



Grade 3 Informational Writing Guide

Student Pages for Print or Projection

SECTION 3: Elaboration – Detail Generating Questions

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Detail-Generating Questions

WHAT DOES IT “LOOK” LIKE?

Sound like? Feel like?

Taste like? Smell like? Seem like?

WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT?

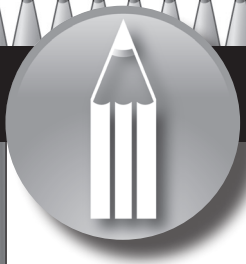
Why is that important to your main idea?

IS EACH DETAIL IN A SEPARATE SENTENCE?

Separate the Grocery List!

DID YOU GIVE A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE?

Avoid general language such as
“stuff,” “things,” “nice,” etc.

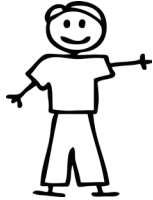


Student Page

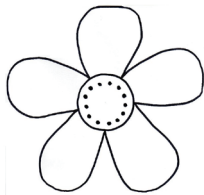
Name: _____

JUST OKAY... OR MUCH BETTER? (1)

Look at the pictures below. List the details you see in the drawing and in the photograph.









Name: _____

JUST OKAY... OR MUCH BETTER? (2)

Read each pair of GOOD and BETTER informational sentences below. In one sentence, the author simply presents an important detail. In another, the author presents the same detail...only better. Circle the sentence that does a better job of elaborating the detail.

1. Pigs live on farms.

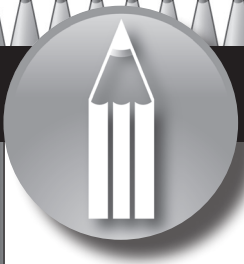
Many breeds of pigs live in muddy pens on farms around the world.

2. Baby birds come out of their nests in the spring.

Baby birds come out of their cozy nests on warm spring days and quickly learn how to fly.

3. Tasty and filling, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are easy to make for lunch or a quick snack.

Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are easy to make.



Student Page

Name: _____

JUST OKAY... OR MUCH BETTER? (3)

Read each pair of GOOD and BETTER opinion sentences below. In one sentence, the author simply presents an important detail. In another, the author presents the same detail...only better. Circle the sentence that does a better job of elaborating the detail.

1. Besides being the best farm animal, I think pigs are cute and easy to care for.

I think pigs are cool.

2. When I see baby birds in spring I feel happy.

I feel happy to celebrate the arrival of spring when I see sweet baby birds fly out of their cozy nests.

3. The best lunch of all is a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Tasty and easy to prepare, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich is the best choice for lunch or a quick snack.



Name: _____

JUST OKAY... OR MUCH BETTER? (4)

Read each pair of GOOD and BETTER opinion and informational sentences below. In one sentence, the author simply presents an important detail. In another, the author presents the same detail...only better. Circle the sentence that does a better job of elaborating the detail.

1. With rowdy pillow fights and yummy pizza, a pajama party that goes on until the wee hours of the morning is the best way to celebrate your birthday.

The best way to celebrate your birthday is with a pajama party!

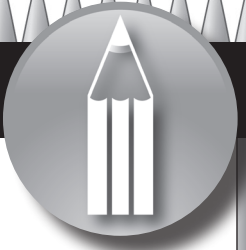
2. In the summer you can swim in pools or go to the beach.

Many people, young and old, enjoying swimming, some in the crystal-clear waters of a pool and others in the wild surf of an ocean beach.

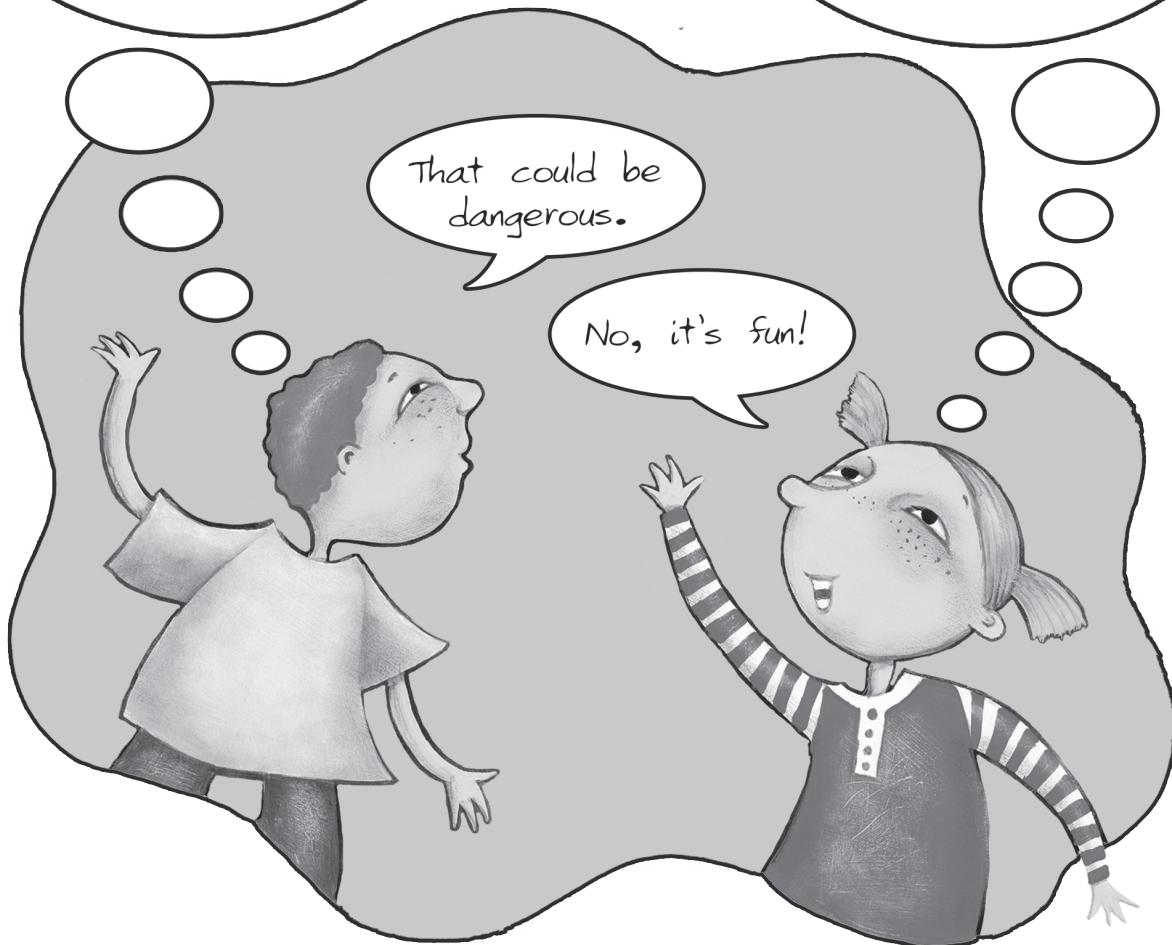
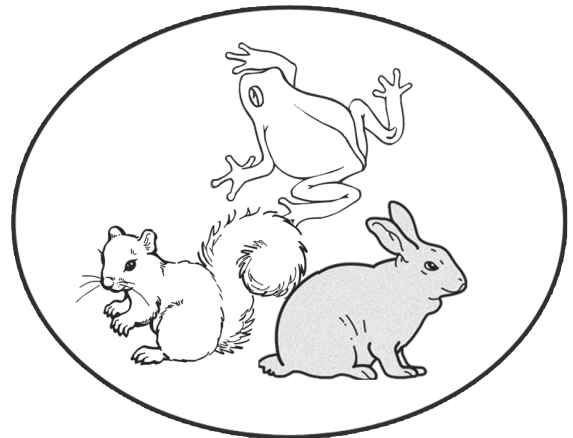
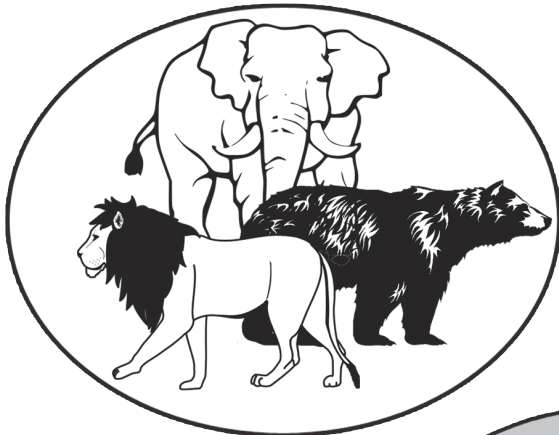
3. Lemons and limes are sour.

