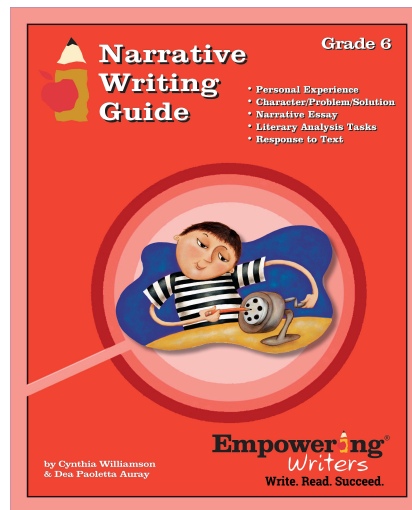




Grade 6 Narrative Writing Guide

Student Pages for Print or Projection

SECTION 1: Recognizing Genre/Organization



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Grade 6 Unit Pacing Guide Template



Awareness lessons - 15-20 minutes each



Foundational lessons - 30-40 minutes each

Lessons to Support Understanding - 20-30 minutes each

Before and After Lessons - to be used after Guided

Practice as independent practice.

Optional: Response to Text Lessons - To be used at the teacher's discretion. Can be broken into multiple days - from 20-40 minutes each.

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 _____

My Sea Monster

Genre: Personal Experience

The alarm buzzed at 5:00 a.m. and I bounced out of bed, more excited than I'd been on Christmas morning. Today I was going deep sea fishing for the very first time and I couldn't wait!

When we arrived at the dock, we joined a group of about 40 people who were also going on this awesome adventure. The captain gave us each a fishing pole and a bucket of bait. It was still early in the morning when we set sail for the rich fishing grounds far from shore.

On the eastern horizon, the sun was rising and the clear waters sparkled. A pair of playful dolphins rode the waves behind the boat. We slowed down to take a look at a fish that looked like nothing more than a gigantic head with big, puckered lips floating on the surface of the water. It looked like a creature from another planet. The captain told us it was an ocean sunfish.

"I hope I catch one of those," I thought, imagining how proud I'd feel showing my friends a picture of myself holding my weird-looking catch.

Just a little while later, we arrived at the fishing grounds. The boat slowed down and dropped anchor. I baited my hook and dropped my line. Dad got the first bite and he pulled in a 6-pound flounder that the captain said was "good eating." Next, a girl about my age landed one that the first mate called a "trash fish" and cut up for bait. Just a little while later, she reeled in a large bluefish with shimmering silver scales.

I reeled in my line and checked my bait. It hung firmly from my hook. I went to the front of the boat where I hoped I'd have better luck, released my line and waited for a nibble. And waited. And waited. All around me, people were reeling in fish, big and small. What was I doing wrong?

"It's just bad luck, Theo," said Mom. "Keep trying!" Easy for her to say; she'd landed four good-sized fish by now.

I took her advice, but it was definitely discouraging. The sun was high in the sky by now and it beat down on me until rivers of sweat were running down my back, neck and face. The rolling motion of the boat was starting to make my stomach feel funny.

(continued)

Just when I was about to quit, I felt a powerful tug on my line. My pole bent into an upside down “U” shape as I started reeling the fish in. It fought me ferociously and I almost lost my grip on my pole. By this time, a crowd had gathered to cheer me on as I struggled to land my catch. My arms ached and I didn’t know how much longer I could hold on.

Finally, I’d reeled my catch to the surface of the water. I gasped as I caught sight of it wriggling on my line. It wasn’t a fish! I can only describe it as a pink, torpedo-shaped sea monster.

“The kid’s hooked a Humboldt,” the captain shouted to the first mate. “Get the net!”

As I lifted the sea monster out of the water, it released its grip on my line. Just in the nick of time, the first mate caught it in a net. He said it was a Humboldt squid, but to me, it was nothing but a sea monster. It had huge, bulging eyes and long, dangling tentacles lined with what looked like suction cups. Magically, the alien creature changed color! Its pale pink flesh first turned a deep angry red and then transformed itself into an almost transparent white hue. Instead of a mouth, it had a sharp beak just like a bird. People clustered around for a closer look at the curious critter and it squirted black ink at them. Everybody called my sea monster “the catch of the day.” Back home, we called it dinner and it was delicious!

