



Grade 3 Informational Writing Guide

Student Pages for Print or Projection

SECTION 1: Recognizing Genre/Organization

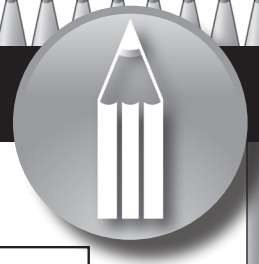


Narrative Book Cover Template

Front Cover - Title and Student Drawing

Back - Leave Blank

Narrative Book Cover Template



A large, empty rectangular box intended for drawing or writing a narrative.

Fold

Form with five vertical lines for writing:

Name: _____

This story is about _____

The problem was _____

The problem was solved _____

The author's purpose was _____



Summarizing Framework

for Narrative Writing

Name: _____

Please tell us about your story by answering the questions below.

This story is about:

The problem/adventure was that:

The problem was solved/the adventure ended when:

The author's purpose was to:



Informational Book Cover Template

Front Cover - Title and Photo

Back - Leave Blank



Summarizing Framework

for Informational Writing

Name: _____

Please tell us about your informational text by answering the questions below.

The text gives information about:

_____ .

The author's purpose is to:

_____ .



Student Reference Page

SENTENCE STARTERS FOR OPINION WRITING



Pro

One thing I enjoy is _____.

My favorite _____ is _____.

I absolutely love _____.

It's easy to see why I like _____.

I really appreciate _____.

I heartily approve of _____.

I get really excited when _____.

I feel positive about _____.

There's nothing I'd rather do than _____.

I look forward to _____.

I am in favor of _____.

I adore _____.

I'm very impressed by _____.

I strongly support _____.

I'm fond of _____.



Con

One thing I dislike is _____.

My least favorite _____ is _____.

I absolutely hate _____.

It's easy to see why I dislike _____.

I just can't appreciate _____.

I completely disapprove of _____.

I get very disappointed when _____.

I feel negative about _____.

There's nothing I'd like to avoid more than _____.

I dread _____.

I am against _____.

I abhor _____.

I'm unimpressed by _____.

I strongly oppose _____.

I don't care for _____.

Opinion Statement

In my opinion, _____.

To me, _____.

According to my point of view _____.

My belief is that _____.

As I see it, _____.

My attitude is that _____.

My stance is that _____.

From my point of view, _____.

I think that _____.

It seems to me that _____.

My position is that _____.



Name: _____

FACT OR OPINION?

Read each sentence. If it's a fact sentence, write an "F" in the blank. If it's an opinion sentence, write an "O" in the blank. Underline the opinion language.

1. The solar system was formed almost 5 billion years ago. _____
2. There are many different breeds of dogs. _____
3. As I see it, cats are better pets than dogs. _____
4. The worst food in the world is onions. _____
5. Bears hibernate during the winter. _____
6. Clara Barton was a civil war nurse who founded the Red Cross. _____
7. Cold winter weather is nasty because it's so uncomfortable. _____
8. The best pizza topping is pepperoni. _____

Write your own opinion or fact sentence below and mark it "F" or "O".



Name: _____

NARRATIVE, INFORMATIONAL, OR OPINION?

Read the paragraphs below and decide if each is an example of narrative, opinion, or informational writing.

Circle your answer from the three choices below each paragraph.

1. Motorboats should be outlawed in the shallow waters where manatees live. These gentle, slow-moving sea creatures are often hurt when they are struck by motorboats. Only kayaks and canoes should be allowed in the waters where these helpless animals live.

NARRATIVE

OPINION

INFORMATIONAL

2. Matty the Manatee lived with his mom in a shallow canal of clear, warm water. They lead a quiet, lazy, life together, napping, munching on sea grasses and drifting around the canal. They were very happy until Matty started feeling restless. "I wish something exciting would happen," he said, rising to the surface for a breath of fresh air. Just then, he saw a boat rocketing toward him!

NARRATIVE

OPINION

INFORMATIONAL

3. Sometimes called sea cows, manatees are about nine feet long and weigh up to 1,200 pounds. Gray in color, they have flat tails and two flippers. These gentle sea creatures have wrinkled faces and whiskers on their snouts. As mammals, they breathe air and care for their babies.

NARRATIVE

OPINION

INFORMATIONAL



Student Page

Name: _____

NARRATIVE, INFORMATIONAL, OR OPINION?

Read the paragraphs below and decide if each is an example of narrative, opinion or informational writing. Circle your answer from the three choices below each paragraph.

1. If you love nature, you'll agree that Alaska is the most interesting of the 50 states. Here's where you can climb the highest mountain in North America, explore miles of coastline, join in a sled-dog race and fish for King Salmon. Without a doubt, Alaska is the most exciting place in the world to visit or to live.

NARRATIVE

OPINION

INFORMATIONAL

2. The 49th state, Alaska, joined the U.S. in 1959. More than twice the size of Texas, it is the biggest of the 50 states. While Alaska covers many, many square miles and includes dozens of islands, very few people live there. Most of the land is still wilderness where grizzly bear, wolves and moose live.

NARRATIVE

OPINION

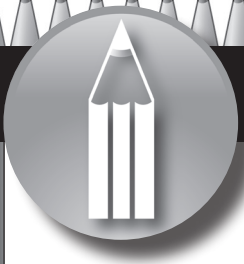
INFORMATIONAL

3. Teddy wolfed down his breakfast and ran outdoors to feed his dogs. They bounded from their shelters and greeted him happily. They seemed to know that today was a special day! "Ready to run?" Teddy asked. The dogs howled and wagged their tails in reply.

NARRATIVE

OPINION

INFORMATIONAL



Student Page

Name: _____

TEXT DETECTIVES - RESPONSE TO TEXT

In school, college, and the workplace, we're often asked to read a text and respond to it in writing. People do this kind of writing to show how deeply they understand what they've read. Read the two excerpts from the response to text essays, below, and circle all of the clue words or phrases that indicate the Response to Text genre. (The clue words will *refer* to a source text.)

SAMPLE RESPONSE TO TEXT CLUE WORDS OR PHRASES:

- The author points out that_____.
- The article states: "_____."
- In this text we see that_____.
- In paragraph two we learn_____.
- The author goes on to explain_____.
- We learn, in paragraph 3, that_____.

1. In the article titled Sea Turtles, we learn about where these creatures live and how they lay their eggs. We learn, in paragraph 3, that sea turtles lay their eggs on sandy beaches. The article states: "Light pollution from seaside homes discourages sea turtles from laying eggs." The author goes on to explain some steps we can take to protect sea turtles.
2. After reading Helping Dogs, I learned what these canines do and how they are trained. The author discussed working dogs and service dogs, and the amazing jobs they perform. I discovered, in paragraph 2, that dogs can even be used to detect cancer. In this text I also read about police dogs and the herding breeds.



Student Page

Name: _____

INFORMATIONAL, OPINION, OR RESPONSE TO TEXT?

Read the paragraph. Is it Informational, Opinion, or Response to Text? Circle your response.

1.



Ice cream is the all-time best dessert! There's nothing better than a bowl of ice cream several times a week as a sweet, delicious treat after dinner. It's a great way to cool off in the summer, but it's also a fun and frosty winter snack. I love mint chocolate chip and adore plain old chocolate!

INFORMATIONAL

OPINION

RESPONSE TO TEXT

2.



In the text titled Volcanoes, the author provides information about these fiery erupting mountains. We learn, in paragraph 2, how volcanoes are formed. The article goes on to explain how molten rock is forced up through a shaft and shoots out as lava and ash. At the end of the piece we discover that volcanoes also are found on the ocean floor.

INFORMATIONAL

OPINION

RESPONSE TO TEXT

3.



The Venus Fly Trap is a plant that eats insects! Instead of petals the Venus Fly Trap has thick *lobes*, each with six small sensitive hairs. When a bug touches these hairs twice, the lobes close around the insect. Then it takes about ten days to digest the bug. Finally, the lobes open up again and wait for the next unsuspecting insect.

INFORMATIONAL

OPINION

RESPONSE TO TEXT



Name: _____

THE MIGHTY SLED DOG

Have you ever tried to walk around outside after a big snowstorm? Or seen cars stuck in a snow bank or on a slippery hill? For sure, getting from here to there in the snow is hard. But, for over 4,000 years sled dogs have helped people travel across the snow. Let's meet the strong, loyal, and hardworking sled dog!