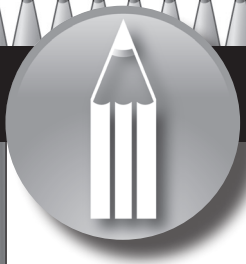
Bright yellow lemons and green limes are often used to add flavor to food.

Finished? Now re-read the sentences and decide which two are the opinion sentences. Put a check mark ✓ beside both.

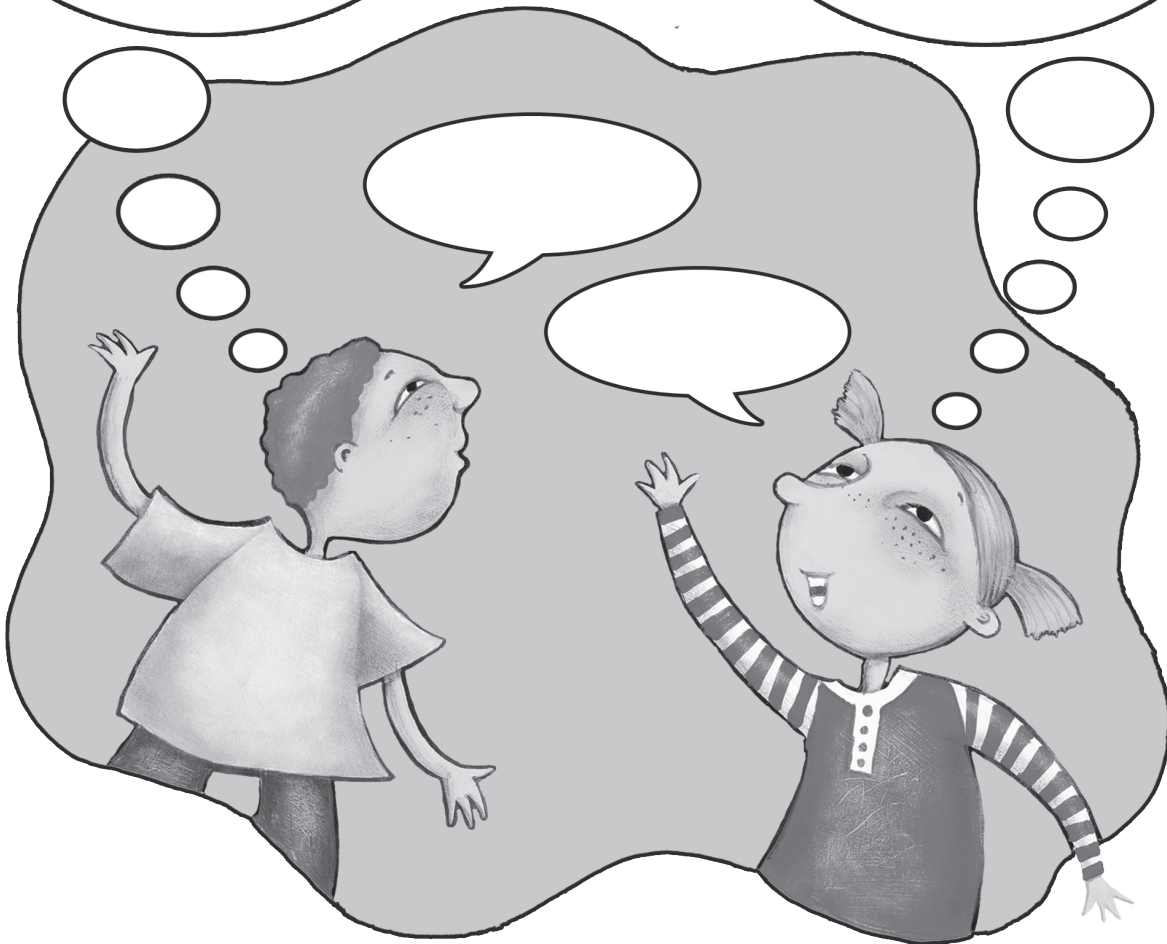
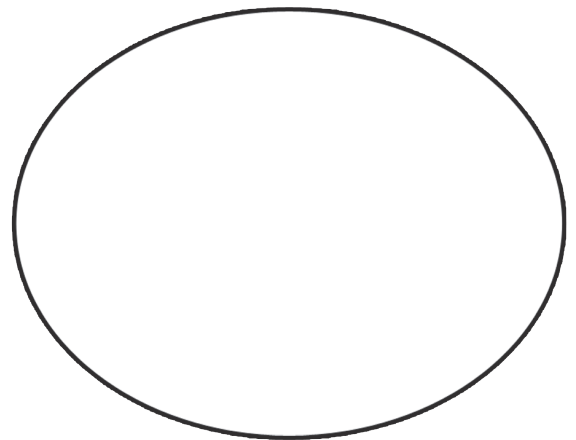
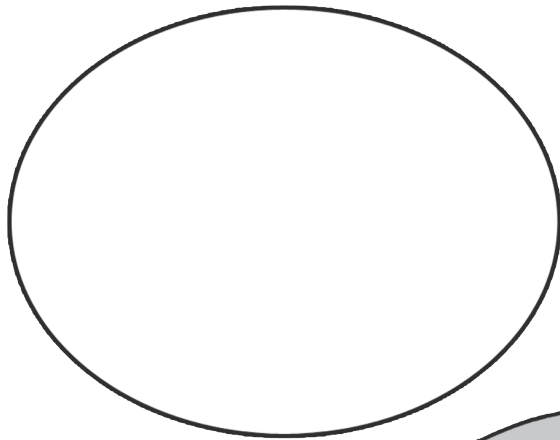
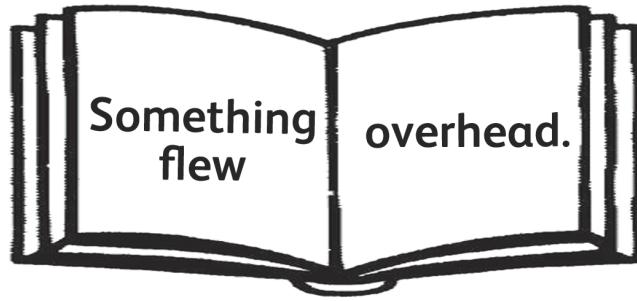