On the dock, I posed proudly with my 4-foot long catch and knew I’d never forget the day I fished a sea monster — also known as a Humboldt Squid — from the mysterious depths of the ocean. Feeling like the luckiest fisherman in the world, I realized that, in fishing and in life, there was one very important rule: Don’t quit!

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 _____

To Noodle or Not to Noodle
Genre: Character/Problem/Solution

“We’re going catfish noodling after school today. Wanna come?” Bruno stopped me in the hall between classes and asked me that very puzzling question. Bruno wasn’t a friend of mine. In fact, he’d been bullying me since first grade. The last thing I wanted to do was go catfish noodling with him or anybody else.

“No,” I said. “No, thanks.” I hoped that would be the end of it.

“Scared?” He shot me a challenging look and snorted with laughter.

Duh? Of course, I was scared. Any normal person would be. Let me explain: during the fall and winter, catfish rest and lay their eggs in deep holes in the muddy bottom of a pond or lake. Catfish noodling involves diving to a depth of 8 feet or so, locating one of these catfish holes and sticking your hand into its dark depths. Then, you’ll need to wiggle your fingers around to entice the catfish to bite you. The catfish will latch onto your fingers with the stubby, rough-textured bones it has instead of teeth. Ignoring the pain, you then wrench the wriggling, angry catfish out of the hole. Can you hold your breath any longer? You’re going to need to because your next task is hold onto the struggling whiskered creature while you swim to the surface with only one arm and most likely, a badly bleeding hand.

Does that sound like fun? I think not. Today, catfish noodling is mostly considered a sport but years ago it was a common way of catching dinner for those of us who live around the bayous, also known as swamps, of Louisiana. People have drowned trying to make it to the surface gripping a large, powerful fish who is fighting for its life. Another possibility is that you’ll find, not a catfish, but a beaver, snapping turtle or alligator in the hole. That could spell disaster!

Not only is catfish noodling dangerous, but I think it’s cruel. Imagine how terrifying it is for the catfish, who is probably protecting a clutch of eggs, to be yanked from its resting place without warning? No way did I want anything to do with this “sport.”

But my friend Gavin did. For years, Bruno had been picking on him just like he picked on me. Gavin was sure that Bruno would stop bullying us once and for all if we took him up on his challenge.

“We can do it, Jeff. We’re good swimmers,” Gavin said.

All week long, Bruno kept taunting us and Gavin continued trying to convince me that the only way to get this bully off our backs was to show him that we dared to catfish noodle. On Friday afternoon, he told me “I’m doing it.”

After school, I saw Gavin heading down to the pond with Bruno and a few of Bruno’s buddies and I made a quick decision. Enough was enough. I wasn’t going to catfish noodle and I wasn’t going to stand for any more of Bruno’s bullying either. I ran to catch up with Gavin and walked with him to the pond.

“You first,” I said to Bruno when we arrived at the deep, murky pond.

“No way,” he said, poking my chest with a finger. “You first.”

“Scared?”

“No,” he sneered. “It’s just that...well, it’s just that I did it yesterday. Hauled in a big one too.”

I could tell that he was lying and so did his buddies. “But, you were with us yesterday,” one of them said, scratching his head and looking confused. “Remember, we watched movies at my place after school.”

Caught in a lie, Bruno stalked away without another word and that’s when I realized he was nothing but a coward. Despite his bluster, he’d back down the instant anybody stood up to him. The loud-mouthed wimp never messed with Gavin or me again. Best of all, Gavin promised me he’d never, never again consider doing anything as reckless as catfish noodling.

