in the plot. This is called a storyboard. Create your own storyboard for a series of events or steps in a process. Use as many “screens” as you need to capture the main events or steps. For each picture, write a sentence or subtitle that briefly explains what is depicted.

Title: ____________________________________________________________________________________________________

Create a title that describes what the story is about or explains what the process is about. It should also capture the reader’s attention and interest.

Draw a picture for each event in your story or each step in the process you are describing. Use as many “screens” as you need to tell the whole story or describe the process in enough detail to be thorough.

Write a caption or subtitle for each picture that explains the picture or clarifies what the drawing depicts.

It might help to first make a list of what you will include in each screen before you start to draw.

Consider using each event or step as the topic for a paragraph in your essay. Include enough details to help your readers create their own mental pictures from your words.

When you have completed your storyboard, try writing an essay about the event or process. Ask someone else to read your paper, and then share your storyboard to see if the reader visualized the same things you did.
STORYBOARDIN’

Television scripts are often first written as a series of still pictures that outline the series of events in the plot. This is called a storyboard. Create your own storyboard for a series of events or steps in a process. Use as many “screens” as you need to capture the main events or steps. For each picture, write a sentence or subtitle that briefly explains what is depicted.

Title: Commercial Art: Making Logos

The first thing you have to do to make a logo is to brainstorm ideas.

Next, put your ideas on paper, in small frames called thumbnails.

Third, pick which ones are your favorites and make some adjustments to them.

Finally, pick your final project and make it perfect. It may become recognized around the world.

When you have completed your storyboard, try writing an essay about the event or process. Ask someone else to read your paper, and then share your storyboard to see if the reader visualized the same things you did.

Source: Adapted from a classroom example submitted by Tammy Dickinson-Ferrell, Roland-Story Community School District, Story City, Iowa.
STORYBOARDIN’

Television scripts are often first written as a series of still pictures that outline the series of events in the plot. This is called a storyboard. Create your own storyboard for a series of events or steps in a process. Use as many “screens” as you need to capture the main events or steps. For each picture, write a sentence or subtitle that briefly explains what is depicted.

Title: _______________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

When you have completed your storyboard, try writing an essay about the event or process. Ask someone else to read your paper, and then share your storyboard to see if the reader visualized the same things you did.
### Prewriting Tools

**SUMMING UP**

**THE WHOLE STORY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>☑ Prewriting Tool</th>
<th>☐ During-Writing Tool</th>
<th>☐ Postwriting Tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### HOW TO USE:

The student will . . .

- Identify an event, issue, or account on which to report.
- Identify all the key players and provide appropriate details about each.
- Identify the setting, both the when and where, assuring the reader a vivid picture of the context of the event.
- Establish the why and how of the event. Again, details are important so the reader will know why this event occurred and under what conditions.
- Determine the effect of this event for the unit being studied as well as its connection to the students, to other events, or to the present world.
- Speculate on the next events that might occur as a result of or be related to the described event.

### TIPS/VARIATIONS:

- Help your students understand that good writing really does matter—it provides meaning, stimulates clear thinking, and increases their understanding of your content. Summarizing an event—whether historical or current—can help students have a better understanding of the event and its effect on and connection to other events.
- Interview a newspaper or television reporter, ideally someone responsible for investigative reporting. Have students brainstorm questions they would like to pursue in the interview. Have students take notes during the interview. After the interview, identify key learnings and applications for students’ writing.
- Model the steps to take before writing a description of an event. Share examples from your own writing as well as examples of other writers—both professionals and students.
- Provide several descriptions of events for students to read and evaluate, noting strengths and challenges of the writing. Consider having the students write their own rubric for the description they write in this activity.
- Provide minilessons on topics that students find a challenge. Design these for individuals, small groups, or the entire class.
- Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
Think of yourself as an investigative reporter for a local television station. As you describe in writing an account or event, be sure to share the “who, what, when, where, why, and how”—and then dig deeper to share the effect (the “so what?”) of the account or event and make predictions (the “now what?”) of the incident on the future.

**Description of Account or Event:**

- **Who?**
  - Share who was involved—names, titles, and descriptions of or reasons for their involvement.

- **What?**
  - Identify the action, event, or account here.

- **When?**
  - Say when the event took place. You may want to consider listing other related events going on as well. This helps your reader develop a context for the summary.

- **Where?**
  - Provide the setting—be sure to give appropriate details to create a vivid picture in your reader’s mind.

- **Why?**
  - Relate why this event occurred; you may include events that led up to this event or refer to actions of individuals involved in the event.

- **How?**
  - Provide details on how this event happened. Identify specific steps in the action—make sure your sequence and supporting details are correct.

- **So What?**
  - Share with your readers why this event is important—what effect did it have? On whom? Why? Is there significance for others? Why?

- **Now What?**
  - Indicate future effects of this event. If it is a historical event, you might say what happened next. If a current event, you might predict or speculate on what might happen next. If you are developing a fictional work, you will want to think about how the event relates to future events in the writing.
SUMMING UP THE WHOLE STORY

Think of yourself as an investigative reporter for a local television station. As you describe in writing an account or event, be sure to share the “who, what, when, where, why, and how”—and then dig deeper to share the effect (the “so what?”) of the account or event and make predictions (the “now what?”) of the incident on the future.

**Description of Account or Event:**

Albert Einstein Named Person of the Century

**Who?**

Albert Einstein, scientist noted most for the theory of relativity.

**When?**

January 2000.

**Where?**

Time magazine’s Person of the Century.

**What?**

Albert Einstein was named Person of the Century by *Time* magazine.

**Why?**

Pre-eminent scientist in century of science.

**How?**

By impacting electronics, quantum physics, theory of relativity, the Big Bang, and even World War II.

**So What?**

His accomplishments go beyond science—art, poetry are influenced by his work—great influence on modern culture.

**Now What?**

Scientists continue to study his brain. It was recently learned by Canadian scientists that he had large inferior parietal lobe—the center for math! More insights with more study—100 books about him in print now.

**What?**

Scientists continue to study his brain. It was recently learned by Canadian scientists that he had large inferior parietal lobe—the center for math! More insights with more study—100 books about him in print now.
Think of yourself as an investigative reporter for a local television station. As you describe in writing an account or event, be sure to share the “who, what, when, where, why, and how”—and then dig deeper to share the effect (the “so what?”) of the account or event and make predictions (the “now what?”) of the incident on the future.

**Description of Account or Event:**

- **Who?**
- **When?**
- **Where?**
- **What?**
- **Why?**
- **How?**
- **So What?**
- **Now What?**
- **How?**
SYNTHESIZE THAT!

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Identify the topic as well as the purpose for the synthesis of information. (Note: The teacher may provide the purpose.)

☛ Using at least three different sources, summarize the information from each source to suit the purpose of the synthesis, using own words. If direct quotes are used, the student should use quotation marks and cite sources and page numbers.

☛ Write a summary of the information from the three sources, addressing the purpose. The synthesis of information should summarize key points, make connections among the sources, and note similarities and differences. If direct quotes are used, the student will cite the sources and page numbers.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

☛ Share a purpose for the synthesis with the students. This will help focus their reading, learning, and reflection. All notes they take should then strengthen the purpose of their synthesis.

☛ Consider having the students use note cards to summarize their information, one card for each source. Encourage the students to highlight information on each note card that will strengthen the purpose of their synthesis.

☛ Provide a minilesson, if necessary, on using direct quotes. Language arts and English teachers in your building would be a great resource for the entire staff to ensure consistency in students’ citations.

☛ Reflect with your students about how the tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
SYNTHESIZE THAT!

Bring together (synthesize) the information you have collected from several sources. Identify your topic and purpose to guide your selection of information. Finally, summarize the information based on the purpose.

**Topic:**

Identify the topic as well as the purpose for the synthesis of information. If your teacher does not select a purpose, you will need to identify one.

**Purpose of Synthesis:**

**Source:** ______________________

**Source:** ______________________

**Source:** ______________________

Identify at least 3 sources that you will be using to gather information to support your topic and purpose.

Summarize information that supports your topic and purpose. Be sure to put the summary for each source in your own words. If direct quotes are used, be sure to use quotation marks and cite the source and page number.

**Synthesis of Information**

Synthesize the information from the three sources to fit the purpose. This will help you make sense of information from multiple sources and help you tie information together. If you use a direct quote in your synthesis of information, be sure to use quotation marks and cite the source and page number of the quoted information.
SYNTHESIZE THAT!

Bring together (synthesize) the information you have collected from several sources. Identify your topic and purpose to guide your selection of information. Finally, summarize the information based on the purpose.

Topic: Child Development—Two-Year-Olds!

Purpose of Synthesis: Description of a “typical” two-year-old

Source: Iowa State University Web site

- Comes in all shapes and sizes—22–38 pounds and 32–40 inches tall.
- Has most of his or her teeth.
- Plays lots—loves stack toys, loves to draw (really scribbles).
- May want to learn to use toilet.
- Walks backwards, stoops, squats, pushes, pulls, fills, dumps.
- Tries to hum.
- Loves books.
- Points to body parts.

Source: Oklahoma University Web site

- Starts to like other kids—but can turn a hug into a tackle.
- Needs routines now—makes them feel secure as they get scared easily.
- Moods change fast—happy one minute and crying the next—tantrums.
- Really likes parents close—very attached to caregiver.
- Mischievous—into everything.

Source: National Network for Child Care

- Mine! No! I do it!—really want to be independent.
- Babyproof for a toddler—they are into cabinets and drawers—reaching hot stove.
- Be ready to run—attention span is couple of minutes.
- Give one-step directions—time for chores.
- Tents, cardboard boxes—fun toys.
- Sand, mud, clay, and water.

Synthesis of Information

“Me!” “Mine!” “No!” “I do it!” That is my nephew to a T! And if I were his parent, I would never get to my things. The entire world revolves around that kid.

Hayden is about typical for his size—32 inches tall and weighs 36 pounds. I know he has all his teeth; I have the pattern on my arm to prove it.

Over the holidays, we played all the time. He loves Simon Says—as long as I give him only one thing to do. He can walk, stoop, squat, push, pull, get the ball, point to his tummy! I don’t think he gets Simon yet, but he is great for “fetching.”

Sometimes I couldn’t find him—he was in the closet, or up the steps, or under the table—looking and trying everything. He has the attention span of, well, a two-year-old. My mom says it is just part of the “terrible twos.”
SYNTHESIZE THAT!

Bring together (synthesize) the information you have collected from several sources. Identify your topic and purpose to guide your selection of information. Finally, summarize the information based on the purpose.