A History of Helping

For thousands of years sled dogs have helped people in cold, snowy climates. In **Siberia**, a northern part of Russia, and across the far north



Places sled dogs are used around the world.

regions of **North America** these dogs have pulled sleds to carry people and supplies from place to place. Hunters and trappers have used sled dogs to take them deep into the wilderness to hunt and trap animals for food, hides, and fur. Then they pull sleds of people and their **bounty** back again. Dog sleds carried **prospectors** searching for gold into faraway regions where they

couldn't go on foot. **Balto**, a famous sled dog, led a team carrying a special **serum** or medicine over 700 miles to a village suffering from an **epidemic**. Many people were very sick and the medicine surely saved lives

The Alaskan Husky

The Alaskan Husky is not a pure breed, but does have certain characteristics. These



A group of Alaskan Husky dogs.

sled dogs are usually a mix of breeds that have thick fur to keep them warm. Their coats come in all colors and could be short or long. They can have brown or blue eyes, and sometimes one of each! Most have furry pointy ears and a tail that curls up and over their backs. Most important, these cold weather canines must be strong, and have the **stamina** needed to run long distances without tiring. These are very smart animals that learn many commands. They also need to be

Dog Sled drivers, or **mushers**, often enjoy racing with other dog sled teams. They must train their dogs to turn quickly and not to get tangled in the lines that connect their harnesses. The team with the best-behaved, smartest, strongest, fastest dogs will be

able to work on a team of between 3 and 16 dogs to pull the sled.

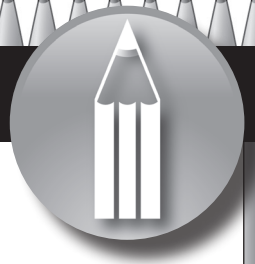
Dog Sled Racing

the winner! A famous Alaskan dog race is called the Iditarod. Teams race over one thousand miles, from Anchorage to Nome, Alaska. The record for the fastest Iditarod time is less than 9 days!

Strong and fast, sled dogs are loyal to their team through thick and thin. If you ever travel to a cold and snowy climate like Alaska, you might be able to go for a ride on a dog sled. Dress warm, hold on tight, and get ready to MUSH!



Sled teams begin the Iditarod.



Name: _____

THE MIGHTY SLED DOG

Read The Mighty Sled Dog and answer the questions, below.

1. Underline the **title**.
2. Circle the three **headings**.
3. Highlight, in yellow, the **keywords** and their definitions.
4. Highlight, in pink, the **captions** beneath photos and map.
5. Write two details about Sled dogs that you learned in this text:



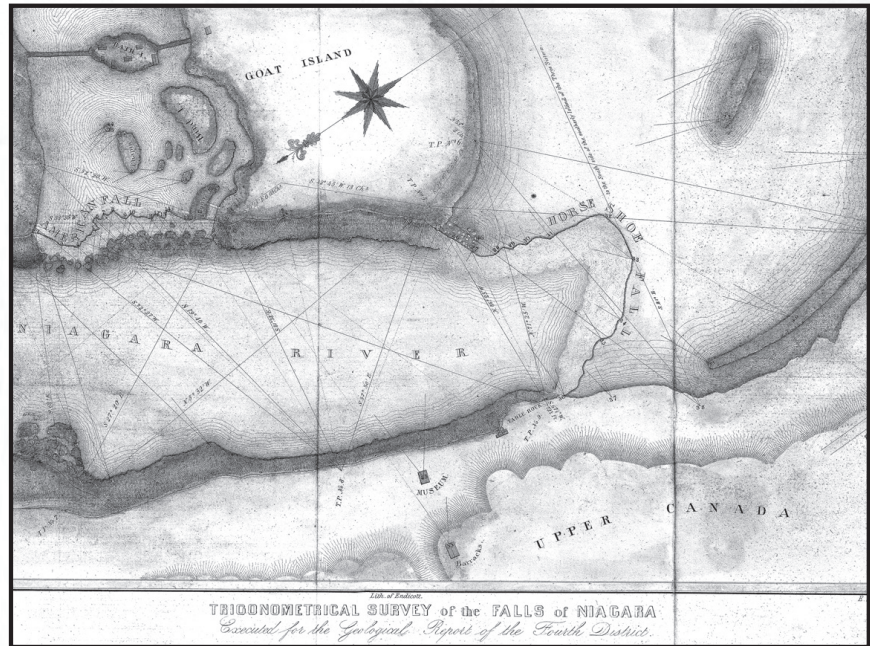
Name: _____

NIAGARA FALLS

If you hear thundering water crashing 165 feet over rocky ledges, feel the air filled with mist, and watch over seven hundred thousand gallons of water per second flow past, do you know where you'd be? If you guessed Niagara Falls, you're right! Let's find out how the falls formed, how people enjoy them, and the many daredevil stunts people have tried there.

How Niagara Formed

Niagara Falls was formed over ten thousand years ago at the end of the last ice age. Waterfalls occur when a stream or river **erodes** or washes away the bed of soil beneath it. When this happens, hard slabs of rocks are uncovered.



Softer rocks are worn down and disappear. The strongest rocks, called capstones, cause the water to flow across them and then down. Niagara Falls are located between Ontario, Canada and New York State. These falls are actually made up of three different falls that **converge** or join together. The largest of the three is

called Horseshoe Falls, and the smallest Bridal Veil Falls.

Enjoying Niagara Falls

For years Niagara Falls has drawn many visitors. Nowadays families love to take a sail on a boat called **The Maid of the Mist**. Upon **embarking** (getting onboard) you'll be given a blue plastic



Tourist vessel, *The Maid of the Mist*

raincoat to protect you from the water and mist in the basin of the Horseshoe Falls. For another view you can climb in special tunnels along the steep rock to observation decks behind the tumbling water. Nearby there are hundreds of hotels and restaurants. Tourists can find a variety of shops, waterparks, and other attractions to make their trip even more interesting.

Niagara Stunts

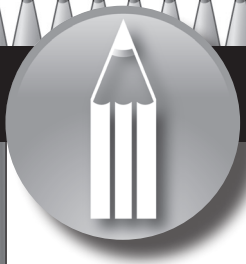
Through the years many **daredevils** or extreme risk-takers have performed dangerous stunts at Niagara Falls. Many tried to go over the falls in a barrel. Most who have tried this have died, although some survived. The first person to go over the falls and survive was a school-teacher named Miss Annie Taylor. In 1901 she was strapped into a special harness inside a barrel (along with her cat) and was launched into the river and over the falls. The barrel was pulled from the river about twenty minutes later. Though bruised and stunned, Annie Taylor lived. Other daredevils have walked across the falls between the United States and Canada on tightropes. Another even tried to go over on a jet ski, but did not live to tell about it. These stunts are against

the law, and many thrill-seekers have been arrested trying some new trick.

Though not the tallest or broadest waterfall in the world, Niagara Falls is impressive. If you visit Ontario or upper New York State, be sure to see the falls. See if you can recognize the Niagara River feeding the falls, and the rocky capstone. Take a boat ride or view the falls from an observation deck. And, perhaps best of all, imagine the daredevil stunts performed there through the years!



Daredevil Annie Taylor and her barrel



Student Page

Name: _____

NIAGARA FALLS

Read Niagara Falls and answer the questions, below.

1. Underline the **title**.
2. Circle the three **headings**.
3. Highlight, in yellow, the **keywords** and their definitions.
4. Highlight, in pink, the **captions** beneath photos and map.
5. Write two details about Niagara Falls that you learned in this text:



Student Page

Name: _____

YOU BE THE EDITOR!

Imagine you're the editor of a science magazine for kids. Your assistant sent you this article, but forgot some of the most important parts that will help the reader learn from the text. Your job is to provide the missing parts.

1. Read the entire piece. What is the **topic** – in other words, what is the text **all about**?

Is this an informational or opinion piece? How do you know?

2. Based on the **topic**, create a **title** for this piece that will help the reader figure out what they'll be learning about. Write your title, in large print, across the top of the article.
3. Number each paragraph.
4. Circle the **introduction**.
5. Bracket the **body** of the piece.
6. Box the **conclusion**.
7. Read the first paragraph in the body of the piece (*paragraph 2*). It is missing a **heading** that tells the reader what the entire paragraph is about. Identify the main idea in order to create a heading and write it in the blank at the beginning of the paragraph. Do the same thing for paragraph 3.
8. Read paragraph 1 again. The writer has forgotten to italicize or bold the **key vocabulary words**. Use the diagram in the middle of the page to help you identify these key vocabulary words. Underline these words to help the reader.
9. Insert **captions** beneath the diagram and the photo to explain what the reader is looking at.
10. Scan the remaining paragraphs and underline any key vocabulary words that should have appeared in bold or italicized print.
11. Fill in the summarizing framework, below.

