



Grade 8 Informational Writing Guide

Student Pages for Print or Projection

SECTION 5: Introductions and Conclusions

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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.

In central Africa, where an estimated 55% of the native species are poached for bushmeat, there's a thriving colony of huge primates that even the hungriest hunter dares not disturb. Standing over five feet tall, these intimidating apes have been known to attack lions and have absolutely no fear of humans. Let's take a closer look at the physical features, complex social structure and unusual behaviors of this oversized primate.

Type of Lead: **A STATISTIC**

Imagine trekking through a remote forest when haunting howls ring out in the distance. You'd probably assume that you were hearing the call of a wild canine, but if you happened to be hiking in the northernmost reaches of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, you might be listening to the vocalizations of the rare and mysterious Bili Ape. Let's take a closer look at the physical features, complex social structure, and unusual behaviors of this oversized primate.

Type of Lead: **A DESCRIPTIVE SEGMENT**

It might be hard to believe, but there is a species of primate that stands over five feet tall and exhibits the behaviors of both gorillas and chimpanzees! These immense, intimidating mammals can only be found in the Bili Forest of central Africa. Let's take a closer look at the physical features, complex social structure, and unusual behaviors of this oversized primate.

Type of Lead: **AMAZING FACT**

Ever since I first heard about the massive Bili Apes found only in the one of the most remote forests on earth, I've been dreaming of hopping a flight to Africa and getting a glimpse at the mysterious mammal with my own two eyes. Clearly, this is an animal that has to be seen to be believed! Let's take a closer look at the physical features, complex social structure, and unusual behaviors of this oversized primate.

Type of Lead: **AN ANECDOTE**

Is it a gorilla, a chimpanzee, or an entirely new species? When it comes to the Bili Apes of central Africa, scientists have to admit that they're not quite sure. Let's take a closer look at the physical features, complex social structure and unusual behaviors of this oversized primate.

Type of Lead: **A QUESTION**

"They look like large chimps, beat their chests like gorillas, and use tools as skillfully as humans." That's how wildlife conservationist Dave Morgan describes the Bili Apes of central Africa. Let's take a closer look at the physical features, complex social structure, and unusual behaviors of this oversized primate.

Type of Lead: **A QUOTE**

Name _____

LEADS AND TOPIC SENTENCES

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

- It might be hard to imagine, but Thomas Edison was only 19 years old when his first invention was patented. By the end of his career, more than 1,000 of his ideas had been issued patents. The genius of Edison brought us some of the most important inventions of all time, including the light bulb, the motion picture camera and the phonograph which was the first machine to record and playback sound.

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

TYPE OF LEAD: _____

- Do you suffer from arachnophobia? If so, you are not alone. Many of us are afraid of spiders. While most of these creepy insects are harmless, there are several species of venomous spiders that can do us serious damage. We'd all best beware of the highly toxic Brazilian wandering spider as well as the black widow and brown recluse spider.

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 _____

WRITING AN ATTENTION-GRABBING LEAD (1)

Read the topic sentence below:

Hiking the Inca Trail would be the experience of a lifetime.

The topic sentence tells us that the piece will be about the adventure of hiking the Inca Trail. 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. You may need to conduct research in order to respond

Descriptive Segment (write several phrases describing the experience of hiking on the Inca Trail.)

Amazing Fact (write an amazing or little known fact about the Inca Trail. Research it via the internet.)

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

Name _____

WRITING AN ATTENTION-GRABBING LEAD (2)

Read the topic sentence below:

Hiking the Inca Trail would be the experience of a lifetime.

The topic sentence tells us that the piece will be about the adventure of hiking the Inca Trail. 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 (Use the internet to find a quote from a travel expert or someone who has actually hiked the Inca Trail.)

Question (Question your reader directly about the experience of hiking the Inca Trail.)

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

Name _____

WRITING AN ATTENTION-GRABBING LEAD (3)

Read the topic sentence below:

Hiking the Inca Trail would be the experience of a lifetime.

The topic sentence tells us that the piece will be about the adventure of hiking the Inca Trail. 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 Inca Trail. Research this via the internet.)