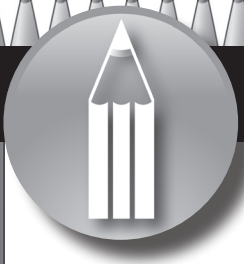
There are lots of animals in my backyard.





Student Page





Student Page

Name: _____

FIND THE OVERLY GENERAL WORDS AND PHRASES (1)

Read the paragraph below about the arcade. Look at the words in boldface print. These words are way too general and do not add to the elaboration of the opinion piece.

Going to the arcade is really fun. There are **many** games to play. You can win **stuff** when you rack up enough points. There is also a snack bar with **good food**. **Everybody loves the arcade**.

Now read the revised paragraph. The author has given specific examples instead of overly general words or phrase. Decide which paragraph is more powerful.

Going to a loud, bustling arcade is a great treat. Everybody loves to play **thrilling games where you pretend to drive a racecar or a monster truck**. **Pinball**, with its **bright flashing lights and booming sound effects**, is another favorite game. As you rack up hundreds of points, you win prizes such as **stuffed animals and action figures**. If you get hungry while you're playing games, you can get a **hotdog, french fries or a slice of pizza** from the snack bar. With exciting games, snacks and prizes, it's no wonder everybody enjoys a trip to the arcade!



Name: _____

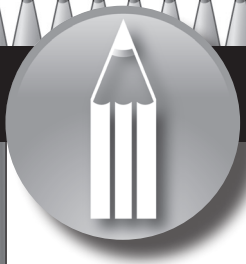
FIND THE OVERLY GENERAL WORDS AND PHRASES (2)

Read the paragraph below about owls. Look at the words in boldface print. These words are way too general and do not add to the elaboration of the opinion piece.

There are **many kinds** of owls in the world. They have **big** heads and eyes as well as sharp beaks and claws. They hunt for **their food** at night. Owls live **all over the world**.

Now read the revised paragraph. The author has given specific examples instead of overly general words or phrase. Decide which paragraph is more powerful.

There are many different species of owls. Some are large and powerful like the **Great Gray Owl, which can grow to a height of three feet. Just five inches tall, the Elf Owl** is the smallest owl of all. Owls sleep during the day and come out at night to **hunt for insects and small rodents**. They have **glowing eyes**, and **strong, sharp beaks and claws** for catching and tearing apart prey. Owls live all over the world, even in **the Arctic**, and make their nests in **tree trunks, barns and caves**.



Student Page

Name: _____

CAN YOU GIVE A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE? (1)

When you are reading, don't you find it more interesting when the author includes specific examples? The examples show how specific examples can bring informational writing to life.

Ex. *Fruit is a good snack.*

This is very general. The revision below gives specific examples.

If you're craving a yummy afternoon snack, why not try a sweet, juicy peach or a crunchy apple?

Look at the detail sentence below. It includes a general detail. Replace the general detail with some vivid, specific detail.

Birds flock to backyard feeders in the winter.

Your revision:



Name: _____

CAN YOU GIVE A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE? (2)

When you are reading, don't you find it more interesting when the author includes specific examples? The examples show how specific examples can bring informational writing to life.

Ex. *Flowers smell pretty.*

This is very general. The revision below gives specific examples.

The scent of roses in the summer and lilacs in the spring smell sweet and lovely.

Look at the detail sentence below. It includes a general detail. Replace the general detail with some vivid, specific detail.

Everybody should read for at least twenty minutes a day.

Your revision:



Student Page

Name: _____

CAN YOU GIVE A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE? (3)

When you are reading, don't you find it more interesting when the author includes specific examples? The examples show how specific examples can bring informational writing to life.

Ex. *Gorillas live in forests.*

This is very general. The revision below gives specific examples.

Mountain Gorillas live in the dense forests of Africa.

Look at the detail sentence below. It includes a general detail. Replace the general detail with some vivid, specific detail.

There are many different kinds of ice cream.

Your revision:



Student Page

Name: _____

BREAK UP THAT GROCERY LIST! (1)

Details are always more powerful when they appear one at a time rather than grouped together in a list. Read each “grocery list” below. Then break up that grocery list by writing each detail in a separate sentence. Be sure to include what each detail “looks like” and why it is important. You can continue on the back of this page. You can use the sentence starters on the bottom of the page to help.