**Topic:** ________________________________________________________________

**Purpose of Synthesis:** ____________________________________________________

**Source:** ______________________  **Source:** ______________________  **Source:** ______________________

[Blank spaces for additional sources]

**Synthesis of Information**

[Blank space for synthesis of information]
TAKING A CUE FROM NATURE

**Prewriting Tools**

- ☑ 1. Compare/Contrast
- ☑ 2. Describe
- ☑ 3. Sequence/Order
- ☑ 4. Persuade
- ☑ 5. Cause and Effect
- ☑ 6. Problem and Solution
- ☑ 7. Reflect
- ☑ 8. Other Summarize

**HOW TO USE:**

The student will . . .

- ☀ Select a topic or one aspect of a topic being studied to use as the basis for the activity.
- ☀ Review a list of categories of natural elements and select a specific example of each one.
- ☀ Determine characteristics that the topic and the item from nature might have in common, applying some creativity to find similarities and differences.
- ☀ Review the list to determine which comparisons might be the most effective in helping someone else understand the topic.
- ☀ Write a paragraph describing how the topic might be compared to the chosen natural element. If desired, more than one comparison can be included in the paragraph.

**TIPS/VARIATIONS:**

- ☀ Model how to draw similarities between unlike objects by sharing examples from everyday life.
- ☀ Encourage students to think deeply in developing their comparisons. Have students consider physical attributes, feelings, uses, and relationships as bases for comparison.
- ☀ Allow students to develop their comparisons individually, in pairs, or in small groups.
- ☀ Prior to writing their paragraphs, let students share their notes with each other and use others’ ideas to help flesh out their own.
- ☀ Help students see how making the comparisons helped them understand the topic and remember it better.
- ☀ Consider having students group together by the natural elements they chose. In their groups they can share their comparisons and discuss which comparisons are most effective in identifying key ideas and concepts about the topic.
“Oh, my love is like a red, red rose . . .” These poetic words help us understand how writers can take everyday things and help us understand something else. Think about your topic and how it might be compared to the following categories of elements of nature. For each type of natural element, select a specific example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Element</th>
<th>Ways They Are Alike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plant:</td>
<td>Select a specific example of each category from nature—a dog, for example. Do so with each category in this column.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal:</td>
<td>Try to think of things that the two items might have in common. Think about how they are used, what they look like, what people think of them, and so on. Be creative and don’t be afraid to stretch your imagination!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Form of Water:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weather:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Light:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Season:</td>
<td>Select the comparison above that you believe might be the strongest in helping the reader understand your topic. If you want, you can include more than one of the comparisons.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose one of the comparisons above and write a paragraph describing how the topic might be compared to your chosen natural element.
“Oh, my love is like a red, red rose . . .” These poetic words help us understand how writers can take everyday things and help us understand something else. Think about your topic and how it might be compared to the following categories of elements of nature. For each type of natural element, select a specific example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Natural Element</th>
<th>Ways They Are Alike</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plant:</strong> Daisy</td>
<td>The United States space program stems from a single agency, NASA, which blooms into several different programs that expand our view of the universe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Animal:</strong> Cat</td>
<td>Cats are pretty quiet creatures that only make their presence known when they want to; we don’t always hear much about space programs until there is a major press release.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Form of Water:</strong> Ice</td>
<td>Ice is slippery and dangerous; going into space is also dangerous and support for space programs can be “slippery” and not solid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weather:</strong> Fog</td>
<td>When a person is traveling through fog, she doesn’t always know where she is or if she’s on the right road; space exploration programs don’t always go as planned either.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Light:</strong> Sunbeam</td>
<td>Sunbeams shed light on things and help us see what is before us; space exploration “enlightens” us about our world and helps us see more about the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Season:</strong> Spring</td>
<td>Spring marks a new beginning for nature; some space explorations lead us to new understandings about our world.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose one of the comparisons above and write a paragraph describing how the topic might be compared to your chosen natural element.
“Oh, my love is like a red, red rose . . .” These poetic words help us understand how writers can take everyday things and help us understand something else. Think about your topic and how it might be compared to the following categories of elements of nature. For each type of natural element, select a specific example.

How is ________________________________ like the following . . .

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Season:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choose one of the comparisons above and write a paragraph describing how the topic might be compared to your chosen natural element.
HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Solve a given math problem.
☛ Explain in writing, step by step, the solution to the math problem, watching closely for clarity and correct use of terms.
☛ Share the solution with a math buddy, who will complete the problem (or a similar one) using the explanation.
☛ Correct any part of the explanation that was unclear or wrong.
☛ Use this “technical manual” to solve similar problems.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☛ Check for your students’ correct use of math terms.
☛ Encourage students to keep their “technical manual” pages in their math notebook, to assist them when they are doing homework or to use as a review reference.
☛ Use sticky notes to provide similar problems that would use the same process of solution. Have students follow the explanation to solve the problem. If errors occur in the solution or explanation or additional information is needed, have the students adjust their “technical manual” page.
☛ Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their math. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
In the left column, solve the problem mathematically. In the right column, explain the steps taken to complete the solution. Be sure to be specific; you should be able to solve similar problems based on the explanation you write.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solving the Problem</th>
<th>Explaining the Solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Solve the math problem on this side of the page. Make sure each step of the solution is obvious.</td>
<td>Explain your solution to the math problem step by step. Make your directions so clear that you could follow them to solve a similar problem or a math buddy could use your explanation to solve the problem. Be sure to put your steps in order and to use correct math terms.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the left column, solve the problem mathematically. In the right column, explain the steps taken to complete the solution. Be sure to be specific; you should be able to solve similar problems based on the explanation you write.

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<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Find the slope of a line. The coordinates of two points on the line are 3, 6 ((x_1, y_1)) and 2, 12 ((x_2, y_2)).</td>
<td>The line has two points on the line that have been identified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m = \frac{y_2 - y_1}{x_2 - x_1})</td>
<td>One point’s coordinates are 3 and 6. We note that as ((x_1, y_1)) to help us know the first point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m = \frac{12 - 6}{2 - 3})</td>
<td>The other point’s coordinates are 2 and 12. We note that as ((x_2, y_2)). This helps us know that this is the second point. We can keep things in order that way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m = 6 / -1)</td>
<td>We let (m = ) the slope.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m = -6)</td>
<td>We then complete the formula using our coordinates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m = \frac{y_2 - y_1}{x_2 - x_1})</td>
<td>(m = \frac{12 - 6}{2 - 3})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m = \frac{6}{-1})</td>
<td>(m = 6 / -1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The slope is (-6); it falls from left to right and it is steep.</td>
<td>The slope is (-6); it falls from left to right and it is steep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Smith says it doesn’t matter in which order we subtract as long as we don’t mix them.</td>
<td>Mr. Smith says it doesn’t matter in which order we subtract as long as we don’t mix them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(m = \frac{y_2 - y_1}{x_2 - x_1}) or (m = \frac{y_1 - y_2}{x_1 - x_2})</td>
<td>(m = \frac{y_2 - y_1}{x_2 - x_1}) or (m = \frac{y_1 - y_2}{x_1 - x_2})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but you cannot do (m = \frac{y_2 - x_1}{y_1 - x_2})</td>
<td>but you cannot do (m = \frac{y_2 - x_1}{y_1 - x_2})</td>
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In the left column, solve the problem mathematically. In the right column, explain the steps taken to complete the solution. Be sure to be specific; you should be able to solve similar problems based on the explanation you write.

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
**Prewriting Tool**

**THE TELEVISION**

**IN MY MIND**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>☑ Prewriting Tool</th>
<th>☑ During-Writing Tool</th>
<th>☐ Postwriting Tool</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**HOW TO USE:**

The student will . . .

- Think about what has been learned and create a mental image that describes the learning.
- List words and phrases that describe the mental image.
- Draw a picture of the mental image, including as many details as needed to capture all of the important components of the picture.
- Provide a title for the image.
- Use the visual image and the words and phrases used to create it to write a description of the image.

**TIPS/VARIATIONS:**

- If students have difficulty in forming mental images, have them work with other students by talking through the details from the learning that will help them create a visual.
- As an alternative to drawing the picture, allow students to use pictures from magazines, catalogs, and other published materials to represent their mental images.
- Have students try to construct a visual from another student’s written description. After they have created their visuals, students can share the original picture and discuss the similarities and differences between the two. You can also use good writing examples to make this a whole-class activity.
- Discuss with students how vivid adjectives, adverbs, and verbs can help the reader create images more easily.
THE TELEVISION IN MY MIND

Select words and phrases that help describe what you see in your mind as you think about the topic. Write those words and phrases below.

Think about what you have learned by creating pictures in your mind. Take notes about what you “see” by listing words and phrases that describe it.

On the television screen depicted below, draw a picture that includes the images you described in words and phrases:

Draw the picture on the “TV screen” in your mind. Try to capture important details in your picture.
THE TELEVISION IN MY MIND (CONTINUED)

What title will you give your image? _____________________________________________________________________

Create a title for your image.

Now write a description of your image, turning the words and phrases into sentences and paragraphs.

Use the visual image you have and the words and phrases you used to describe it to write a description of your image.
Select words and phrases that help describe what you see in your mind as you think about the topic. Write those words and phrases below.

- budget
- Consumer Reports
- economy
- retail store
- balance sheets
- taxes
- unbiased
- sofas
- mortgage
- net income

On the television screen depicted below, draw a picture that includes the images you described in words and phrases:

Source: Adapted with permission from a classroom example provided by Tammy Dickinson-Ferrell, Roland-Story Community School District, Story City, Iowa.
THE TELEVISION IN MY MIND (CONTINUED)

What title will you give your image? Money Counts

Now write a description of your image, turning the words and phrases into sentences and paragraphs.

When we think of the economy, we think of the taxes taken away from our wages, which becomes net income. We think of planning budgets, saving money, and paying off loans, including mortgages. Luckily, Consumer Reports, an unbiased magazine, helps us save money on sofas or anything else that’s found in a retail store. All this combines to a balance sheet wanting to be hidden.

Source: Adapted with permission from a classroom example provided by Tammy Dickinson-Ferrell, Roland-Story Community School District, Story City, Iowa.
THE TELEVISION IN MY MIND

Select words and phrases that help describe what you see in your mind as you think about the topic. Write those words and phrases below.

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

___________________________________________________

On the television screen depicted below, draw a picture that includes the images you described in words and phrases:
THE TELEVISION IN MY MIND (CONTINUED)

What title will you give your image? ____________________________________________

Now write a description of your image, turning the words and phrases into sentences and paragraphs.
THINK LIKE A JOURNALIST

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ To prepare for writing about an event, think about the kinds of questions that a reporter might ask in order to get the facts for the story: who, what, when, why, where, and how.

☛ Make notes about the answers to each question. Include details that might help someone who reads the article understand what has happened.

☛ Review the facts that have been included. Determine whether any important facts have been left out and whether the facts tell the whole story.

☛ If directed to do so by the teacher, write a news story using the facts to answer each question.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

☛ Model good journalistic style by sharing quality news articles with students. Discuss how the reporter included the 5 Ws and H in the article. You might give all students the same article, then break them into six groups, with each group underlining the parts of the article that answer the six questions.

