



Grade 7 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?

You may need to research this!

WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT?

Why is that important to your main idea?

You may need to research this!

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.

Name _____

JUST OKAY...OR MUCH BETTER?

Read each pair of sentences. In one sentence the author simply states a fact. In the other, the author presents the same fact, in a much stronger way. Label each sentence, **JUST OKAY** if it's the bare-bones fact, or **MUCH BETTER** if the author fully elaborates.

1. _____ The colorful, detailed graphics and high-tech wizardry of video games can challenge your competitive spirit so much that you won't be able to stop playing once you get started.
 _____ Once you start playing video games, it is often hard to stop, so you end up playing late into the night and wake up in the morning feeling tired.
2. _____ With long, lean legs and an amazing lung capacity, the streamlined cheetah is so speedy that it is able to compete with larger, more aggressive predators on the African savannah.
 _____ Long-legged and slender, cheetahs are made for speed and they can easily outrun many other animals with whom they share habitat.
3. _____ When people travel to Paris, most are eager to see the Eiffel Tower which was built in Paris in 1889.
 _____ Soaring nearly 1,000 feet into the Parisian skies, the Eiffel Tower was originally constructed in 1889 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the French Revolution, and it attracts legions of tourists to this day.
4. _____ The introduction of the non-native cane toad to Australia was a huge mistake with far-reaching consequences that will cause problems well into the future.
 _____ Able to secrete dangerous toxins that can kill pets as well as native plants and wildlife, the wart-covered non-native cane toad is considered the most destructive invasive species in Australia.
5. _____ Summer vacation is a great time to work outdoors and earn the extra money that you need instead of staying indoors and being bored.
 _____ If you enjoy working outdoors, why not ask your neighbors if you can help them out by mowing their lawns or trimming their shrubs to earn extra money during the sunny months of summer.

Name _____

SENTENCE MATCHING - WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? WITH WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

When you're using detail-generating questions, it's helpful to follow "What Does it Look Like?" with "Why is it Important?" This can be done in one sentence or two or more sentences. Using a line, connect each "What Does it Look Like?" sentence in Column 1 with its matching "Why is it Important?" sentence or sentence part in Column 2.

Column 1

What does it look like?

Bordered by Russia to the North and China to the south, the country of Mongolia has no coastline, but several large saltwater lakes.

Prized for its soft, fine hair, the hardy cashmere goat is raised in the rocky desert regions of Southern Mongolia.

Packing their few belongings on two-humped camels, the nomadic people of Mongolia roam the vast countryside

A fearless warrior who went thundering into battle on horseback, Genghis Khan led the most efficient army the world has ever known

The singing sands of Mongolia echo with an eerie, otherworldly sound as wind sweeps over the grand dunes of the Gobi desert.

Column 2

Why is it important?

The songs are created when the smooth, round grains of sand rub together in dry weather conditions and are considered one of the great wonders of the world.

and founded the legendary Mongol empire.

Many species of wading birds and fish make their home in these crystal clear waters.

in search of green pastures for their livestock.

These herding animals provide the world with one of its most expensive and luxurious textiles.

BONUS: If these sentences appeared in an informational text, what would the TOPIC be?

Name _____

WRITING SENTENCES WITH “WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?”

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

Detail Sentence:

Frogs live in swamps.

Your revision:

Detail Sentence:

Our family has a cabin in the woods.

Your revision:

Detail Sentence:

Tacos are spicy and delicious

Your revision:

Name _____

FIND THE OVERLY GENERAL WORDS AND PHRASES

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

Surfing is definitely a **cool** sport. It requires that you balance on a **big** board to catch a wave and ride it to shore. It's really **fun**, but you need to be **physically fit**. Hawaii is one of the best places in the world to go surfing. Surfers can also find **great** waves on the beaches of Australia and in California. Why not give surfing a try? It's really a **fun** way to make the most of your summer.

Now read the revised paragraph below. The author has provided specific examples instead of overly general words and phrases. Decide which paragraph is more powerful.