Anecdote (Write a short, personal story or aspiration about the Inca Trail.)

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

Name _____

REVISE THESE BORING LEADS (1)

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. *This report will tell you all you need to know about the Grand Canyon.* The Grand Canyon is surely one of the world's natural wonders.

2. *Birding is a popular hobby.* There are many different types of birds to watch in wetlands and forests.

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

Name _____

REVISE THESE BORING LEADS (2)

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. *Someday I hope to learn how to tap a sugar maple tree.* It is not difficult to collect the sap of the sugar maple tree.

2. *It is interesting to learn about different cultures.* All around the world, indigenous people have created rich cultures.

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.

- 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.
- Write a topic sentence that specifically references each of the main ideas.

TOPIC: Birds

MAIN IDEA #1: Wading Birds

MAIN IDEA #2: Birds of Prey

MAIN IDEA #3: Parrots

Topic Sentences:

1. Some people keep birds as pets.
2. There are many unique types of big and small birds in the world.
3. _____

TOPIC: Mountain Ranges of the World

MAIN IDEA #1: The Andes

MAIN IDEA #2: The Alps

MAIN IDEA #3: The Rockies

Topic Sentences:

1. Avalanches occur regularly in the Alps.
2. All around the world, there are mountain ranges renowned for their scenic beauty.
3. _____

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

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: Summer Jobs

MAIN IDEA #1: Mowing lawns

MAIN IDEA #2: Babysitting

MAIN IDEA #3: Walking dogs

MAIN IDEA #4: Doing household chores

TOPIC SENTENCE #1: _____

TOPIC SENTENCE #2: _____

TOPIC: Visiting an Art Museum

MAIN IDEA #1: Paintings

MAIN IDEA #2: Sculpture

MAIN IDEA #3: Special exhibits

MAIN IDEA #4: Gift shop

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 (1)

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: _____



Name _____

WRITING THE INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH (2)

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.

As you approach your high school years, you’ll probably see that some of your classmates will be tempted to experiment with cigarette smoking. To help them resist that temptation, write an informational piece about the consequences of this deadly addiction. Make sure your essay describes the link between cigarette smoking and lung as well as heart disease, the effect of smoking on your dental health, the sad consequences of smoking during pregnancy, the expense of this habit and the importance of avoiding secondhand smoke.

TOPIC: Cigarette Smoking

MAIN IDEA #1: Lung and heart disease

MAIN IDEA #2: Dental health

MAIN IDEA #3: During pregnancy

MAIN IDEA #4: Expense

MAIN IDEA #5: Secondhand smoke

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 the Battle of the Little Big Horn – one focusing military strategies of General George Armstrong Custer and the other on those of Lakota Chief Crazy Horse. Write an essay describing the effectiveness of at least three of these tactics.

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

Givens: *The military strategies of two leaders*

Variables: *Which tactics were the most or the least effective?*

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

TOPIC: Crazy Horse vs. General Custer

MAIN IDEA #1: *Communication among the troops*

MAIN IDEA #2: *The initial charge*

MAIN IDEA #3: *Decoy tactics*

MAIN IDEA #4: *Taking hostages*

Ex. *These texts focus on the Battle of the Little Big Horn and the military strategies of its leaders, General George Armstrong Custer and Lakota Chief Crazy Horse. As the author explains, these strategies included maintaining communication among the troops, making an initial charge, using decoy tactics and taking hostage.*

3. **Turn a question into a response:** While both Crazy Horse and General Custer provided effective leadership, some of their tactics set the stage for victory and others for defeat at the Battle of the Little Big Horn.
4. **By combining these techniques students can compose a solid introduction paragraph:**

These texts focus on the Battle of the Little Big Horn and the military strategies of its leaders, General George Armstrong Custer and Lakota Chief Crazy Horse. As the author explains, these strategies included maintaining communication among the troops, making an initial charge, using decoy tactics and taking hostages. While both Crazy Horse and General Custer provided effective leadership, some of their tactics set the stage for victory and others for defeat at the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

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:

Gobi Desert

MAIN IDEA #1: Wild horses

MAIN IDEA #2: Birds of prey

MAIN IDEA #3: Flowering shrubs

TOPIC:

Saguara Desert

MAIN IDEA #1: Saguara cactus

MAIN IDEA #2: Venomous reptiles

MAIN IDEA #3: Predators

Now, imagine that you must respond to this assignment:

You've read two articles about the animals and botanicals found in desert ecosystems. The first text focuses on the Gobi Desert while the other article explores the Sagura Desert. Refer to both texts to write an essay outlining at least two ways in which plants and animals have adapted to survive in these arid environments.