Ex. *Mom made a salad with lettuce, carrots, walnuts, and apples.*

Revision: *Mom put together a healthy salad, starting with fresh green leafy lettuce. She topped that off with bright orange shredded carrots for a dash of color and some vitamin A! Adding crisp slices of apples can bring sweetness and crunch. Chopped walnuts not only look good, but they add some important nutrients to this tasty bowl of goodness!*

Kids like to top off their ice cream with hot fudge, whipped cream, sprinkles, and a cherry on top.

Your revision:

Sentence Starters:

- You can smother your ice cream with _____.
- Topping off several scoops of your favorite flavor with _____.
- Spoon on some _____.
- Another popular topping is _____.
- If you have a sweet tooth add _____.
- For some extra flavor enhancing _____.

BONUS: Informational or opinion? How do you know? _____



Name: _____

BREAK UP THAT GROCERY LIST! (2)

Details are always more powerful when they appear one at a time rather than grouped together in a list. Read each “grocery list” below. Then break up that grocery list by writing each detail in a separate sentence. Be sure to include what each detail “looks like” and why it is important. You can continue on the back of this page. You can use the sentence starters on the bottom of the page to help.

Ex. *At the garden center you can buy flower plants, grass seed, potting soil, and fertilizer.*

Revision: *If you have a green thumb, the garden center is the place to go to buy flowering plants of every imaginable color to dress up your back yard or to fill a pot on your porch. If you are planning on planting window boxes or large clay pots with flowers or herbs you’ll also find large plastic bags of potting soil, guaranteed to help your plants grow. The garden center also offers huge bags of grass seed to create a green, lush lawn. Once your flowers, herbs, or lawn begins to grow you can purchase just the right fertilizer to give your garden or lawn all the nutrients it needs.*

A good playground has swings, a slide, and monkey bars.

Your revision:

Sentence Starters:

- A well-equipped playground will include _____.
- Kids enjoy _____.
- Another popular piece of playground equipment is _____.
- Everyone wants a turn on the _____.
- Scramble onto the _____.
- _____ provides the opportunity to _____.

BONUS: Informational or opinion? How do you know? _____



Name: _____

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Read the sentences below. Imagine that an author will be including these details in an informational piece about clothing for children. See if you can match the picture to the sentence describing each item by writing the number in the blank. Then, reread each sentence and underline the words that tell us what it looks like in red. Finally, circle the words that tell us why it is important in green.



1



2



3



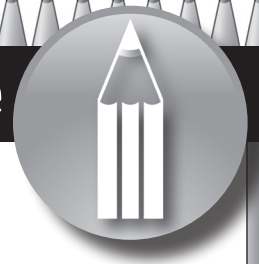
4

_____ A thick, wool coat with snug buttons and a high collar will keep you warm and cozy on cold winter days.

_____ Buttoned at the sides, with shoulder straps and a bib, blue denim overalls have many pockets where you can keep tools and gardening supplies.

_____ Made of heavy-duty canvas with bouncy rubber soles, sneakers make you feel like running and jumping.

_____ Soft, fleecy hoodies come in a rainbow of colors that both boys and girls like.



Name: _____

MATCHING TWO PARTS OF A SENTENCE (1)

When you are using detail-generating questions, your sentences often have two parts. The first part describes What Does it Look Like?. The second part tells you Why is it Important?. Match the first and second parts of the following sentences by drawing a line from the first part in column 1 to the second part in column 2.

Column 1

What does it look like?

Well-prepared students use a sturdy backpack

It's important to have two sharpened pencils with erasers

A set of brightly colored felt tip markers

A spiral bound notebook with lined paper is the place

Column 2

Why is it important?

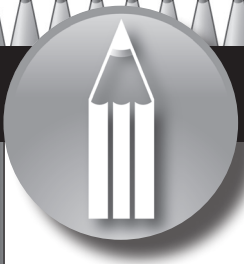
is useful for art projects and for highlighting text.

to take class notes, list homework assignments, and for journal writing.

to carry their books and supplies to and from school.

to write with and correct and revise work in class.

BONUS: If these sentences were taken from an essay, what might the topic be? _____



Student Page

Name: _____

MATCHING TWO PARTS OF A SENTENCE (2)

When you are using detail-generating questions, your sentences often have two parts. The first part describes What Does it Look Like?. The second part tells you Why is it Important?. Match the first and second parts of the following sentences by drawing a line from the first part in column 1 to the second part in column 2.

Column 1

What does it look like?

When biking, wearing a well-fitting helmet

Shiny, brightly colored reflective clothing

Rubber soled sneakers with Velcro straps help runners

Strapping on an orange life jacket when sailing

Column 2

Why is it important?

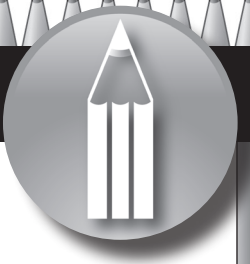
keep from tripping on laces or skidding on slick surfaces.

can prevent head injuries.

will keep you afloat if you fall overboard.

allows drivers to see you crossing the street at night.

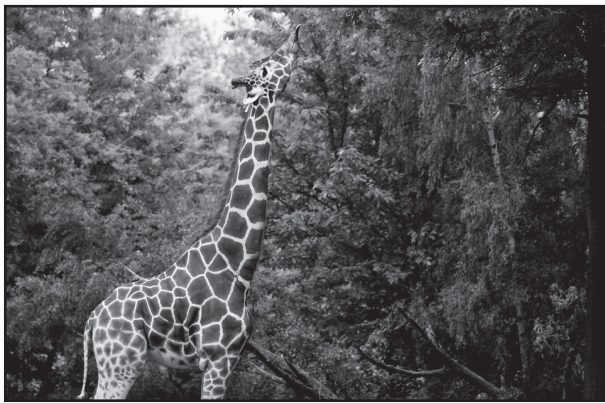
BONUS: If these sentences were taken from an essay, what might the topic be? _____



Name: _____

OBSERVE AND THINK USING DETAIL-GENERATING QUESTIONS (1)

Writing improves when authors observe carefully, ask questions, and draw conclusions. Look at the photograph below. Read the “just the facts” sentence below it. Then ask, “Why is that Important?” Revise the “just the facts” sentence by adding your conclusion. The first one has been done for you.



Giraffes have long necks

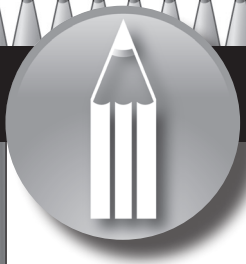
that help them eat leaves high up in the trees.