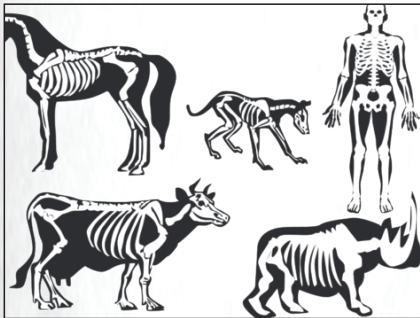
| |
|--|
| <p>TOPIC: _____</p> <p>MAIN IDEA #1: _____</p> <p>MAIN IDEA #2: _____</p> |
|--|



Name: _____

Title

If you ever walk in a forest or along a beach, look around. If you look closely you can see creatures of all kinds. Some of them have fur, others have scales, feathers, or shells. Scientists group or classify animals as vertebrates or invertebrates. What are these groups or classifications? And how do we recognize them?



Heading:

Let's look at the group of animals called vertebrates. Vertebrates are creatures that have backbones and skeletons that are made of bone. This includes a skull that protects

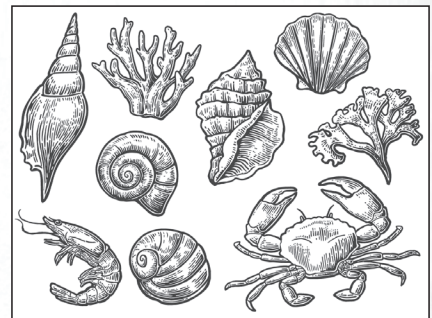
a highly developed brain. Vertebrates also have powerful sensory organs (that help them see, hear, feel, taste, smell). The bony skeleton supports the vertebrate's body. Because of this, vertebrates are larger than invertebrates. They can also move more quickly than invertebrates. Vertebrates include mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, and fish.

Heading:

Now let's examine invertebrates. These creatures do not have a skeleton or a backbone inside of them. Therefore, their bodies are usually smaller than vertebrates, because without a skeleton there is little to hold their bodies up. Because of this they move slowly. Their nervous systems are simple and they act mostly on instinct.

This means they react without thinking. Many invertebrates are round in shape with a mouth in the middle. Others, like insects and crustaceans such as crabs or shrimp, have a front and a back end, and their right and left sides mirror each other. Invertebrates include worms, jellyfish, starfish, insects and spiders.

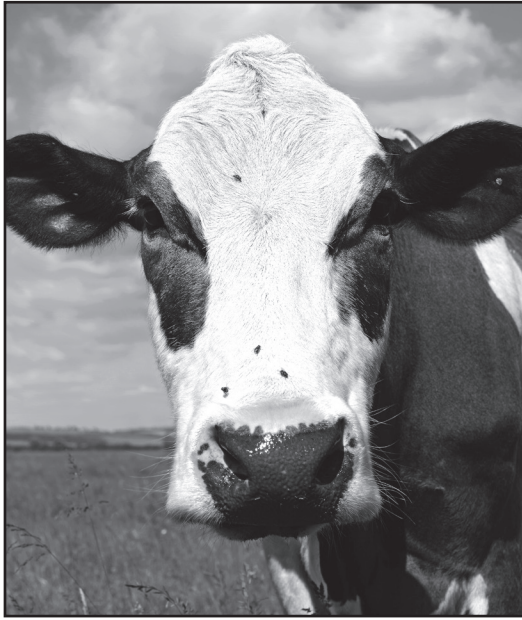
So, think about vertebrates and invertebrates. Think about the characteristics that set them apart. Then ask yourself, "Am I a vertebrate, or an invertebrate?" Look at your body, think about the way you move and think, and you should know the answer.





Name: _____

ANIMALS OF THE WORLD



From the tiny hummingbird to the enormous elephant, there are an amazing variety of animals living on the planet Earth. Some live on their own in forests, oceans and jungles. Others depend on us to care for them.

Wild animals live in different habitats. A squirrel is a wild animal that lives in forests around the world. In the ocean, whales and dolphins swim freely. Cheetahs live in dark jungles. It is fun to see animals living in the outdoors on their own.

Farmers raise other animals for food. If you visited a farm, you would see pigs, goats, cows, chickens and ducks. Chickens and ducks lay eggs. Goats and cows provide milk. Pigs and cattle give us meat. Without animals there would be less foods to eat.

Pets are companions to people, which means they are like our friends. Dogs and cats are probably the most popular pets around, but some people keep rabbits, fish, ferrets, hamsters and frogs as pets. People love their pets and think of them as part of the family.

From a howling wolf to a sweet, gentle kitten, the variety of animals in the world is astonishing. Animals enrich our lives.





INTRODUCTION

Lead/Topic Sentence

Main Idea #1 _____

| | |
|--------|--------|
| Detail | Detail |
| Detail | Detail |

Main Idea #2 _____

| | |
|--------|--------|
| Detail | Detail |
| Detail | Detail |

Main Idea #3 _____

| | |
|--------|--------|
| Detail | Detail |
| Detail | Detail |

Conclusion

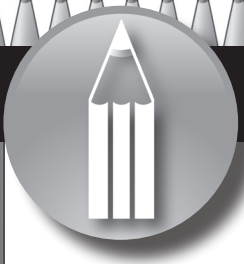
Summarizing Framework for Animals of the World

TOPIC: Animals

MAIN IDEA #1: Wild Animals

MAIN IDEA #2: Farm Animals

MAIN IDEA #3: Pets



Name: _____

ROSIE'S PET

Rosie felt a shiver of excitement when she looked at the calendar. Her birthday was only a week away and she'd been promised that she could choose her first, very own pet for her birthday. Since Rosie loved all animals, she was having a hard time deciding on just one.

She thought about it for a long time and finally made decision. Rosie told her dad that her first, very own pet would be a speedy, spotted cheetah.



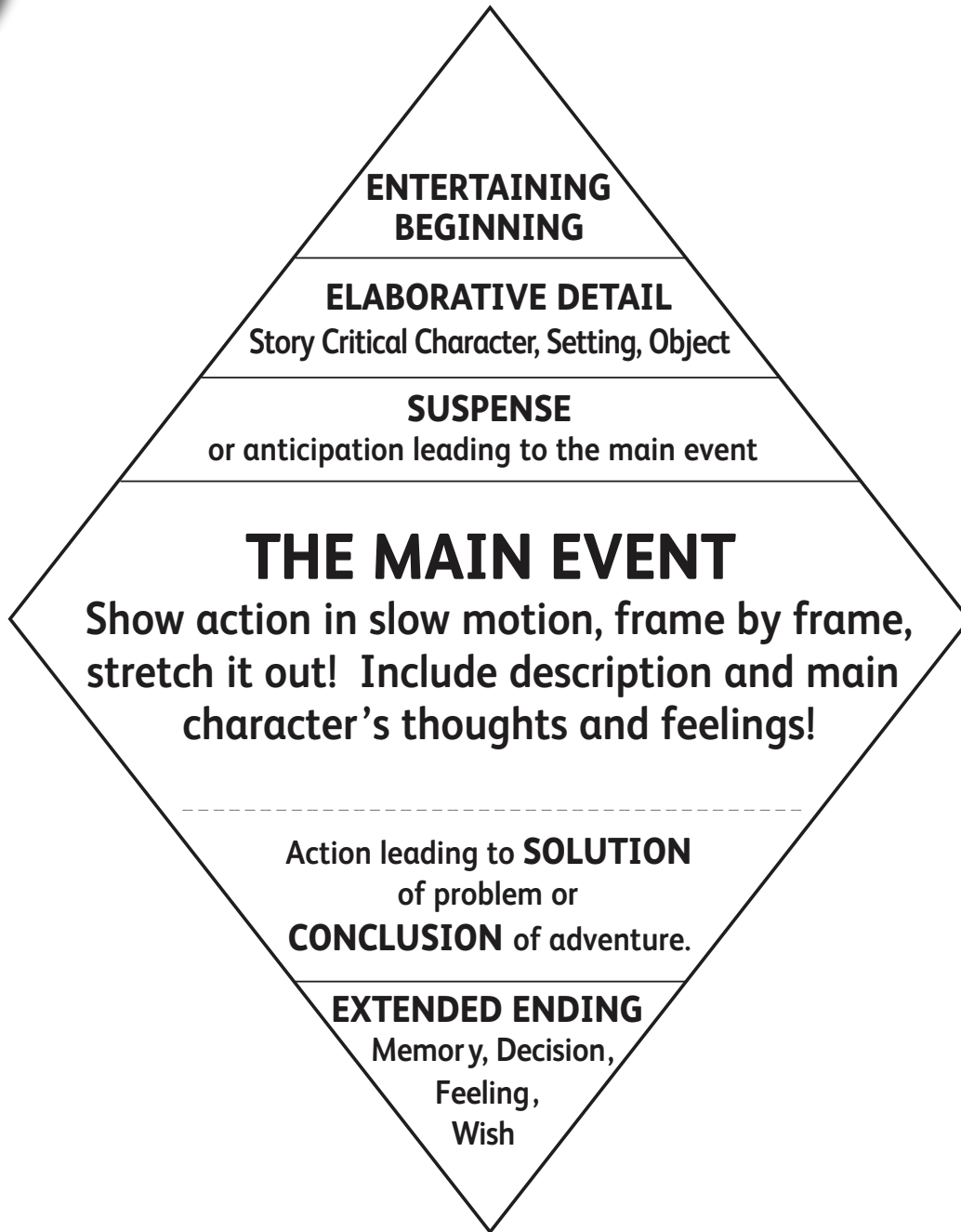
"Sorry, Rosie," Dad said. "A cheetah is a wild animal, not a pet. Rosie's next choice was a pig, but her Dad told her that a "pig is a farm animal, not a pet."

