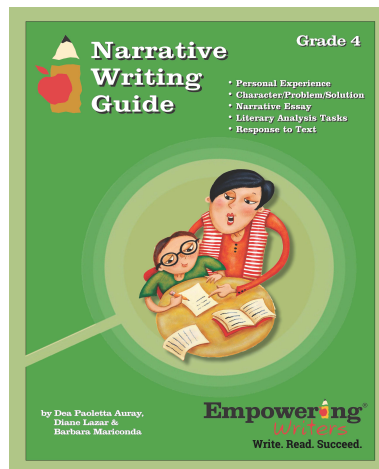




Grade 4 Narrative Writing Guide

Student Pages for Print or Projection

SECTION 1: Recognizing Genre/Organization



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Grade 4 Unit Pacing Guide Template

NARRATIVE UNIT START DATE: _____

NARRATIVE UNIT END DATE: _____

TOTAL DAYS ALLOWED FOR NARRATIVE UNIT: _____

Baseline: Day 1	Section 1: Recognizing Genre Weeks: _____	Section 3: Elaborative Detail Week: _____	Section 2: Beginnings and Section 6: Endings Week: _____	Section 4: Suspense Week: _____	Section 5: Main Event Weeks: _____	Section 7: Growth Line - Process Writing Weeks: _____
BEGIN the year with a baseline prompt - Section 7 of the resource will give the background knowledge - this will require at least 45-60 minutes Lesson 3: Administering Prompts as Timed Writing Assessments	<i>Focus</i> <i>Lessons:</i>	<i>Focus</i> <i>Lessons:</i>	<i>Focus</i> <i>Lessons:</i>	<i>Focus</i> <i>Lessons:</i>	<i>Focus</i> <i>Lessons:</i>	Complete a process piece where students can apply the skills they've learned to a whole piece Teacher Background - Process Writing Process Writing Projects - Process Writing Timeline
1 Day	_____ days	_____ days	_____ days	_____ days	_____ days	8 Days

Name _____

The Best Project Yet

Genre: Personal Experience

My grandfather looks up from his workbench and smiles at me. “Come on in, Katie,” he exclaims. He looks down at the wood in his old gnarled hands, but I can see he’s still smiling. The workbench has been all set up for me - a pile of small boards on one side, glue and paint on the other. Grandpa pats the seat beside him and I hop into the chair.

“A birdhouse,” he says. “We’ll each make one.” He hands me a piece of smooth wood, carefully cut. I take it in my hands and run my fingers over it. I can see how he’s spent a lot of time sanding it. My heart pounds a little as I imagine it hanging in the tree outside my window. This will be the best project yet, I think!

He speaks softly to me, explaining how to attach the sides, then the small pointy roof. The perch is the hardest part, and he steadies my small hands with his. He never takes the tools from my hands or tries to rush me. We work, side by side, and he lets me do the work.

I choose carefully from his whole shelf full of paints, and he puts the old tin can of bristly brushes of every shape and size on the worktable. Pale yellow for the walls, and dark green for the trim, that’s what I choose. We’re both quiet, Grandpa and me, both of us absorbed in our work, and feeling comfy and cozy together. We both stick our tongues out a little on the hard parts, and squint our eyes at the places where two colors meet - like two peas in a pod is what Grandma always says.

Finally we both sit back and admire our work. Funny thing - his birdhouse was painted gray and white - just like my house. Mine is yellow and green, just like his house. We smile at each other and he ruffles my hair with his hand. We both understand what we’ve done. We’ve each made a reminder of one another to keep in our own backyards. So at least when we’re far apart, we’re reminded of where the other of us is!

Grandpa gets the nutty smelling linseed oil and some small rags and we clean up. We don’t rush, and we don’t hurry, because right down to the last second, every project with my Grandpa feels like the best project yet!

Name _____

SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK:

This story is about _____ .

The problem/adventure/experience was that _____

_____ .

The problem was solved, adventure/experience concluded when

_____ .

What is the theme of the story? _____

(Go back and highlight the sections of the story that indicate the theme.)

Name _____

What in the World is He Making Out There?

Genre: Character/Problem/Solution

“Your grandfather’s in the barn,” said Grandma, shaking her head, “I have no idea what he’s up to out there.”

I practically ran out to Grandpa’s workshop. “I’m here!” I shouted as I raced toward the old wooden building. I slid open the door and there he was. His gray hair glistened like silver in the sunlight pouring in through the tall windows. He sat at the workbench like a mad scientist, covering his project with his hands, and grinning at me.

“So, what did you make this time?” I yelled. I pulled up a tall stool and sat next to him. “Show me!” I begged. Grandpa smiled but kept the project hidden. “You’ll see,” he said.

I looked around. Wood scraps littered the floor. Small pieces of electrical wire and batteries lay here and there. Grandpa had a wild look on his face. “This is my best invention yet,” he said. “Voila!” He pulled a small white cloth off of his invention.

“It’s a birdhouse!” I yelled. But it wasn’t just an ordinary birdhouse. It was a high-tech birdhouse. It had a little garage door, a front porch and an antennae on top. Grandpa held a remote unit in his hand. It looked like the one that had been missing from the T.V. in the house.