Requiring **perfect balance** and precise timing, surfing is one of the most **exhilarating** sports around. While experts make it look easy, surfing actually requires **superior athletic ability** and **extensive practice**. As a beginner, you'll want to build your **upper body strength** and **endurance** and the best way to do just that is by **swimming laps using the butterfly stroke**. Once you're ready to face the ocean, look for **flat, sandy beaches with waves no higher than three feet**. Avoid crowds. You don't want to get in the way of more **experienced surfers** or plow into a **swimming child**. As you get more and more confident, you're probably going to want to chase down **challenging** waves, such as those found in the Hawaiian surfer's haven of Oahu. That's where you'll discover the famous Waikiki Beach where **constant trade winds** produce **gentle as well as gigantic swells**. With its **soft, white sands** and **consistent 4-6 foot swells**, **Bondi Beach** in Australia is another thrilling surf destination. For the most daring among us, there are the **26-60 foot swells** of the Mavericks in Northern California. In the winter, top surfers from around the world gather at this **rugged beach** where the waves crash into the shore with enough power to register on the **Richter scale**, which was developed to measure the force of an earthquake. Whether you want to enjoy the beaches in your own hometown or travel the world in search of the **perfect wave**, surfing is an **electrifying sport**. Have yourself an adventure and give it a try this summer.

Name _____

CAN YOU GIVE A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE? (1)

Look at the list of facts about Fiji below. Refer to it as you revise the very general sentence to include at least one specific detail. Try to write it two different ways using as many specific examples as possible!

- Fiji is an independent island nation in the South Pacific.
- Sugarcane and coconuts are grown on farms in Fiji.
- Fiji is known for its beautiful sandy beaches and colorful coral reefs.
- Four species of bats are the only mammals native to Fiji.
- There are 27 bird species found only in Fiji, including the rare Fiji petrel which has rich, chocolate-colored feathers.
- There are many luxurious resorts with fine dining and big, clear swimming pools on Fiji.
- Fisherman in Fiji dream of catching a wahoo, a long, slender fish with iridescent bands of bright blue.

General Sentence:

Fiji is a gorgeous tropical island.

Your revision:

Your revision:

Name _____

CAN YOU GIVE A SPECIFIC EXAMPLE? (2)

Read the general sentences below. Then, use the internet or the library to find a specific example. Revise the sentence to include least one specific example that you uncovered in your research.

General Sentence:

Our oceans are polluted.

Your revision:

General Sentence:

Hummingbirds are small and speedy.

Your revision:

General Sentence:

Jupiter is the largest planet in our solar system.

Your revision:

Name _____

BREAK UP THAT GROCERY LIST!

Read the example in the box below and see how the grocery list has been broken into separate sentences. Do the same as you revise the next sentence. Be sure to use the sentence starters if you're stuck.

Ex: *When you're stuck at home recovering from a cold, you will need chicken soup, orange juice, cough medicine and a few movies to watch.*

Revision: *There is nothing more boring than being stuck at home as you recover from a cold. To help you get through these dull days, make sure you have plenty of warm, comforting chicken soup with noodles and carrots to eat. Sipping sweet, delicious, vitamin-packed orange juice will help you regain your strength in no time. Nothing disrupts your sleep more effectively than a nagging cough. A dose of fruit-flavored cough medicine can help you get the rest you need. To amuse yourself, why not settle down in front of the TV with a cuddly quilt and a selection of your favorite DVDs to watch? After all, you probably won't have the energy to do much else, so take this opportunity to enjoy hilarious comedies, exciting adventure tales and great dramas.*

Now, revise the following:

There is so much to do at camp, including canoeing, archery, hiking, pottery, swimming, mountain biking, crafts, baseball and soccer.

Your revision:

SENTENCE STARTERS:

- Enjoy nature by _____ .
- Another option would be to _____ .
- Get creative with _____ .
- Why not try _____ .

Name _____

USING DETAIL-GENERATING QUESTIONS (1)

Read the paragraph below. The author has simply listed a few facts about swimming pools. Instead, the author should have **SHOWN** us how much fun it could be to have a swimming pool in your backyard. On another piece of paper, revise this paragraph using the detail-generating questions as shown below. You can use the sentence starters at the bottom of the page to vary your sentences. Finally, look over your completed paragraph and highlight the “What does it look like?” parts of your sentences in red and the “Why is it important?” parts in blue.