Rosie's face fell. Would she ever find the perfect pet? But that night, she dreamed of an animal with floppy ears and a friendly face. It loved to chase balls and came when Rosie called.

When Rosie woke up, she knew exactly what her first, very own pet would be. On her birthday, she and her dad went to the animal shelter and adopted a puppy! It was the perfect pet for Rosie!



Narrative Writing Diamond



Summarizing Framework for Rosie's Pets

This story is about: Rosie .

The problem was that: she wanted the perfect pet .

The problem was solved when: she and her dad adopted a puppy .



Student Page

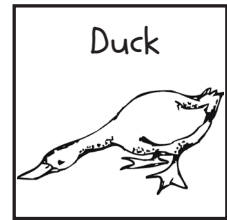
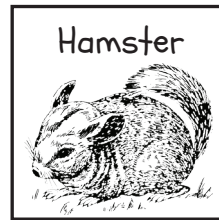
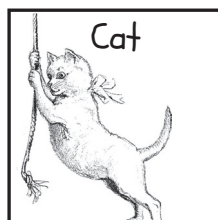
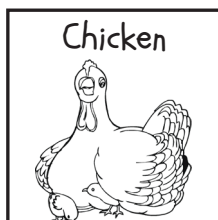
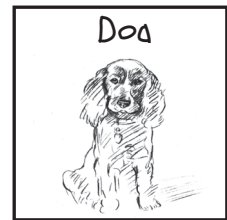
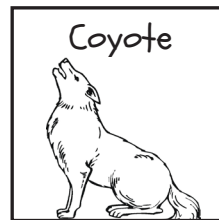
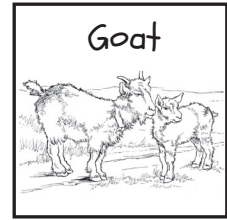
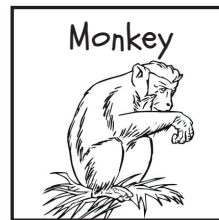
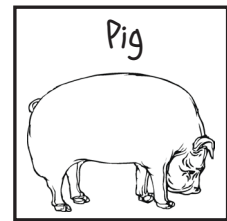
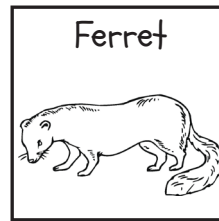
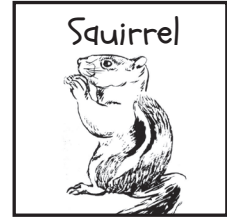
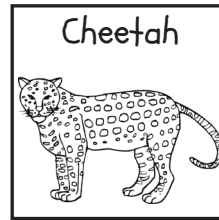
Name: _____

ROSIE'S PET

Rosie is dreaming of all the animals she would like to keep as pets, but Rosie needs to learn that farm animals and wild animals do not make good pets. Please help Rosie sort the wild animals and the farm animals from the pets.

Pets for Rosie?

| WILD ANIMALS | FARM ANIMALS | PETS |
|--------------|--------------|------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |





Student Page

Name: _____

CLOUDS



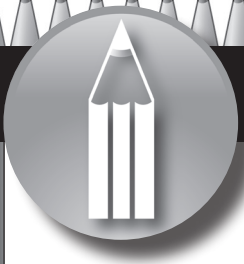
Have you ever noticed that not all clouds look the same? On some days clouds are gray and puffy. On other days they are wispy and white. **Meteorologists**, or weather scientists, watch the clouds because they help them predict different types of weather. Let's discuss what clouds are made of and examine two kinds of clouds, the **stratus cloud** and the **cumulus cloud**.

How are clouds formed? Clouds are really clusters of teeny tiny water droplets or ice crystals. As air is heated by the sun, the droplets and ice crystals group together. When billions of these come together a cloud is formed. Because the droplets and ice crystals are so tiny, clouds are light enough to move with and float on the wind. The temperature affects how high these vaporous clusters float.

Stratus clouds hover close to the earth. They are gray in color and usually cover the whole sky. These are the kinds of clouds you'll see on a day of drizzling rain. If you wake up to stratus clouds you might want to take an umbrella with you! If it's really cold out, stratus clouds could also signal snow. When stratus clouds sink to the ground we call it **fog**.

Cumulus clouds float higher in the sky and look more like fluffy cotton balls. The base, or bottom, of cumulus clouds are flat and the tops resemble mounds of whipped cream. Cumulus clouds are white when the weather is nice. But sometimes cumulus clouds form layer upon layer in tall columns. We call this kind of cloud **cumulonimbus** and it signals thunderstorms. If you see stacked cumulus clouds and the sky gets dark, watch out for thunder, lightning, or even a tornado!

So, each day when you head outside, pay attention to the clouds. All are made of water and ice crystals, some float high, and others low. Like a meteorologist, looking at the clouds can help you to predict all kinds of weather.



Student Page

Name: _____

Clouds

1. Number each paragraph.
2. Circle the introduction.
3. Box the conclusion.
4. Circle the topic.
5. Underline each MAIN IDEA. Write a blurb (a word or two) in the margin next to the paragraph explaining what the entire paragraph is about.
6. Number the references to each main idea restated in the conclusion.
7. Fill in the summarizing framework/author's prewriting plan:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1 _____

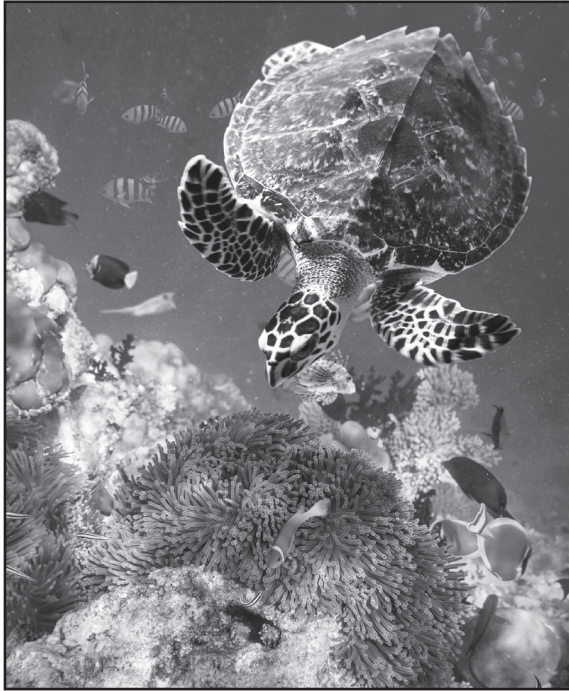
MAIN IDEA #2 _____

MAIN IDEA #3 _____



Name: _____

TURTLES VS. TORTOISES



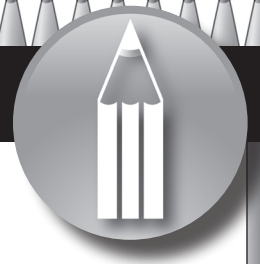
Turtles and tortoises are both fascinating creatures. They are similar in many ways, but have some important differences.

Both turtles and tortoises are reptiles, but tortoises live on land while turtles live in the water. Tortoises have short, sturdy, flat feet with bent legs to support the weight of the shell on their back as they lumber along land. Turtles have webbed feet with long claws for swimming in lakes, ponds and rivers. Some varieties of turtles live in salt water too.

Tortoises and turtles both have a carapase or shell. Both reptiles can draw their heads and limbs into the shell to stay safe. The tortoise's shell is dome-shaped, thick and heavy. The turtle's shell is flatter and lighter.

At first glance, a turtle and a tortoise may seem very much alike. But, when you look closer, it is easy to see the differences between their feet, their shells, and where they live.