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 Commercial Fishing Industry

Genre: Informational

Did you know that fishing is a job for about 200 million hard-working, courageous people around the world? From the “catch of the day” on the restaurant menu to the canned tuna at the grocery store, the protein-rich food they harvest from the sea is an important part of a healthy diet. Newfoundland, New England and Alaska are just three places in North America with a history and culture shaped by the commercial fishing industry.

The first fishermen of Newfoundland, an island in the North Atlantic, were the Inuit. In canoes made from wood and sealskin, these brave native people used harpoons to catch fish and marine mammals for food. In the 14th century, Europeans discovered the bounty of herring, mackerel and especially cod in these waters. They created the first successful method for preserving fish so that they could bring their catch back home to England, France or Portugal. In the 1940s, super-trawlers first appeared in Newfoundland. These efficient commercial fishing vessels dragged nets across miles of ocean floor, scooping up fish and other marine creatures along the way. Fishing on this scale led to the collapse of the cod population in the Atlantic. Slowly, but steadily, it is making a recovery.

Just south of Newfoundland, New England was another important commercial fishing port. Gloucester, a small city in the northeastern corner of the state of Massachusetts, is the oldest fishing port in the United States. Italian and Portuguese immigrants flocked here in the 1870s and began fishing some of the most dangerous and unpredictable waters in the world for swordfish and tuna. Others, especially the Portuguese, headed to nearby Cape Cod. Let’s not forget about the able-bodied sailors of the state of Maine who bring the world a great variety of shellfish, including their tasty, world-famous lobsters.

Do you like salmon? If so, thank the rugged commercial fishermen and women of Alaska. More than 200 million pounds of the highly nutritious, pink-fleshed fish are harvested from the waters around Alaska each year and much of it is canned right on the dock. Another highly profitable harvest from Alaskan waters is the snow crab. These clawed critters are caught in crab pots made of wire and mesh with an escape hatch for the undersized specimens. The pots are baited with chunks of fish and planted on the floor of the sea. Since they can weigh as much as 800 pounds, special equipment is necessary to pull up the crab pots. Crab fishing in Alaska is widely considered the most dangerous job in the world with a death rate 80% higher than that of any other profession. Most of the deaths are due to exposure to freezing temperatures and drowning.

Wary of overfishing, most of these commercial fishing communities pay close attention to the amount of fish taken from their waters. Without a doubt, it's vital that the commercial fishing industries of Newfoundland, New England and Alaska take pride in their seafaring past and farm the sea responsibly today.

Informational Writing Summarizing Framework

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

Name _____

Overfishing Our Oceans

Genre: Argument

Our oceans are in distress. Oil spills, plastic pollution and climate change are just a few of the issues that threaten their healthy future. Overfishing, taking fish from the sea faster than the populations can replenish themselves, presents a major threat to marine life. Should we consider limiting this practice? Research shows that overfishing is devastating to the health of marine animals.

As the top predator of the oceans, sharks are vital to a healthy marine ecosystem. Without these efficient carnivores, many species of fish would overpopulate until the marine ecosystem could no longer support them and they all die. Sadly, each year an estimated 100 million sharks are taken from the sea by commercial fishing operations. Many are killed just for their fin, which is used to make a soup eaten in China and Vietnam. Accounting for the loss of at least 12 million sharks each year, recreational fishing is yet another threat to the future of sharks. It would be a tragedy to see these primitive creatures, who've survived here on earth for more than 400 million years, become extinct.

Overfishing has proven to be devastating to marine mammals, whales in particular. During the mid-1800s, also known as "the golden age of whaling," entire species of these gentle giants were almost wiped out. Some whale species have recovered and others have not, including the North Atlantic Right Whale. Despite their protected status, these slow-moving baleen whales remain the most critically endangered animal on earth. It is shocking that some types of whales are still being harvested today. Other marine mammals, including seals and dolphins, risk starvation as overfishing ravages their only source of food.