☛ If some of the questions have not been answered by the text or through instruction, encourage students to conduct additional research to find the answers.

☛ Have students write an article about the story as a follow-up to the activity. If students are writing on the same topic, have them compare their versions of the story.

☛ If different topics have been used, have students create a “newspaper” by compiling their articles. They will need to determine which articles would be “front page” news and which would appear on other pages, depending on the relative importance or newsworthiness of the event. A discussion of how real editors make such decisions might be helpful to students.

☛ Have students exchange their news stories and, using different colors of pens or pencils, have them identify how the reporter included the 5 Ws and H in the article.
Before you start to write about an event, answer the 5 Ws and H about it in the appropriate blocks. Provide as many details as you can in answering each question. Some suggestions for how to answer each question are listed at the bottom of the page.

**Who?**
Include as many of the important people or characters as you can, along with a brief description of each one.

**What?**
Summarize what has happened. Be sure to be specific about what the event is all about.

**When?**
If you do not know the exact date of the event, try to include details about the general time frame.

**Why?**
As a journalist, you are to report only the facts. Unless there is factual evidence for cause, you might want to quote someone involved and why they think the event happened.

**Where?**
If you don’t know exactly where the event took place, try to list some notes about the general location or environment.

**How?**
If appropriate, explain how the issue has been resolved, how the event happened, or how the event is significant.

**Who** is involved? Who are the participants? Who is affected?

**What** is the significance of the topic? What is the problem or issue? What were the results?

**Where** does the event take place? Where does the problem have its source?

**When** did the event take place? What is the significance of the timing of the event or issue?

**Why** did the event happen? Why did the issue or problem arise? Why did it develop the way it did?

**How** did it happen? How is the event or issue significant? How does the event or issue affect the participants? How can the issue or problem be resolved?
THINK LIKE A JOURNALIST

Before you start to write about an event, answer the 5 Ws and H about it in the appropriate blocks. Provide as many details as you can in answering each question. Some suggestions for how to answer each question are listed at the bottom of the page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who?</th>
<th>What?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>George Grenville</strong>—Prime Minister of Britain after the French and Indian War.</td>
<td><strong>Grenville enforced current laws and proposed plans, such as the Sugar Act of 1764, that put taxes on things the colonists needed.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When?</th>
<th>Why?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1764</strong>—Leading up to the Revolutionary War.</td>
<td><strong>Britain had many financial problems after the war and needed money to pay debts.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where?</th>
<th>How?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grenville started in the British Parliament and went to the colonies.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Grenville's Sugar Act was meant to raise money, but it didn't work because the colonists refused to pay it.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Who** is involved? Who are the participants? Who is affected?
**What** is the significance of the topic? What is the problem or issue? What were the results?
**Where** does the event take place? Where does the problem have its source?
**When** did the event take place? What is the significance of the timing of the event or issue?
**Why** did the event happen? Why did the issue or problem arise? Why did it develop the way it did?
**How** did it happen? How is the event or issue significant? How does the event or issue affect the participants? How can the issue or problem be resolved?

*Source: Adapted with permission from a classroom example contributed by Nicole Muhlenbruch, Webster City Middle School, Webster City, Iowa.*
Before you start to write about an event, answer the 5 Ws and H about it in the appropriate blocks. Provide as many details as you can in answering each question. Some suggestions for how to answer each question are listed at the bottom of the page.

**Who?**

**What?**

**When?**

**Why?**

**Where?**

**How?**

**Who** is involved? Who are the participants? Who is affected?

**What** is the significance of the topic? What is the problem or issue? What were the results?

**Where** does the event take place? Where does the problem have its source?

**When** did the event take place? What is the significance of the timing of the event or issue?

**Why** did the event happen? Why did the issue or problem arise? Why did it develop the way it did?

**How** did it happen? How is the event or issue significant? How does the event or issue affect the participants? How can the issue or problem be resolved?
THINKING IN WORDS AND IMAGES

H O W T O U S E:
The student will . . .

☛ Select a word that is important to understanding the topic being studied.

☛ List other words and phrases that come to mind about the word. Some will emerge from instruction and some will come from prior experience and knowledge about the word.

☛ Describe or draw images associated with the word, including images that are created from all five senses: sight, sound, taste, touch, and smell.

☛ Use the words, phrases, and images to write a paragraph about what the word means and the associated images it brings to mind.

T I P S / V A R I A T I O N S:

☛ Introduce students to the concept of free association. The goal is to help students make connections between what has been learned and the prior knowledge students have about the word.

☛ After noting all of the words, phrases, and images associated with the word, suggest that students may want to organize their thoughts by numbering them in the sequence they will use in their writing.

☛ Have students work in pairs to develop the list of words, phrases, and images. In doing so, they will be able to build on one another's background knowledge.

☛ Ask students to evaluate their lists in regard to how comprehensively they have thought about the word. Have students share and compile their lists to help individuals determine how thoroughly they have described the word and its related concepts.
THINKING IN WORDS AND IMAGES

Thomas Edison and Leonardo da Vinci both kept journals that included both words and pictures. When you see or hear a word, your brain connects the word with other words and with pictures. Your teacher will provide you with a word that is important to the topic (or think of one on your own). As you learn about the topic, take notes and draw pictures that help you understand the word.

WORD:

Write the word selected in this space. The word should be important to understanding the topic.

WORDS/PHRASES:

As you think about the word, list all of the other words and phrases that come to mind that describe it or are associated with it.

PICTURES/IMAGES:

When you think of the word, what images are formed in your mind? Either draw or describe the images that the word brings to mind.

Images can include smells, feelings, sounds, and tastes as well as sights.

Use the words, phrases, and images in writing a paragraph about the word.
THINKING IN WORDS AND IMAGES

Thomas Edison and Leonardo da Vinci both kept journals that included both words and pictures. When you see or hear a word, your brain connects the word with other words and with pictures. Your teacher will provide you with a word that is important to the topic (or think of one on your own). As you learn about the topic, take notes and draw pictures that help you understand the word.

WORD:
Contract

WORDS/PHRASES:
- promise
- agreement
- legal
- written
- oral
- competent
- value (consideration)
- broken

PICTURES/IMAGES:

Use the words, phrases, and images in writing a paragraph about the word.
THINKING IN WORDS AND IMAGES

Thomas Edison and Leonardo da Vinci both kept journals that included both words and pictures. When you see or hear a word, your brain connects the word with other words and with pictures. Your teacher will provide you with a word that is important to the topic (or think of one on your own). As you learn about the topic, take notes and draw pictures that help you understand the word.

WORD:

WORDS/PHRASES:

PICTURES/IMAGES:

Use the words, phrases, and images in writing a paragraph about the word.
THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

H O W T O U S E:
The student will . . .

☛ Describe a current situation or event (or one that has happened). This summary should be short and include the most important ideas or facts about the situation.

☛ Add details about the situation.

☛ Write about how the situation could be different if something were changed. Suggest a change and note what would be different about the situation or event with that change.

☛ Select which version of the situation would be better and explain the rationale for the choice made.

T I P S / V A R I A T I O N S:

☛ Consider conducting this activity in “3-D” by using real boxes and oatmeal containers. Have students write their ideas on papers that are taped to the sides of the containers. Then randomly have others in the class pick a container and continue to examine how the change might make or made a difference.

☛ Introduce students to the concept of “thinking outside the box” by conducting the activity as a class on a topic that has been previously studied. This will help students review past material as well as develop their ability to see a topic in a different way.

☛ Use this tool after instruction or as a precursor to a reflective or shared writing experience, because students will need to have enough knowledge or information about the topic to be able to think of alternatives to a situation.

☛ Assure students that there are no wrong answers and that what matters most is their ability to see the topic or situation in different ways. Their answers, however, should have a basis in fact and be plausible alternatives.

☛ Have students develop a paragraph or essay based on one or more of the changed scenarios.
On the face of the box, describe what the current situation is regarding your topic. Then, on the sides of the box, make notes of details about the situation that are important. In the circles below the box, enter ideas about what could be possible to change the situation. Select one of your “out of the box” ideas and provide a rationale for why you think it is the best solution.

**Current Situation:**

Summarize the current situation in this part of the box. Be clear and concise about what is happening or has happened.

**What COULD be . . .**

In each of the “canisters,” write about how the situation or event could be different. Think about what would have to change for the results to be different.

The best choice is ____________________________________________

because ____________________________________________

Select the change that you think would be best and explain why you chose it.

In the top of the canister, write what would have to be different to make the changes you indicate.
On the face of the box, describe what the current situation is regarding your topic. Then, on the sides of the box, make notes of details about the situation that are important. In the circles below the box, enter ideas about what could be possible to change the situation. Select one of your “out of the box” ideas and provide a rationale for why you think it is the best solution.

**Details:**
- Among high school dropouts in 19 countries surveyed, U.S. high school dropouts ranked 19th in literacy.
- In a survey of literacy among native-born citizens in 17 countries, the United States ranked 10th.
- In a 19-country survey of literacy scores of adults with a bachelor's or higher degree, the United States ranked 5th.

**Current Situation:**
Adult literacy is a national problem, with almost half of those 16 or over being below average in their reading proficiency.

**What COULD be . . .**

- All students proficient in reading by the end of 3rd grade.
  - Need to invest more time and resources in early reading programs.
  - Provide all young children with books.

The best choice is **reading programs for older students** because **there are already a lot of resources for elementary students, and high school students are still a “captive audience.”**

**Reading programs for older students to increase reading skills.**
- All teachers helping students learn how to read their books with greater understanding.
- Reading gets harder in high school.

**Adult reading programs to help those out of school.**
- Offered at night after work.
- Provide incentives for attending classes.
- 10% increase in average education = 8.6% increase in productivity.
THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

On the face of the box, describe what the current situation is regarding your topic. Then, on the sides of the box, make notes of details about the situation that are important. In the circles below the box, enter ideas about what could be possible to change the situation. Select one of your “out of the box” ideas and provide a rationale for why you think it is the best solution.

The best choice is _______________________

_______________________________________

_______________________________________

What COULD be . . .

The best choice is _______________________

_______________________________________

because _____________________________

_______________________________________
**Prewriting Tools**

- 1. Compare/Contrast
- 2. Describe
- 3. Sequence/Order
- 4. Persuade
- 5. Cause and Effect
- 6. Problem and Solution
- 7. Reflect
- 8. Other

**TOTAL RECALL**

**HOW TO USE:**

The student will . . .

- Choose an event that is important to what is being studied.
- Identify the people or characters involved in the event—characters that might have been there as well as people who were actually there.
- List details about what each person or character saw or might have seen in regard to the event. Consider the person’s background and relative perspective of the event in relating what he or she “saw.”
- Create statements that each person or character might have made in regard to the event. If actual quotes are available, list these as well.
- Write a conversation between two or more of the people or characters described, considering each one’s personal perspective. Include details and use appropriate punctuation while developing the conversation.