1. What are the GIVENS in this assignment?

What are the VARIABLES?

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

3. Finally, turn the "why" question 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

So, 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.

After comparing their physical characteristics, their behavior, and the habitats in which they are found, it is clear that alligators and crocodiles share some similarities and some differences.

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.

Is it the alligator or the crocodile that sports a pointy snout? Which of these two remarkable reptiles is more aggressive? Where could we find alligators but not crocodiles - and vice versa? By comparing and contrasting these carnivorous cousins, it becomes obvious that they have distinct similarities and differences.

Analyze it:

1. Compare the “Before and After” concluding paragraphs.
2. Circle the word referent the author used in place of the words “alligators and crocodiles.”
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: Think of topic to compare and contrast, for example: another pair of animals, two cities you’d like to visit or two sports. On another sheet of paper, create a prewriting plan for that topic with at least three main ideas.

Name _____

REVISE THIS CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH

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.

Robotic technology is progressing at a rapid rate and will be invaluable to the military, the agricultural and manufacturing industries, and to space exploration in the future. 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:

- Can you imagine the potential of _____?
- Could robotic technology actually _____?
- Isn’t it amazing to think _____?
- Would you like to know more about _____?
- Aren’t you fascinated by _____?

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
highlight	discuss	illustrate	disclose
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					

Read each conclusion paragraph below. Use carets to insert one or more definitive words or phrases to make the conclusion paragraph more effective.

1. With their long, lush eyelashes and graceful necks, giraffes 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. These long-legged beauties are amazing.
2. If you live near a beach or lake, why not teach yourself how to fish? Once you learn how to select the right pole, bait your hook, cast your line, and reel in your catch, you'll find that it is a relaxing way to spend a summer afternoon. Whether you release your catch or take it home for dinner, fishing is a great sport!
3. Studies have shown that hobbies can help you improve your problem-solving abilities and alleviate stress. Regardless of whether you choose to collect coins or build model rockets, having a compelling leisure activity can boost your self-esteem and connect you with others who share your interests. Your hobby could become a healthy, lifelong passion!

BONUS: Find the word referent for GIRAFFE in the first paragraph and for HOBBY in the third.

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	
highlight	discuss	disclose	illustrate	become aware of	

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

If you’ve learned anything from this piece, it’s that you should never try to outrun a cheetah, under-estimate the speed of a falcon, or challenge an antelope to a race.

Now, rewrite the above conclusion paragraph restating each main idea using informational verbs and word referents. Make sure your revision includes a general restatement of the topic sentence and definitive words or phrases.

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>
Swimming	At a pool party At the beach At a hotel pool
Your hypothetical anecdote might read:	Whether you love splashing around in the salty surf at the beach or in the luxuriously heated waters of a hotel pool, swimming is certainly a fun fitness activity.

BONUS: Circle the word referent for “swimming” and underline the definitive word that can be found in the above example.

Now you try it:

<u>If your topic was:</u>	<u>Your reader might encounter your topic:</u>
Owls	_____

<u>If your topic was:</u>	<u>Your reader might encounter your topic:</u>
Winter sports	_____

On another sheet of paper or at the keyboard, turn your ideas into effective hypothetical anecdotes. Use the following sentence starters if needed:

<u>SENTENCE STARTERS:</u>	
• When you go _____.	• If you’re lucky, you’ll _____.
• The next time you _____.	• Have you ever _____.
• Someday you might have the chance to ____.	• If you ever decide to _____.

Name _____

ANALYZING MORE COMPLEX CONCLUSIONS (1)

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.

This report has provided facts about the atmosphere, clouds, and moons of the largest planet in our solar system, Jupiter. 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.