Alarmingly, sea birds are facing the same problem. Today, even small species of fish, such as herring and sardines, are being overfished and used primarily to make feed for pigs and cattle. Although the land animals might be fed, this

deeply diminishes the food supply for sea birds. Plus, an estimated 400,000 sea birds drown each year when they become entangled in gill nets, which can stretch over a mile in length in the open ocean. Equally damaging to sea birds of all kinds, is the practice of “longlining,” dragging long lines of baited hooks behind a fishing vessel. As they try to scavenge a meal from the bait, birds are either critically injured by the sharp hook itself or pulled underwater and drowned. Many agree that these fishing practices are directly responsible for the decline of the Waved Albatross, a critically endangered bird native to the Galápagos Islands as well as coastal Peru.

To protect the future of sharks, marine mammals and sea birds, we must start making smart decisions about how we harvest the bounty of the sea immediately. Without a doubt, overfishing is a major threat to the future of oceans around the world.

Argument Writing Summarizing Framework

ISSUE: _____

CLAIM: _____

MAIN REASON #1: _____

MAIN REASON #2: _____

MAIN REASON #3: _____

Name _____

NARRATIVE, INFORMATIONAL, OR ARGUMENT?

Read each paragraph. Decide if you think it is **NARRATIVE** which is written to entertain you, **INFORMATIONAL** which is written to inform you, or **ARGUMENT** which is written to support a claim about a specific issue. Circle your answer.

1. One of the best things you can do for your health is to choose organic foods whenever possible. Fruits and vegetables grown with fertilizers and pesticides arrive at the market with traces of these chemicals still on them. Washing the produce well will eliminate some, but not all of these harmful substances. Like everybody who cares about their own wellness, paying a little more for organic fruits and vegetables is worth it, rather than risk having these toxins build up in the body over the years.

Narrative Informational Argument

2. Beware of the Box Jellyfish! While powerful, the venom of cobras and rattlesnakes can't compare to that of this deadly menace. Found in the shallow waters of Australia, these dreaded drifters can deliver a dose of toxins that cause excruciating pain and often lead to heart failure. Also known as sea wasps, these transparent tyrants are hard to spot in the water and have multiple tentacles that can reach 15 feet in length.

Narrative Informational Argument

3. Lily paddled her canoe to the island where the crumbling lighthouse stood. For years, she'd been hearing stories about the ghosts who haunted this relic from the past. Lily never believed them until she stepped ashore and a loud moan filled the air. The haunting sound echoed as a sudden gust of wind broke through the stillness of the early morning. The next thing she knew, the frightened girl felt an invisible pair of hands shoving her back into her canoe.

Narrative Informational Argument

BONUS: Go back and look at the narrative paragraph. Is it a **CHARACTER/ PROBLEM/SOLUTION** or **PERSONAL EXPERIENCE** narratives?

Name _____

NAME THE GENRE! (1)

Read the following paragraphs. For each, determine whether it is Narrative, Informational or Argument. 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 explain them.

1. Today there's nothing I like more than a sleepover at a friend's house, but that was not always the case. The first time I got invited to spend the night at my friend Jamie's house, I was only six and really nervous about being away from home for such a long stretch of time. I imagined waking up in the dark and missing my mom. I also worried that nobody would be there to calm me down if I had a nightmare. As it turned out, I got a good night's sleep and had a wonderful time. When my mom picked me up in the morning, the first thing I asked her was "Can Jamie sleep over at our house next Friday night?"

Narrative

Informational

Argument

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

2. Found in northern woodlands, the moose is the largest member of the deer family, which includes elk and caribou. These hooved giants can grow to more than seven feet tall. The males are easily recognized by their majestic antlers which can stretch up to six feet in diameter. These bold herbivores feed on plant matter and shrubbery. Excellent swimmers, they are able to stay underwater for up to a minute while feasting on aquatic plants. Wolves and cougars prey upon moose, who defend themselves and their young ferociously. While their first instinct is to run away when attacked, if necessary the female moose is capable of knocking a hungry carnivore unconscious with one kick from her long, strong legs. Males, of course, protect themselves with their powerful, broad antlers. Both genders are formidable fighters!

Narrative

Informational

Argument

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

Name _____

NAME THE GENRE! (2)

Read the following paragraphs. For each, determine whether it is Narrative, Informational or Argument. 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 explain them.