**TIPS/VARIATIONS:**

- Use this tool as a follow-up activity to instruction, so that students will have a comprehensive understanding of the event or situation.
- Allow students to share their conversations by enacting them in front of the class. Conduct a class discussion after each enactment to determine how accurately the dialogue reflected the persons’ or characters’ personalities and perspectives.
- Provide a sample dialogue to help students review the punctuation and format used in writing a dialogue.
- Consider allowing students to work together in completing the activity, to draw on one another’s ideas. Once they complete the chart, they can select different people or characters for their written dialogues.
- Conduct a class discussion about how people’s attitudes can affect what they see or hear about an event. Role-play a common event, such as a car accident, to help students understand how perception can color a person’s recall of an event.
TOTAL RECALL

Choose an event that is important to the concepts you are studying. In the following columns, list the people that were (or might have been) involved in the event, details about what they might have seen as they witnessed the event, and what they said or might have said during or after the event.

**Topic or Event:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People Involved</th>
<th>What They Saw or Might Have Seen</th>
<th>What They Said or Might Have Said</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Use real people or characters, if possible. You can also create characters that are based on the kinds of people that would actually have been present at an event such as this.

- Include details about what they saw. Remember, people have “selective” sight and hearing—they want to see or hear only what they want to see or hear. Focus on the most important parts of the event.

- Use actual quotes if possible or make up quotes appropriate to the person to whom you are attributing them.

- Begin the conversation by “setting the stage,” explaining where the characters are having the dialogue. Work in details about what they saw or what they heard others say about the event.

Now write a conversation between two or more of the characters as they retell what happened. Make sure that the conversation reflects the personalities of those involved and that you chose people whose perspectives about the event will be different.
Choose an event that is important to the concepts you are studying. In the following columns, list the people that were (or might have been) involved in the event, details about what they might have seen as they witnessed the event, and what they said or might have said during or after the event.

**Topic or Event:** Attack at Pearl Harbor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People Involved</th>
<th>What They Saw or Might Have Seen</th>
<th>What They Said or Might Have Said</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sailors</td>
<td>Japanese planes coming toward them, dropping bombs all over the harbor.</td>
<td>“Ah! Let’s jump off the ship and swim to shore! I’m too young to die!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People of Honolulu</td>
<td>Big explosions in the harbor and capsized boats in the water.</td>
<td>“What happened? We must get revenge! What if the planes bomb inland?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese pilots</td>
<td>Terrified sailors on the U.S. ships and explosions.</td>
<td>“We are proud to support our country. We will win!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President Franklin D. Roosevelt</td>
<td>All of his officers running to report the bad news and American people who were terrified.</td>
<td>“I am going to ask Congress if we can go to war tomorrow!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurses in hospital at Pearl Harbor</td>
<td>Hundreds of wounded sailors being rushed into the hospital.</td>
<td>“We don’t have enough supplies! What if they attack the hospital?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now write a conversation between two or more of the characters as they retell what happened. Make sure that the conversation reflects the personalities of those involved and that you chose people whose perspectives about the event will be different.

*Source:* Adapted with permission from a classroom example submitted by Tammy Dickinson-Ferrell, Roland-Story Community School District, Story City, Iowa.
Choose an event that is important to the concepts you are studying. In the following columns, list the people that were (or might have been) involved in the event, details about what they might have seen as they witnessed the event, and what they said or might have said during or after the event.

**Total Recall**

<table>
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Now write a conversation between two or more of the characters as they retell what happened. Make sure that the conversation reflects the personalities of those involved and that you chose people whose perspectives about the event will be different.
Using Writing to Learn Across the Content Areas

Prewriting Activities

Using Signal Words

How to Use:
The student will . . .

☛ Select a purpose for writing a paragraph about the topic.

☛ Review the signal words that might be used in writing about the topic.

☛ Write a paragraph about the topic that is consistent with the purpose selected. Use appropriate signal words in the paragraph in order for the writing to be more easily understood. Underline the signal words as they are used.

☛ Review the writing and reflect on how the signal words might help a reader follow the ideas included in the writing.

Tips/Variations:

☛ Introduce the activity by having students brainstorm lists of signal words for each of the purposes for writing. Discuss how signal words help make the writing clearer. If possible, share examples of writing with students to model the appropriate use of signal words.

☛ Have students break their writing into segments that each begin with a signal word, and write each segment on a separate line. Ask students to reread the composition phrase by phrase and reflect on how the signal words provide meaning to the words and phrases that accompany them.

☛ Break the class into four groups and assign each group a different purpose. Have groups exchange compositions and evaluate how effectively the signal words were used to help the reader understand what the author intended.

☛ Make transparencies of students’ paragraphs and use them to demonstrate how signal words assist the reader in understanding the content.

☛ Model the use of signal words by sharing passages from the text and having students identify signal words and how they assist the reader's understanding.
USING SIGNAL WORDS

Four purposes of writing are listed below, along with a list of words that writers often use to help their readers understand how their thoughts are organized. Select one purpose and circle it. Then write a paragraph about the topic with that purpose in mind. Use as many of the signal words as needed, underlining each one as you use it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sequence</th>
<th>Compare/Contrast</th>
<th>Cause and Effect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>to begin with</td>
<td>first</td>
<td>like</td>
<td>therefore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for example</td>
<td>second</td>
<td>unlike</td>
<td>so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for instance</td>
<td>third</td>
<td>in contrast</td>
<td>this leads to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>most important</td>
<td>before</td>
<td>on the other hand</td>
<td>consequently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in front</td>
<td>on (date)</td>
<td>as well as</td>
<td>as a result</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beside</td>
<td>not long after</td>
<td>also</td>
<td>because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>near/far</td>
<td>after that</td>
<td>too</td>
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<td>finally</td>
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<td>then</td>
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<td></td>
<td>following</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>simultaneously</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These signal words are samples of what you might use. Feel free to use others that fit your purpose.

Select your purpose and circle the appropriate heading for your choice.

Underline all of the signal words you used in your writing.

Write your paragraph about the topic, using appropriate signal words for the purpose you chose.

Reflect on how the signal words will help the reader more clearly understand what you write.
USING SIGNAL WORDS

Four purposes of writing are listed below, along with a list of words that writers often use to help their readers understand how their thoughts are organized. Select one purpose and circle it. Then write a paragraph about the topic with that purpose in mind. Use as many of the signal words as needed, underlining each one as you use it.

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The National Mall in Washington, D.C., is flanked by the Washington Monument on the west and the United States Capitol on the east. The Smithsonian National Museums line the south and north sides of the mall. The center of the mall is a broad expanse of grassy area, dissected by sidewalks to allow pedestrians to move from one museum to another across the mall. On the southwest corner of the mall is the Department of Agriculture, with the Smithsonian Institutes to the east, followed by the National Air and Space Museum and the National Museum of the American Indian. The National Museum of American History is on the northwest corner of the mall. With the National Museum of Natural History directly to the east. To its right (as you face it from the mall) are the west and east buildings of the National Gallery of Art.
USING SIGNAL WORDS

Four purposes of writing are listed below, along with a list of words that writers often use to help their readers understand how their thoughts are organized. Select one purpose and circle it. Then write a paragraph about the topic with that purpose in mind. Use as many of the signal words as needed, underlining each one as you use it.

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</table>
USING TWO-COLUMN NOTES TO PLAN THE WRITING TASK

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Think about the topic and select the purpose for the writing.

☛ Think about the purpose chosen and then list ideas consistent with it, including all the details necessary to fully explain each idea.

☛ Review the ideas, determine how to best organize them to show a logical flow of thought, and number them in the order in which they will be addressed.

☛ Share the ideas with a partner to get input on how thoroughly the purpose has been addressed and how well the ideas are organized.

☛ Use the ideas to write a paragraph or essay about the topic.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

☛ Consider allowing students to partner with each other to list ideas and organize them into logical sequence.

☛ Before starting the activity, help students reflect on the various purposes and how each might be used to discuss the topic. If there are some purposes that do not match the content, have students eliminate them as choices. If there are additional purposes that could be used, have students add them.

☛ Consider having students write their ideas on note cards that are coded to various headings. The cards can then be shuffled around to reflect various types of organizational patterns so students can determine which one would be best to use in explaining the topic.

☛ Ask different students or pairs of students to use different purposes. After students have completed the activity, compare their papers and discuss how the purposes of writing change the information that is included or how similar information can be used in more than one way.

☛ Find passages from texts that use each of the purposes. Share these examples with the students before they start to write.

☛ Have students select the author’s purpose for an article or piece of text about the subject.
USING TWO-COLUMN NOTES TO PLAN THE WRITING TASK

Use one of the following sets of data to plan the ideas you will include in your writing. Circle the one that you decide to use.

1. Main Idea/Details
2. Questions/Answers
3. Hypothesis/Proof
4. Pros (Positives)/Cons (Negatives)
5. Opinion/Support for Opinion
6. Opinion/Proof
7. Problem/Solution

Circle the purpose you select and write the two headings in these spaces.

Heading: ______________________________________
Heading: ______________________________________

List ideas for the headings you chose in these columns. You do not have to use complete sentences.

Periodically stop and review the ideas that you have included. Have you covered the topic thoroughly and included all important information?

When you have finished noting your ideas, consider how they might be logically organized in a paper written for the selected purpose. Consider numbering them in the order in which you think you might include them in a paper.

Share your work with a partner and ask your partner to review your notes to determine whether you have left out anything important.
### Using Two-Column Notes to Plan the Writing Task

Use one of the following sets of data to plan the ideas you will include in your writing. Circle the one that you decide to use.

1. Main Idea/Details  
2. Questions/Answers  
3. Hypothesis/Proof  
4. Pros (Positives)/Cons (Negatives)  
5. Opinion/Support for Opinion  
6. Opinion/Proof  
7. Problem/Solution

#### Using Figurative Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heading: Questions</th>
<th>Heading: Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is figurative language (also called figures of speech)?</td>
<td>Words and phrases used for descriptive effects; they are not meant to be taken literally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the most commonly used figures of speech?</td>
<td>Similes and metaphors are the most common—they both compare two mostly unlike things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s the difference between a simile and a metaphor?</td>
<td>A simile uses the word “like” or “as” to compare two things; a metaphor is a direct comparison that equates two basically different things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What’s an example of a simile and a metaphor?</td>
<td>A simile would be: “My love is LIKE a red, red rose.” A metaphor would be: “I’m flying on the wings of love.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do writers use similes and metaphors?</td>
<td>By using similes and metaphors, authors help the reader understand what is being described by comparing a concept to something with which the reader is familiar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**USING TWO-COLUMN NOTES TO PLAN THE WRITING TASK**

Use one of the following sets of data to plan the ideas you will include in your writing. Circle the one that you decide to use.

