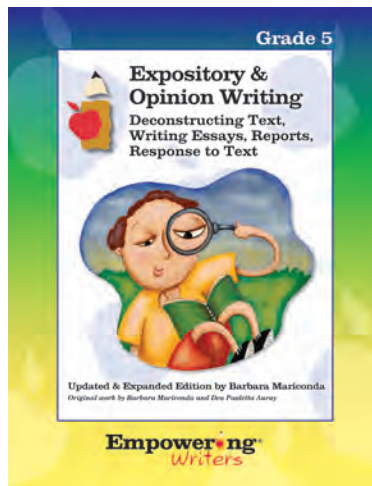




Grade 5
Expository and Opinion Writing
Deconstructing Text, Writing Essays, Reports, Response to Text

Student Pages for Print or Projection

SECTION 2: Broad Yet Distinct Main Ideas/Reasons



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OVERLY GENERAL “BLURBS” TO AVOID

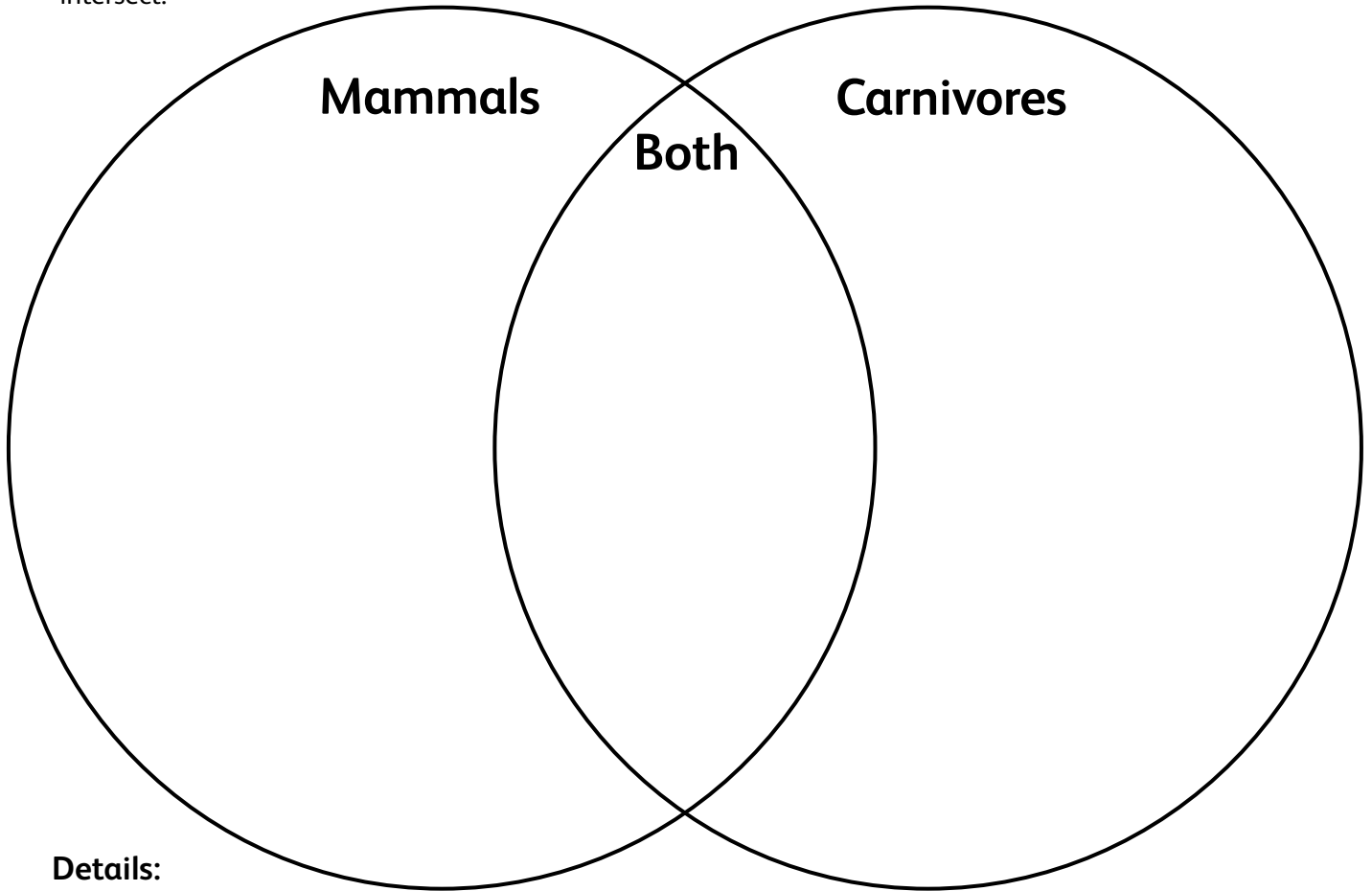




Name: _____

SORT & CATEGORIZE

Read the list of details below and decide which main ideas/reasons they apply to. Write the details in the circle. Any details that apply to both main ideas/reasons should be sorted into column where the circles intersect.