“Watch this,” he yelled. He pushed some buttons and the doors and windows opened. Lights went on and off and music played.

“Wow!” I shouted. What lucky bird will move into this house?”

“You’ll see,” said Grandpa, “It’s all yours! Put it in the tree outside your bedroom window at home. Then let me know what happens.”

I couldn’t wait to get home. I put the birdhouse in the giant oak just outside my bedroom window. It wasn’t long before a small brown sparrow flew over to inspect. I could almost hear him tweet with delight. He flew off, and an instant later was back with some straw and twigs to build a nest inside. I couldn’t wait to see this...but then, another bird swooped down, this time a large blue jay.

The blue jay squawked and pulled the sparrow’s nest right out of the birdhouse. Grandpa always said blue jays were aggressive, but I never knew they’d kick a poor little sparrow right out of its nest! The sparrow tweeted angrily and flew around in a furious fit of rage, but the blue jay was bigger. It was no use.

(continued)

But it didn't end there. Next, a crow landed and before I could say "four and twenty blackbirds" he'd kicked the blue jay out and taken over the high-tech birdhouse. This was better than watching a boxing match! Now the sparrow and the jay flew around making a racket, and before you knew it, a seagull booted out the crow. A horned owl chased the sea gull away. Before I knew what was happening, a duck, a goose, a hawk, and an eagle were fighting over the high-tech bird mansion! Feathers flew in a furious cloud of dust. I covered my ears to block out the squawking, hooting, and cawing. Who would win out and live in the birdhouse of all birdhouses?

Then, it happened. The neighborhood tomcat snuck over to watch the bird brawl. He inched up on them. I rapped on the window, hoping to scare him off, but he was too interested in the birds. That was when I got the idea! I got the remote and pushed this button, then that one. I shut down all the birdhouse doors and windows. Lights blinked on and off. I think the crow was in the garage, and the owl was in the main part of the bird house, locked in. Mom and Grandma were just walking up the driveway with the groceries when the sparrow tried to fly down the birdhouse chimney, and the eagle dive-bombed at the cat. The cat howled and took off running, knocking the bags from Mom's hands and sending all the groceries flying!

"What in the world?" yelled Mom. Grandma just shook her head and muttered, "Another one of Grandpa's crazy inventions gone berserk, I'm sure."

It wasn't long before Grandpa came to collect his high-tech birdhouse. Grandma came with him. She had a big bag that she handed to me.

"Here," she said. "This will work out much better." I opened the bag. It was an old fashioned birdhouse, the one that used to hang in the maple tree next to Grandma and Grandpa's house. Grandpa shrugged as he put the high-tech birdhouse into the bag and loaded it in his car. "Back to the drawing board, I guess," he said. "Oh no you don't," warned Grandma, wagging her finger at him.

Grandpa and Grandma got into their car. I hoped Grandpa wouldn't give up. I waved as they pulled away.

That was when Grandpa slowed down. He rolled down the window and gave me a big wink. I'll bet that in a month or so he'd be back - with a new and improved high-tech birdhouse!

Name _____

SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK:

This story is about _____ .

The problem/adventure/experience was that _____

_____ .

The problem was solved, adventure/experience concluded when

_____ .

What is the theme of the story? _____

(Go back and highlight the sections of the story that indicate the theme.)

Name _____

Making a Birdhouse

Genre: Informational

Do you enjoy nature? Are you someone with an appreciation for wildlife? Do you like to work with your hands? If you answered yes to any of these questions you will enjoy learning about an exciting and fun craft project - building a birdhouse!

A sturdy, well constructed birdhouse is usually made from a pattern. Easy to follow patterns can be purchased at your local craft store or home improvement center. There are many different designs - one for just about every skill level from beginner to advanced. Included with your pattern will be photographs of the birdhouse. You might decide on a Swiss Chalet style, something that looks like a rustic cabin, or a cozy cottage. Be sure to read about the tools you'll need to cut and assemble the pattern you choose.

Most birdhouses are crafted out of wood, so the proper tools are a must. Some people like to use 1/4 inch pine, but plywood can work just as well. Begin with about four or five feet of 12 inch wide wood. Cut out the pattern pieces and trace the pattern for the roof, walls, and floor onto the wood with a pencil. You might need someone to help you cut the wood. A table saw or band saw that can cut on a curve is usually necessary and it is important to know how to use the saw safely. Goggles will prevent wood chips, splinters, or sawdust from blowing into your eyes.

Once all the pieces are cut out, you can begin assembling and decorating your birdhouse. Nails or screws will hold the walls, ceiling, and floor together. Glue can also be used for extra strength. A small dowel can be placed in a hole drilled in the front as a perch. You can paint your birdhouse in any color or style you like, or, you can leave it natural. Some people enjoy adding humorous touches such as a house number, window curtains, or a chimney. Let your imagination run wild!

Once completed, place your birdhouse in the great outdoors, either in a tree or on a tall pole. Before you know it, all of your planning, cutting, and decorating will pay off when a family of beautiful sparrows, wrens, or bluebirds move in! Then the real fun begins - bird watching right in your own backyard!