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

I love my house but it would be even better if it had a pool in the backyard. I would invite my friends over, and we’d all have a great time together. I would get a diving board and learn how to do lots of dives, including a back-flip and a sailor’s dive. I would get some pool toys, too. Having a pool would be awesome.

I love my house (**What does it look like?**) but it would be even better if it had a pool in the backyard. I would invite my friends over, and we’d all have a great time together. (**What does it look like? Why is it important? Can you give a specific example?**). I would get a diving board and learn how to do lots of different dives, including a back-flip and a sailor’s dive. (**What does it look like? Why is it important? Is each detail in a separate sentence?**) I would get some pool toys, too. (**Can you give a specific example?**) Having a pool would be awesome. (**What does it look like? Why is it important?**)

SENTENCE STARTERS:

- We would play _____ .
- Having a pool would _____ .
- In the crystal clear water _____ .
- Can you imagine _____ ?



Name _____

USING DETAIL-GENERATING QUESTIONS (2)

Read the paragraph below. The author has simply listed a few facts about lions. Instead, the author should have **SHOWN** us what a lion and its habitat looks and sounds like. On another piece of paper, revise this paragraph using the detail-generating questions. Research lions on the internet or at the library to get the information you need. You can use the sentence starters at the bottom of the page to vary your sentences. Look for and correct redundant word choice and always remember to break up the grocery list! Finally, look over your completed paragraph and highlight the “What does it look like?” parts of your sentences in red and the “Why is it important?” parts in blue.

Lions live on the grasslands of Africa. The males have a mane of golden brown fur. They will roar to protect their territory. They will also scent mark to keep other males out of their territory. The females do most of the hunting. They are smaller than the males. Lions are mammals. They are carnivores and they hunt impala, zebra, giraffe, wildebeest and wild hogs. They might even attack an elephant or rhinoceros when food is scarce. They live in groups, which are called “prides.” Lions are not an endangered species yet.

SENTENCE STARTERS:

- Lionesses might pounce upon _____ .
- Female lions deserve _____ .
- Beneath the hot African sun, _____ .
- Beware of _____ .



Name _____

FLIP THE SENTENCE SUBJECT! (1)

Read each sentence below from a paragraph about the Grand Canyon. Notice the redundant sentence structure. The group of sentences reads like a “broken record”.

There is a campground at the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

There are California Condors nesting near the southern rim of the Grand Canyon

There is Beavertail Cactus blooming in the Grand Canyon.

One way to correct this problem is by “flipping” the sentence subject:

INSTEAD OF

There is a campground at the bottom of the Grand Canyon.

There are California Condors nesting near southern rim of the Grand Canyon.

There is Beavertail Cactus blooming in Grand Canyon.

FLIP THE SENTENCE

At the bottom of the Grand Canyon, there’s a campground.

Near the southern rim of the Grand the Canyon, California Condors are nesting.

In the Grand Canyon, Beavertail the Cactus blooms.

Then, identify a critical element and “show” rather than “tell” and add some description!

INSTEAD OF

At the bottom of the Grand Canyon, there’s a campground.

Near the southern rim of the Grand Canyon, California Condors are nesting.

In the Grand Canyon, Beavertail Cactus blooms.

WHAT DOES IT “LOOK” LIKE?

On the sandy shores of the rushing Colorado River at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, there’s a small, simple campground.

In the dense woodlands near the southern rim of the Grand Canyon, several pairs of glossy black, bald-headed California Condors are nesting.

On the dusty plateaus of the Grand Canyon, the brilliant pink flowers of the Beavertail Cactus bloom in the spring and early summer.

REVISE these two sentences by flipping the subject and adding description.

1. It is no fun to hike in the hot sun.

2. Bumblebees buzzed in the garden.

BONUS: Create a word referent for “bumblebees.” _____

Name _____

FLIP THE SENTENCE SUBJECT! (2)

Read each sentence below from a paragraph about the Music. Notice the redundant sentence variety. The group of sentences reads like a “broken record”.