1. Main Idea/Details  
2. Questions/Answers  
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>
**VIP Words**

**How to Use:**
The student will . . .

- Select the words and phrases that are most important to the topic being studied.
- Develop and write notes about a rationale for why each word was chosen.
- Write a summary sentence using as many of the words as possible to express the most important thing to remember about the content. More than one sentence can be written if needed, but the goal is for the summary to be brief and concise.
- Evaluate the words that were chosen and add any additional important words that come to mind.

**Tips/Variations:**
- Model the activity by creating a list of important words from a lesson previously delivered. Discuss why you chose each word and how you evaluated the importance of each to the content.
- Have students compare their word lists and track the words that appear most often on the various lists. Use the most frequently occurring words as discussion points for small groups or the whole class.
- Consider having students work in pairs or small groups to complete the activity. Each person should be prepared to present the words and rationales to the rest of the class.
- Post all of the summary sentences on the wall and have students reflect about which ones help reinforce the learning the most.
- Use the summary sentences as topic sentences for writing assignments about other aspects of the topic being studied.
**VIP Words**

Select the words or phrases about your topic that you think are most important from your text or the teacher’s presentation. Write those words or phrases in the left-hand column. Then, in the right-hand column, describe why you chose them. In the space at the bottom of the page, write a one-sentence summary of the most important thing to remember about the topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Important Words</th>
<th>Why the Word Is Important to the Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write the words you selected in the spaces of this column.</td>
<td>Write about why each word is important to the topic. What makes the word important enough that the reader should spend time really studying it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The words chosen should represent the most important ideas about the topic—they should be key to understanding the content.</td>
<td>Give your reasons for selecting each word. What criteria did you use in selecting the words?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary Sentence:**

In your summary, try to use all of the important words. If needed, you can write more than one sentence. Your goal should be to have a clear idea of what you should remember about the topic.
VIP WORDS

Select the words or phrases about your topic that you think are most important from your text or the teacher’s presentation. Write those words or phrases in the left-hand column. Then, in the right-hand column, describe why you chose them. In the space at the bottom of the page, write a one-sentence summary of the most important thing to remember about the topic.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Characters</td>
<td>The characters move the plot forward. Each character has a part in what happens in the story. It’s important that the characters are believable. How the characters act portrays their personalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>The dialogue is the script of the drama. The dialogue tells the story—it is the conversation between the characters. If the dialogue is not delivered well, the audience may not understand the story.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staging</td>
<td>Staging includes the scenery, props, lighting, costuming, and positioning of actors on the stage. If done well, these elements make the story more realistic. The writer carefully writes directions that help the actors make the story come alive on the stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage directions</td>
<td>Stage directions in a script tell the actors how to move around the stage. Stage directions appear only in screenplays and dramas performed on the stage. They tell the actors where to stand, where to enter the stage, and how to move.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scene</td>
<td>One part of the drama is a scene. Each scene depicts an event in the story. Scenes in a drama are like chapters in a novel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary Sentence:

A drama is a story that is acted out rather than read, so it includes additional details like stage directions to help the performers bring the story to life.
VIP WORDS

Select the words or phrases about your topic that you think are most important from your text or the teacher's presentation. Write those words or phrases in the left-hand column. Then, in the right-hand column, describe why you chose them. In the space at the bottom of the page, write a one-sentence summary of the most important thing to remember about the topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Important Words</th>
<th>Why the Word Is Important to the Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Summary Sentence:
WHAT IF?

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Identify a historical event (e.g., Columbus’s “discovery” of America).
☛ Project a new ending to the event.
☛ Brainstorm how history would have been affected based on the new ending.
☛ Use the information to write a “projected” account of a historical event.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☛ Consider sharing different historical events for teams or individuals in your class. Then have students write a new ending to one of these events. Have them brainstorm how history would have changed had the outcome of the original event been different.
☛ Help your students see that this process helps them understand better the causes and effects of the original historical event.
☛ Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing and their understanding of the content. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
WHAT IF?

After identifying the actual happening, project the opposite as a possibility. Then brainstorm possible outcomes with the new ending.

**Actual Happening:**

Identify a historical event.

**What If? (A Projected Result)**

Change the event by projecting a new ending.

**Brainstorm possible outcomes as a result of the new ending.**

How would history have changed with the new ending? Brainstorm possible outcomes as a result of this projected change in history.
WHAT IF?

After identifying the actual happening, project the opposite as a possibility. Then brainstorm possible outcomes with the new ending.

Actual Happening:
*General Washington and his men won the Battle of Trenton on December 26, 1776.*

What If? (A Projected Result)
The Hessians were ready for Washington and his men and captured them instead of being defeated.

Brainstorm possible outcomes as a result of the new ending.

Immediate impact:
The war would have ended quickly because so many soldiers were already deserting or not renewing their commitment to the war by reenlisting. Morale was low before the battle; it would have gone even lower.

*General Washington and many of his friends may have been tried for high treason by the British government.*

I do think, however, it would have been just a matter of time before these people—like Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton, and others—would have found ways to revolt and move their agenda forward.

Long-term impact:
*We might be much like Canada. Under extreme measures, the United States would have never been, but instead the Brits could have sovereignty over us—and use our resources to increase their power throughout the world.*

*Or we might be like Canada—have our own government yet be connected to England.*
WHAT IF?

After identifying the actual happening, project the opposite as a possibility. Then brainstorm possible outcomes with the new ending.

**Actual Happening:**

**What If? (A Projected Result)**

**Brainstorm possible outcomes as a result of the new ending.**
HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Explain how an event happened or a situation developed, including important details that are specific enough to provide a reader with a clear idea of what took place.

☛ List several ideas about what might have been different that would have changed the course of events or the outcome of the situation.

☛ Review the “what ifs” that were developed and choose one considered to be the best outcome of the event or situation.

☛ Write about how the event would be different if that change had been made. Compare the new version with the account of what actually happened. Use facts and information to support the conclusion about how the situation would be different.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

☛ Help students understand that while the past can’t be undone, we can learn from it by reflecting on what might have been done differently and then using that information when a new situation arises.

☛ Prior to students’ summarizing of the event or situation, conduct a class discussion in which you help students understand the most important points about the topic. Have them include these points in their summary of what happened.

☛ Consider having students work together in pairs or small groups to develop ideas for how the event or situation might have been changed. Ask each student to select a different aspect to be changed and write about how the event or situation would have been different. Have students compare their hypotheses.

☛ Encourage students to think about how different people might view the event and how their perceptions of it might alter the choices they would make.
WHAT IF . . .

Think about an event that is important to the subject you are studying. Write a short paragraph explaining how it happened. Then brainstorm some aspects of the event that might have changed the outcome. Pick one of your “what ifs” and write about how something would be different now if the event had happened according to that “what if.”

The Way It Happened:

Include important details about the event. Be sure to be specific enough so that you will be able to compare what happened and what might have happened after the “what if” change.

What might have happened differently that would have changed the course of events:

MARK THE CHANGE YOU SELECT BY PUTTING AN X IN THE SPACE TO THE LEFT OF THE CHANGES.

List several significant aspects of the event that, if changed, might have altered the final outcome of the event. Indicate both how the “what if” event happened and how it changed the outcome of the event.

Pick one of the above by checking the space in front of the line.

How things would be different today with this change:

Reflect on how the change you selected above would have affected real events. Write about the event as if that change had happened, pointing out how things would be different as a result.
Think about an event that is important to the subject you are studying. Write a short paragraph explaining how it happened. Then brainstorm some aspects of the event that might have changed the outcome. Pick one of your “what ifs” and write about how something would be different now if the event had happened according to that “what if.”

The Way It Happened:

Columbus is credited with discovering America because he landed near what is now the East Coast of the United States. As a result, colonization began in the eastern United States. As the population grew and settlers began looking for places to live, they moved westward.

What might have happened differently that would have changed the course of events:

- Columbus discovered America when he landed in the northern portion of what is now the East Coast of the United States.
- Columbus missed the east coast, sailed around the tip of South America, and landed on the west coast.
- Columbus failed to return to Spain, so there was no news of the “New World.”

Pick one of the above by checking the space in front of the line.

How things would be different today with this change:

• The United States would have been settled from west to east rather than east to west.
• Geography of the west would have slowed growth (desert would have discouraged movement east).
• Discovery of gold might have sped up colonization.
• More Spanish influence in today’s history.
• Longer route to the “New World” would have discouraged colonists.
• Too far away from Britain for Britain to rule; maybe no Revolutionary War.
• Not as much need for slave labor because no cotton grown; this might have meant that there would be no Civil War.
• U.S. capital would be on the west coast.
WHAT IF . . .

Think about an event that is important to the subject you are studying. Write a short paragraph explaining how it happened. Then brainstorm some aspects of the event that might have changed the outcome. Pick one of your “what if’s” and write about how something would be different now if the event had happened according to that “what if.”

The Way It Happened:

[Blank space for paragraph]

What might have happened differently that would have changed the course of events:

______  __________________________________________________________

______  __________________________________________________________

______  __________________________________________________________

______  __________________________________________________________

______  __________________________________________________________

______  __________________________________________________________

Pick one of the above by checking the space in front of the line.

How things would be different today with this change:

[Blank space for paragraph]
WRITING A SUMMARY SENTENCE

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Select a topic to be summarized.
☛ Think about and list nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs that could be used to describe the topic. Make sure that the words chosen provide a clear description of the topic.
☛ Review the list of descriptive words to make certain that all important details about the topic are included.
☛ Select at least one noun, one verb, one adjective, and one adverb and use these words in a sentence that summarizes an important point about the topic.
☛ Create as many summary sentences as possible.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☛ Review the definition and use of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs.
☛ Identify nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs from a sample passage in the textbook or other text related to the topic. Each part of speech can be color-coded as it is identified. Have students reflect on how the choice and use of each part of speech affects the meaning of what is written.
☛ Allow students to work in pairs or small groups to create the lists of words. Summary sentences can then be written individually by each person.
☛ Have individual students, pairs, or groups exchange word lists to use in crafting their summary sentences.
☛ Compile words entered on all of the students’ lists. Post them for collective use by students as they write their summary sentences.
☛ Post all of the sentence summaries and ask students to look for commonalities among them. Those that appear most often may provide clues as to what students believe are the most important ideas.
☛ Use the summary sentences as topic sentences for paragraphs that the students are assigned to write.
Follow the directions below to write some great summary sentences about the topic!

**Topic:**  
Enter the topic you have been studying here.

Fill in the chart below with words that could be used to summarize the topic. Make sure you enter the words under the heading of the correct part of speech.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Adjectives</th>
<th>Adverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nouns are words that name things. They can be people, places, things, or ideas or concepts.</td>
<td>Verbs are words of action or being. They tell the reader what the nouns are doing. Try to think of vivid verbs that show a lot of action!</td>
<td>Adjectives are words that describe nouns. They give the reader details about the people, places, things, and ideas.</td>
<td>Adverbs are words that describe verbs. They give more detail about how the action took place or about the state of being of a person or thing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Select at least one noun, one verb, one adjective, and one adverb from the lists and use them in a sentence that summarizes something about the topic. Underline the words as you use them.

