



Grade 6 Informational Writing Guide

Student Pages for Print or Projection

SECTION 5: Introductions and Conclusions

**www.empoweringwriters.com
1-866-285-3516**

WHAT YOUR INFORMATIONAL INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH NEEDS

When writing an original essay or report include:

1. **A LEAD**

Catch your reader's attention with:

- a question
- an amazing or unusual fact
- a descriptive segment
- a quote
- a statistic
- an anecdote

2. **A TOPIC SENTENCE**

Briefly, clearly, tell the reader what the piece will be about.

Read each introduction paragraph that follows. Pay attention to the different kinds of leads. The lead appears in italics. The topic sentence is underlined. Notice that the topic sentence in each example is the same.

Our heads bulge with brains. Now that the ozone layer has been depleted, our skin tone has darkened to protect us from sun. We are tall and lean, with wide, bright eyes and a dense mane of hair. Without a doubt, evolution will change our faces, our bodies and our brains in amazing ways over the next ten thousand years.

Type of Lead: **A DESCRIPTIVE SEGMENT**

It might be hard to believe, but in the future, our eyes may be three times the size they are today. There's a good chance we'll have a second eyelid and the ability to see in the dark! Without a doubt, evolution will change our faces, our bodies, and our brains in amazing ways over the next ten thousand years.

Type of Lead: **AMAZING FACT**

"The human face will be heavily biased toward features that humans find fundamentally appealing: strong, regal lines, straight noses, intense eyes, and perfect left/right symmetry," said Dr. Alan Kwan of Washington University. Without a doubt, evolution will change our faces, our bodies, and our brains in amazing ways over the next ten thousand years.

Type of Lead: **QUOTE**

Student Reference Page

Our skulls today are 20% larger than they were in the 14th century and are expected to get even bigger to house our ever-growing brains. Without a doubt, evolution will change our faces, our bodies, and our brains in amazing ways over the next ten thousand years.

Type of Lead: **STATISTIC**

Would you recognize yourself with a higher forehead, bigger, shinier eyes and a darker skin tone? Without a doubt, evolution will change our faces, our bodies, and our brains in amazing ways over the next ten thousand years.

Type of Lead: **QUESTION**

If you know how to use Photoshop, you're going to want to try this: Take your class picture and enlarge your eyes. Give them a luminous glow. Darken your skin tone. Make your hair thicker and your forehead longer. Now, you've got a preview of what you might look like if you were born ten thousands years from now. Without a doubt, evolution will change our faces, our bodies, and our brains in amazing ways over the next ten thousand years.

Type of Lead: **ANECDOTE**

Name _____

LEADS AND TOPIC SENTENCES (1)

Read each introduction paragraph. Fill in the author's prewriting plan in order to highlight each main idea. Underline the lead in red and the topic sentence in blue. Then, on the line below each paragraph, tell which kind of lead the author used:

Descriptive Segment • Amazing Fact • Question
• Quote • Statistic • Anecdote

1. When my mother signed me up for a first aid course over the summer, I wasn't exactly thrilled. After all, I'd been looking forward to a fun-filled few months of swimming, sleeping late, and spending time with my friends. Today, however, I am really proud of myself for rising to the challenge of completing that course. Without a doubt, it is valuable to know how to splint a bone, dress a bleeding wound, and perform cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

TYPE OF LEAD: _____

2. Nearly half of the world's population, which adds up to three billion people, live on less than \$2.50 per day. While this statistic is chilling, a look into the future is even more alarming. According to the World Bank, in certain parts of the world extreme poverty is expected to rise by 15-41% over the next decade. Inadequate food supplies, water shortages and epidemics of easily prevented diseases are just a few of the dangers associated with this horrifying problem.

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

TYPE OF LEAD: _____

BONUS: On another piece of paper or at the keyboard, rewrite the lead for either (or both) of these paragraphs using a different type of lead.



Name _____

LEADS AND TOPIC SENTENCES (2)

Read the introduction paragraph below. Underline the general topic sentence. Then, create a prewriting framework with 3-5 main ideas that could be associated with this topic sentence. This may require research. Finally, underline the lead in red and identify the kind of lead used:

Descriptive Segment • Amazing Fact • Question
• Quote • Statistic • Anecdote

According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, a staggering 41,415 species of plants and animals are now threatened with extinction. This includes one-third of all amphibians, 8,000 types of plants, 25% of all mammals and one in eight bird species. Clearly, saving these irreplaceable species is going to be a challenge, but there are steps we can take today to give these majestic animals and plants a future here on earth.