One type of music that people enjoy is bluegrass.

The most popular type of music is probably rock and roll.

A type of music that some people enjoy but others despise is rap.

One way to correct this problem is by “flipping” the sentence subject:

<u>INSTEAD OF</u>	<u>FLIP THE SENTENCE</u>
One type of music that people enjoy is bluegrass.	Bluegrass is one type of music that some people enjoy.
The most popular type of music is probably rock and roll.	Rock and roll is probably the most popular type of music.
A type of music that some people enjoy but others despise is rap.	Rap is a type of music that some people enjoy but other despise.

Then, identify a critical element and “show” rather than “tell” and add some description!

<u>INSTEAD OF</u>	<u>WHAT DOES IT “LOOK” LIKE?</u>
Bluegrass is one type of music that people enjoy.	The twang of the banjo and the trill of the mandolin distinguish the sounds of bluegrass, a type of country music that some people love swing dancing to.
Rock and roll is probably the most popular type of music.	Fun to dance to and easy to sing along with, rock and roll is probably the most popular type of music among people of all ages.
Rap is a type of music that some people enjoy but others despise.	Rhythmically chanted rather than sung, rap is a type of music that some people enjoy but others despise.

REVISE these two sentences by flipping the subject and adding description.

1. The radio plays new tunes and old favorites.

2. Good dance music is a must at any celebration.

BONUS: Create a word referent for “celebration.” _____

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 text, The Great Depression, the author explains the hardships the people of North America faced. The article explains what life was like in shantytowns called “Hoovervilles,” how the dust bowl destroyed agricultural lands and what Franklin D. Roosevelt did to address these complex and serious issues.*

- **PARAPHRASE**

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

Ex. *The author explains that the Dust Bowl devastated more than 40% of the farms in the state of Oklahoma.*

- **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 four the author states: “More than 2.5 million young men benefited from this program and many served the nation further in the upcoming World War II.”*

Name _____

Reading and Summarizing Texts

1. Read the text titled Abby Sunderland, Sailor.
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
- know • delve • consider • determine • remember • explore
- become familiar with • be on the lookout • become aware of

Now, on the back of this paper, do the same thing for the partner text titled Thomas Nickerson, Whaler. Be sure to read, annotate, create a summarizing framework, and then construct a summary paragraph using informational verbs.

Name _____

Abby Sunderland, Sailor

Can you imagine sailing around the world completely alone at the age of 16? Abby Sunderland made headlines across the globe when she attempted just that in 2010. Sadly, her ambitious but controversial journey ended when a rogue wave struck and the daring teenager was left adrift in the Southern Ocean.

Since the age of 13, Abby had a burning ambition to be the youngest person ever to sail by herself around the world. Her determination was further ignited when she saw her brother circumnavigate the globe at the age of 17. Eager to break his record, she trained exhaustively for her ill-fated adventure, learning from experienced sailors, including her father, a shipbuilder. Leaving from the resort town of Cabo San Lucas on Mexico's Baja Peninsula, she set sail on February 6, 2010 in a 40-foot yacht named "Wild Eyes." Her vessel had been designed specifically for solo sailors with every safety feature. In case of flooding, Abby could take refuge in any one of the boat's four watertight compartments. "Wild Eyes" also had numerous safeguards against fire and an escape hatch at the stern, although it was said to be highly unlikely that a sailor would ever have to abandon this floating fortress. It's safe to say that both she and the vessel were well-prepared for the challenge ahead.

However, there were immediate controversies surrounding Abby's journey. Many vilified Abby's parents for allowing her to embark on this precarious adventure. Some went as far as to say that they were guilty of the crime of child endangerment. Others, including Bruce Barcott, a contributing editor at Outside Magazine, praised their "bold parenting." Abby's dad always argued that the issue was "not age but competence" and that his daring daughter was as able a sailor as any. Abby's voyage was further criticized as a ploy to spark interest in a reality show centered around the risk-taking Sunderland family, who home schooled their eight children and encouraged each in their pursuits. According to the producer, the TV show would be used as a showcase for "inspiring kids to do inspirational things," but the idea was ultimately abandoned.