Turtles have hard shells



I have an umbrella





Student Page

Name: _____

OBSERVE AND THINK USING DETAIL-GENERATING QUESTIONS (2)

Writing improves when authors observe carefully, ask questions, and draw conclusions. Look at the photograph below. Read the “just the facts” sentence below it. Then ask, “Why is that Important?” Revise the “just the facts” sentence by adding your conclusion.



Use a duster

Sharks have sharp teeth



Elephants have long trunks





Name: _____

WRITING SENTENCES WITH: WHAT DOES IT “LOOK” LIKE? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT? (1)

Read the detail sentence below. Revise the sentence using the detail-generating questions:
What does it look like? Why is it important?

Ex. *I want to build a treehouse.*

Revision: *I want to build a huge treehouse high in the sky where my friends and I can have sleepovers.*

Detail sentence:

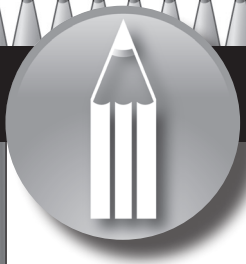
Riding the school bus is fun.

Your revision:

Detail sentence:

It is important to take good care of your teeth.

Your revision:



Student Page

Name: _____

WRITING SENTENCES WITH: WHAT DOES IT “LOOK” LIKE? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT? (2)

Read the detail sentence below. Revise the sentence using the detail-generating questions:
What does it look like? Why is it important?

Ex. Hotdogs are delicious.

Revision: Slathered with spicy mustard, hotdogs are a delicious treat that taste even better when you cook them outdoors.

Detail sentence:

Let’s plant a garden.

Your revision:

Detail sentence:

Everybody enjoys a piece of birthday cake.

Your revision:

BONUS: Do you think number 2 is an example of informational or opinion writing? [] Informational [] Opinion. Why? _____



Name: _____

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? WHY IS ITS SPECIAL FEATURE IMPORTANT?

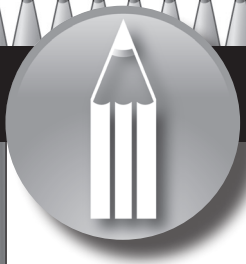
Think about an animal you might see at the zoo and its special features (such as a long tail, sharp teeth, tusks). Draw a picture of your animal in the box below. Be sure to fill the box with your drawing and add as many details as you can. Then, on a separate piece of paper, use the questions: What does it “look” like? Why is it important? to describe your animal. Use the sentence starters below to help you with your description.

Think about the animals you might see at the zoo.

- How big is it?
- What kind/color fur?
- What kind of expression does she/he wear?
- How does it move?
- What does it eat?
- Where does it live?
- How does it stay safe?

Sentence Starters:

- This animal is _____.
- You’ll notice its _____.
- It always _____.
- You might be surprised by ____.
- It is the color of _____.
- It spends its days _____.
- It is amazing how it _____.
- This is helpful because ____.
- They use their _____.
- Because of this they can ____.



Student Page

Name: _____

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HAVE IN THE KITCHEN?

When you step into a kitchen, you usually see lots of appliances that help us store and prepare food. Pick one and draw a picture of it. Then, on a separate piece of paper, write a description of it, using the detail generating questions: What does it “look” like? Why is it important to have in the kitchen? Use the sentence starters below if needed.

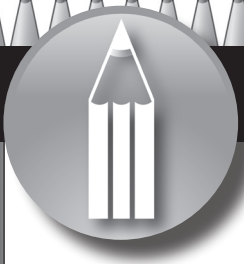
Think about the appliances you might see in the kitchen.

[Large dashed box for drawing]

- How big is it?
- What color is it?
- How do you turn it on?
- What do you use it for?
- How does it open?
- Is it cold or hot inside?

Sentence Starters:

- This appliance stands_____.
- You’ll notice its _____.
- It always _____.
- It is the color of _____.
- We use it to _____.
- It can _____.
- It is amazing how it _____.
- Without it we’d _____.



Student Page

Name: _____

USING DETAIL-GENERATING QUESTIONS IN PARAGRAPHS (1)

Read this opinion paragraph about household chores. The author has simply listed a number of facts. The author did not SHOW us what it felt like to help out around the house or give specific examples of how we can help. On another piece of paper, revise this paragraph using the detail-generating questions below. You may use the sentence starters on the bottom of the page to help you vary your language.

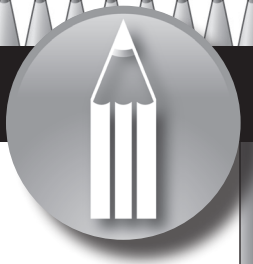
WHAT DOES IT “LOOK” LIKE?
WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT?
CAN YOU GIVE A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE?
IS EACH DETAIL IN A SEPARATE SENTENCE?

The best way we can help our busy parents is by doing chores around the house. Every day we should make our own beds and pick up our toys. Sometimes we earn money for helping.

The best way we can help our busy parents is by doing chores around the house. Everyday we should make our own beds and pick up our toys. **(Is each detail in a separate sentence? What does it “look” like? Why is it important?)** Sometimes we earn money for helping. **(What does that “look” like? Why is it important?)**

Sentence Starters:

- You can help by _____.
- We should _____.
- Make sure _____.
- Every day _____.
- I believe _____.



Name: _____

USING DETAIL-GENERATING QUESTIONS IN PARAGRAPHS (2)

Read this opinion paragraph about scouting. The author has simply listed a number of facts. The author did not SHOW us what it felt like to help out around the house or give specific examples of how we can help. On another piece of paper, revise this paragraph using the detail-generating questions below. You may use the sentence starters on the bottom of the page to help you vary your language.

WHAT DOES IT “LOOK” LIKE?
WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT?
CAN YOU GIVE A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE?
IS EACH DETAIL IN A SEPARATE SENTENCE?

Joining the scouts is a very smart decision. It is the best way to meet new friends. Scout troops do fun things together and earn badges.

Joining the scouts is a very smart decision. It is the best way to meet new friends. **(What does that “look” like? Why is it important?)** Scout troops do fun things together and earn badges. **(Is each detail in a separate sentence? What does it “look” like? Why is it important?)**

Sentence Starters:

- Scout troops go to _____.
- You can learn about _____.
- As a scout, you can help _____.
- You might meet _____.
- Join _____.