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

MAIN IDEA #4: _____

MAIN IDEA #5: _____

TYPE OF LEAD: _____

BONUS: On another piece of paper or at the keyboard, rewrite the lead for this paragraph using all five of the other techniques listed above.

Name _____

WRITING AN ATTENTION-GRABBING LEAD (1)

Read the topic sentence below:

Sleep is extremely important to our physical and emotional health.

The topic sentence tells us that the piece will be about the importance of sleep. Think about the various types of leads you can write to grab the reader's attention:

Descriptive Segment • Amazing Fact • Question
• Quote • Statistic • Anecdote

Use the spaces below to write an example of each kind of **lead**. Make sure your lead catches the reader's attention and draws the reader on to the topic sentence which is given.

Descriptive Segment (Write several phrases that describe the importance of sleep.)

Amazing Fact (Write an amazing or little known fact about the importance of sleep or the consequences of not getting enough sleep. If you aren't sure, research it via the internet.)

BONUS: See if you can write a lead that uses two of the techniques. For example, a question that includes a statistic or an anecdote that incorporates an amazing fact.

Name _____

WRITING AN ATTENTION-GRABBING LEAD (2)

Read the topic sentence below:

Sleep is extremely important to our physical and emotional health.

The topic sentence tells us that the piece will be about the importance of sleep. Think about the various types of leads you can write to grab the reader's attention:

**Descriptive Segment • Amazing Fact • Question
• Quote • Statistic • Anecdote**

Use the spaces below to write an example of each kind of **lead**. Make sure your lead catches the reader's attention and draws the reader on to the topic sentence which is given.

Quote (Find a quote from an expert about the importance of sleep.)

Question (Question your reader directly about the importance of sleep.)

BONUS: See if you can write a lead that uses two of the techniques. For example, a question that includes a statistic or an anecdote that incorporates an amazing fact.

Name _____

WRITING AN ATTENTION-GRABBING LEAD (3)

Read the topic sentence below:

Sleep is extremely important to our physical and emotional health.

The topic sentence tells us that the piece will be about the importance of sleep. Think about the various types of leads you can write to grab the reader's attention:

Descriptive Segment • Amazing Fact • Question
• Quote • Statistic • Anecdote

Use the spaces below to write an example of each kind of **lead**. Make sure your lead catches the reader's attention and draws the reader on to the topic sentence which is given.

Statistic (Use a percentage or other number to spark your readers' interest in the importance of sleep. Research this via the internet.)

Anecdote (Write a short, personal story about the importance of sleep.)

BONUS: See if you can write a lead that uses two of the techniques. For example, a question that includes a statistic or an anecdote that incorporates an amazing fact.

Name _____

REVISE THESE BORING LEADS

Even though an informational piece is intended to give you information, it shouldn't be dull. Read each lead sentence below. Each one is boring!

Remember: The introduction should have a "lead" sentence that makes the reader eager to read on! In each example, the boring lead sentence is in italics. The topic sentence is underlined.

Revise each lead sentence using one of the following techniques:

Descriptive Segment • Amazing Fact • Question
• Quote • Statistic • Anecdote

1. *Many people enjoy collecting seashells.* Dozens of different kinds of seashells can be found on beaches around the world.

2. *Tokyo is a bustling city.* There's so much to see and do in Tokyo.

BONUS: Revise one of your leads using an alternate technique.

Name _____

EFFECTIVE TOPIC SENTENCES

Read the prewriting plan and the menu of possible TOPIC SENTENCES the author is considering.

- Circle the topic sentence that references each main idea.
- Underline the topic sentence that refers to the main ideas in a general way.
- Cross out the topic sentence that does not encompass all of the main ideas.

TOPIC: Arcade Games

MAIN IDEA #1: Pinball

MAIN IDEA #2: Driving simulation games

MAIN IDEA #3: Air Hockey

Topic Sentences:

1. Pac-Man is an old-fashioned arcade game.
2. Many of us enjoy heading to the arcade with a pocket full of quarters on a rainy afternoon.
3. Pinball, driving simulation games, and air hockey are some of the popular games at the arcade.