(continued)

In the Southern Ocean, a rogue wave can happen at any time. The one that wrecked “Wild Eyes” and sunk Abby’s dream struck on the morning of June 10, 2010. Following several days of rough seas in the Indian Ocean about 2,000 miles from the west coast of Australia, an enormous wall of water crashed into the boat and snapped its mast. Upright but badly damaged, “Wild Eyes” was helplessly adrift at sea. Its courageous captain activated her emergency radio beacons and her location was pinpointed using a highly sophisticated Global Positioning System developed by NASA. Two days later, she was rescued by a French fishing boat. Abby had sailed 12,000 miles and just passed the halfway mark on her journey. When she returned home, the fortunate seafarer wrote a book about her experiences and her story was made into a documentary film. While disappointed by the way her excursion ended, Abby’s competitive spirit survives. She still plans to sail solo around the world someday soon.

It’s easy to admire Abby Sunderland, but let’s not forget that her adventure could have ended in tragedy. The young sailor was courageous, capable and most of all, lucky. Without a doubt, her story is one of boundless ambition, controversy, and survival at sea.

Name _____

Thomas Nickerson, Whaler

The saga of the whale ship *Essex* is one of the greatest survival stories of all time. The inspiration for the great American novel *Moby Dick*, this real-life epic began on August 12, 1819 when the doomed whaling vessel set sail and ended with eight men fighting for their lives in stormy seas. One of the few survivors of this catastrophic event was also the youngest on board. Meet Thomas Nickerson, and learn about his life as a cabin boy, his struggle to survive adrift on the open ocean and the aftermath of his ordeal.

As was customary for boys from the island of Nantucket in the 19th century, Thomas Nickerson went to sea at an early age. Eager to see the world and make his fortune from the precious oil of the sperm whale, he was only 14 years old when he signed on as the cabin boy on the whale ship *Essex*. In this thankless position, he swabbed decks and was a servant to the captain, George Pollard. Ambitious young Tom worked long hours and slept in the cramped underbelly of the ship. As the smallest person aboard, the job of crawling into the huge, open head of a sperm whale and bailing out the thick, reeking oil often fell to him. When the infamous whale attacked, most of the crew was out on the open ocean harpooning whales from the small whaleboats. Nickerson was at the helm and he saw the whale moving purposefully toward the ship, obviously intent on revenge. Seconds later, he watched helplessly as the whale slammed into the boat with the full force of its thousand-pound weight. He heard the boat splinter and felt it begin to sink.

Nickerson took refuge on one of three whaleboats and his struggle to survive began. The terrified boy, along with several crew members, hurriedly ransacked the sinking ship for supplies. They loaded a cask of water and as much food as they could into the little boats. While carefully rationed, those meager supplies did not go far. Within days, Nickerson's skin was blistered from sunburn and his lips cracked and bleeding from thirst. Over the course of the next 92 days, adrift in the open ocean, Nickerson and his small band of fellow survivors had to resort to cannibalism, eating their mates who'd died of thirst and exposure. Starving and delirious, the young cabin boy was near death when

(continued)

he was rescued by a British ship that happened to be passing by. He was taken to the nearest port in Chile and nursed back to health. It was almost two years before he stepped foot on Nantucket again.

Amazingly, Nickerson set sail again just a few months later. In 1821, he sailed on the *Two Brothers*, also under the command of Captain George Pollard. No longer a novice, he'd been promoted to boat-steerer. Imagine his horror when the *Two Brothers* was lost in a gale around the Hawaiian Islands and he was once again adrift in a small wooden whaleboat. Luckily, this time around he was quickly rescued and returned home. Captain Pollard never went to sea again, but optimistic Nickerson survived several more voyages before he settled into a comfortable life as the owner of a guesthouse on Nantucket. In his later years, he wrote about his harrowing experiences, but the manuscript was lost for nearly a century. His book, *The Loss of the Ship Essex, Sunk by a Whale*, was finally discovered and published in 1980.