1. Pompei is one of the most famous tourist destinations in Italy today, attracting nearly 3 million visitors each year. In ancient times, this bustling seaside city was destroyed the eruption of nearby Mount Vesuvius. This violent explosion killed thousands of people and left the city buried in ash for hundreds of years. In the 1700's, the ruins of Pompei were uncovered and many buildings, homes and artifacts were discovered. Much of what we know about everyday life in the Roman Empire, we learned from this historic excavation. While it hasn't erupted since 1944, Mount Vesuvius remains an active volcano.

Narrative

Informational

Argument

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

2. One of the scariest experiences of my life was when I lost track of my little sister Jane at the crowded mall. It was a chilly Saturday morning and the winter holidays were just a week away. Mom had asked me to watch Jane while she shopped, promising it would be only for "twenty minutes or so" and giving me money so that I could buy ice cream cones. One minute my sweet sister was happily licking her strawberry cone at the food court and the next, she'd disappeared without a trace. I'd only turned my back for a minute! I ran through the mall frantically calling her name and leaving behind a trail of melted chocolate ice cream.

Narrative

Informational

Argument

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

Name _____

NAME THE GENRE! (3)

Read the following paragraphs. For each, determine whether it is Narrative, Informational or Argument. 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 explain them.

1. Many people think that online education is the wave of the future, but is it? While computer-generated instruction can save us the trouble of traveling to an actual school, it delivers a very limited education. While taking an online course, don't count on having a teacher available to provide any extra help needed or inspire motivation. Group discussions are almost non-existent. No wonder about 70% of the students enrolled in online school quit within a year. Experts agree that most students are far better off at a typical school where teachers and classmates interact and learn from each other.

Narrative

Informational

Argument

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

2. The witch cackled with delight when she realized that she'd trapped Toby and I inside the dark, underground dungeon. Large black bats hung upside down in each corner of the spooky chamber. A cauldron simmered over an open flame in the middle of the room. With her long, pointy nose, the witch sniffed the aroma rising from her steaming concoction. "Oh, how delicious my stew will be with the addition of one spicy girl and one extra salty boy," she said, licking her lips. We had to get away, but how?

Narrative

Informational

Argument

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

3. A pink planet has been recently discovered in our universe. Located 4.6 billion miles away from the sun, this newly formed planet exists in perpetual darkness, but glows with the bright, rosy color of molten lava. Its temperature is a scorching 465 degrees Fahrenheit! The mysterious orb has clouds and orbits a star the same way the Earth revolves around the sun. But that's where the similarities between the two planets ends. Like Jupiter but four times bigger, the pink planet is composed of a swirling combination of gases and has no solid surface.

Narrative

Informational

Argument

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

Name _____

The Comforts of Home

It was time for our summer vacation. I wanted to sleep under the stars and grill hotdogs over an open flame. Mom and Dad dreamed of checking into a resort where they could nap in supremely comfortable hammocks on a sandy beach and eat in fancy restaurants. Needless to say, a compromise was in order.

After a short flight and a long taxi ride, we arrived at our glamp site in the late afternoon. Glamp site? Yes, like a regular campsite but glamorous. This type of deluxe camping experience is a trend in travel today, offering the relaxation of being in nature without actually having to “rough it.”

A uniformed attendant moved our suitcases into a large and immaculate white canvas safari tent, fully furnished with comfy beds with a plush rug underfoot. Right in front of our tent was a fire pit and a dining table set with a white linen tablecloth and fine china. An old-fashioned swing, made from a board and a heavy rope, hung from one of the towering elms that shaded our site. A hammock with stripes of many bold colors was suspended between two more of these magnificent trees. Just up the tree-lined trail, was a mirror smooth, crystal clear lake. “All the comforts of home,” the attendant said.

“And more! Don’t you agree, Andy?” Dad said.

“Sure!” I said. This was going to be awesome

Dad tossed his smartphone onto the table. “I don’t think I’ll be checking my e-mail anytime soon.”