Student Page

Name: _____

USING DETAIL-GENERATING QUESTIONS IN PARAGRAPHS (3)

Read this informational paragraph about watermelon. The author has simply listed a number of facts. The author did not SHOW us what it felt like to help out around the house or give specific examples of how we can help. On another piece of paper, revise this paragraph using the detail-generating questions below. You may use the sentence starters on the bottom of the page to help you vary your language.

WHAT DOES IT “LOOK” LIKE?
WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT?
CAN YOU GIVE A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE?
IS EACH DETAIL IN A SEPARATE SENTENCE?

Watermelon is grown all over the world. It is a sweet summer treat. Watermelon is a healthy food that is good for your heart and your muscles.

Watermelon is grown all over the world. It is a sweet summer treat. **(What does that “look” like? Why is it important?)** Watermelon is a healthy food that is good for your heart and your muscles. **(Is each detail in a separate sentence? What does it “look” like? Why is it important?)**

Sentence Starters:

- On a hot day _____.
- Most people enjoy _____.
- At a picnic or cookout _____.
- Just imagine _____.



Name: _____

USING DETAIL-GENERATING QUESTIONS IN PARAGRAPHS (4)

Read this informational paragraph about skunks. The author has simply listed a number of facts. The author did not SHOW us what it felt like to help out around the house or give specific examples of how we can help. On another piece of paper, revise this paragraph using the detail-generating questions below. You may use the sentence starters on the bottom of the page to help you vary your language.

WHAT DOES IT “LOOK” LIKE?
WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT?
CAN YOU GIVE A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE?
IS EACH DETAIL IN A SEPARATE SENTENCE?

After a long day at school, the last thing kids want to do is homework. But, clearly homework is important. Most second and third graders get math and spelling homework every night.

After a long day at school, the last thing kids want to do is homework. But, clearly homework is important. **(What does that “look” like? Why is it important?)** Most second and third graders get math and spelling homework every night. **(Is each detail in a separate sentence? What does it “look” like? Why is it important?)**

Sentence Starters:

- Be sure to finish _____.
- Take a break before _____.
- Ask for help if _____.
- Your teacher will be proud when _____.



ELABORATION TOOLS FOR RESPONSE TO TEXT TASKS

When writing in response to text, it's important to cite evidence from the source material without copying word for word. Here are some ways to cite evidence in interesting ways:

- **SUMMARIZE**

In a sentence or two, *summarize* the topic and main ideas of the source material.

Ex. In the texts Chameleons and An Unusual Creature of the Deep, we explore the appearance, characteristics, and habitats of both creatures and how these help each to hunt and catch food. We also discover some of the threats the reef octopus faces. We learn that although these are very different creatures they share some similarities.

- **PARAPHRASE**

In your own words, rephrase specific details in the source material in order to support your summary.

Ex. Original text: It's easy for chameleons to see predators approaching because their eyes move separately.

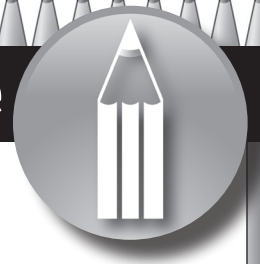
Paraphrased with Flipped Sentence and Word Referents: Because their eyes move separately it's easy for these interesting lizards to spot predators that are nearby.

- **CITE THE SOURCE TEXT**

Cite specific words, phrases, examples from the source material, using quotation marks to indicate the source author's exact words.

Ex. In paragraph two the author states: "The reef octopus is a crafty hunter." (Direct Quote)

In paragraph two the author states that the reef octopus is a crafty hunter. (Indirect Quote)



Name: _____

Summarizing in Paragraph Form

Look at the following summarizing framework for an informational text:

TOPIC: George Washington

MAIN IDEA #1: Childhood

MAIN IDEA #2: Life as a Soldier

MAIN IDEA #3: Life as First President

Now read the way one student expressed this summary in a short paragraph using INFORMATIONAL VERBS:

This article provided information about George Washington. The reader learns about George Washington's childhood and then is introduced to his time as a soldier. The author also informs us about George Washington's life as our first president.

Now it's your turn! Read each summarizing framework, below, and on another paper rewrite each as a short paragraph, using informational verbs. Select your informational verbs from the box located at the bottom of the page.

TOPIC: Polar Bears

MAIN IDEA #1: Appearance

MAIN IDEA #2: Habitat

MAIN IDEA #3: Threats they face

TOPIC: Bees

MAIN IDEA #1: Appearance

MAIN IDEA #2: Behavior

MAIN IDEA #3: Bee Keepers

TOPIC: Chewing Gum

MAIN IDEA #1: Who invented chewing gum

MAIN IDEA #2: Flavors of gum

MAIN IDEA #3: Pros and Cons of chewing gum

TOPIC: Mars

MAIN IDEA #1: Location of the planet

MAIN IDEA #2: Characteristics of planet

MAIN IDEA #3: Traveling to Mars

- recognize • understand • learn about • discover • uncover • reveal • study
- examine • observe • analyze • investigate • find out • focus on • research
- introduce • know • delve • consider • determine • remember • explore
- become familiar with • be on the lookout • become aware of



Name: _____

Reading and Summarizing Texts

1. Read the text The Flightless Kakapo.
2. Annotate it, marking in the following: TOPIC, INTRODUCTION, MAIN IDEA BLURBS, CONCLUSION. Then fill in the summarizing framework, below:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

3. Finally, write a summarizing paragraph based on this framework on the lines below. Be sure to use informational verbs.

- recognize • understand • learn about • discover • uncover • reveal • study
- examine • observe • analyze • investigate • find out • focus on • research
- introduce • know • delve • consider • determine • remember • explore
- become familiar with • be on the lookout • become aware of

On the back of this paper, do the same thing for the partner text titled The Ostrich. Be sure to read, annotate, create a summarizing framework, and then create a summary paragraph using informational verbs.



Student Page

Name: _____

THE FLIGHTLESS KAKAPO

Can you imagine a parrot with the face of an owl? Or a nocturnal bird that can't fly? A bird that can live to be 95 years old? This peculiar parrot is called a *kakapo*. Let's examine this unusual flightless bird, study its habitat, and find out why it's become endangered.