While seafaring history abounds with daring escapades and misadventures, the story of the *Essex* and its youngest survivor is among the most dramatic. Imagining his hardscrabble life as a cabin boy, his harrowing experiences adrift in the open ocean and his later life on Nantucket is certainly inspirational. Without a doubt, Thomas Nickerson is the very definition of a survivor.

Name _____

RESEARCH SIMULATION TASK DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - ABBY SUNDERLAND & THOMAS NICKERSON

You have read two informational texts about survival at sea, Abby Sunderland, Sailor and Thomas Nickerson, Whaler. Write an essay outlining the traits these survivors shared and the ways in which their experiences differed. Be sure to cite evidence from both texts.

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

ABBY SUNDERLAND, SAILOR

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

THOMAS NICKERSON, WHALER

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. Go back to each text. Based on your main idea “blurbs” in the margins, circle the “young and ambitious/hard working” paragraphs in yellow, the “survival at sea” paragraphs in pink, the “aftermath” paragraphs in orange.

5. Create a summarizing framework for this essay:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

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

TOPIC SENTENCE: _____

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #1: _____

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #2: _____

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #3: _____

7. Go back to both texts. Underline evidence of their common traits in green, the controversies surrounding Abby’s voyage in red and struggles at sea in blue. Then, use the Grid, p. 259, to organize and list your evidence to support each main idea.

BONUS: Go back to each source and circle the word referents the authors refer to Abby and Thomas.

Name _____

COMPARISON GRID

	ABBY SUNDERLAND	THOMAS NICKERSON
Young & Ambitious		
Controversies		
Adrift at Sea		

Name _____

EXEMPLAR TEXT**ABBY SUNDERLAND & THOMAS NICKERSON**

In these articles we meet Abby Sunderland and Thomas Nickerson, two ambitious young sailors who managed to survive after disasters at sea. While generations apart, the hardworking seafarers share some common traits, but their stories of survival are quite different. The controversies surrounding Abby's voyage and their actual experiences adrift in the open ocean set them firmly apart.

Both authors portray these teenage mariners as hard working and ambitious. The text emphasizes 16-year-old Abby Sunderland's determination to become the youngest person ever to sail solo around the world and how hard she worked to train for the 2010 adventure. The article goes on to detail the measures taken to assure the safety of her vessel, "Wild Eyes" and concludes that both the ship and its captain were well-prepared for the adventure. At only 14, Thomas Nickerson was equally ambitious. As the text explains, he was "eager to see the world and make his fortune from the precious oil of the sperm whale" when he signed on as a cabin boy on the whale ship Essex. Once aboard, he did the some of the most difficult and unpleasant jobs aboard the ship and slept in cramped quarters. While Thomas was embarking on a career and Abby simply challenging herself, both seemed highly motivated to succeed.

In 1819, when the Essex set sail, it was customary for boys as young as Thomas Nickerson who were from the whaling capital of Nantucket to go to sea. For Abby, in the first decade of the 21st century, it was anything but! Controversy over whether or not her parents should have allowed her to embark upon this adventure raged! As the text explains, some believed that her parents were "guilty of the crime of child endangerment." Of course, others praised Mr. and Mrs. Sunderland for their "bold parenting." There was also the question of whether the young sailor was embarking upon this risky expedition to secure a reality TV deal for her family. From start to finish, the voyage of the teenaged Californian made headlines around the world. That was certainly not the case for Thomas Nickerson.

(continued)

Sadly, both of the teenagers ended up helplessly adrift at sea. A rogue wave ruined Abby's "Wild Eyes" while an enraged Sperm Whale destroyed the "Essex." Abby was rescued within two days, but Nickerson endured 93 torturous days drifting on a rickety wooden whale boat. He watched his comrades die of thirst and exposure and was forced to eat their dead bodies just to stay alive. Sunburned and starving, he was rescued by a passing British ship only by a stroke of good luck. Abby was lucky too, but she also had the benefit of a sophisticated Global Positioning System developed by NASA which was able to pinpoint her location quickly and accurately.