TOPIC: Boating

MAIN IDEA #1: Canoes

MAIN IDEA #2: Motorboats

MAIN IDEA #3: Sailboats

Topic Sentences:

1. Simple canoes, sleek sailboats, and speedy motorboats are among the most popular types of boats today.
2. Boating is an often expensive but exciting summer activity.
3. Some sailboats are huge and luxurious.

THINK ABOUT IT: What is the benefit of stating each main idea within the topic sentence? How does it help the author? How does it help the reader?

BONUS: On another sheet of paper or at the keyboard, compose an effective lead that could be used with your choice of the two effective topic sentences.



Name _____

WRITING TOPIC SENTENCES (1)

Read each prewriting plan. The author has listed both the TOPIC and the MAIN IDEAS. Use this information to craft an effective TOPIC SENTENCE. Be sure your topic sentence references all of the main ideas and remember, it doesn't have to be a single sentence. Try using two or even three.

Example:

TOPIC: South Korea
MAIN IDEA #1: History
MAIN IDEA #2: Geography
MAIN IDEA #3: Capital city
MAIN IDEA #4: Economy
MAIN IDEA #5: Conflict with North Korea

TOPIC SENTENCE:

South Korea is a land distinguished by a rich history and unique geographical features. With a bustling capital city and a healthy economy, it is a prosperous nation. However, this modern Asian country is challenged by an ongoing conflict with its neighbor to the north.

Now it's your turn.

TOPIC: Adventure Sports
MAIN IDEA #1: Windsurfing
MAIN IDEA #2: Rock climbing
MAIN IDEA #3: Skydiving
MAIN IDEA #4: Hang gliding
MAIN IDEA #5: Scuba diving

TOPIC SENTENCE: _____

BONUS: Try creating a topic sentence that suggests or implies main ideas in a general way rather than stating each main idea specifically.

Name _____

WRITING TOPIC SENTENCES (2)

Read each prewriting plan. The author has listed both the TOPIC and the MAIN IDEAS. Use this information to craft two effective TOPIC SENTENCES: One that generally references the main ideas and the other that specifically references all of the main ideas. Remember, it doesn't have to be a single sentence. Try using two or even three.

TOPIC: North American Landmarks

MAIN IDEA #1: Chateau Frontenac

MAIN IDEA #2: Mount Rushmore

MAIN IDEA #3: CN Tower

MAIN IDEA #4: Golden Gate Bridge

TOPIC SENTENCE #1: _____

TOPIC SENTENCE #2: _____

TOPIC: Hybrid Animals

MAIN IDEA #1: Liger

MAIN IDEA #2: Zonkey

MAIN IDEA #3: Grolar Bear

MAIN IDEA #4: Wholphins

TOPIC SENTENCE #1: _____

TOPIC SENTENCE #2: _____

BONUS: Try to come up with an additional main idea for either or both of these prewriting plans and include it in your topic sentence that specifically references your main ideas.

Name _____

WRITING THE INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

Read the writing prompt and the author’s prewriting plan below. Use this information to write two effective introduction paragraphs:

- One with your choice of a lead and a topic sentence that specifically refers to each main idea.
- A second using an alternate lead and a general topic sentence that does not name any of the main ideas specifically but hints at them.

Remember, your lead can be a blend of two of the techniques and your topic sentence doesn’t have to be one single sentence. Take notes from your research below and compose your paragraph at the keyboard.

Few nations on earth have as dramatic a history as Russia. Write an informational piece tracing the evolution of this country from ancient times up to the present.

TOPIC: Russia

MAIN IDEA #1: Early history

MAIN IDEA #2: Napoleon’s Invasion

MAIN IDEA #3: The Russian Revolution

MAIN IDEA #4: The Soviet Era

MAIN IDEA #5: Present day Russia

Research Notes: _____

STRATEGIES FOR CRAFTING A RESPONSE TO TEXT INTRODUCTION

1. Read the assignment or prompt and analyze it for **GIVENS** and **VARIABLES**.
2. Fill in a **SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK** for each source text and use this to write a paragraph using **INFORMATIONAL VERBS**.
3. Read the assignment and **TURN QUESTIONS INTO RESPONSES**.