Informational Writing Summarizing Framework

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

etc. _____

Name _____

A Birdhouse in the Yard is Better than TV!

Genre: Opinion Writing

Can you imagine seeing a nature show in your own backyard? Would you enjoy the drama of watching avian burglars raiding a house right before your very eyes? Would you chuckle at the sight of baby birds perched outside your birdhouse getting ready to take flight? You can see this and so much more if you have a collection of birdhouses in your backyard like I do! As far as I'm concerned, watching the activity around a birdhouse is way better than TV!

Observing birds building their nests is an amazing sight. Each year in the early spring my mom and I open the back of each birdhouse and clean out last year's nest. Before we throw it away I examine it closely. The sparrows had woven a perfect round bowl of tiny twigs in which to lay their eggs. Looking closer I can spot other nesting materials – bits of paper and small scraps of cloth, a shred of bubble wrap, long strands of grass or hay, fluffy feathers and bits of leaves. I enjoy this detective work because it helps me as I watch the birds build their new nests. Once the birdhouse is back in the tree Mom and I keep our eyes peeled. We get excited when we see the new sparrows flying back and forth with their building materials in their beaks. It's fun to watch with binoculars and try to identify all of their nesting supplies. This keeps Mom and me at the window for a week at least!

Another thing I look forward to is what I call "bird drama." Brightly colored blue jays sometimes raid the nests of other birds. We're entertained by their loud raucous calls and we watch them circle and swoop around the birdhouses trying to scare away the sparrows. Mom and I root for the little spunky sparrows and applaud when they defend their house and the nest inside. Once we even took a video of all the action and added a suspenseful musical background track. We never got tired of playing that for family and friends. It was not only fun, but creative!

I think the best part of watching our birdhouses is when the baby birds are born. When you walk by the birdhouse the mother bird dive bombs by to scare you away and protect the nestlings. Mom and I laugh and duck out of the way. It is a delight to hear

(continued)

the high-pitched peeping and chirping of the baby birds in the birdhouse demanding to be fed. We watch the parents bring food back to the house to feed their hungry brood. Soon the straggly, wobbly babies venture out of the house and begin to learn to fly. It's so much fun to entice them to our bird feeder by the window so we can watch them up close.

Have I convinced you that setting up and observing a birdhouse is an enjoyable and satisfying activity? You may not think that watching birds make their nests in a birdhouse, rooting for them as they defend themselves against bird intruders, and following the growth of baby birds is as exciting as TV – but that might just be because you haven't tried it yet!

Opinion Writing Summarizing Framework

TOPIC: _____

MAIN REASON #1: _____

MAIN REASON #2: _____

MAIN REASON #3: _____

Name _____

NARRATIVE, INFORMATIONAL, OR OPINION?

Read each paragraph. Decide if you think it is **NARRATIVE** which is written to entertain you, **INFORMATIONAL** which is written to **INFORM** you, or **OPINION** which is written to express a personal opinion. Circle your answers.

- Clara walked through the garden gate and looked around. She'd never seen such a beautiful place! Huge red roses covered the stone wall. The brick path was lined with pansies. Colorful butterflies landed here and there. She took a deep breath and enjoyed the sweet smell of the flowers. She strolled along, imagining what kinds of magic might take place in this special garden.

Narrative

Informational

Opinion

- Hermit crabs are easy pets to care for. All you need is a tank, a water bowl, and some crab food. These land crabs live in shells left behind by other creatures. The shells protect the crabs. As they grow, the shell may become too small. Then, they leave that shell and move into a new, bigger shell. You can watch your pet hermit crabs crawl, climb, eat, and drink. But watch out! These small crabs have sharp claws and they might pinch you if you do not handle them carefully!

Narrative

Informational

Opinion

- The moving van pulled up in front of our house. I felt the tears well up in my eyes. We'd be moving all the way across the country. I'd be leaving my best friend Sarah, and having to start at a new school in the middle of the school year. I was lonely already. No matter how much Mom talked about how nice it was in our new town, it didn't matter. I wanted to stay right here.

Narrative

Informational

Opinion

BONUS: Go back and look at the narrative paragraphs. Are they **CHARACTER/ PROBLEM/SOLUTION** or **PERSONAL EXPERIENCE** narratives?

Name _____

NAME THE GENRE! (1)

Read the following paragraphs. For each paragraph determine whether it is Narrative, Informational, or Opinion. If it's a narrative, do you think it's a personal experience narrative or a character/problem/solution narrative? Circle your answers and be ready to explain them.

1. Jeremy the Cat and Dodie the Rat glared at one another. Dodie began to back into the hole she'd gnawed in the cottage wall. She never took her eyes off of Jeremy, whose eyes sparkled and tail twitched. Jeremy licked his chops and began to creep toward Dodie. Dodie began to tremble. Stay calm, Dodie thought, as she slowly edged toward her rat hole.

Narrative

Informational

Opinion

If narrative - Character/problem/solution or Personal Experience?

2. Since the earliest times people have played flute-like instruments to make beautiful music. In ancient Egypt flutes were crafted out of the hollow reeds that grew along the Nile. Early European people carved instruments called recorders out of hard wood from the trees that grew in the countryside. Some prehistoric people even carved animal bones and antlers into simple flutes.