Name: _____

TURTLES VS. TORTOISES

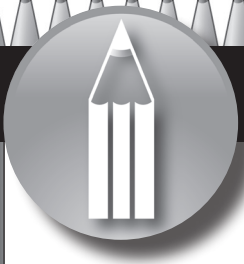
1. Number each **paragraph**.
2. Circle the **introduction**.
3. Box the **conclusion**.
4. Circle the **topic**.
5. Underline each **MAIN IDEA**. Write a **blurb** (a word or two) in the margin next to the paragraph explaining what the entire paragraph is about.
6. Read this detail: **Some kinds of turtles even have flippers.**
Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # _____.
7. Read this detail: **A heavier shell would make it hard for a turtle to stay afloat.**
Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # _____.
8. Number the references to each main idea restated in the **conclusion**.
9. Fill in the summarizing framework/author's prewriting plan:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1 _____

MAIN IDEA #2 _____

MAIN IDEA #3 _____



Student Page

Name: _____

HOW TO PLAY MARCO POLO

Do you like to play tag? Marco Polo is a great game to play in the swimming pool. The rules are very simple, like tag, and can be played by just three people, but, it is more fun and challenging with a larger group.

As in all games there are rules to follow. First you have to choose one person to be Marco. Everybody else is a Polo. Marco has to close his/her eyes and keep them closed. All the Polos can keep their eyes open. Marco shouts “Marco” and the Polos answer “Polo.” Marco’s challenge is to chase down and tag a Polo just by following the voices. Then, the player who was tagged becomes Marco (or “it”).

Playing Marco Polo is a good way to involve all of your guests. Young and old can play. Unlike some games, no one is left out. It’s also a good game for people who don’t like to be splashed or to go under water. Once you explain the rules you can invite everyone to play. After watching for a while everyone will want to join in.

Marco Polo is a simple, fun game that boys and girls of all ages can play. Why not teach the rules and then invite your friends to a game on the next sunny, summer day?





Student Page

Name: _____

HOW TO PLAY MARCO POLO

1. Number each **paragraph**.
2. Circle the **introduction**.
3. Box the **conclusion**.
4. Circle the **topic**.
5. Underline the **main ideas** in each body paragraph. Write a **blurb** (a word or two) in the margin next to the paragraph explaining what the entire paragraph is about.
6. Where would this detail belong? *If Marco peeks in order to tag someone it doesn't count.*

7. Where would this detail belong? *If you're a Polo you can dive under water if you like.*

8. If you never played Marco Polo, would this piece teach you how? Highlight each rule and explain how this information is helpful.

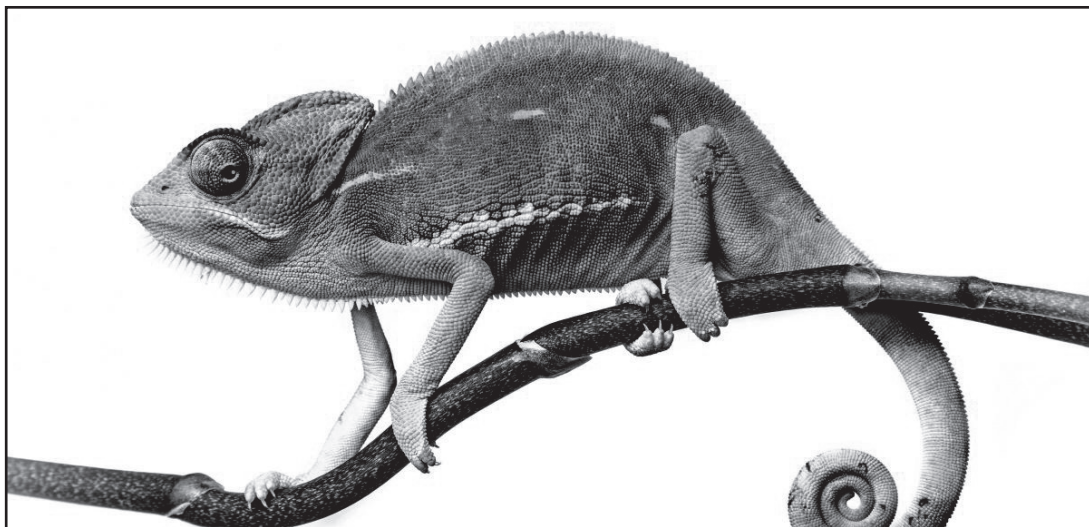


Name: _____

CHAMELEONS

Imagine a type of lizard that lives in both rainforests and deserts and many can change the color of its skin to just about any shade in the rainbow! Let's learn about these unique creatures called **chameleons**. We'll examine their appearance, learn about their remarkable eyesight, and investigate their eating habits.

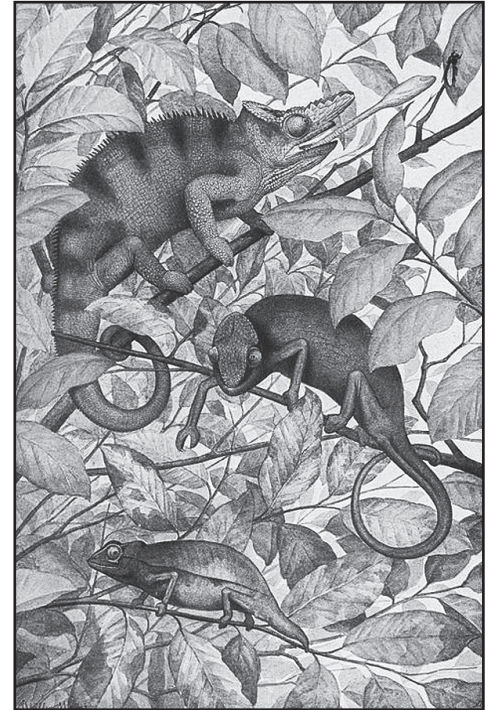
Would you recognize a chameleon if you saw one? Not all chameleons look alike. In fact, there are over 160 kinds or **species** of chameleons. Chameleons can only be spotted in warm climates. Some of these scaly lizards can be less than an inch long, but others grow to more than two feet in length! Many types of chameleons have special cells under their skin called **chromatophores** that enable them to change color! These cold-blooded reptiles can turn patterns of orange, pink, red, purple, blue, yellow, green, black or brown. They show off their colors for many reasons – to **camouflage** themselves (blend in with their habitat to hide from enemies), to attract a mate, or to warm up or cool down. You can recognize many kinds of chameleons by a sort of crown of bumps, horns, or ridges on top of their heads.





Student Page

Chameleons have very unusual eyes. Instead of having two lids that open and close, these colorful reptiles have protruding upper and lower lids that are joined, with only a tiny hole for their pupils. It's easy for chameleons to see predators approaching because their eyes move separately. This allows them to see two different things at the same time and to scan a full 360 degrees. In other words, it's a little like having eyes in the back of their heads! Their eyesight is very sharp. They can spot tiny insects up to 30 feet away.



Insects beware – chameleons often feast on large bugs. After a chameleon sees a tasty insect it shoots its sticky tongue out and captures it with lightning speed. When the tongue strikes an unsuspecting grasshopper, locust, or cricket the tip forms a sort of suction cup that grabs hold of the prey and snaps it back into the lizard's mouth. A chameleon's long sticky tongue can stretch up to two times the length of its body! In addition to insects, larger chameleons have been known to capture and devour small birds.

The next time you're at the zoo, or even the pet store, ask to see a chameleon. Hopefully you'll recognize their distinctive appearance, notice its unusual eyes, and watch out for its sneaky, sticky tongue. If you're lucky, you might even see this amazing lizard change to a brand new hue!



Name: _____

CHAMELEONS

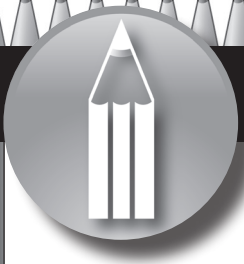
1. Number each **paragraph**.
2. Circle the **introduction**.
3. Box the **conclusion**.
4. Circle the **topic**.
5. Underline each **MAIN IDEA**. Write a **blurb** (a word or two) in the margin next to the paragraph explaining what the entire paragraph is about.
6. Read this detail: *Chameleons have long tails that they can curl around branches and vines.*
Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # _____.
7. Read this detail: *Locusts are another favorite chameleon meal.*
Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # _____.
8. Number the references to each main idea restated in the **conclusion**.
9. Fill in the summarizing framework/author's prewriting plan:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1 _____

MAIN IDEA #2 _____

MAIN IDEA #3 _____



Student Page

Name: _____

WEIRD CONTESTS AROUND THE WORLD

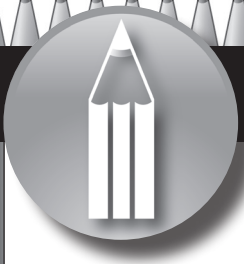
Have you ever played a board game, hide and seek, soccer or baseball? What is it that we enjoy about a game or a contest? Maybe it's the fun. Or maybe we like the challenge of winning! All around the world people enjoy the fun and excitement of a contest. You've probably never heard of camel wrestling, worm charming, or Mud Olympics, but these are some of the weird contests that people in far-away places enjoy.