You've read two articles on Gold Rushes in North America – one about the California Gold Rush and the Yukon Gold Rush. Write an essay comparing their beginnings, peak years, and aftermath. Then, based on both articles, explain which of these Gold Rushes you believe had a greater impact on North American history.

1. Analyze the assignment for **GIVENS** and **VARIABLES**:

Givens: Compare the beginnings, peak years and aftermaths of the California Gold Rush and the Yukon Gold Rush

Variables: Impact on North American history

2. Use **summarizing framework** to craft a paragraph with informational verbs:

TOPIC: California vs. Yukon Gold Rush

MAIN IDEA #1: Beginnings

MAIN IDEA #2: Peak Years

MAIN IDEA #3: Aftermath

MAIN IDEA #3: Impact on North American history

These texts trace the progression of the California and Yukon Gold Rushes from their beginnings, through their peak years. The two articles also explore the aftermath of these historic events.

3. **Turn the question into a response:** *While both of these Gold Rushes brought settlers to the frontier, I believe the California Gold Rush had a greater impact on North American history.*

4. **By combining these techniques students can compose a solid introduction paragraph:**

These texts trace the progression of the California and Yukon Gold Rushes from their beginnings, through their peak years. The two articles also explore the aftermath of these historic events. While both of these Gold Rushes brought settlers to the frontier, I believe the California Gold Rush had a greater impact on North American history.

Name _____

WRITING RESPONSE TO TEXT INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPHS

Imagine that you've read two source texts and created the following summarizing frameworks for these texts.

TOPIC:

Forest Preservation

MAIN IDEA #1:

Pest and disease control

MAIN IDEA #2:

Managing the timber industry

MAIN IDEA #3:

Preventing soil erosion

TOPIC:

Forest Fires

MAIN IDEA #1:

Benefits

MAIN IDEA #2:

Dangers

MAIN IDEA #3:

Control of forest fires

Now, imagine that you must respond to this assignment:

You've read two articles about forest preservation. The first describes the challenges involved in preserving forests while the second focuses on forest fires. Refer to both texts to write an essay outlining at least two strategies for protecting these complex ecosystems.

1. What are the GIVENS in this assignment?

What are the VARIABLES?

2. Based on the summarizing frameworks, write a paragraph using INFORMATIONAL VERBS:

3. Finally, turn the "why" QUESTIONS INTO a RESPONSE and make it the last sentence in your paragraph above.

INFORMATIONAL VERBS

- Recognize
- Disclose
- Discover
- Reveal
- Examine
- Analyze
- Find out
- Research
- Delve
- Determine
- Explore
- Be on the lookout
- Emphasize
- Outline
- Discuss
- Chronicle
- Understand
- Learn about
- Uncover
- Study
- Observe
- Investigate
- Focus on
- Know
- Consider
- Remember
- Become familiar with
- Become aware of
- Illustrate
- Explain
- Recount
- Clarify

REVISING DULL CONCLUSION PARAGRAPHS

Read the prewriting plan and conclusion paragraph below.

TOPIC: Percussion Instruments

MAIN IDEA #1: Snare drum

MAIN IDEA #2: Cymbals

MAIN IDEA #3: Xylophone

MAIN IDEA #4: Tambourine

If you want to learn how to play a percussion instrument, try out the tambourine, snare drum, cymbals or xylophone. The End

The conclusion paragraph restates the main ideas in a boring way.

Watch the way the author REVISED this paragraph using the following techniques:

- Restating each main idea as a question.
- Using word referents.
- General topic sentence.

Can you imagine pounding out a rhythm on a snare drum? Don't you love the resounding crash of the cymbals? Doesn't the penetrating, precise tinkle of the xylophone make a great accent to a musical composition? Who doesn't appreciate the playful jingle of the tambourine? These rhythmic sound sensations surely enhance marching bands and orchestras.

Here's another example of a "before and after" conclusion paragraph:

TOPIC: How to make candles

MAIN IDEA #1: Selecting the right wax

MAIN IDEA #2: Adding color and fragrance

MAIN IDEA #3: Placing the wick

MAIN IDEA #4: Molding the candle

Now you know how to make your own candles. Just select the right type of wax, add color and fragrance, place the wick, and mold the candle. The End

Do you understand why it's so important to choose the right type of wax for candle making? Aren't you excited about how many different colors and fragrances you can add to your candles? Doesn't it sound easy to place the wick properly? What molds will you use to shape your tiny torches? Most people find the process of making these pretty pillars quite satisfying.