Narrative

Informational

Opinion

If narrative - Character/problem/solution or Personal Experience?

3. My favorite mode of transportation is a bicycle. I just love grabbing my bike and pedaling off to school. This easy travel mode gets me there in a fraction of the time all while having the exhilaration of the wind in my hair and a bit of blood pumping exercise. I think the best part about taking my bike to school is when classes are over I am ready for endless hours of fun with my friends as we hit the bike paths that circle around our school.

Narrative

Informational

Opinion

If narrative - Character/problem/solution or Personal Experience?

Name _____

NAME THE GENRE! (2)

Read the following paragraphs. For each paragraph determine whether it is Narrative, Informational, or Opinion. If it's a narrative, do you think it's a personal experience narrative or a character/problem/solution narrative? Circle your answers and be ready to explain them.

1. I felt the cold air whip against my cheek and pulled my scarf a little tighter around my neck. I smiled as I gazed down the snow-covered slope. It would be a great day for sledding. I positioned my sled, aiming it down the steep hill. My heart beat in a rush and I threw myself across the sled, pushing off. The sled started off slowly and gained speed. I felt the wind in my face and my eyes watered. What a thrill it was to speed down the hill like a rocket!

Narrative

Informational

Opinion

If narrative - Character/problem/solution or Personal Experience?

2. I knew it hadn't been a good idea to venture into the old house. But, I'd always wanted to know what was inside. Was it really haunted? My curiosity got the best of me, and I'd opened the big wooden rickety door. It creaked and screeched on its rusted old hinges - a sound that sent chills up and down my spine. I moved slowly, cautiously inside, squinting to adjust to the darkness. The door shut behind me, and to my horror I heard a loud CLICK - the sound of the lock rotating and snapping into place. I grabbed the handle and desperately turned it left and right. It didn't budge. I was locked in!

Narrative

Informational

Opinion

If narrative - Character/problem/solution or Personal Experience?

3. My eye traveled across the room which was divided into cozy sectioned off areas lined with soft, fragrant cedar chips. My heart began to thump as I caught sight of the puppies in each area - tiny sad-faced pugs with comical bulging eyes and tiny, silky brown and black Yorkies, small enough to slip into a pocket! But my heart flipped over when my eyes rested on the lone Golden Retriever pup gazing at me from across the room. His soulful brown eyes turned me into jello. This would be my dog - I felt it in my bones!

Narrative

Informational

Opinion

If narrative - Character/problem/solution or Personal Experience?

Name _____

NAME THE GENRE! (3)

Read the following paragraphs. For each paragraph determine whether it is Narrative, Informational, or Opinion. If it's a narrative, do you think it's a personal experience narrative or a character/problem/solution narrative? Circle your answers and be ready to explain them.

1. Dogs make loyal, helpful pets. A well-trained canine can be taught to fetch the newspaper or your slippers. When you're feeling lonely a dog is likely to nuzzle against you, wag its tail, and make you feel as though you are the most important person in the universe. Of course, the barking of a good watchdog is perhaps a better deterrent against burglars than an alarm system!

Narrative

Informational

Opinion

If narrative - Character/problem/solution or Personal Experience?

2. I heard the snarling before I saw him. The dog was huge, a growling, teeth-baring brown and black monster. He stared up at me while inching across the yard with its tail down and the fur along its back standing on end. "Nice Doggie," I whispered, as I backed along the fence. The beast lunged at me, tearing the leg of my pants. I stifled a scream and backed up, desperately trying to stay calm.

Narrative

Informational

Opinion

If narrative - Character/problem/solution or Personal Experience?

3. The best pet of all is definitely a dog. I enjoy everything about my canine companion. I love playing fetch and Frisbee with him in the yard and taking long walks in the woods and along the shore. My dog is affectionate and gentle, but also lively and smart. It's so much fun to teach him to do tricks like playing dead and rolling over. I adore how he looks at me with his big brown eyes and my heart beats a little faster when his tail thumps a warm greeting as I walk into the house after school.

Narrative

Informational

Opinion

If narrative - Character/problem/solution or Personal Experience?

Going Solo

Splash! The gentle waves lapped against the side of my sailboat. The sun glistened on the water and noisy white gulls soared overhead. It was a perfect day for a sail! I checked the rudder and the tiller, spread out the sails, attached the halyards and the mainsail. Where was Will? I glanced at my watch for the third time. We had planned to meet twenty minutes ago.

I sighed. My boat was ready, my life vest on, but my sailing partner was nowhere to be seen. My parents had made it clear that I wasn't experienced enough to sail solo – at least not yet. "Zach," my dad had said, "New England weather can change in a heartbeat. In a squall, another pair of hands can make all the difference." I bit my lower lip. What should I do? I was confident I could handle myself out there in the bay. The water was calm, the sky blue. Why not just take a short sail? What harm could it do? I pushed the little nagging worry I felt aside and concentrated on preparing to launch.