Mom did him one better. “I’m not even going to bother charging mine.”

For the next three days, there was not a dull moment. The weather was perfect for long, relaxing swims in the lake. We paddled kayaks and learned how to wind-surf. On mountain bikes, we explored the scenic trails through fragrant, cedar-scented woods. A chef cooked and served us three delicious meals a day right at our glamp site. At night, we slept soundly in our clean, soft beds surrounded by the soothing darkness and enveloped by silence. It was easy to forget that we were deep in the wilderness.

On the last day of our vacation, I set off for one last mountain bike ride along a tree-lined trail. I was lost in my thoughts, imagining how I'd describe this awesome adventure to my friends back home when a snarling beast with tan-colored fur dropped from a tree directly into my path. Terrified, I skidded to a stop. It was a mountain lion! My heart pounded in my chest as the wild cat and I eyeballed one another for several tense seconds. Then, leaving my bike behind, I started slowly backing away. The fearsome feline followed my every movement with its bright golden eyes. I heaved a huge sigh of relief when it finally skulked back into the thick forest with its long tail swaying. The minute the mountain lion disappeared from sight, I ran for my life! I was trembling and out of breath when I arrived back at the glamp site. Once I calmed down, I realized that the mountain lion wasn't out to harm me but only to protect its own home. Thinking back, all I remember is its beauty.

I will never forget my luxurious vacation or the majesty of that mountain lion. But I'm not entirely sold on the whole idea of glamping. My encounter with the snarling cat had reminded me that I was in the wilderness, which was easy to forget when you're surrounded with the luxuries of our modern age. So, the next time I venture into the wilderness, I am going to bring a deep respect for wildlife with me — and not much else. I'd learned that you don't really need all the comforts of home to experience the wonders of the wilderness.

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 _____

Honest Amy

“Liar! Liar! Pants on fire!” I remember when a little boy yelled that phrase at me years ago on the playground. He thought it was his turn to go down the slide next; I was sure it was mine. The words were uttered in the heat of a typical argument amongst kindergartners, but I never forgot how much it hurt me to be called a liar. I’d taken pride in my honesty ever since.

That changed when I started hanging out with Marcia. She and I had been in classes and riding the bus together for a long time, but we’d never spent much time together until very recently. Smart and sassy, Marcia was a born leader and I was proud to be among her many other friends.

The trouble started when she asked me to come to her house after school. Since both of her parents worked, Marcia stayed alone after school. As much as I loved spending time with my new friend, I had to say no to her invitation, explaining that my parents didn’t allow me to go over a friend’s house unless a parent was present.

“They’re treating you like a baby,” she said, with a sneer. “Just tell them my dad will be home,” Marcia suggested. “They’ll never know.”

Lie to my mother? I knew that was wrong. But Marcia kept on tantalizing me with a long list of fun things we could do at her house, including swimming in her pool which was my favorite thing in the whole world to do.

It was late September, still warm and sunny, but the end of swimming season was in sight and the temptation was finally just too much. I gave in. Sneaking a bathing suit into my backpack, I told my mom I’d be going over to Marcia’s house after school.

“Her mom or dad will be there, right?” Mom predictably asked. “Of course,” I lied. “Okay then. Call me if you need a ride home,” Mom said. “And have fun!”

Splash! I dove into the pool and Marcia followed, executing a far more graceful dive. It felt so good to be swimming after a long day at school, but before long, we were starving.

“Let’s make grilled cheese sandwiches,” Marcia suggested.



We went inside, changed back into our school clothes and fired up the stove. Into a heavy skillet, we laid two sandwiches of bread with cheese. We didn't think to butter the bread or spray the skillet with oil, so the bread stuck to the skillet and started burning. The smoke detector began blaring at top volume and neither one of us knew how to turn it off. Marcia opened a window and I helped her fan the smoke outside. Finally, the ear-splitting sound stopped and I ran the whole way home.

I thought I'd gotten away with lying to my mother until the phone rang after dinner.