You'll never see another bird that looks like the Kakapo. The Kakapo is the heaviest of all parrots, weighing in at about eight pounds. This ground-dwelling parrot has soft mossy green feathers tipped in black with pale yellowish downy soft feathers underneath. The female kakapos are smaller and duller in color than the males. The kakapo has a face like an owl with soft grayish feathers around its small black eyes and whitish-blue curved beak. These gray feathers stand out like whiskers on its cheeks. Since this bird spends its time walking and running on the ground its legs are strong and sturdy. It uses its wings to balance itself as it moves. Sometimes the kakapo climbs a tree and uses its short, soft wings as a kind of a parachute.

These "owl parrots" are only found in the island nation of New Zealand. Scientists tell us that kakapos once lived all over New Zealand. They have found remains in highlands, lowlands, wet and dry areas, cold and hot places on the island, in forests, shrublands, and grasslands. But now the endangered kakapo is only found on the smaller, protected outer islands of New Zealand where they're safe from people and mammals that can harm them. Their greenish color helps camouflage them in underbrush and vegetation.

There are a number of reasons that the kakapo is endangered today. Up until the last two hundred years or so there were no mammals living in New Zealand – only birds and reptiles. So, the kakapo had no predators. But, in the 1800's, people began farming in New Zealand and started to bring dogs, cats, ferrets, and other mammals. For the first time the kakapo faced many enemies. Besides animal predators, people discovered that kakapos were good to eat. Around 1860 when the Gold Rush brought miners to New Zealand, kakapo became their favorite meal. Today there are less than one hundred kakapo left. These live in safe places called *sanctuaries*.

If you ever go to New Zealand, try to see the endangered kakapo. You might be able to contribute to a fund to save these large, attractive and unusual flightless parrots.



Student Page

Name: _____

THE OSTRICH



Meet the world's largest bird – the ostrich! Let's discover the ostrich's distinctive appearance, learn how it protects itself, and consider many amazing facts about these powerful flightless birds.

Once you get a glimpse of an ostrich you'll never forget the sight! These African birds stand upright between six and nine feet tall and weigh over 300 pounds. Their long, slender necks covered in grayish white feathers can measure up to four feet in length. They have large eyes and short beaks. The male ostrich's body is covered in thick plumes of black feathers. Females' feathers are brownish gray. Their wings are tipped in white and, when open, span six and a half feet in length! Ostriches run on powerful legs that bend at the knee and end with two hoof-like toes.

Even though the ostrich doesn't fly it has ways of protecting itself! They can outrun most predators. These speedy birds can move up to forty miles per hour on their strong legs, using their wings to help change direction when they need to. But, when face-to-face with an enemy, such as a lion or a human being, ostriches can deliver a kick powerful enough to kill. Another way that an ostrich steers clear of trouble is to hunker down on the ground with their long necks extended. Their feathers can blend in with the ground. At a distance, predators might mistake them for a bush or a shrub out on the African plains.

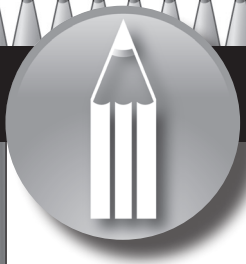
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There are many amazing facts to discover about the ostrich. Did you know that these birds have not one, not two, but three stomachs? They are **omnivores**, which means they eat meat and vegetation. An ostrich is known to gobble seeds and plants, large insects, snakes, reptiles, and even rodents! Since they don't have teeth ostriches also eat pebbles and sand to help grind their food. They lay huge 3-5 pound eggs. In fact, one ostrich egg can be as big as two dozen chicken eggs! In the wild, ostriches often graze with giraffes, zebras, and antelopes. But today, most ostriches live on farms where they're raised for their meat and beautiful feathers. Perhaps most surprisingly, ostriches share some traits with camels. Both ostriches and camels have very large eyes (2 inches across) with long lashes. Like camels, ostriches can do without water for long periods of time. Another surprising fact – every year at many racetracks across America you can attend a Camel and Ostrich Race. At some, the ostriches pull a cart with a driver, and at others a jockey rides on the ostrich's back! You never know whether the winner will be an ostrich or a camel!

Whether you go on a safari, visit an ostrich farm, or attend a Camel Ostrich Race, you'll enjoy seeing one of these large, flightless African birds. Notice their appearance, think about the ways they protect themselves, and consider the amazing facts about the ostrich. And, who knows, you might even share a scrambled ostrich egg with your entire family! Ostriches are certainly incredible birds!





Student Page

Name: _____

RESEARCH SIMULATION TASK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - THE FLIGHTLESS KAKAPO & THE OSTRICH

You have read two informational texts about birds that don't fly, the kakapo and the ostrich. Write an essay comparing the size and color of these birds, and highlight the most interesting fact you read from either article.

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

THE FLIGHTLESS KAKAPO

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

THE OSTRICH

TOPIC: _____

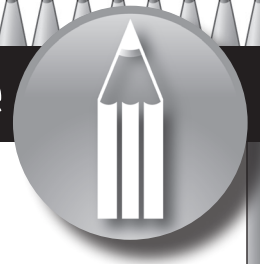
MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

2. What do you notice about the second main idea in each summarizing framework?

3. What are the "givens" in the boxed assignment?



4. What is the “variable” in the boxed assignment?

5. Go back to each text. Based on your main idea “blurbs” in the margins, circle the “appearance” paragraphs in yellow. Circle the paragraph with the most interesting fact in pink.

6. Create a summarizing framework for this essay:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

7. Based on your summarizing framework and the assignment, write a topic sentence for your essay and both main idea sentences:

TOPIC SENTENCE: _____

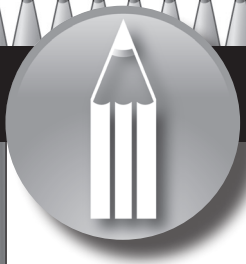
MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

8. Use the grid on p. 300, to organize your evidence to support each main idea.
Hint: look at the color-coding in each text!

BONUS: Go back to each source and circle the word referents the authors refer to the kakapo and ostrich.

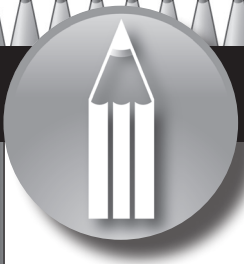


Student Page

Name: _____

COMPARISON GRID

	Kakapo	Ostrich
Size		
Color		
Amazing Fact		



Student Page

Name: _____

FLIGHTLESS BIRDS

The texts I read provided information about two unusual and very different flightless birds – the kakapo and the ostrich. I’ll compare their size and the color of their feathers. I’ll also report on the most interesting fact that really surprised me. I never realized that ostriches and camels share certain traits!