I finished raising the mainsail, secured it, and untied from the pier. Before I knew it the sails snapped as they caught the wind. My heart leapt as the boat easily cut through the water throwing up a fine mist. The exhilaration nearly blocked out the guilt I felt about disobeying my dad. But as the wind whipped through my hair and I expertly guided the boom to adjust the sails I forgot all about the rules. The northeasterly wind carried my boat effortlessly. "Woo hoo!" I yelled, feeling more confident by the minute. This was what I loved about sailing – flying across the water, free as a bird. A gull glided overhead, wings extended and still, coasting on the sea air, keeping pace with my boat. A grin spread across my face. It was as though the gull and I were brothers, both of us taking advantage of the wind. The sun glittered on the water – it was like sailing on a sea of diamonds. A school of fish skirted the surface of the water alongside the boat. The shoreline shrunk to a thin line in the distance before it completely disappeared. Without really realizing it I'd left the bay and found myself on the open ocean.

That's when everything changed. Suddenly the waves got choppier. The wind rapidly changed direction. This was a different kind of sailing! It took all my

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attention to control the sailboat. I'd have to turn the boat around to sail back into the bay, but that would mean sailing into the wind. My arms ached with the effort, my stomach tied in knots. The air grew colder as a large cloud drifted in front of the sun. As I unsuccessfully tried to turn the boat back I was pelted with the first raindrop. In seconds there was a downpour. The ocean didn't seem like my friend anymore! The wind roared and waves crashed. My boat listed dangerously to one side, skimming the surface of the ocean. I leaned back as far as I could to level the boat. A dark foamy wave ripped across the deck. Soaking wet and shivering, I struggled to keep the boat afloat. How would I ever make it back to shore? The sky turned dark. Thunder rumbled in the distance. It was hard to concentrate with the rising panic in my throat. I tacked back and forth in a desperate attempt to navigate back into the bay. The boat would turn a bit, then veer off course again. Every muscle in my body screamed. The word "help" was on the tip of my tongue, but there was no one to hear me.

Painfully, little by little, I managed to turn the boat a bit and zigzag back into the bay. Tears brimmed when I caught sight of the shore. My knees were weak with relief. As I got closer I could see a small crowd of people. My mom and dad. Will and his dad. Will must have called my house when he couldn't go sailing. That tipped them off.

With trembling hands I tied up to the pier and they all ran toward me. My mom was crying as we shared a huge group hug. "Zachary, what were you thinking?" she whispered. I couldn't answer. The memory of the wave tipping the boat sideways was still too fresh. I couldn't meet my dad's eyes, but I felt his arms around me. It was just so good to feel the ground beneath my feet and the love of my family! Of course, I got in big trouble, but it seemed like nothing compared to what might have happened. I'd have to wait a long time to go sailing again, but that was okay. That squall had taught me an important lesson!

Name _____

SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK:

This story is about _____.

The problem/adventure/experience was that _____

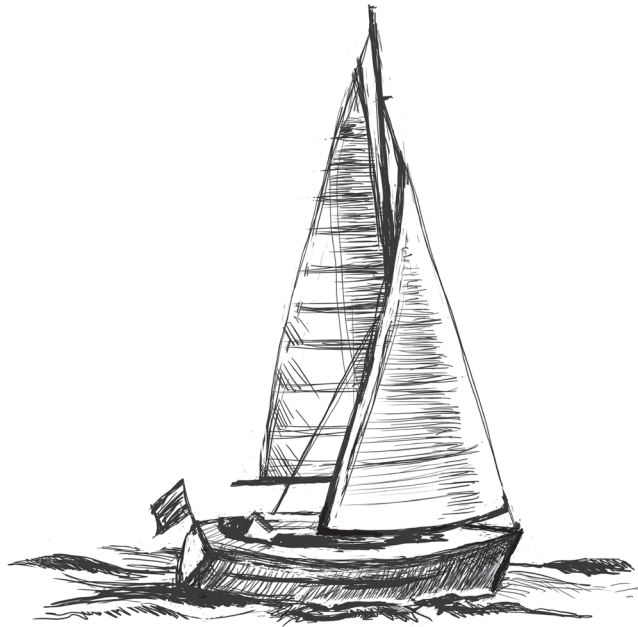
_____.

The problem was solved, adventure/experience concluded when

_____.

What is the theme of the story? _____

(Go back and highlight the sections of the story that indicate the theme.)



Name _____

The Treasure Hunt

The warm sparkling water lapped about my ankles as I made my way along the tropical island beach. I was out for an afternoon of exploring, eager to discover whatever secrets the island might hold.

I glanced around. Palm trees swayed in the breeze. Huge colorful flowers bloomed amidst thick, lush greenery. The sun glinted off of the jewel blue waves. I followed a narrow path that led away from the beach a bit. Suddenly I came to a clearing of sorts, a peculiar circular area in which the vegetation had been hacked away. A pile of cut branches lay on the top as if to cover or camouflage something. How, strange, I thought. Who would have gone to all this trouble to cut away this patch of underbrush and then cover it up again? I scratched my head and looked more closely. I pushed aside the branches and noticed that the ground beneath looked as though it had been disturbed, as though someone had dug a hole. My heart began to beat faster. Had something been buried here, I wondered.