BONUS: Can you think of any other word referents for percussion instruments or candles?

Name _____

ANALYZING CONCLUSION PARAGRAPHS

The concluding paragraph should “sum up” the main ideas of an informational piece. However, this should not be a totally redundant restating of the main ideas. Read this conclusion paragraph. It restates the main ideas in a boring way. Underline the main ideas and fill out the prewriting summary.

The launch of the soviet spacecraft Sputnik 1, the Korean conflict, and the introduction of the Barbie doll are some of the historic events of the 1950s.

Based on that conclusion paragraph, fill in the author’s prewriting plan:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

Now read the revised conclusion below. Once again, underline the main ideas.

Can you imagine how exciting it must have been to see the launch of Sputnik 1? What impact does the Korean War have on the world today? Would you have yearned for a Barbie Doll in 1959? The 1950s were certainly memorable and many people today feel nostalgic for this traditional time in history.

Analyze it:

1. Compare the “Before and After” concluding paragraphs.
2. Circle the word referent the author used in place of the words “the 1950s.”
3. In the revised version, what technique does the author use to restate each main idea?

4. Underline the general restatement of the topic sentence.

BONUS: Research this topic to come up with a fourth main idea for this informational piece. On another piece of paper or at the keyboard, rewrite the conclusion paragraph to include this additional main idea.

Name _____

REVISE THIS CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH (1)

Read this conclusion paragraph. Fill in the author's prewriting plan below. On another sheet of paper or at the keyboard, revise the conclusion paragraph. Begin by restating each main idea as a question. Then, write a general restatement of the topic sentence using one of the word referents you created below.

As sharpshooters, cattle rustlers, ranchers and rodeo queens, the women of the wild west were bold and daring. THE END

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

MAIN IDEA #4: _____

Revise this conclusion paragraph by restating each main idea as a question. You may use the following sentence starters to help you:

SENTENCE STARTERS:

Wouldn't you love to meet _____?

Can you imagine how exciting _____?

Isn't it amazing to think _____?

Would you like to know more about _____?

Can you picture _____?

Now, see if you can create a few word referents for the topic of this piece.

Name _____

REVISE THIS CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH (2)

Read this conclusion paragraph. Fill in the author’s prewriting plan below. On another sheet of paper or at the keyboard, revise the conclusion paragraph. Begin by restating each main idea as a question. Then, write a general restatement of the topic sentence using one of the word referents you created below.

Troll dolls, superballs, pet rocks and mood rings are just a few of the goofy fads that swept the globe in the 1960s and 70s. THE END

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

MAIN IDEA #4: _____

Revise this conclusion paragraph by restating each main idea as a question. You may use the following sentence starters to help you:

SENTENCE STARTERS:

Have you ever seen _____ ?

Would you have yearned for a _____ ?

Isn't it amazing that _____ ?

Who would fall for _____ ?

Isn't it funny to think _____ ?

Now, see if you can create a few word referents for the topic of this piece.

DEFINITIVE WORDS/PHRASES lend an air of authority and finality to the piece.

certainly	surely	positively	clearly
decidedly	undoubtedly	for sure	absolutely
definitely	of course	indeed	truly
without a doubt			

INFORMATIONAL VERBS replace passive or helping verbs with informational verbs in order to easily restate each main idea.

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

Name _____

DEFINITIVE WORDS AND PHRASES

One way authors end their pieces effectively is to use definitive words and phrases to add an air of authority and clarity to the conclusion paragraph. Here is a list of some of these words and phrases:

certainly	surely	positively	clearly	decidedly	truly
for sure	absolutely	definitely	of course	indeed	undoubtedly
without a doubt					

Compare the following pairs of sentences. Circle the definitive words and phrases. Notice the difference in the tone between those that use this technique and those that do not.

1. While they may look fearsome, moray eels are actually quite shy.
Without a doubt, moray eels look fearsome, but they are actually quite shy.
2. Guatemala is a country of great natural beauty.
Guatemala is surely a country of great natural beauty.
3. Rabies is a devastating disease that can strike wild as well as domestic animals.
Indeed, rabies is a devastating disease that can strike wild as well as domestic animals.
4. Thousands of taxpayer dollars are spent clearing highways after blizzards.
Of course, thousands of taxpayer dollars are spent clearing highways after blizzards.