If you dream of someday exploring our solar system, you will certainly want to research the mysteries of the planet Jupiter. Perhaps you will discover exactly why this celestial giant has such a turbulent atmosphere, so many moons, and vividly colored clouds. Without a doubt, there is much left to learn about the largest planet in our universe.

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 word “Jupiter.”
- Underline the definitive words.
- Double underline the informational verbs.
- Place a check beside the general restatement of the topic sentence.

Name _____

ANALYZING MORE COMPLEX CONCLUSIONS (2)

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.

In this report, I have explained the geographical features, major industries, and government of Switzerland. It would be great to visit this small European country. 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.

If you ever get a chance to take a tour of Europe, make sure it includes a stop in Switzerland! With soaring Alpine peaks and clear mountain lakes, this charming country has some of the most scenic geographical features on the continent to explore. It is also known for its thriving industries and democratic government. Whether you're interested in skiing the Matterhorn or shopping for a Swiss watch the city of Zurich, this small nation is certainly worth a visit.

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 word “Switzerland.”
- 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 (1)

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

That's a quick overview of the history of Ireland from the Great Hunger to the Easter Rebellion and the Irish Civil War and finally onto the Good Friday Agreement. 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 _____

CRAFTING POWERFUL CONCLUSION PARAGRAPHS (2)

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

If you have a phobia, I hope this report has helped you. It covered the most common type of phobias as well as their causes and cures.

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 a compare and contrast piece about alligators vs. crocodiles. Brainstorm the associated topics that may spark your interest as you research that topic. (Two ideas have been provided for you.)

From the sophisticated city of Sydney to the rugged outback, the land down under is undeniably unique and, when it comes to wildlife, definitely dangerous. While deserving of our respect, we should all steer clear of the venomous box jellyfish, the aggressive saltwater crocodile and the bold brown snake.

Associated Topics:

wildlife management issues

the kangaroo

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: Alexander Hamilton

TOPIC: Thomas Jefferson

MAIN IDEA #1: Early life

MAIN IDEA #1: Declaration of Independence

MAIN IDEA #2: Military Accomplishments

MAIN IDEA #2: Secretary of State

MAIN IDEA #3: Secretary of the Treasury

MAIN IDEA #3: Presidency

MAIN IDEA #4: Duel with Aaron Burr

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 the founding fathers, Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson. Based on what you learned from these texts, write an essay about the conflicting views of these two political leaders. 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 _____

Alexander Hamilton

True or False: One of the most distinguished of the Founding Fathers of the United States died in a public duel with a political adversary. Strangely enough, that statement is 100% true. Alexander Hamilton, who overcame an impoverished childhood to become a Revolutionary War hero and the nation's first Secretary of the Treasury died in just that unseemly circumstance in 1804.

The life of this political leader began in the British West Indies, where he grew up in poverty after his father abandoned the family. Smart and ambitious, Hamilton was employed as an accounting clerk for an island merchant and learning about international commerce by the time he was 11 years old. Totally on his own at age 13 after his mother's death, the scrappy survivor so impressed his bosses that they sent him to New York for a formal education at King's College, today known as Columbia University, in 1773. However, with the American Revolution looming on the horizon, the bright boy left the world of academia to join forces with the Patriots and protest British taxation and business regulations.

When the Revolutionary War broke out, Hamilton was made captain of the New York Artillery Company and fought in the battles of Long Island, Trenton and White Plains. His outstanding leadership abilities captured the attention of George Washington. Not yet twenty years old, the impassioned patriot was promoted to a Lieutenant Colonel in Washington's Continental Army and spent the winter of 1777 at Valley Forge with the Commander-in-Chief. With shared political views and complimentary personalities, the two men forged a deep bond and Washington entrusted Hamilton to lead the charge at the Battle of Yorktown, securing a pivotal victory for America. After the war, he worked tirelessly for the ratification of the Constitution

Once elected the first president of the United States, Washington appointed Hamilton to his cabinet as the Secretary of the Treasury. Of course, the costs of the long war had left the new nation deeply in debt, but Hamilton distinguished himself in his new post by quickly and fairly paying back all monies owed. Among his other accomplishment during this time was the establishment of one of the first modern banking systems in the world and the promotion of American commerce on a global scale. While his brash policies definitely brought economic stability to the federal government, they were criticized as

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beneficial to an elite group of New York merchants and financiers who were related to Hamilton through his marriage. Thomas Jefferson, then the Secretary of State, spoke out boldly against the financial wizard and the two cabinet members grew to be arch-enemies.