I looked this way and that, and confident that no one else was around I began to dig. The earth flew beneath my fingers and in no time at all I had made a fairly deep hole. If I had a shovel the job would be much easier. That was when I noticed the cracked coconut shell on the ground. "Perfect!" I yelled as I grabbed for it. Its tough curved surface made a handy scoop and my task began to move along more quickly.

Before long my makeshift shovel hit something solid. I blinked the sweat out of my eyes, wiped my forehead with the back of my arm, and reached into the hole. I cleared away the last layer of dirt and gasped!

It was the size of a large suitcase and made of smooth wood. I ran my hand along it and felt several cool brass fittings that spanned its curved top. A metal latch held it closed. It was a treasure chest!

My heart raced and my stomach did a little flip. My hands shook as I pried open the latch and lifted the lid. I closed my eyes for a moment and then peered into the chest.

My heart fell! It was empty! Apparently some other treasure hunter had beat me to it! Sadly, I dragged the chest out of the hole. I stared into it imagining the gold and jewels that probably once filled it to the brim.

(continued)

That was when something caught my eye. Something small and shiny, something wedged in the far, dark corner of the chest. I reached in, grasping with eager fingers.

It was a small gold charm! As I picked it up I realized that it was attached to a fine golden chain. I blew the dust off of it and held it up to the sun. It was an odd shape, and I turned it this way and that. Then it struck me! The charm was crafted into the shape of the very island on which I stood. I'd studied the map enough to recognize it! But there was something else – a tiny ruby chip set into the gold, way off to one side. How unusual and beautiful, I thought as I placed the chest back in the ground and carefully covered it back up.

As I hung the necklace around my neck I realized that this leftover, forgotten token would always serve as a reminder of my adventure – but not just a reminder! I was certain that the ruby chip marked the spot where the treasure had been buried. I decided to return again, next year perhaps, and see if there might be another forgotten treasure awaiting me!

SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK:

This story is about _____ .

The problem/adventure/experience was that _____

_____ .

The problem was solved, adventure/experience concluded when

_____ .

What is the theme of the story? _____

(Go back and highlight the sections of the story that indicate the theme.)

Name _____

Garden School – My Home Away from Home

When you first see Garden School with its old-fashioned brick and stone entrance way surrounded by tall oak trees and beautifully sculpted bushes you might feel as though you're stepping into the past. But actually, I believe this century-old structure is home to the best and most modern school anywhere! There's no place I'd rather spend my days than at Garden School – the beautiful building, excellent teachers, and friendly atmosphere make it my home away from home.

I absolutely adore my classroom in the old wing of the building. One entire wall is taken up with enormous old, paned windows. I enjoy gazing out into the boughs of the trees outside, watching the birds and squirrels, thinking about my work or just daydreaming. I really appreciate the old fashioned building, with thick fancy doors and woodwork. There's even an old fireplace in one end of our room surrounded by old-fashioned tiles. I love it during the holiday season when our principal comes in and lights a fire and we share popcorn popped in our own fire, just like in the olden days.

The building may be old, but I feel that the teaching and learning environment is creative, stimulating, and so much fun. I get really excited about all of the technology we share. There's nothing I'd rather do than use our computer station and to check out my own tablet to conduct research. I could spend hours collecting images to illustrate a report or create a collage. And, to me, Smartboard lessons are the best! Our teacher puts our writing up there and we color-code and revise it. I like pretending I'm an editor working on an important book. As much as I love the technology, I also enjoy our fish tank, classroom library, and reading corner. In my opinion, my classroom is the absolute best and coziest place to settle in and learn!

(continued)

From my point of view, what makes Garden School so wonderful is the friendly atmosphere. I'm so impressed that our principal, Ms. Hartz, greets every single student by name. I love my teacher, Ms. Cardoza, and trust her to be fair and to help me when I need help. To me, our nurse, Mrs. Caron, is like a mom away from home. She makes me feel welcome and safe whenever I go into her office. As far as I'm concerned there's not a school anywhere that has music, phys-ed, and art teachers who are as much fun as ours. I appreciate how talented they are and how they work so joyfully to pass these special skills along to us.

It's true, there's no place like home, but when you have to go to school it doesn't get better than Garden School. I'm so fond of the building itself, am excited about the learning that takes place there, and adore the friendly atmosphere. If I ever had to move, what I'd miss most of all would be Garden School.

SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK:

MAIN REASON #1: _____

MAIN REASON #2: _____

MAIN REASON #3: _____

Name _____

The Garden School Monster

It all started with a dare. "Bet you don't have the guts to sneak down to the basement of the school," Jackson taunted. I regretted my response the moment the words flew from my mouth. "How much you wanna bet?"

We'd all heard about the basement of the century old building. It was rumored to be dark as a dungeon and smelled musty and damp. Up in our classrooms we could hear the gigantic old boiler churning and belching. It was like a big mechanical monster hiding in its cave waiting for an unsuspecting student to happen by.

Jackson grinned wickedly. "I'll bet you twenty bucks you won't do it!" He must have been pretty sure of himself.

"Deal!" I said, thinking of what I could buy with that money. The question was, how would I do it? Students weren't allowed down there.