Now it's your turn! Rewrite each sentence to include a definitive word or phrase.

1. Being a commercial fisherman is often a dangerous job.

2. It is important to limit the time you spend online.

3. There are many historic and cultural sights to see in the city of Vienna.

Name _____

INFORMATIONAL VERBS

One way authors effectively restate main ideas is to use informational verbs along with word referents. Here is a list of informational verbs:

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

Read this “before” version of a conclusion paragraph. Underline the main ideas.

If you're determined to become a modern-day gold miner, you now know where you're most likely to find the precious metal, the equipment you'll need, and the risks you'll face.

Read the following “after” version that restates each main idea using informational verbs and word referents. Again, underline the main ideas.

Clearly, modern-day prospectors have much in common with their predecessors during the rough and tumble days of the gold rush. These hopeful miners recognize just the right place to stake their claim. They know how to use the equipment that maximizes their chances of success. Perhaps most importantly, these daring dreamers understand the risks they are taking in their quest to strike it rich. Just as it did back in 1849, gold mining today certainly requires determination and a bold nature.

ANALYZE IT:

- Compare the “before and after” concluding paragraphs.
- Locate each word referent for GOLD MINER in the after version and circle.
- Place a check beside the general restatement of the TOPIC SENTENCE and BOX the general adjectives.
- Highlight the definitive words and phrases in the after version. In a different color, highlight the informational verbs.

Name _____

THE HYPOTHETICAL ANECDOTE

One way to hold your reader’s attention in your conclusion paragraph is to use a “hypothetical anecdote.” In other words, place your reader in a situation where they might encounter your topic.

Example:

<u>If your topic was:</u>	<u>Your reader might encounter your topic:</u>
Peacocks	At the zoo Traveling in India or Africa At a farm
Your hypothetical anecdote might read:	So, the next time you visit a zoo or a farm, or if you’re ever lucky enough to travel to Africa or India, keep an eye out for these vibrantly colorful fowl.

Now you try it:

<u>If your topic was:</u>	<u>Your reader might encounter your topic:</u>
Roller coasters	At an amusement park At a carnival On a boardwalk
Your hypothetical anecdote might read:	_____ _____ _____ _____

<u>If your topic was:</u>	<u>Your reader might encounter your topic:</u>
Raccoons	_____ _____ _____
Your hypothetical anecdote might read:	_____ _____ _____ _____

Name _____

ANALYZING MORE COMPLEX CONCLUSIONS

The concluding paragraph should “sum up” the main ideas of an informational piece. However, this should never be a totally redundant restating of the main ideas. Read this conclusion paragraph. It restates ideas in a boring way. Underline main idea #1 in red, main idea #2 in blue, main idea #3 in green.

Polar Bears are well adapted to the harsh environment in which they live, but are threatened by habitat destruction, oil spills, and climate change. THE END

Based on that conclusion paragraph, fill in the authors prewriting plan below.

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

Now read the revised conclusion below. Once again, underline main idea #1 in red, main idea #2 in blue and main idea #3 in green.

Should you ever have the opportunity to observe a polar bear in the wild or at a zoo, you will surely be inspired to help protect this iconic species of the north country. As we have learned, they are threatened by habitat destruction as chemical toxins pollute their once pristine territory and oil spills foul their waters. However, science has confirmed that the most significant danger to polar bear populations is climate change which is destroying the sea ice where polar bears find shelter and hunt for food. While these mighty mammals are indeed well-adapted to their icy environment, their future is truly and alarmingly uncertain.

ANALYZE IT:

- Compare the “before and after” versions of the concluding paragraph. (Compare color to color for main ideas.)
- Box the hypothetical anecdote that puts your reader in contact with your topic.
- Circle the word referents the author used in place of the words “polar bear(s).”
- Underline the definitive words.
- Double underline the informational verbs.
- Place a check beside the general restatement of the topic sentence.

Name _____

CRAFTING POWERFUL CONCLUSION PARAGRAPHS

Use the techniques below to REVISE the following dull conclusion paragraph. Remember, you can:

- * Restate main ideas as questions
- * Use word referents
- * Use informational verbs
- * Use hypothetical anecdotes
- * Use definitive words/phrases
- * Use a general restatement of the topic sentence

I hope you have learned something from my report about the appearance, behavioral characteristics, and threats to the future of the odd narwhal.
THE END

Take notes from your research below and write your revision on another sheet of paper or at the keyboard.