Details:

Gorilla

Badger

Alligator

Sheep

Penguin

Skunk

Deer

Shark

Camel

Snake

Coyote

Giraffe

Hawk

Lion

Dolphin

Arctic Fox

Owl

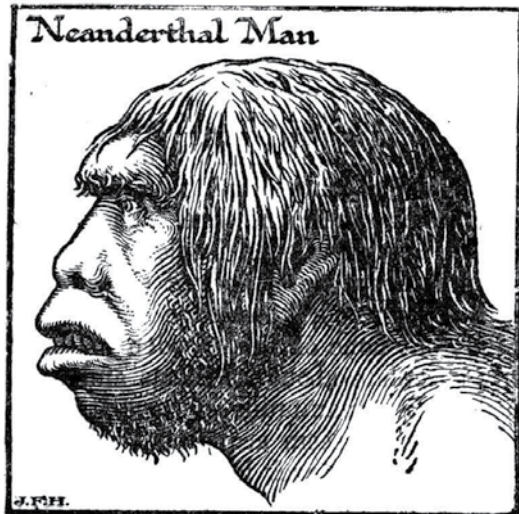
Elephant

Bonus: Can you think of any other details that might fit into either or both of the main idea/reason categories? If so, write them in the appropriate place.



Name: _____

THE ICE AGE (1)



The ice age was an exciting time here on planet earth. The climate was chilly and the dinosaurs were gone, but life abounded on land and in the air. Let's travel back to the ice age and meet one of the most successful species of ancient humans as well as the gigantic ancestors of the birds and mammals alive today.

Neanderthals were a successful species of early humans that thrived during the ice age.

With brains as big as ours, these humans adapted well to the harsh weather and flourished in Africa, Asia, and Europe during this time in world history. Fossil remains reveal that Neanderthals had a lot in common with modern humans. They lived and hunted in family groups and cared for each other. They mourned and buried their dead. Nobody knows for sure, but it is likely that they used language and medicine. The powerful Neanderthals were probably the dominant human species during the ice age.

Mammals ruled the icy landscape. Amazingly, an estimated two-thirds of the mammal species that live today began their journey of evolution during the ice age. Many of these early mammals looked much like their modern day counterparts, only bigger. The ice age bear stood a towering 12 feet tall while the beaver grew to the staggering length of 9 feet. The cave lion had the same golden coat as the lions that rule the African plains today, but was 25% larger and lacked the regal mane. The woolly mammoth reached an average height of 14 feet and was much heftier than the modern Asian elephants who top out at about 9 feet.



Student Page

Even the birds of the ice age were huge! From high in the sky, *Teratorn* cast a huge shadow on the earth. An ancestor of the Giant Condor, this ice age bird of prey had a wingspan of up to 28 feet and stood 6 feet tall. It was the largest flying bird ever. Another fascinating ice age bird is the Giant Owl. About 4 feet tall, this odd looking raptor had the long legs of a wading bird and huge talons. Fossil remains of the Giant Owl have only been found on the island of Cuba, where three complete skeletons have been discovered.

Can you imagine living in a cave and hunting with stone-tipped spears like the Neanderthals? Do you wonder why so many birds and mammals grew to outlandish sizes during the ice age? Surely, there is still much left to discover about this important time in the rich history of the world.