**Summary Sentence:**

Write as many summary sentences as you can using your word list. You can use the same word twice, but only if the other three words are different. Challenge yourself to use all of the words at least once. Review your summary sentences to see whether they contain the most important information about the topic.
WRITING A SUMMARY SENTENCE

Follow the directions below to write some great summary sentences about the topic!

**Topic:** Democracy

Fill in the chart below with words that could be used to summarize the topic. Make sure you enter the words under the heading of the correct part of speech.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Adjectives</th>
<th>Adverbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>government</td>
<td>govern</td>
<td>equal</td>
<td>fairly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>representation</td>
<td>debate</td>
<td>representative</td>
<td>independently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Republic</td>
<td>check</td>
<td>“of the people”</td>
<td>freely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constitution</td>
<td>balance</td>
<td>messy</td>
<td>practically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rights</td>
<td>vote</td>
<td>time-consuming</td>
<td>directly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elections</td>
<td>share</td>
<td>informed</td>
<td>thoughtfully</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>authority</td>
<td>elect</td>
<td>Federalist</td>
<td>systematically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>politics</td>
<td>rule</td>
<td>legislative</td>
<td>accountably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resiliency</td>
<td>frame</td>
<td>executive</td>
<td>equally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citizen involvement</td>
<td>provide</td>
<td>judicial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>separation of powers</td>
<td>represent</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>safeguard</td>
<td>limit</td>
<td>fundamental</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td></td>
<td>proportional</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress</td>
<td></td>
<td>direct</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>majority rule</td>
<td></td>
<td>electoral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>compromise</td>
<td></td>
<td>free</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>individual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Select at least one noun, one verb, one adjective, and one adverb from the lists and use them in a sentence that summarizes something about the topic. Underline the words as you use them.

**Summary Sentence:**

The individual rights of people living freely in a democracy are balanced against the fundamental freedoms provided to all its citizens.

**Summary Sentence:**

The Constitution provides for the existence of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government to operate independently.
**WRITING A SUMMARY SENTENCE**

Follow the directions below to write some great summary sentences about the topic!

**Topic:** _________________________________________________________________

Fill in the chart below with words that could be used to summarize the topic. Make sure you enter the words under the heading of the correct part of speech.

<table>
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<th>Nouns</th>
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</tr>
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</table>

Select at least one noun, one verb, one adjective, and one adverb from the lists and use them in a sentence that summarizes something about the topic. Underline the words as you use them.

**Summary Sentence:**

**Summary Sentence:**
### During-Writing Tools

**From Two Perspectives**

| 1. Compare/Contrast | ✔️ |
| 2. Describe |  |
| 3. Sequence/Order |  |
| 4. Persuade |  |
| 5. Cause and Effect |  |
| 6. Problem and Solution |  |
| 7. Reflect |  |
| 8. Other |  |

#### How To Use:

The student will . . .

- Share his point of view about an issue, a situation, or information and support his thinking with specific examples, facts, or evidence.
- Identify an individual or group who might have a quite different point of view about the issue or situation.
- From an opposing perspective, write a summary of the individual’s or group’s thinking and provide specific examples, facts, or evidence to support that thinking.

#### Tips/Variations:

- Remind your students that looking at information from different perspectives helps them extend and refine their own learning; make connections; and understand others’ points of view, particularly if the different views reflect cultural differences.
- Consider using fairy tales to help students see information from different perspectives (e.g., the big bad wolf’s perspective compared to that of the three little pigs).
- Collect and share examples of multiple perspectives in the classroom, in the community, and in the world.
- Help your students understand the importance of constructing support for their beliefs and thinking. Model for them how you support your beliefs and thinking with specific examples or reasons.
- Encourage your students to use as many situations as possible. Remind them that almost all actions—both in fiction and nonfiction—have two sides to the story.
- Make sure your students understand the difference between facts and opinions, recognizing that not all statements are easily determined as one or the other.
- Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing and thinking. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES

As you organize your thinking, prepare to share the thinking and evidence from two perspectives. These perspectives could be yours and someone whose thinking is entirely different from yours, or they might be from two characters in a novel or in history.

Summary of Key Points Through My Eyes or ____________________________’s Eyes

Summarize the information or situation from your perspective or the perspective of an identified person or group, noting key learnings or beliefs. Be sure to support your thinking with appropriate examples.

But ____________________________ Might See It Differently!

See the same information through the eyes of someone who might see it differently. Share the key beliefs of that individual and provide the support for that thinking. This helps you extend and refine your own thinking. It also helps you connect with ideas of others.
FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES

As you organize your thinking, prepare to share the thinking and evidence from two perspectives. These perspectives could be yours and someone whose thinking is entirely different from yours, or they might be from two characters in a novel or in history.

Summary of Key Points Through My Eyes or ______________________________’s Eyes

It’s Thursday—just another day I want to hurry up and get it over. I have two tests today—one in Chemistry and one in World Lit.

I have basketball practice—light practice today. Tomorrow’s the big game! Let’s get on with Thursday. I want Friday! We play St. Francis—our biggest rival!

Today just makes me nervous—waiting, wanting tomorrow, the really important day!

But _____________________________ Might See It Differently!

Grandpa has cancer. He knows he doesn’t have long, but he knows each day, even Thursday, holds something special.

Maybe it’s just getting up and not feeling nauseated.

Maybe it’s having your neighbors stop in for coffee and solving the world’s problems in front of the fireplace.

Maybe it’s eating Gramma’s family-famous pot roast and apple cake.

Maybe it’s watching the sunset from the porch swing.

Maybe it’s getting a call from his grandson, to talk about tomorrow’s big game!
FROM TWO PERSPECTIVES

As you organize your thinking, prepare to share the thinking and evidence from two perspectives. These perspectives could be yours and someone whose thinking is entirely different from yours, or they might be from two characters in a novel or in history.

Summary of Key Points Through My Eyes or ____________________________’s Eyes

But ____________________________ Might See It Differently!
IDENTIFYING MY STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

Postwriting Tools

- 1. Gather ideas for writing
- 2. Make discoveries of what is known
- 3. Create relationships
- 4. Explore a chosen topic
- 5. Demonstrate story development

Postwriting Activities

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Reflect on her own writing in the content area, thinking about her knowledge about writing, attitude toward writing, skill in writing, aspiration to be a writer, and behaviors in writing.

☛ Review and mark each item in a survey on writing habits, using a check for those that she is good at, an exclamation mark for those that she is great at, and a star for those that are a challenge and need improvement.

☛ Reflect in writing, recognizing and celebrating her accomplishments and setting goals for her challenges.

☛ Use a goal-setting tool to focus on meeting the challenges.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:

☛ Help your students understand that good writing really does matter—it provides meaning, stimulates clear thinking, and increases understanding of content.

☛ Assist students in understanding the importance of assessing progress in their writing.

☛ Help students understand that they sometimes have the knowledge and even the skill to write well, but they don’t make it a common practice (a behavior). Help them also to understand the roles of attitude and effort in accomplishing great things.

☛ Consider having students reflect on their writing at least every quarter if not more often. Ideally, they should be reflecting on their writing goals at least weekly or with every writing assignment.

☛ Post quotes by writers and individuals who have accomplished great things.

☛ Provide minilessons on aspects of writing that students find a challenge. The minilessons might be designed for individuals, small groups, or the entire class.

☛ Share examples of quality in any and all of the areas listed on the survey, so that students know what it should look, sound, and feel like to be strong in each.

☛ Have students interview adults in the real world to seek how they use writing in their work, what they struggle with, and what they have become good at as a result of perseverance.

☛ Encourage students to keep a writing notebook, in which they can write daily and keep banks of issues, questions, topics, ideas, and vocabulary.
Provide options and choices as well as feedback as students strive to turn their writing challenges into strengths.

Provide a rubric for each writing assignment that addresses students' knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes, and aspirations as writers.

Share students’ examples (with permission, of course) of quality writing or reflection on their writing habits.

Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
In the following survey, check the items that you are good at, put an exclamation mark by the ones you are great at, and put a star by the ones that are a challenge for you. The items you star are the ones on which you want to focus your thinking and your writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Aspiration</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ I know vocabulary terms appropriate for my content writing.</td>
<td>☐ Flexibility—I am willing to start over if necessary or persist when needed.</td>
<td>☐ I increase and use vocabulary appropriately.</td>
<td>☐ I strive to be a writer of quality.</td>
<td>☐ I write regularly, at least 20 minutes each day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I am fluent in the content subject matter.</td>
<td>☐ Inventiveness—I am willing to try new ways to write.</td>
<td>☐ I use library, Internet, and other resources with skill and purpose.</td>
<td>☐ I believe I can be a good writer.</td>
<td>☐ I use prewriting techniques to brainstorm ideas, topics, purpose, audience, and organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I know where to access additional resources to increase my knowledge.</td>
<td>☐ Patience—I have patience in getting my writing to the quality expected of me.</td>
<td>☐ I use reference materials.</td>
<td>☐ I write for my audience.</td>
<td>☐ I use during-writing techniques to stay on track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I know correct grammar and punctuation.</td>
<td>☐ Communication—I like to work with my writing buddy to improve my writing.</td>
<td>☐ I generate topics for my writing and examples for my topics.</td>
<td>☐ I use postwriting techniques to revise my work for clarity.</td>
<td>☐ I use postwriting techniques to edit my work for correctness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I know various audiences for whom I can write.</td>
<td>☐ Assessment/Evaluation—I am always looking for new ways to improve my writing; I know I can always improve something.</td>
<td>☐ I cite direct quotes appropriately.</td>
<td>☐ I turn in writing assignments on time.</td>
<td>☐ I turn in writing assignments on time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I know steps and techniques of various styles and forms of writing (e.g., narrative, persuasive, descriptive, comparisons, poems, essays, letters).</td>
<td>☐ Goal Setting—I always have a goal for improving the quality of my writing.</td>
<td>☐ I construct support for my thesis, purpose, or goal.</td>
<td>☐ I celebrate accomplishments in my writing.</td>
<td>☐ I celebrate accomplishments in my writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ I know how to begin and end a writing piece.</td>
<td></td>
<td>☐ I organize information to make meaning for my reader and to support my point.</td>
<td>☐ I set goals to improve myself as a writer.</td>
<td>☐ I set goals to improve myself as a writer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Think about yourself as a writer. Review these indicators of great writers and check the ones you are good at. Put an exclamation mark by the ones that you think you are really great at. Finally, star the ones that you believe you need to focus on (maybe with assistance from your teacher or writing buddy) to become a better writer.

As I review my strengths and challenges above, I need to celebrate . . .

. . . and I need to set a goal to improve . . .