CHECK YOURSELF

- Compare the “before and after” versions of this concluding paragraph. Underline main idea #1 in red, main idea #2 in blue and main idea #3 in green.
- Box the hypothetical anecdote that puts your reader in contact with your topic and/or the restatements of main ideas as questions.
- CIRCLE the word referents you used in place of the topic words and main ideas.
- Underline the definitive words/phrases.
- Double underline the informational verbs.
- Place a check beside the general restatement of the topic sentence.



Name _____

BROADENING YOUR TOPIC

Read the conclusion paragraph below for an informational piece about giraffes. Brainstorm the associated topics that may spark your interest as you research giraffes. (Two ideas have been provided for you.)

If you've ever seen a giraffe at a zoo, you will surely agree that they are one of the world's most elegant creatures. It is fascinating to learn about their low-pitched vocalizations, the foods they eat and their unique breeding behaviors. With their long, lush eyelashes and graceful necks, these long-legged beauties are absolutely amazing.

Associated Topics:

okapi bears

tall animals

Now, compose a concluding sentence that suggests opportunities for further research about an associated topic. Use the sentence starters below if needed.

SENTENCE STARTERS:

Doesn't it make you wonder _____ ?

Is it possible that _____ ?

My research about ___ has sparked my interest in ____ .

It might be valuable to _____ .

Name _____

WRITING RESPONSE TO TEXT CONCLUSION PARAGRAPHS

You've read two source texts and created the following frameworks for these texts:

TOPIC: Long Lived Animals

TOPIC: The Island of Ikaria

MAIN IDEA #1: Bowhead Whale

MAIN IDEA #1: Healthy Diet

MAIN IDEA #2: Galapagos Giant Tortoise

MAIN IDEA #2: Stress-free Lifestyle

MAIN IDEA #3: Greenland Shark

MAIN IDEA #3: Sense of community

Now, imagine that you completed the assignment below, but you still need to write the conclusion paragraph.

You have read the two informational texts about longevity, The Most Long-Lived Animals in the World and The Island of Long Lives. Based on what you learned from these texts, what advice would you give a friend who hopes to live to be 150 years old? Assume that simply moving to the island of Ikaria is NOT an option and be sure to cite specific examples from both texts.

Use the following to help craft your conclusion paragraph on the lines below:

REITERATE your **TOPIC** and **MAIN IDEAS**.

SYNTHESIZE information from both texts and draw a conclusion.

EVALUATE how this information inspires, challenges or changes you.

Challenge: Include word referents and informational verbs!

Name _____

The Most Long Lived Animals in the World

How would you celebrate your 100th birthday? Of course, it's hard to think that far ahead, but there's an ever-increasing chance that you'll reach that milestone. Longevity among humans is definitely on the rise, but we've still got a long way to go before we catch up to the most long-lived creatures on earth today, the Bowhead Whale, the Galapagos Tortoise and the Greenland Shark.

The Bowhead Whale is estimated to have a life span of up to 250 years, making it the most long-lived of all mammals. The remaining population of these endangered animals, numbering just over 10,000, lives in the frigid, uncrowded waters of the Arctic and feeds upon tiny, but protein-rich, crustaceans such as krill. Well-adapted to life in the northernmost reaches of the planet, these robust creatures have the thickest blubber of any whale species and huge heads that can break through sea ice. Bowheads have a range of vocalizations through which they communicate with one another and groups often get together for feeding. As they have for centuries, Native Alaskans and Canadian Inuits, hunt these calm, slow-moving animals for their meat, blubber and oil. This annual hunt, along with limited predation from Orcas, is the only known cause of death for the massive mammals. Why they enjoy such long, seemingly healthy lives is a mystery at the present time. Scientists hypothesize that they probably have an unusual ability to repair their cells and thus, slow down the aging process

Found only on the famous islands of the Pacific, the Galapagos Giant Tortoise has the longest life span of any reptile. It's also the largest tortoise species on earth, with some specimens measuring five feet in length and weighing in excess of five hundred pounds. Like few other animals, they continue to grow at a very slow pace throughout the 200+ peaceful years of their lives. These giant herbivores spend their days grazing on vegetation, basking in the sun and napping. Their slow metabolism makes it possible for them to survive without food or water for long periods of time. They have no natural enemies and their thick shell protects them from the nonnative species, such as feral pigs, who might try to prey on them. While they were hunted extensively for their meat and dome-like shells in the past, these hearty reptiles are now a strictly protected species and the only threat to their continued survival seems to be environmental toxins.