Mom glared at me with fire in her eyes as she listened to the voice on the other end of the phone. "That was your friend Marcia's mother," she said furiously, ending the call.

I was in so much trouble – not only for lying to my mother, but for swimming in a pool without adult supervision and for almost starting a fire. So much could have happened...

It took a long time for me to win back Mom's trust and things between Marcia and I were never quite the same. It was my choice to lie to my mother, but she had encouraged me to do so and I liked her less for it. It was a hard lesson to learn, but the experience convinced me that honesty really is the best policy.

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 _____

Saving the Trail

400,000 people traveled the Oregon Trail to find their fortunes in the untamed American west of the 1800's. Both U.S. and Native American history was made along this route from Missouri to the Pacific coast. The question is should this landmark be preserved? Research suggests that The Oregon Trail is the most important historical site in America and must be preserved.

The historical significance of the Oregon Trail certainly cannot be denied. The site of the largest land migration in the history of the world, there is quite simply nothing like it in all the Americas. Experts believe that westward expansion in the United States would have been delayed by decades without the Oregon Trail. If not for the pioneers who traveled the trail, the construction of the cross-country railroad would have been stalled too. Further, it is estimated that there are 10 graves for every mile of the trail. Preserving the route provides a meaningful memorial to those brave individuals who took on the dangerous journey to the Pacific Coast and never made it to their destination.

Native American history was made on the Oregon Trail. Here, many American Indians encountered people of European and African descent for the very first time — and vice-versa. The emigrants introduced the native people to the English language too. These are the lands where herds of buffalo roamed the sweeping plains, providing sustenance for several Native American tribes, including the Pawnee and the Sioux. The Oregon Trail also passed through the lands of the Cheyenne and the Shoshone both of whom provided invaluable advice and assistance to the pioneers. Preserving the trail helps us commemorate their proud culture and valuable contributions to the people who settled the west.

There are amazing landmarks along the Oregon Trail that really bring history alive. Some would prefer to build shopping malls, however by preserving the trail,

we save landmarks such as Chimney Rock near the Platte River basin in Nebraska. This towering rock formation marked the end of the plains and the beginning of the Rocky Mountains. Independence Rock, where a group of emigrants celebrated the Fourth of July in 1830, is another such historic site. Further west, there's Soda Springs, a body of natural bubbling water in which pioneers bathed and relaxed after long, hard weeks on the trail. Perhaps the most important landmark along the Oregon Trail are the grooves in the earth left behind by the heavy wagon wheels of the westward-bound. Isn't it amazing that these historic tracks still exist and wouldn't it be devastating if they were lost forever?

It is a tragedy that much of the 2,225-mile trail has already been lost to shopping centers and super highways. The Oregon Trail is an important site highlighting U.S and Native American history, as well as numerous one-of-a-kind landmarks. Preservation is absolutely necessary for the historical significance..

SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK:

ISSUE: _____

CLAIM: _____

MAIN REASON #1: _____

MAIN REASON #2: _____

MAIN REASON #3: _____

ETC: _____

Name _____

A Snake in the Grass

"Yippie!" I let out a hoot of joy when Father announced that we'd be leaving our homestead for the rich and fertile lands of Oregon territory. This was exciting news. What an adventure it would be to travel the Oregon Trail!

"But it's so dangerous, William," Mama said, wringing her hands with anxiety.

"It's dangerous here, Betty," Father replied and he was right. Just last winter, nearly half of our townsfolk were lost to the miseries of the Yellow Fever. Plus, we were working our fingers to the bone and scarcely scratching out a living on our farm. While it was the only home I'd ever known, I wouldn't regret leaving it behind. My family's future was in the wide-open west. I couldn't wait for us to get there and stake our claim.