Without a doubt, both authors capture the drama of these seafaring teenager's frightful experiences at sea. While the two sailors share a few characteristics, their stories differ in many ways, including the controversies surrounding Abby's voyage and the horrors Thomas endured while adrift at sea.

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, The Vietnam Veterans Memorial. On another paper, *paraphrase* each sentence in your own words. Use sentence starters and create at least one word referent for each sentence. Then, try "flipping the sentence." Note in the example that when the sentence is flipped, the sentence starter appears at the end. Notice also how "black granite monument" serves as a word referent for Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Ex. Made of black granite that stands in stark contrast to the white marble of other Washington D.C. monuments, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial has generated controversy since its installation in 1983.

In the article, we read about the controversy generated by the black granite monument and its stark contrast to the white marble of other such Washington D.C. landmarks.

Underline the sentence starter and circle each word referent used in the paraphrased version of the sentence. Notice how the writer "flipped the sentence," below:

Controversy has been generated by the black granite monument and its stark contrast to the white marble of other such Washington D.C. landmarks, according to the article.

1. The names of the 58,282 men and women who lost their lives serving the United States in Vietnam are inscribed on the memorial, and on special occasions they are read aloud.
2. Visitors to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial are often seen tracing names from the wall with charcoal pencils and paper to create a precious keepsake.
3. No government funds were used to build the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

4. In the nation's capital, here is also a memorial dedicated specifically to the 7,484 women, most of them nurses, who served in Vietnam.

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.

Name _____

MORE PARAPHRASING!

Read these sentences from an article titled The Life of Mark Twain. Imagine that you are writing a report about Mark Twain and want to use this information. Paraphrase each sentence. Use word referents for the underlined words and the Citing Sentence Starters to help you. You might also flip the sentence subject!

1. Inspired by one of Twain's most famous short stories, a Jumping Frog Jubilee is held annually in Calaveras County, California.

2. Mark Twain is famous around the world as the author of the classic novels, **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** and **The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**.

3. Captain Twain's career as a riverboat pilot was cut short when the Civil War broke out.

4. Mark Twain, the author's pen name, means "safe waters" in the language of a riverboat captain.

5. The witty writer grew up along the banks of the Mississippi in Hannibal, Missouri but he raised his own family in Hartford, Connecticut.

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 _.

CITING SENTENCE STARTERS

- In this article the reader discovers _____ .
- The text explains how _____ .
- This informational piece outlines _____ .
- The author discusses _____ .
- In paragraph ____, we learn that _____ .
- An interesting point the author makes is _____ .
- According to this article _____ .
- Based on this text _____ .

Name _____

GIVING THE AUTHOR CREDIT (1)

Read each sentence below from the text The Facts About Middle School Dating. 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.

Ex. Tweens and young teens may grow depressed and anxious as they cope with the feelings of rejection and jealousy sparked by a romantic relationship.

In paragraph four, the author explains that: "Tweens and young teens may grow depressed and anxious as they cope with the feelings of rejection and jealousy sparked by a romantic relationship."

1. Some might say that they're going out with someone when all they do is eat lunch together in the cafeteria or exchange text messages in the evening.

2. Parents often fear that dating during the middle school years will cause their children to lose interest in school.

3. Since children develop at differing rates, some may be ready for a romantic relationship during the middle school years and some will not.

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, below from the text, Natural Wonders of North America. 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. Efforts to preserve these majestic giants didn't begin until the 1920s.

2. It starts when charged particles from the sun strike atoms in the northerly reaches of the Earth's atmosphere.

3. The sweltering 136 degree heat of the cave is perfect for crystal growth, but too hot for humans to endure for any length of time.

CITING SENTENCE STARTERS WITH INFORMATIONAL VERBS:

- In the section titled "Going Undercover" the author states: "_____."
- Later in the article the author maintains that: "_____."
- When describing the ways animals camouflage themselves, the author tells us: "_____."

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

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

EXTRA CHALLENGE: In the first example, "majestic giants" is a word referent for ____ .