It’s always important to celebrate what you do well—and to set goals for areas where you need to improve—so identify both in this section. Then give yourself a “high five” for the great things you do!
**IDENTIFYING MY STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES**

In the following survey, check the items that you are good at, put an exclamation mark by the ones you are great at, and put a star by the ones that are a challenge for you. The items you star are the ones on which you want to focus your thinking and your writing.

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ I know vocabulary terms appropriate for my content writing.</td>
<td>□ Flexibility—I am willing to start over if necessary or persist when needed.</td>
<td>✓ I increase and use vocabulary appropriately.</td>
<td>□ I strive to be a writer of quality.</td>
<td>★ I write regularly, at least 20 minutes each day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ I am fluent in the content subject matter.</td>
<td>□ Inventiveness—I am willing to try new ways to write.</td>
<td>□ I use library, Internet, and other resources with skill and purpose.</td>
<td>★ I believe I can be a good writer.</td>
<td>✓ I use prewriting techniques to brainstorm ideas, topics, purpose, audience, and organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ I know where to access additional resources to increase my knowledge.</td>
<td>★ Patience—I have patience in getting my writing to the quality expected of me.</td>
<td>□ I use reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, thesauruses, grammar/punctuation books).</td>
<td>✓ I write for my audience.</td>
<td>✓ I use during-writing techniques to stay on track.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ I know correct grammar and punctuation.</td>
<td>★ Communication—I like to work with my writing buddy to improve my writing.</td>
<td>✓ I generate topics for my writing and examples for my topics.</td>
<td>✓ I use postwriting techniques to revise my work for clarity.</td>
<td>✓ I use postwriting techniques to stay on track.</td>
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<tr>
<td>★ I know various audiences for whom I can write.</td>
<td>□ Assessment/Evaluation—I am always looking for new ways to improve my writing; I know I can always improve something.</td>
<td>□ I cite direct quotes appropriately.</td>
<td>✓ I turn in writing assignments on time.</td>
<td>✓ I write for my audience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ I know steps and techniques of various styles and forms of writing (e.g., narrative, persuasive, descriptive, comparisons, poems, essays, letters).</td>
<td>★ Goal Setting—I always have a goal for improving the quality of my writing.</td>
<td>★ I construct support for my thesis, purpose, or goal.</td>
<td>✓ I celebrate accomplishments in my writing.</td>
<td>✓ I set goals to improve myself as a writer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ I know how to begin and end a writing piece.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓ I organize information to make meaning for my reader and to support my point.</td>
<td>★ I set goals to improve my attitude and behavior about writing.</td>
<td>★ I read various texts—better readers become better writers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As I review my strengths and challenges above, I need to celebrate . . . that I have a “good” knowledge base and use tools to increase my vocabulary. I also know the correct way to cite quotes. Mr. Montigo has really focused on making sure we can edit our work and use resources in his room.

. . . and I need to set a goal to improve . . . my attitude and behavior about writing. It’s just like football; when I decided I wanted to be a good lineman, I set goals, I practiced, and I achieved. Now if I want to be successful in this class (and ready for college), I know I need to do the same—set goals, practice, and achieve!
## Identifying My Strengths and Challenges

In the following survey, check the items that you are good at, put an exclamation mark by the ones you are great at, and put a star by the ones that are a challenge for you. The items you star are the ones on which you want to focus your thinking and your writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Attitude</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Aspiration</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know vocabulary terms appropriate for my content writing.</td>
<td>□ Flexible—No mode starting if necessary or persist when needed.</td>
<td>□ I increase and use vocabulary appropriately.</td>
<td>□ I strive to be a writer of quality.</td>
<td>□ I write regularly, at least 20 minutes each day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am fluent in the content subject matter.</td>
<td>□ Inventiveness—I am willing to try new ways to write.</td>
<td>□ I use library, Internet, and other resources with skill and purpose.</td>
<td>□ I believe I can be a good writer.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know where to access additional resources to increase my knowledge.</td>
<td>□ Patience—I have patience in getting my writing to the quality expected of me.</td>
<td>□ I use reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, thesauruses, grammar/punctuation books).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know correct grammar and punctuation.</td>
<td>□ Communication—I like to work with my writing buddy to improve my writing.</td>
<td>□ I generate topics for my writing and examples for my topics.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know various audiences for whom I can write.</td>
<td>□ Assessment/Evaluation—I am always looking for new ways to improve my writing; I know I can always improve something.</td>
<td>□ I cite direct quotes appropriately.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I know how to begin and end a writing piece.</td>
<td>□ Goal Setting—I always have a goal for improving the quality of my writing.</td>
<td>□ I construct support for my thesis, purpose, or goal.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As I review my strengths and challenges above, I need to celebrate . . .

. . . and I need to set a goal to improve . . .
Postwriting Tools

MY GREATEST NEED IS ...
Share with your students how you might answer their greatest need with written feedback.

Consider making only very general comments on the paper if you will have the time to have a face-to-face conference where you can share specifics. The student would then jot down a summary of your responses.

Reflect with your students about how the tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
Prepare in advance for a conference about your writing. Identify the focus of the conference by sharing your "greatest need" and then identify specifics that would help you with that need. Be sure to reflect on the assistance given.

As you read my writing, my greatest need is _____________________________________________________________.

It would help me if you could . . .

☐ Try to be specific in what would help you with the need you just identified. You might need your teacher or writing buddy to help you identify or organize specific examples, look for words that will make your writing clearer to other readers, check for tense of verbs, check for accuracy in your facts, check for transitions in your writing, and so on.

In the space provided, your teacher or writing buddy can respond to your need through your specific request. If you have a discussion, you can jot down their ideas in the available space.

Before you meet with your teacher or writing buddy, identify your greatest need by asking yourself, “What is the one thing that would most help me to improve my writing?”

As I reflect on the responses I received about my greatest need,

It’s always important to reflect about how the process helped you and your writing. Stop to think and write about what helped you most, why, and what you would do differently (or the same) next time as you seek to be the best writer you can about the content.
Prepare in advance for a conference about your writing. Identify the focus of the conference by sharing your “greatest need” and then identify specifics that would help you with that need. Be sure to reflect on the assistance given.

As you read my writing, my greatest need is saying what I mean.

It would help me if you could . . .

✓ Give me tips on how to make my introduction “grab” my reader.

☐ Let me “tell” my story—record it first and then write it.

☐ Show me what you think are really good examples of first paragraphs.

☐ Help me see how my introduction and conclusion should be connected.

As I reflect on the responses I received about my greatest need,

I know now I can ask myself a lot of questions my teacher asked me—before I even have her help me. Maybe then “my greatest need” won’t be so great.

I do like being able to focus on what is bugging me in my writing. It makes me think and “come to terms” with what it takes to make my writing better.

I wonder if famous authors do this—identify their greatest need, and then fix it.
**MY GREATEST NEED IS . . .**

Prepare in advance for a conference about your writing. Identify the focus of the conference by sharing your "greatest need" and then identify specifics that would help you with that need. Be sure to reflect on the assistance given.

As you read my writing, my greatest need is ____________________________.

It would help me if you could . . .

☐ ____________________________________________________________________

☐ ____________________________________________________________________

☐ ____________________________________________________________________

☐ ____________________________________________________________________

☐ ____________________________________________________________________

As I reflect on the responses I received about my greatest need,
MY OWN "THINK ALOUD"—
AFTER I WRITE

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Select topics for which she needs to have an internal conversation or a conversation with a writing buddy after the writing but before publication.

☛ Think aloud on the selected topics, always digging deeper to clarify any questions, increase understanding, or develop next steps to be successful with the writing.

☛ Adjust the plan for the writing to reflect the conversation she has had either internally or with a writing buddy.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☛ Help your students understand that good writing really does matter—it provides meaning, stimulates clear thinking, and increases their understanding of content.

☛ Help your students understand that checking and reflecting on their writing before publication is instrumental in increasing their success with the writing.

☛ Provide as many examples as possible that will support students’ struggles and successes. Strive to use examples written by students as well as by professional authors and writers.

☛ Provide minilessons on any areas that seem to be of concern to students as they struggle with their writing.

☛ Model how you yourself think during revision, editing, and publication, as well as before and during the writing processes.

☛ Assist students in understanding the importance of assessing their progress in writing.

☛ Interview writers in the community or via the Web or e-mail, so that your students realize that others often use “thinking aloud” as a way to internalize what is important for their writing to be successful.

☛ Encourage students to keep a writing notebook, in which they can keep their “think aloud” summaries for future reference.

☛ Provide feedback to your students on their “think alouds,” always striving to increase the quality of their questions and the depth of the clarifications, and celebrating the effect of thinking aloud on their writing.
Provide opportunities for feedback in all stages of the writing process, including the revision, editing, and publishing stages.

Provide a rubric for each writing assignment that addresses the purpose as well as your expectations.

Share students’ examples (with permission, of course) of work at the revision stage and the editing stage, as well as the final publication.

Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their writing. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
MY OWN “THINK ALOUD” — AFTER I WRITE

Use the following information to guide your thinking after you have written your paper. Think seriously about how each of the areas will help you achieve success on the writing assignment.

Writing Assignment: _____________________________________________________________________

After I write . . .

- Revision: ____________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________

- Editing: ________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________

- Seeking Feedback: _______________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________

- One More Time with the Rubric: __________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________

- Publishing My Work: ______________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________

- Other: _________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________
  ____________________________________________________________________________________________

Note the writing assignment provided by your teacher. Keep this sheet with the “think aloud” tools you completed before and during the writing.

Revisit your audience and purpose. Think about how you might revise to create a more vivid picture for your reader. Take a good look at your content—the examples, ideas, and supporting details. Are they strong enough to support your thesis? If not, what are possible solutions?

Quality editing is a must if you want to communicate with your reader. Check for correctness in grammar, punctuation, and the content itself. Make sure you have met or exceeded the standards for editing. Clear communication is the goal!

Identify your greatest needs in conferencing with your writing buddy or teacher. Check your verb and noun choices—are they descriptive? Do they paint the picture you want the reader to see? Your writing buddy can help you with this.

One more time with the rubric! Double-check to be sure you have met all expectations. Brainstorm solutions if you have not.

Talk through “final publication” so that you meet your deadline and your teacher’s expectations. Then reflect on what has worked in this writing process, determine changes you will make next time, and plan to celebrate your accomplishments.

Address any other concerns and seek solutions to them!
Use the following information to guide your thinking after you have written your paper. Think seriously about how each of the areas will help you achieve success on the writing assignment.

**Writing Assignment:** Provide a sequential explanation of a piece of food being digested. Your “audience” is a middle school student.

After I write . . .

- **Revision:** Wow! I thought it would be easy for me, a senior, to write for a middle schooler! Thinking about the digestion of a cheeseburger (one of their favorite foods) was good, but making sure I used appropriate vocabulary was tricky. I think I am going to add a “glossary of terms”—just in case! I added drawings—cartoons of digestion—after Maria suggested that might help. I think it really does.