For thousands of years the people of Turkey have held **camel wrestling contests**. Camels are trained all year to be in top shape for the event. They've been fed extra food to gain weight so that they can push over their opponent. To add to the fun, the camels are dressed in fancy colorful blankets and bridles. The camels butt and push one another while the crowd cheers. Sometimes the weaker camel will give up and run away. But other times both humpy animals push, shove, and trip each other until one falls over. The camel left standing is the winner. The camels don't get hurt, but sometimes a 2,000 pound camel will run into the crowd causing even more excitement.

In England children and adults alike compete in a contest called **worm charming**. The goal is for each contestant to try to get worms to come out of wet soil. Worm charming is sometimes called **grunting or fiddling**. **Wormers** (people who try to charm worms) will put a tool called a stob into the ground and hit it with a special stick. This makes the stob vibrate. This vibration causes the worms to crawl out of the soil. Each wormer gets a small area of soil to work on. The one who collects the most worms wins! The record at the **World Worm Charming Championship** in Willaston, England was over 500 worms!

Most of us have watched the Olympics on TV, but have you ever seen the Mud Olympics? Every year along the Elbe River in Germany contestants roll in the smooth river mud before competing in sporting events. Football and volleyball are played by teams covered in the slick brown sludge. Other events include a rubber boot toss and making mud angels. (This is the muddy version of snow angels.) There are also booths with food, outdoor concerts, and an opening ceremony. All of the money raised goes to charity.

So, if you love contests, and ever get to travel around the world, perhaps you'll get to watch camel wrestling, worm charming, or the Mud Olympics. Who knows – you might even be a contestant!



Student Page

Name: _____

WEIRD CONTESTS AROUND THE WORLD

1. Number each **paragraph**.
2. Circle the **introduction**.
3. Box the **conclusion**.
4. Circle the **topic**.
5. Underline each **MAIN IDEA**. Write a **blurb** (a word or two) in the margin next to the paragraph explaining what the entire paragraph is about.
6. Read this detail: *At the end of the contest the worms are all set free.*
Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # _____.
7. Read this detail: *Male camels fight to try to become the leader of the herd.*
Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # _____.
8. Number the references to each main idea restated in the **conclusion**.
9. Fill in the summarizing framework/author's prewriting plan:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____



Name: _____

JUMBO THE CIRCUS ELEPHANT

The year was 1861 when a special elephant was born in the French Sudan. This elephant, later named Jumbo, was loved by many children. But Jumbo had a difficult life that ended sadly. Learning how Jumbo was taken from the wild and became famous helps us to see why it is cruel to use elephants to perform for people.

For hundreds of years people have captured elephants like Jumbo to amuse and entertain others. Jumbo's mother was killed by a hunter and Jumbo was taken into ***captivity***. The elephant hunter sold this motherless baby elephant to an Italian man who brought wild animals to Europe. For twenty years Jumbo was sold to zoos and ***menageries*** to be put on display. He traveled to Germany, France, and London before he was bought by the Barnum and Baily Circus and shipped to the United States. I think it is sad that elephants and other wild animals are stolen from their mothers and taken from their homes in order to entertain people. A wild animal is never happy cooped up in a cage or chained up in a small space. This is what happened to Jumbo.

In the United States Jumbo appeared with the Barnum and Baily circus all over the country. By then Jumbo had grown into his name, weighing about seven tons! People had never seen such a large animal and they paid lots of money to get a glimpse of Jumbo. Barnum and Bailey featured Jumbo on posters and signs and children from coast to coast fell in love with him. Sadly, while his trainer was moving Jumbo and a smaller elephant named Tom Thumb across a freight train track both elephants were hit by a train and Jumbo was killed. The force of the accident was so great that the locomotive derailed. P.T. Barnum, the circus owner, had Jumbo stuffed and displayed him around the country. I believe it was bad enough to force Jumbo to perform for

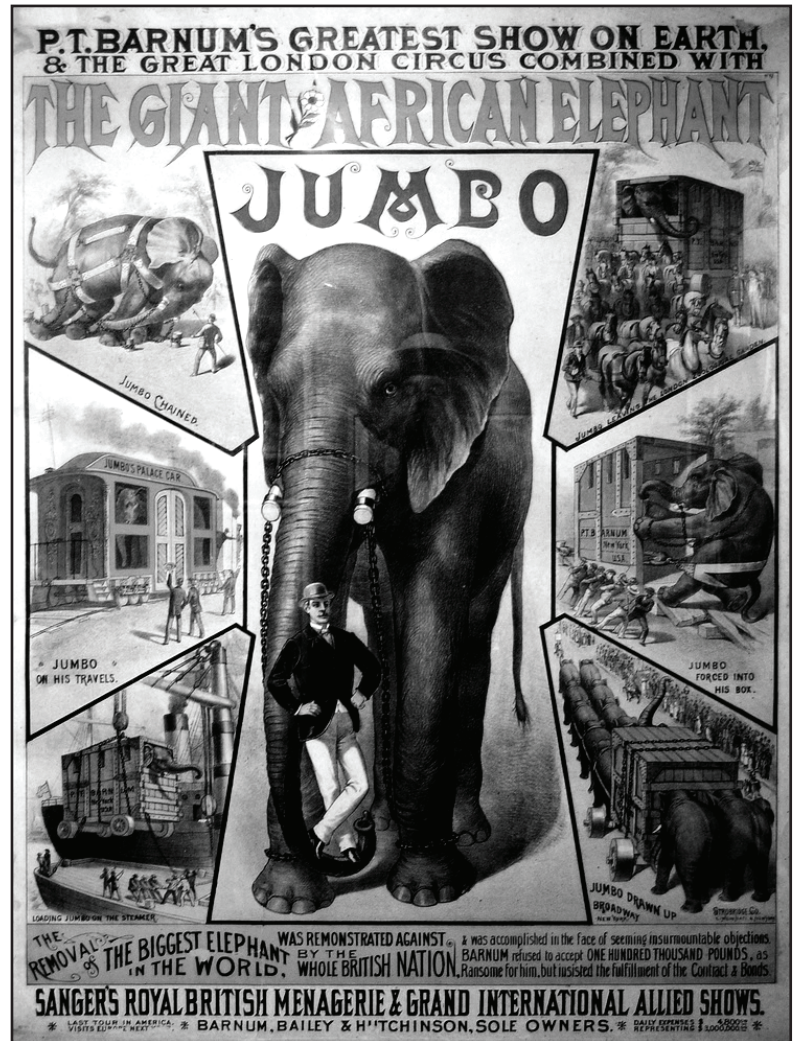


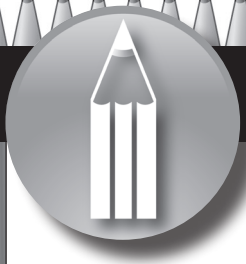
Student Page

people all those years, and even worse to continue to make money showing his sad remains. It's no wonder that people began to work to keep elephants out of the hands of people hoping to make a profit from them.

Now-a-days animal rights organizations protest when elephants are used as entertainers. You can see picket signs at circuses and fairgrounds wherever these gentle giants appear. People are outraged that these large, smart, beautiful beasts are forced to travel in hot, dirty train cars, are routinely beaten to get them to do tricks, and are chained together by the feet. It is certainly a horrible life to endure in captivity!

Jumbo's story really makes me want to fight to protect elephants and the wild places where they live. Elephants belong in plains and jungles - not in circus cars and big tops! I hope that sharing the story of Jumbo's capture and life as a performer will make you agree that we have a responsibility to protect these intelligent pachyderms in their native habitats and to protest when elephants are forced to perform!