How do the kakapo and ostrich compare in size? In The Flightless Kakapo we learn that this rare parrot weighs about 8 pounds. Even though the kakapo is the heaviest of all parrots, it’s much smaller than the ostrich. We discover in the introduction of The Ostrich that ostriches are the biggest birds in the world. The author says, “These African birds stand upright between six and nine feet tall and weigh over 300 pounds.” That’s taller than my dad! The reader can see from the photographs that the kakapo is a large bird compared to the kinds of birds we see outdoors at our bird feeders, but the ostrich is a giant. The text reveals that an ostrich’s wings reach 6 and a half feet when they’re spread out, and their long necks can measure up to four feet long!

The kakapo and the ostrich have very different colored feathers. In paragraph 1 of The Flightless Kakapo the author describes its “soft mossy green feathers tipped in black with pale yellowish downy feathers underneath. Around the kakapo’s face are soft grayish feathers that stand out like whiskers. The first paragraph of The Ostrich reveals that these giant African birds have necks

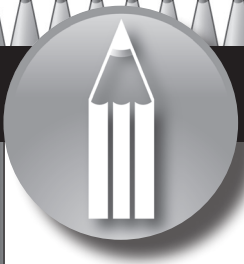
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covered in grayish white feathers and bodies covered in thick plumes of black feathers. Both authors explain that the female birds have duller colored feathers than the males.

There were many amazing facts in both texts, but the one I found most surprising was that ostriches and camels share some traits. Both have really big eyes with long lashes. Another similarity between ostriches and camels is that both can survive without water for long periods of time. It was fun to read, in paragraph 4 of The Ostrich, that every year people can go to racetracks across America to see ostriches and camels racing one another. The author informs us that at some races ostriches pull a cart with a driver, and at others a jockey rides on the ostrich's back!

If I ever get to New Zealand I'll try to visit a sanctuary to see a kakapo! And, I'm going to ask my parents if we can go to an Ostrich-Camel race. This way I'd get to compare their size and color in person. Both of these unusual flightless birds are amazing!



Student Page

Name: _____

Paraphrase It!

When writing a response to text or when using researched material in a report or an essay it's important not to take another author's words and use them as your own. That is called **plagiarism**. Instead, you need to refer to the text or source material and then express what you learned in your own words. This is called **paraphrasing**.

Read each sentence below from a text titled, Lincoln Logs. Your teacher will MODEL how to paraphrase each sentence in your own words. Notice how your teacher uses sentence starters at the bottom of the page and replaces underlined words or phrases with word referents or *synonyms*.

Ex. Lincoln Log toy construction sets were invented about a century ago and kids have been enjoying them ever since.

In the article we learn that Lincoln Log construction sets were invented about one hundred years ago and that children have been having fun building with them for about 10 decades.

*Notice how the sentence starter has been underlined and the word referents circled. Be sure to annotate your paraphrased sentences in the same way.

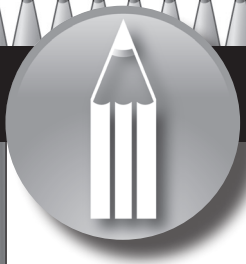
1. Lincoln Logs were created by a fellow named John Lloyd Wright.
2. The inventor's dad was a well-known architect named Frank Lloyd Wright.
3. Lincoln Log collections also came with miniature rooftops, doors, windows, and chimneys so that children could create structures of all kinds.



SENTENCE STARTERS:

- The author discusses _____ .
- In the article we learn that _____ .
- The text explains the way _____ .
- It was interesting to learn how _____ .
- Reading the piece, I discovered that _____ .
- The writer outlines _____ .
- The reader learns that _____ .
- This informational piece examines _____ .
- In this article we discover _____ .
- According to this article _____ .
- Based on this text _____ .

BONUS: Select several sentences from a textbook, magazine article, or nonfiction book and *paraphrase* them using these techniques.



Student Page

Name: _____

More Paraphrasing!

Read these sentences from an article titled Spaghetti. Imagine that you are writing a report on the history of spaghetti and want to use this information. *Paraphrase* each sentence. Use word referents for the underlined words and the Citing Sentence Starters to help you.

1. Did you realize that this thin stringy pasta was invented in China?

2. The famous merchant and traveler Marco Polo brought spaghetti from China to Italy.

3. People enjoy spaghetti because you can serve it with many delicious sauces.

4. Wind spaghetti into a ball with a fork and large spoon and pop it into your mouth.

CITING SENTENCE STARTERS

The author points out that _____. The text explains _____. In the article we learn that _____.

The reader discovers that _____. It is interesting to note that _____. The author shows how _____.

I learned in the text that _____. The author explains how _____. The text includes the fact that _____.



Name: _____

GIVING THE AUTHOR CREDIT (1)

Dan’s teacher asked the class to write a response to text essay about the article titled Weird Contests Around the World. Dan read the article and summarized the author’s important points – but he forgot one important step! He used the author’s exact words without citing them! Reread Weird Contests Around the World and the following sentences from Dan’s response. Skim and scan to locate the sentence in the text. Then REVISE each sentence, using quotation marks to enclose the author’s exact words and an informational verb to help explain where the quote can be found in the text.

Ex. The camel left standing is the winner.

In paragraph two the author explains: “The camel left standing is the winner.”

1. Worm charming is sometimes called grunting or fiddling.

2. The one who collects the most worms wins!

3. Football and volleyball are played by teams covered in the slick brown sludge.

Citing Sentence Starters with Informational Verbs

- In paragraph _____ the author states: “ _____.”
- In the introduction the author informs us that: “ _____.”
- In the article the author explains: “ _____.”

BONUS: Substitute a different Informational Verb for the one given:

- divulges • shares • asserts • maintains • says • tells us



Name: _____

GIVING THE AUTHOR CREDIT (2)

Read each sentence from the text, Niagara Falls. Skim and scan to locate each sentence in the text, then REVISE as a citation, using quotation marks and a citing sentence starter to show where the citation can be found in the text.

1. Niagara Falls are located between Ontario, Canada and New York State.

2. Nearby there are hundreds of hotels and restaurants.

3. Many tried to go over the falls in a barrel.

Citing Sentence Starters with Informational Verbs

- In the section titled “Niagara Falls,” the author states: “_____.”
- Later in the article the author discloses that: “_____.”
- When describing Niagara Falls stunts the author tells us: “_____.”

BONUS: Substitute a different Informational Verb for the one given:

- divulges • shares • asserts • informs • says • explains