After three weeks on the trail, the journey seemed like less an adventure and more a life and death struggle. Overloaded with every single one of our belongings, our heavy wagon was pulled by oxen who were exhausted by the end of the day. We'd joined a convoy of more than 500 other families and each had their own heavily packed wagon and overburdened livestock to cope with. Traveling with a large group may have kept us safe from Indian attacks, but it couldn't protect us from horrible diseases, runaway wagon accidents and the other perils. For every mile of progress, I reckon at least one person died. So far, we'd been lucky. While we were always at least a little hungry and never properly rested, my family was still healthy and hopeful. We would make it to the Oregon territory and stake our claim!

Just after we'd crossed the South Platte River, we stopped for a day of rest and mourning. Three younguns had been swept away in the rushing river and our spirits had sunk as low as a horse's hoof. Having eaten nothing but dried venison for days, we were all hungering for a bite of something green. I decided to venture out in search of wild plants. I was picking a load of dandelion greens, when I heard a rattle that chilled me straight to the bone.

(continued)

In the tall grass, I didn't see the rattlesnake until it struck. Quick as lightning, it sunk its fangs deep into my forearm. It hurt something fierce. My heart started racing and I broke out in a cold sweat.

By the time I made it back to camp my arm had swelled to twice its normal size and it felt like it was on fire. I collapsed in my father's arms.

I felt like I was deeply asleep, but I was aware of the noise and frantic activity around me. I heard somebody shout, "A boy's been snake bit. Get a knife!" I felt a sharp pain and a gush of warm blood as somebody cut a deep X into my arm and tried to suck the poison out of my arm. Crying, Mama held a cup to my lips and urged me to take a sip of mint tea. Somebody else smeared clay from the riverbank onto my wound.

"Let him rest," my father said. "We've done all we can." For the next three days, I floated in and out of consciousness. On the fourth day, I woke up feeling fit as a fiddle with a scar on my arm and a hankering to hit the trail.

We finally made it to the Oregon territory in the fall of 1839 and claimed our land. I've still got a scar on my arm, which reminds me every day that even rattlesnake venom couldn't stop me from finding my future on the western frontier.

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 _____

Dangers on the Oregon Trail

Can you imagine the courage of people who packed up everything they owned and ventured into uncharted territory? That's exactly what the travelers on the Oregon Trail did in the 1800s. While many were lucky enough to reach the fertile valleys of the Pacific coast, they all faced treacherous dangers along the way, including disease, accidents, and unpredictable weather.

After a few weeks of traveling the Oregon Trail, exhaustion and poor nutrition broke down the defenses of even the healthiest individuals. Thus, outbreaks of disease were common, taking the lives of an estimated 6-10% of the pioneers. Cholera, which could kill within 12 hours, was a particular menace. Since the deadly disease was so contagious, some of the sick were just left behind to die alone. There were also frequent cases of dysentery from poor sanitary conditions and questionable water sources. Food poisoning and scurvy, caused by a lack of vitamin C were just two other constant threats to the health of the emigrants.

Accidents were a constant source of misery on the Oregon Trail. Travelers old and young drowned at river crossings, especially in the spring when the waters were swollen and rushing with melted snow. The heavy, often overloaded wagons were difficult to maneuver up and down rugged mountains. Since they had no brakes or safety features, accidents were frequent and usually deadly. Because of the fear of Indians as well as the need to hunt along the way, most of the emigrants were heavily armed. Accidental gunshot wounds took the lives of many.

The weather was rarely a friend to the pioneers of the Oregon Trail. A sudden thunderstorm could cause a buffalo stampede. Without warning, a tornado might rip through the plains causing death and destruction. Dry spells just might spark

(continued)

prairie fires. Heavy rains could make rivers impassable. Worst of all, an early season blizzard could leave the emigrants stranded in the mountains with little food and inadequate shelter for the entire winter. That's what happened to the Donner Party, who had to resort to cannibalism in order to survive.

Can you imagine what it was like to stand by helplessly as somebody you loved died of a horrible disease? Wouldn't it be terrifying to cross a river knowing you might drown before you arrived at the other side or have your life endangered by a sudden whim of the weather? The pioneers who traveled the Oregon Trail faced all these dangers and many more. For sure, they had courage to spare.

SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

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 _____

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

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 _____.