After years of intensive research as well as radiocarbon dating of bones and eye tissue, marine biologists have gathered evidence that the Greenland Shark has a lifespan of more than 400 years! The most long-lived animal on earth by a large margin, this sluggish scavenger lives in the darkest depths of the ocean where the temperature drops to near freezing and few other predators dare venture. The Greenland Shark, however, is able to survive these subarctic conditions because it stores a natural antifreeze in its tissues, which also makes its meat toxic so it's never been hunted. Known as the sloths of the sea, these large carnivores are capable of quick bursts of speed but they much prefer to keep still or move at a snail's pace if they must. Marine biologists believe that cold water is the key to the shark's long life because it slows down their growth and metabolic rate. Further, as Shaun Xu, a geneticist at the University of Michigan, explains "cold can activate anti-aging genes that help an animal better absorb proteins, get rid of DNA-damaging molecules and even fight off infections more effectively, extending life span."

What do these three long-lived animals have in common? Having few natural predators is obviously a factor in their longevity. However, when we look at the characteristics of the Bowhead Whale, the Galapagos Giant Tortoise, and the Greenland Shark, we have to wonder if living at a slow, serene pace might be the key to their endless health and vitality. The question is, would it work for us too? It's certainly possible.

Name _____

The Island of Long Life

The *New York Times* calls it “the island where people forget to die.” Of course, they do eventually pass away, but the people of the peaceful Greek island of Ikaria live an average of twelve years longer than the typical North American. Perhaps even more importantly, they enjoy good health and vitality well into their nineties! What’s their secret? There is no definitive answer to that question, but their diet, stress-free lifestyle, and sense of community appear to be contributing factors.

It makes sense that the people of Ikaria have a healthy diet. The surrounding Aegean Sea is known for its bounty of fish and Ikarian diet includes lots of wild-harvested seafood and a limited amount of meat. Plus, everybody from children to centenarians seems to garden on Ikaria. Since the idyllic island enjoys a temperate climate, most of the people grow their own fruits and vegetables year-round. Along with nutrient rich, local produce, the people also benefit from the moderate cardiovascular exercise of gardening. Their diet traditionally includes a wide variety of wild herbs such as sage, which has been shown to help maintain healthy blood sugar levels and preserve memory. Mint, a powerful antioxidant that helps alleviate allergies and improves digestion, adds flavor to food and is often brewed into refreshing teas.

Life on the sparsely populated island moves at a slow pace and the people very rarely suffer the ill effects of stress. There is no traffic; walking and biking are the preferred methods of transportation. Clocks and tight schedules are of little value here. The lucky, laid-back residents simply eat when they’re hungry and rest when they’re tired. Here’s a typical day: in the mornings, they tend to their gardens, their homes and their businesses. Then, they take a long lunch break, followed by a 1-2 hour nap. A seriously under-rated health habit, consistent napping has been shown to reduce the risk of heart disease by as much as 37%. It also improves the intellectual and sensory functions that can deteriorate with age. After another few hours of work, the day ends with a light dinner and, often, dancing in the streets to live music provided by fellow islanders.

The island's powerful sense of community is another reason why people might "forget to die" on Ikaria. It might be hard to prove scientifically, but it's easy to understand how living in a place where you feel valued and welcome might contribute to health and longevity. Loneliness, after all, has been linked with premature death by numerous studies. On this friendly Greek isle, people usually live in large, multi-generational family units and the elderly are included in all household and community activities. Meals are shared with friends, family and neighbors and the people of all ages tend to socialize until late into the night.

A ten-hour boat ride from mainland Greece, this remote island lies far from the fast-paced, plugged-in culture of the modern world. While their simple life may not be right for everybody, it seems ideal to many. Without a doubt, the fortunate few who live on the island of Ikaria enjoy a healthy diet, stress-free lifestyle and sense of community that together promote health and longevity.