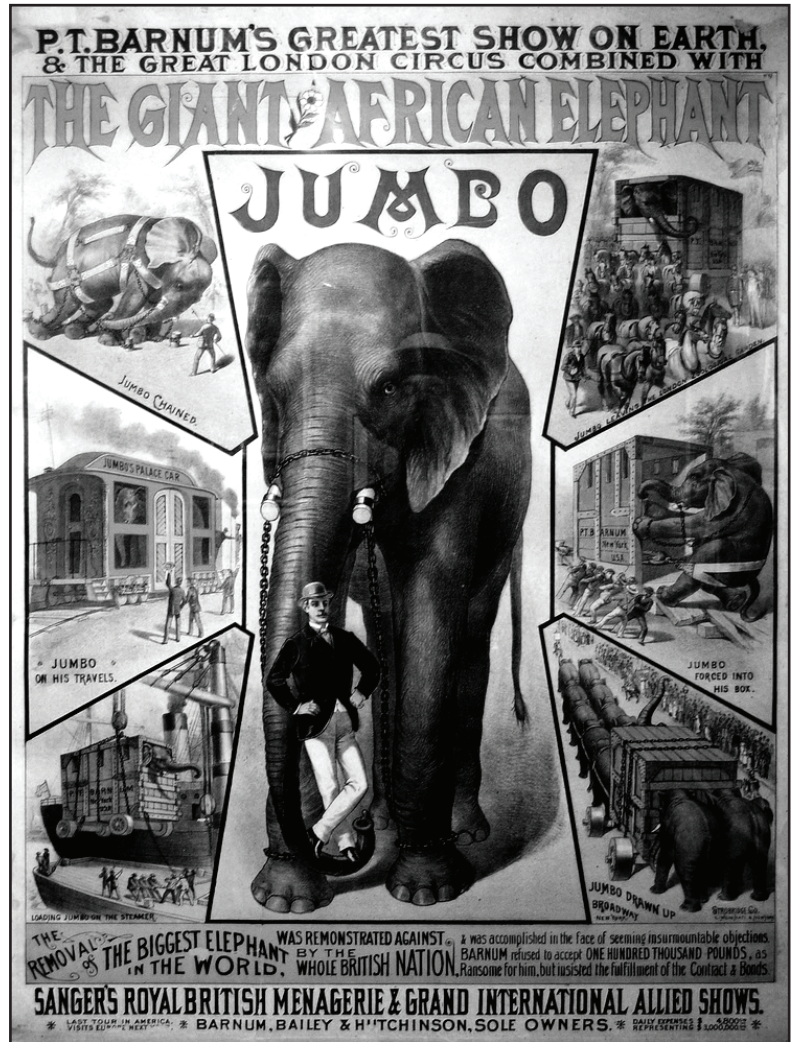
Student Page

Name: _____

people all those years, and even worse to continue to make money showing his sad remains. It's no wonder that people began to work to keep elephants out of the hands of people hoping to make a profit from them.

4.) Now-a-days animal rights organizations protest when elephants are used as entertainers. You can see picket signs at circuses and fairgrounds wherever these gentle giants appear. People are outraged that these large, smart, beautiful beasts are forced to travel in hot, dirty train cars, are routinely beaten to get them to do tricks, and are chained together by the feet. It is certainly a horrible life to endure in captivity!

animal rights protest



It is certainly a horrible life to endure in captivity!

5.) Jumbo's story really makes me want to fight to protect elephants and the wild places where they live. Elephants belong in plains and jungles - not in circus cars and big tops! I hope that sharing the story of Jumbo's capture and life as a performer will make you agree that we have a responsibility to protect these intelligent pachyderms in their native habitats and to protest when elephants are forced to perform!

conclusion



Name: _____

JUMBO THE CIRCUS ELEPHANT

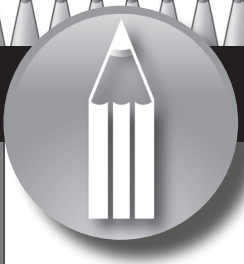
1. Number each **paragraph**.
2. Circle the **introduction**.
3. Box the **conclusion**.
4. Circle the **topic**.
5. Is this an informational or an opinion piece?
6. Circle the opinion language.
7. Underline each **MAIN REASON**. Write a **blurb** (a word or two) in the margin next to the paragraph explaining what the entire paragraph is about.
8. Read this detail: *School children in London were sad when Jumbo left for America.*
Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # _____.
9. Read this detail: *Many people work to stop illegal hunting of elephants in the wild.*
Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # _____.
10. Number the references to each main idea restated in the **conclusion**.
11. Fill in the summarizing framework/author's prewriting plan:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____



Name: _____

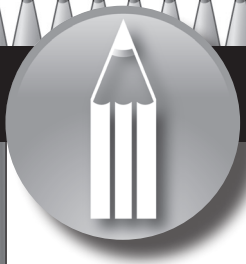
AN UNUSUAL CREATURE OF THE DEEP

If you were asked to name a creature that has a large head, no bones, a beak, and comes equipped with suction cups, could you name it? Here's another clue: it swims and moves under the sea using its eight **tentacles** or long flexible arms. If you guessed octopus, you'd be correct! Let's discuss the special creature called the **reef octopus**. The reef octopus is an excellent hunter, but it also faces threats, both human and animal.

This four foot long sea dweller is made for hunting. It can walk or swim around the coral reefs of the Pacific and Indian Oceans using its eight strong tentacles. This makes it easy to capture and hold onto prey. With its suction cups it can grab hold of an oyster, clam, crab or bony fish and use its sharp beak to break it open. The reef octopus is a crafty hunter! Amazingly, because it has no bones it can change shape in order to hide in reef crevices. It also has special cells called **chromatophores** that help the octopus change color. Changing shape and color helps the octopus hide, undetected, waiting for its next meal. Another trick is to puff itself up to make these shy creatures look bigger than they really are.

Despite all of its hunting abilities, the reef octopus faces many dangers. Seals and sea lions enjoy feasting on these eight-armed reef-dwellers. Sharks and other large bony fish often tear octopuses apart to make a meal of them. The reef octopus can sometimes avoid being captured at the last instant by squirting a dark inky liquid at its enemies, making it harder for them to be seen. But this does little to protect it from another threat – people. Octopuses are captured using traps or lures and can be fished, speared, or netted. More and more diners around the world enjoy grilled octopus, and many restaurants serve it on their menus.

Perhaps someday you'll go scuba diving and see a reef octopus. But, remember, these excellent hunters are hard to spot, and they'll do their best to steer clear of humans and other threats. A trip to an aquarium might be a way to get to know these amazing shape and color changers better.



Student Page

Name: _____

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - CHAMELEONS & REEF OCTOPUS

You have read two informational texts about interesting creatures - Chameleons and An Unusual Creature of the Deep. Write about one way the chameleon and reef octopus are the same and one way that they're different.

1. Fill in the summarizing frameworks, below, for each text:

CHAMELEONS

REEF OCTOPUS

TOPIC: _____

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

2. What do you notice about these main ideas? _____

3. What are the “givens” in the boxed assignment or the two things you **MUST** write about?

4. Go back to each text. Highlight similarities in yellow, differences in pink. Circle the similarity and difference that you plan to write about.

5. Fill in a summarizing framework that shows the main ideas you selected, one similarity and one difference.

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

BONUS: On the lines below, list all of the ways the authors refer to chameleons and reef octopuses in these texts. (We call this technique the use of “word referents.”)



Student Page

Name: _____

COMPARISON GRID

| | CHAMELEON | REEF OCTOPUS |
|---------|-----------|--------------|
| Hunting | | |
| Habitat | | |



Student Reference Page

SUMMARIZING YOUR INDEPENDENT READING

What are you reading? After reading a story, highlight the important parts by completing the Narrative Writing Summarizing Framework below. If you're reading nonfiction, summarize what you learned from it using the Informational Writing Summarizing Framework.

Narrative Writing Summarizing Framework

Title _____

Author _____

This story is about _____
Main Character

The problem, adventure or experience was that _____

Single significant main event

The problem is solved, adventure/experience concluded when _____

Solution/conclusion

Informational Writing Summarizing Framework

TITLE: _____

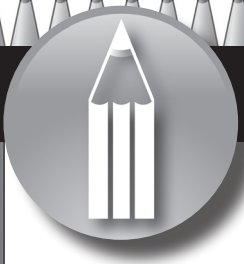
TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

etc.: _____



Student Page

Name: _____

WHAT DOESN'T BELONG?

Read the paragraphs below. Then cross out the detail that is not about that main idea.

1. T-Rex was a fearsome dinosaur that lived more than 65 million years ago. It had 60 teeth, each one as big as a banana and as sharp as a razor. T-Rex was huge but had oddly tiny arms. Some dinosaurs were plant eaters.

What is the main idea of this paragraph?

2. The first day of April is a day when people play jokes on each other. It rains often in the spring. It is called April Fool's Day and it is celebrated around the world. In France, children tape paper fish to each other's backs and yell "April Fish" at them. It is silly and fun.

What is the main idea of this paragraph?

3. Many people are afraid of bats, but these flying mammals are rarely a danger to us. Owls have glowing eyes and sharp claws. Vampire bats do feed on blood, but most species of bats eat insects and fruit. All bats are active at night.

What is the main idea of this paragraph?



Student Page

Name: _____

CARNIVAL FUN (1)

READ AND COMPARE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATIONAL PIECES.