All day long I worried. Sweat formed on my brow and my knees felt like rubber. I looked at the clock. Five minutes until dismissal. I raised my hand and pointed to the bathroom pass. Miss Tucker nodded. I got up, grabbed the pass, and headed out the door.

I slunk past the boy's room, casting a glance over my shoulder to see if anyone was around. The hall was deserted. I took a deep breath and ran toward the stairwell. Down the first flight, then the second. I hesitated. But there was no turning back. I took hold of the doorknob with trembling hands and slipped through the door. It closed behind me with a swoosh and a clunk. The sounds of the school disappeared as I entered this dim, mysterious inner sanctum. I crept down the stairs, sweaty hand on the railing. It was dark down there, with no light coming in except through the narrow windows along the top of the wall.

Suddenly a coughing, sputtering sound stopped me short. It was followed by a huge whooshing noise - the boiler! At the same time a grotesque shadow loomed across my path and danced against the wall. A monster-like silhouette - huge head with wild hair, an enormous nose and protruding jaw, something that looked like a club clenched in its paws. I

(continued)

jumped back into the shadows, my heart racing. The shadowy beast shuffled toward me, closer and closer. I shut my eyes and held my breath, hoping against hope that I wouldn't be detected.

"Ahhhh!" the beast hollered.

"Ahhhh!" I screamed. My eyes flew open.

Mr. Mac, our custodian, stood before me, holding a mop, his other hand over his heart. "What are you doing here?" he cried. "You scared me half to death!"

"I'm sorry!" I gasped. "Jackson dared me to come down here. Kids say that..."

Mr. Mac grinned. "I know what they say. That there's a monster in the basement." He winked at me. "I have an idea..." He pulled out a pair of scissors, and snipped off a few filthy wet strands of yarn from the mop and handed them to me. "Monster hair," he said.

"Thanks Mr. Mac," I answered, and headed up the stairs. As I opened the door I came face-to-face with my class heading to the bus. Jackson stared, wide-eyed. I held up the proof that I'd ventured into the basement. "Monster hair!" I exclaimed. "Time to pay up!"

Miss Tucker glared at me, took me by the shoulder, and marched me toward the office. But, seeing Jackson's surprise made it all worthwhile. As I took a seat in the detention chair I dreamed about how I would spend my twenty bucks!

SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK:

This story is about _____.

The problem/adventure/experience was that _____

_____.

The problem was solved, adventure/experience concluded when

_____.

Name _____

Garden School in the Old Days

Imagine the sound of the old school bell clanging, and the sight of boys in knickers and suspenders, and girls in pipe curls, long dresses and high button boots, all waiting to file inside. The year was 1902, the year that Garden School opened its doors. School was not the same then – the building and furniture, the way teachers taught, and the school rules were all very different than what we experience today. Let's take a look back at this typical turn of the century school.

If you walked into Garden School the day it opened you might be surprised at the building itself and the furniture within. This three-story brick structure had twelve-foot high ceilings and each outside classroom wall was lined with rows of huge, paned windows that could only be opened with a long window pole hook. A black chalkboard covered the front wall of each classroom. Student desks were made of oak and came with a hole on the writing surface called an inkwell that held a pot of ink. Each desk was attached to the chair by fancy metal trim. The tops of the desks opened up, so there was no reaching into your desk as you worked! In the back of the class was a cloakroom where students hung their coats and belongings.

Teachers taught differently in 1902. Most of the teachers were women and they were very stern. This was a necessity with forty or fifty students in a class! Students had to read aloud from books called primers. They memorized poetry and their math facts in order to improve their powers of memory. Practicing penmanship with a fountain pen was difficult, and students would be punished for spilled ink, stained hands, and splotted papers. To maintain order, desks were arranged in neat rows. Because of the

(continued)

large numbers of students there was little time for individual help. There were no computers, videos, or other modern tools. Instead they depended on books, the blackboard, and pull-down maps to access and list information they needed.

When Garden School opened, schools were much stricter. No one was allowed to talk out of turn or get up without permission. In those days no few recognized the value of peer conversations or cooperative learning. If students broke the rules they might be whacked on the knuckles with a ruler or be made to write an apology on the board a hundred times. A common punishment for either poor behavior or less than acceptable school work was the "dunce cap". The student would sit on a stool in the corner and be forced to wear a large pointed hat. It was meant to embarrass a student in front of his or her peers. Students who misbehaved might be immediately sent home or to the principal's office for a spanking.

Think about your experience in school. How does it compare to Garden School in 1902? The building and furnishings, the methods of teaching, and the rules all made learning very different than it is now. Can you imagine what school might be like one hundred years in the future?

SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

ETC. _____

Name _____

TURNING QUESTIONS INTO RESPONSES

An easy way to answer response to text questions is to turn the important parts of the question into the beginning of your response. Look at the questions below, followed by the beginning of a response. Using this technique ensures that your answers will be written in complete sentences. Your teacher will select a story for you to reread. Then, answer each of these questions about the story, by turning the question into the beginning of your response. The first two have been started for you.

1. Who was *the main point of view character*?

The main point of view character was _____ .

2. What was *the setting*?

The setting was _____ .

3. What was *the problem or adventure*?

_____ .

4. What was *the main character's motivation*?

(What did the main character want?)