Hamilton clashed too with another leading politician of the day named Aaron Burr. The feud between the two men began when Burr, a New York state senator, refused to support Hamilton's economic policies. It only grew more intense as Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr entered the presidential race of 1800. While Hamilton despised both candidates, he supported Jefferson who emerged the winner. Four years later, Burr ran for Governor of New York and Hamilton once again spoke out against him. The result was another humiliating defeat for Burr. His career in jeopardy and his ego battered, Burr challenged Hamilton to a duel and the two men met on a dueling field in Weehawken, New Jersey on July 11, 1804. Both men fired their .56 caliber weapons and Hamilton was mortally wounded. He died the following day

Today Alexander Hamilton's somber face gazes out at us from the \$10 bill and his life story has been brought to life through music and dance in a smash-hit Broadway musical. From his humble beginnings to his embarrassing death, this controversial trailblazer made powerful friends and enemies along the way as he distinguished himself on the battlefields of war and politics.

Name _____

Thomas Jefferson

“Do you want to know who you are? Don’t ask. Act! Action will delineate and define you.” That famous quote from Thomas Jefferson offers good advice for anybody who is eager to live a life of accomplishment. As the primary author of the Declaration of Independence, the nation’s first Secretary of State and third President, Thomas Jefferson certainly proved the wisdom of his own words.

Born on a flourishing Virginia plantation in 1743, Thomas Jefferson was thirty-two years old when he was elected to Congress and chosen to author the Declaration of Independence. In his characteristically eloquent writing style, he composed the first draft of the document, making a strong case for the colonist’s right to rebel against British government and establish their own independent nation devoted to the premise that all are “created equal and have the inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” After Jefferson presented his draft, a committee that included Benjamin Franklin and John Adams was formed to finalize it. Eighty-six revisions later, the completed declaration was released to the public on July 4, 1776, less than a month after Jefferson first began working on the decisive document. It is fascinating to note that Alexander Hamilton, who would become Jefferson’s nemesis in coming years, was instrumental in getting the Declaration of Independence swiftly approved by Congress.

Jefferson’s illustrious career continued with his appointment as the new nation’s first Secretary of State by President George Washington. Thoughtful and even-tempered, he made momentous contributions to U.S. diplomacy in this role but found it hard to work with the brash Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton. Polar opposites in terms of personality and political views, the two men disagreed about just about everything, including how to repay Revolutionary War debts and the establishment of a national bank. Hamilton was a proponent of a strong federal government, commerce and urbanization. Jefferson, ever the self-sufficient country gentleman, believed in states’ rights and saw agriculture as the key to growing the country’s economy. Also, since Washington and Hamilton had established such a close relationship during the Revolutionary War years, Jefferson often resented the Secretary of the Treasury’s influence on the President. Over time, he grew convinced that his ideas and opinions were not given proper consideration and ultimately resigned from his post.

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In 1801, Jefferson was elected the third President of the United States, beating Aaron Burr, who became his vice president. (Back then, when two candidates vied for the office, the one with the most votes became president and runner-up became vice president.) One of his first accomplishments was the purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France, an area of 820,000 square miles that doubled the size of the United States. He also paved the way for westward expansion by commissioning Merriwether Lewis and William Clark to explore the uncharted land between the Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean. The Lewis and Clark expedition yielded invaluable information about the geography, native people, plants and animals of the western United States. During his second term, he used his considerable diplomatic skills to keep the United States out of the Napoleonic Wars, a series of bloody conflicts between France and other European nations.

Who is the most influential of the Founding Fathers? Many believe the answer to that question is Thomas Jefferson. Without a doubt, this man of action and accomplishment made momentous contributions to history as an author of the Declaration of Independence, the first Secretary of State and a two-term President.