Carnival Fun

It's a Friday night and you have nothing to do. If you're lucky there's a carnival in town. Carnivals are fun.

Carnivals have lots of rides like ferris wheels and merry-go-rounds. You can play bingo there. Sometimes there is a giant slide down on a sack. It is fun to have cotton candy at the carnival.

You can take a chance and win a stuffed animal. My mother likes to buy fried dough with powdered sugar. My sister loves to ride on a wild ride called "The Spider." The ball toss game is fun, too. You can get a hot dog and fries there.

That is why I love the carnival.



CARNIVAL FUN (2)

READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATIONAL PIECE AND COMPARE IT TO EARLIER VERSIONS.

At the Carnival

Don't you just love going to the carnival? There are rides, games, and good food. I will tell you all about it.

The first thing I will tell you about are the rides. My favorite ride is the ferris wheel. My sister likes the merry-go-round best. There is a fast ride called "The Spider" that my brother loves. There is also a spinning teacup ride that can make you dizzy.

Carnival games are fun. You can put a quarter on the board and spin the wheel and if your number comes up you win a prize! You can do the penny toss game or the dunking booth. There is bingo, too. You can win stuffed animals, small toys, hats, posters, and all kinds of prizes..

There is a lot of food at carnivals. Cotton candy is my favorite. My mother gets fried dough with powdered sugar on it. You can buy hot dogs or hamburgers. Sometimes they have meatball grinders, french fries, and more.

So now I have told you all the reasons I like the carnival. There are rides, games, and food to enjoy. Do you like the carnival?



Student Page

Name: _____

CARNIVAL FUN (3)

READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATIONAL PIECE AND COMPARE IT TO EARLIER VERSIONS.

A Night at the Carnival

Bright lights and music, laughter and excitement, good fun and great food. Where, you ask? At the carnival, that's where! There is no place like the carnival for exciting rides, challenging games of chance, and delicious food.

The incredible rides are what brings most people to the carnival. In fact, 9 out of 10 people polled at carnivals nation-wide report that rides are what attracts them to the fairgrounds. I will never forget my first ride on the ferris wheel--the thrill of soaring over the trees and the blinking carnival lights in a swing sized for two! Then, of course, there's the merry-go-round with its old fashioned music and brightly painted wooden horses. For those who enjoy speed and excitement, there's The Whip and The Spider. You can hear the screams from these rides for miles around! Carnival rides are so much fun!

If you're feeling lucky, then carnival games are the thing for you! Place a quarter on your lucky number as the Roulette Wheel is spun. Your heart pounds with the rapid tick-tick-tick of the wheel slowing to a stop. If the wheel sops at your number, you're the winner! Do you have a good eye and a steady hand? If so, you should try the ring toss or the penny pitch booth. There are even opportunities to dunk an unfortunate adult into a



tub of water. All you need to do is hurl a baseball at the target on the dunking booth. Then SPLASH! You did it! And did you know that at least 50% of people who try their hands at a carnival game walk away with a prize of some kind? That's why I enjoy the thrill of carnival games.

You will never go hungry at a carnival, that's for sure! Next time you're at the carnival, close your eyes and inhale. What you'll smell is the mouth-watering aroma of popcorn, hot dogs and fries. My mother never leaves the carnival without a large, flaky piece of scrumptious fried dough dusted in powdered sugar. You can also find other delicacies like meatball grinders or onion blossoms. What I love best are the pink, mile-high puff of cotton candy and icy snow cones oozing with rainbow colored syrup. Just thinking about carnival food makes my stomach start to rumble and growl!

So while there are certainly fancier places to go than the carnival, I can't think of one place more exciting and fun. For me, the rides, the games, and the food make a night at the carnival a real blast! The carnival is certainly an amazing entertainment destination.



Student Page

Name: _____

STANDARD POODLES (1)

READ AND COMPARE THE FOLLOWING OPINION PIECES.

Standard Poodles

Do you know what a Standard Poodle looks like? Lots of people have them as pets. These are not little toy poodles. They're big dogs that are really smart. I have a standard poodle and have taught it all kinds of tricks. My standard poodle's name is Baxter. He likes to run around and play. He weighs about 65 pounds. He is a fast runner and likes to play fetch and swim. He has curly black hair and he doesn't shed. He has a fancy poofy hair cut like a show dog, but he is just a family dog.

Baxter is a good watchdog because he has a big scary bark. He can roll over and play dead and shake hands. He only will do it for a treat though.

Standard poodles come in other colors like white, brown, gray, and apricot. You might see a Standard Poodle in a dog show on TV.

If you want a dog you could get a standard poodle. They are interesting dogs.



Name: _____

STANDARD POODLES (2)

READ AND COMPARE THE FOLLOWING OPINION PIECES.

Standard Poodles

I have a Standard Poodle named Baxter. I will tell you all about Standard Poodles. They look different from other dogs, they are really smart, and they are very athletic.

The thing that sets Standard Poodles apart is their appearance. They are big dogs that weigh about 65 pounds. They have curly hair that doesn't shed. Most owners give them a fancy poofy haircut with a puffy head, tail and pom poms on their feet. They come in black, brown, gray, or apricot. Baxter is black with dark brown eyes.

Standard Poodles are really smart. You can train a Standard Poodle to do tricks like playing dead, rolling over, prancing on their hind legs, shaking hands, and fetching things. You can teach a Standard Poodle to be a good watchdog. Baxter barks whenever a stranger comes near our house. You can train a Standard Poodle to be in a dog show. We don't have Baxter in dog shows, but he is smart enough to learn how. I bet he'd win a prize because he is so smart.

The last thing about Standard Poodles is that they are athletic. They are fast runners. They are also good swimmers. They love to run after a ball or a Frisbee. They can leap over things and jump very high. They like to run on the beach or out in the open. They don't get tired easily.

So now you know all about Standard Poodles. They look different than other dogs, they are really smart, and they're athletic. Maybe someday you'll own a Standard Poodle.



Student Page

Name: _____

STANDARD POODLES (3)

READ AND COMPARE THE FOLLOWING OPINION PIECES.

The Distinctive Standard Poodle

If you've ever watched a dog show on TV you've probably seen a beautiful, regal Standard Poodle. I have a Standard Poodle named Baxter and I know that the Standard Poodle is a very distinctive breed. They're attractive and eye-catching, they're extremely smart, and they are excellent athletes. Let me explain what sets them apart from other dogs.

When a Standard Poodle frolics past people can't help but turn around and watch. These large, curly haired dogs stand about two feet tall and can weigh up to seventy pounds. Most Standard Poodle owners groom their pets into fancy cuts with pom poms on their feet and tail and a curly puff of fur on their heads. Their long snouts are shaved close and their ears are long and silky. When I walk with Baxter he prances proudly and people always "ooh and ahhh..." They exclaim, "That dog is gorgeous!" Baxter has soft black curly hair that doesn't ever shed. These graceful, elegant canines also come in white, brown, gray or apricot. They can be groomed in many different styles to suit their owner's taste. For sure, Standard Poodles have a distinctive appearance!

I know there are lots of smart dogs, but Standard Poodles are particularly intelligent. Dogs have to be taught manners and how to behave. Baxter was house-trained in less than two weeks, and never has an accident. I see some owners walking dogs that pull and strain on their leashes, but the Standard Poodles I know trot along happily beside their owners. They are too intelligent to choke themselves during a walk!

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Standard Poodles also easily learn tricks. I've taught Baxter to roll over and play dead. He lays on his back, eyes closed, legs straight up in the air. He'll stay there until I tell him to roll over. He will perform for visitors, prancing on his hind legs, shaking hands, and barking on command until they applaud. I also feel safe with Baxter around because we've trained him to be an excellent watchdog. He barks a deep, threatening WOOF whenever strangers approach. This brilliant animal also seems to sense my moods and will come and nuzzle his face in mine whenever I'm feeling sad. In this way he's not only smart, but he's my best friend.

These attractive, intelligent pups are surprisingly good athletes! Standard Poodles can run like the wind, bounding across a backyard, field or beach like a racehorse! In competitions they often win in agility tests because they can run, leap, jump and change directions across an obstacle course with lightning speed. These energetic athletes are also powerful swimmers. Their paws have webbing between their toes that helps them paddle in the water. Baxter runs, fetches, and swims with my friends and me, and never seems to get tired. When we're exhausted he's panting, but still eager to play. This outstanding pet can leap in the air and catch a tennis ball or a Frisbee. These active dogs can help keep their owners in shape with all the exercise they require.

If you ever want a pet that is distinctive looking, intelligent, trainable, and athletic, you might consider a Standard Poodle. You'll quickly see why so many Standard Poodle owners enjoy them!