_____ .

_____ .

5. What caused *the conflict in the story*?

_____ .

KICK IT UP A NOTCH!

To improve the writing, try varying the way each of above sentences begin. On another sheet of paper, or at the keyboard, REVISE the complete sentences you created by using the sentence starters below.

In this story _____ .

In the story titled (title here) _____ .

The author introduces us to _____, our main character.

We immediately meet (main character's name) _____, the hero of the story.

The story took place _____ .

The story was set _____ .

The protagonist, (main character's name) wanted _____ .

(Main character's name) was trying to _____ .

The author created tension when _____ (conflict) _____ .

The problem began when _____ .

Name _____

DIGGING DEEPER – BE A TEXT DETECTIVE!

To get the most out of a story, it's important to not just think about the action, but to consider why things happened in the story. What might the character's feelings have to do with it? What caused the character to feel as she or he felt? How did you feel about the events in the story? What about the things an author implies but doesn't actually explain? This involves looking for evidence in the text. Look at the questions below. Your teacher will select a story for you to reread. Then, on another sheet of paper or at the keyboard, answer each of the questions below about the story using the sentence starters provided. You may also turn each question into a response by repeating the key parts.

1. In the story, how did (*character*) feel about his/her situation?
2. How do you know how (*character*) felt?
3. Did you ever have a similar experience? When?
4. How did you feel during your experience?
5. What did (*character*) learn from his/her experience?
6. What did you learn from your experience?
7. Why did you empathize with (*character*)?



Sentence Starters:

1. It was clear ___ was feeling ___ because_____.
2. This was evidenced by_____.
3. I understand the way_____felt because_____.
4. I'll never forget the time _____when_____.
5. A similar experience I had was_____.
6. I could really empathize with her/him because_____.
7. It's easy to understand why_____because_____.
8. Although I never had an experience like this, I can imagine_____.
9. This scene kept my interest because_____.



Name _____

THEME IN STORY

When someone asks, “What was that story all about?” the reader might talk about the character, setting, the plot, motivation, and conflict. But there’s also a deeper meaning that is responsible for all of the choices the author makes. This deeper meaning (sometimes called the BIG IDEA) is called **theme**. For example, the theme of a story might be the importance of honesty. The plot, the main character’s motivation and conflict would all demonstrate the importance of honesty. Perhaps the main character was dishonest and learned a difficult lesson because of telling a lie. Or, maybe the main character struggled to be honest, but it paid off in the end. Here are some other common themes found in stories and literature:

Common Literary Themes

- Friendship
- Loyalty
- Justice
- Honesty
- Compassion
- Responsibility
- Being true to yourself
- Learning from mistakes
- Value of hard work
- Forgiveness
- Courage
- Ambition
- Importance of Family
- Cooperation
- Appreciating what you have
- Gift of Nature

Think and Discuss!

Call to mind your favorite narrative book. What was the **theme**? How do you know? What did the main character do, feel, or learn over the course of the story that points to the theme? Discuss this with your class!

Write about it!

Reread the story Going Solo to determine what the theme might be. Be sure to look for evidence in the text to support your ideas. Then, using the Sentence Starters below, write about the theme, providing evidence.

Sentence Starters:

- It’s clear the theme of this story is _____ because _____.
- Throughout the story the main character struggles with _____.
- The big idea throughout this story is _____.
- The main character displays _____.
- As I read, the theme _____.
- This is illustrated when _____.
- The evidence of theme appears when _____.
- Another illustration of this is when _____.
- At each important point in the plot we see _____.
- The author also echoes this theme when _____.

Name _____

**MAKE-IT-YOUR-OWN
FRAMING QUESTIONS FOR NARRATIVE STORIES**

_____ Story

_____ Author

1. Who is the main point of view character in the story?
2. Where is the story set?
3. What is the mood of the story? (How does the word choice make you feel?)
4. What is the main character's problem, challenge or adventure?
5. What is the main character's motivation? (What does the main character want?)
6. What is the main character's conflict? (Who or what stands in the way of the main character's motivation?)
7. Where does the author use suspense and/or foreshadowing?
8. How does the main character feel about the situation?
9. How does the main character show his/her feelings?
10. How does the main character grow and change in response to story events?
11. What is the theme of the story and how is it demonstrated?
12. Have you ever experienced something similar? Describe.
13. How did you feel about the experience you had?

*Remember, some of these questions can be influential or evaluative in nature.

Sentence Starters for Responding to Literature

The reader discovers that _____.

We recognize _____.

The author reveals _____.

(Character's name) was motivated by _____.

_____ contributed to the story conflict.

This is evidenced by _____.

In this story _____.

The reader realizes _____.

At the beginning it's clear that _____.

As the story unfolds, _____.

The plot centers around _____.

In the story, the evidence suggests _____.

It isn't long before we discover _____.

Through the text we learn that _____.

Clearly, the theme was _____.

The main character's point of view is _____.

The author definitely shows _____.

We see this when _____.

For example, _____.

Furthermore, _____.

Additionally, _____.

From the start, _____.

However, _____.

As a result, _____.

An illustration of this _____.

Similarly, _____.

I believe _____ because _____.

From my point of view _____.