- **Editing:** I feel a whole lot better about this one since my conference with Ms. Kennedy. She also gave our class a couple of minilessons on common errors she saw. I am also getting better using the spell checker and grammar checker on the computer.

- **Seeking Feedback:** For my one last check, I want to have Maria and Antonio read it as if they were 8th graders. Maria has already read it, but I think it will help to have Antonio be the “new eyes” for my paper. Besides, he likes cheeseburgers—and studying the digestive system.

- **One More Time with the Rubric:** I have gone over every detail twice after I wrote the paper, not to mention all the times I looked at it during the writing. One thing I know now: I will always use the rubric. It has made the difference in this paper—I wish I had done that on my last paper.

- **Publishing My Work:** OK, the goal is to have Antonio and Maria do their final look during class tomorrow. I will make the necessary revisions tomorrow night and during class on Wednesday. I will stay after school to print my paper on Wednesday, and be ready to turn it in on Friday. And Thursday night will be homework- and stress-free. Yippee!

- **Other:** My goal for my next paper will be to use that rubric even better than I did this time. I really want to work “up front” on use of transitions and signal words.
MY OWN “THINK ALOUD”—AFTER I WRITE

Use the following information to guide your thinking after you have written your paper. Think seriously about how each of the areas will help you achieve success on the writing assignment.

Writing Assignment: _____________________________________________________________

After I write . . .

☐ Revision: ____________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

☐ Editing: ______________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

☐ Seeking Feedback: ___________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

☐ One More Time with the Rubric: _____________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

☐ Publishing My Work: _________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

☐ Other: _____________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________________________
OK, I ADMIT IT!

**Postwriting Tools**

| □ | 1. Compare/Contrast |
| □ | 2. Describe |
| □ | 3. Sequence/Order |
| □ | 4. Persuade |
| □ | 5. Cause and Effect |
| ✅ | 6. Problem and Solution |
| ✅ | 7. Reflect |
| ✅ | 8. Other Writing Difficulties |

**HOW TO USE:**
The student will . . .

- Reflect on the difficulties he is having with the assignment in the content area.
- Complete a written request for additional help, including information about the assignment, an indication of successes so far, a summary of the problems being experienced and solutions tried, and an indication of the type of help needed.

**TIPS/VARIATIONS:**
- Share with your students a timely and efficient way to seek assistance. This tool may provide the organization you need. Be sure to have a definite place in your room where students leave their requests for assistance.
- Help students understand that if they can talk and write about the problems they are having with the assignment, they are one step closer to the solution.
- Try to respond to students’ requests in a timely manner by completing the bottom of the sheet and returning it.
- Consider providing minilessons for groups of struggling students. You might even want to set up a schedule of minilessons so that students can come in for additional help on focused areas of struggle. Consider having students who identified those areas as strengths serve as teacher aides during the minilessons. It often helps to have others who see how to do it share with others. It is always valuable to have students learn from their peers.
- Remind your students that mathematics is a language in itself, and using that language in writing is an important skill to learn; it is also a skill recommended in the NCTM (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics) standards.
- Help your students understand that good writing really does matter—it provides meaning, stimulates clear thinking, and increases their understanding of your content.
- Provide options and choices as well as feedback as students strive to turn their challenges into strengths.
- Share students’ examples of quality writing (with permission, of course), solutions to their problems, or reflections on how they solved problems.
- Reflect with your students about how this tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their math or other content area. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
OK, I ADMIT IT!

Summarize carefully the problem you are having, identifying what you have tried and what you think might help, as well as written feedback already given. Be sure to identify your teacher’s name and the class for which you are seeking help. Be sure to identify yourself and the date of your request.

To: _____________________________________________
From: ___________________________________________
Date: ___________________________________________

Ok, I admit I am having a problem with the following assignment:
________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Summary of Problem: ___________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________

This is what I have tried: _________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________

It would really help me if . . .

☐ I could meet with you before or after school or during my study hall.
   Time I am available for help: _________________________________________________________________

☐ You could explain it to the class or a small group of us who may be having the same problem.

☐ You could recommend one of my peers who could share his or her learning about this.

☐ Other:

P.S. I am feeling lots of success with the following, and I would be glad to share my learning with another student who needs assistance. _________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Teacher’s Comments:
________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Be sure to identify your teacher’s name and the class for which you are seeking help. Be sure to identify yourself and the date of your request.

Identify the assignment for which you are seeking help. Be sure to list the text, the page number, and the problem or problems with which you are having difficulty.

Be as detailed as you can about each kind of problem you are having. Is it vocabulary terms you don’t understand? Is it the process itself? Is it applying the process to the real world?

Be sure to help your teacher understand the effort you have given so far. Identify solutions you have tried and people from whom you have sought help.

Be specific. What kind of assistance do you think you need?

And don’t be shy—share with your teacher where you are meeting success. There just might be another student in your class who could use your expertise.

Leave this space for your teacher, who might give the specific help you need here or suggest a time when the two of you could meet.
OK, I ADMIT IT!

Summarize carefully the problem you are having, identifying what you have tried and what you think might help, as well as what has worked. Share this with your teacher to focus the upcoming conference or to get written feedback about your writing.

To: Mr. Rodriguez  
Class: Algebra I—Period 2

From: Turner Owen  
Date: October 21

Ok, I admit I am having a problem with the following assignment: Dividing Variables—pp. 106–108

Summary of Problem: I keep making dumb mistakes—and I get my variables mixed together. Is it OK to have fractions or decimals or remainders with the numbers? And sometimes I don’t think I even have a usable answer.

This is what I have tried: I have done the samples in the book and the odd-numbered problems and checked my work with the answer key in the back of the book—but my answers don’t match theirs most of the time. I asked my dad for help; he couldn’t get it either.

It would really help me if . . .  
✓ I could meet with you before or after school or during my study hall.

Time I am available for help: 7:30 any morning; 5th hour every day; 3rd lunch

☐ You could explain it to the class or a small group of us who may be having the same problem.

☐ You could recommend one of my peers who could share his or her learning about this.

☐ Other:

P.S. I am feeling lots of success with the following, and I would be glad to share my learning with another student who needs assistance. I can add variables really well—and subtract, too—and I am getting better and better at multiplying them.

Teacher’s Comments:
OK, I ADMIT IT!

Summarize carefully the problem you are having, identifying what you have tried and what you think might help, as well as what has worked. Share this with your teacher to focus the upcoming conference or to get written feedback about your writing.

To: ___________________________________________ Class: ___________________________________________

From: ________________________________________ Date: __________________________________________

Ok, I admit I am having a problem with the following assignment: ______________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Summary of Problem: ___________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

This is what I have tried: ______________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

It would really help me if . . .

☐ I could meet with you before or after school or during my study hall.
   Time I am available for help: _____________________________________________________

☐ You could explain it to the class or a small group of us who may be having the same problem.

☐ You could recommend one of my peers who could share his or her learning about this.

☐ Other:

P.S. I am feeling lots of success with the following, and I would be glad to share my learning with another
   student who needs assistance. _________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________________________

Teacher's Comments:
Postwriting Tools

REFLECTING ON MY MATH

Note: This tool could be used for other areas besides math.

HOW TO USE:
The student will . . .

☛ Summarize her thinking, using her own words after reflecting on information learned in math class.
☛ Draw her thinking. Visualizing the learning clarifies any misconceptions and leads to deeper understanding.
☛ Discuss the new information with a math buddy.
☛ Summarize the thinking and learning again, showing an extension of the learning as a result of the processes of writing about it, drawing about it, and talking with a peer about it.
☛ Reflect on the process, recognizing new learning achieved through the various steps.

TIPS/VARIATIONS:
☛ Use this tool to help students reflect on reading, minilectures, and problem solving.
☛ Share with students that learning is social, which means it’s important to talk about what they have learned with others. Talking allows them to practice their thinking one more time as well as clarify misconceptions. Remind them that conversation must include listening.
☛ Use this tool particularly in the area of math, where students are often asked to solve complex problems. Having the opportunity to draw and discuss their thinking before attempting solutions results in better solutions. Having the opportunity to draw and discuss their thinking after solutions are attempted increases their long-term memory of the process.
☛ Consider having several math buddies to extend the thinking. You might have students talk five minutes with one student, then rotate to another student and talk an additional three minutes, and then the same with another student for two minutes. Each time the student should strive to learn one new thing as well as share a new learning as a result of the previous conversation.
☛ Post examples of Reflecting on My Math in your classroom so that students can see their thinking.
☛ Reflect with your students about how the tool and each of the steps helped (or hindered) their learning. Brainstorm other opportunities where this tool could be helpful.
As you think about your learning in math today, first write and then draw about your understanding of it. Then pair with your math buddy to talk about your writing and drawing as they pertain to your new learning. Then write again, focusing on key ideas you want to remember.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Write</th>
<th>Draw</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In this area, summarize in your own words what you have learned from reading the text or from your teacher’s instruction.</td>
<td>In this area, create a drawing to help you better understand or visualize your learning. This is especially helpful in math as you work to solve problems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talk</th>
<th>Rewrite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After you talk with a math buddy, summarize your new understanding of the material. Be sure to put it in your own words so you can remember it later.</td>
<td>Now it’s time to combine all your learning into one complete summary or reflection. If you are solving a math problem, this is a good area to actually show your solution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Reflecting on My Math

As you think about your learning in math today, first write and then draw about your understanding of it. Then pair with your math buddy to talk about your writing and drawing as they pertain to your new learning. Then write again, focusing on key ideas you want to remember.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Write</th>
<th>Draw</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I hadn’t really thought much about a square before—just that it was a figure that had four equal sides. Now I know there’s a lot more to it than that. A square can be called a parallelogram because it has four equal sides with four right angles. It’s also a rhombus because it has four right angles. And, of course, it’s a rectangle because it has four sides. It really has some “geometry” properties, too—for example, opposite sides are parallel and opposite angles are equal.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>![Square Diagram]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talk</th>
<th>Rewrite</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having the picture made our conversation easy—especially about the geometry of squares. We talked about how the opposite sides are parallel and the opposite sides are equal. We also talked about opposite angles being equal—and since it is a square, they are all equal. We also recognized that a diagonal would bisect the equal opposite angles and that the diagonals would be equal because of the equal sides and the equal angles. And I had thought a square was just a square!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It really helped me to write, draw, and talk about my math. I organized in my mind lots of information I hadn’t really thought of before. Now I have lots of terms for a square—parallelogram, rectangle, rhombus, regular polygon, convex polygon, quadrilateral—because I understand the “geometry” of a square. I can even talk about how a square is different from a triangle, a circle, a trapezoid, and a kite because of lines and angles.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As you think about your learning in math today, first write and then draw about your understanding of it. Then pair with your math buddy to talk about your writing and drawing as they pertain to your new learning. Then write again, focusing on key ideas you want to remember.

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