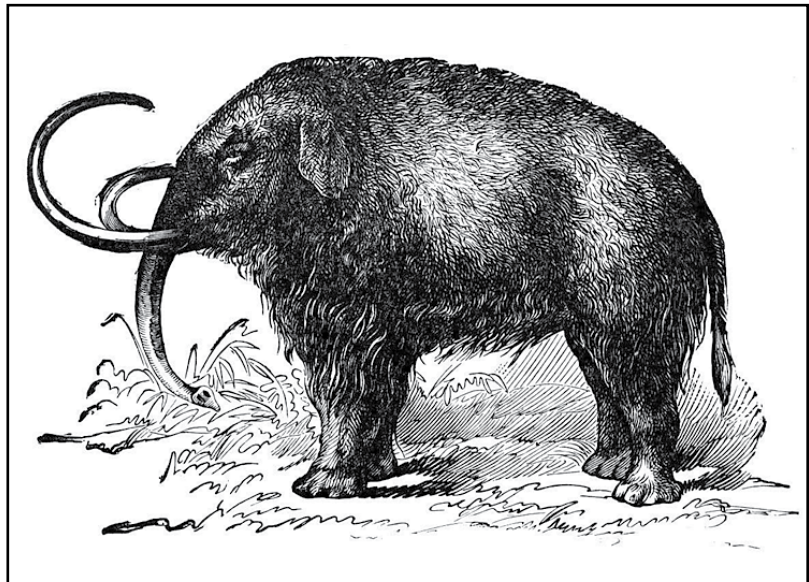
Name: _____

THE ICE AGE

Imagine being a caveman during the ice age. Huge woolly mammoths, fierce saber-toothed cats and other enormous animals roam the landscape. Your only weapon is a stone-tipped spear. It is amazing that humans were able to find shelter and food in a world ruled by these hulking beasts. Let's meet the big, strange, interesting beasts that lived back then.

Everything was strange back then. Many of the mammal species that roam the earth today lived during the ice age. But the ice age versions were bigger and stranger. Neanderthal people looked similar to us but had much wider noses and heavier bones. Beavers of the ice age had long, strong front teeth like beavers living today, but weighed about 350 pounds and grew to a length of 9 feet. The 1,500 pound Irish Elk went extinct at the end of the ice age, but still holds the record for the largest antlers of all time. Some of these big, deer-like mammals had antler racks spanning an astonishing 13 feet. Also, during the ice age, there was a huge rodent who hopped like a kangaroo.

Animals were bigger during the ice age! The Woolly Mammoth was a larger, shaggier ancestor of the modern-day elephant. Ground sloths still live today in Central and South America, but they are only about 2 feet long. Their strange ice age ancestors grew to a length of 20 feet. While they were bigger, they were just as slow and lazy as today's ground sloths. They were plant-eaters with long, sharp claws to protect themselves from predators.

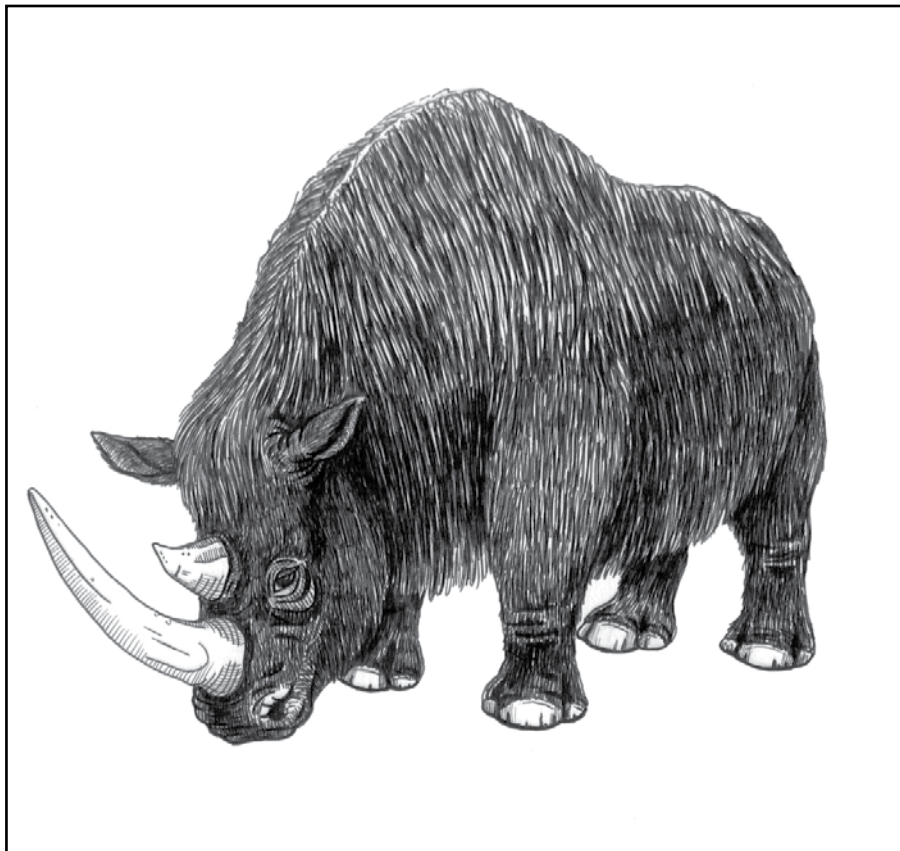




Student Page

Ice age creatures are so interesting. It is interesting to think about why these mammals got so big. After all, just imagine seeing a beaver the size of a brown bear swimming around in a pond or an elk weighing 1,500 pounds grazing by the side of the road. These big, strange animals are fascinating and it is too bad that they all shrunk down to the size they are today. They were much stranger and cooler when they were big.

Learning about the super-sized mammals of the ice age is interesting. They were certainly big, strange, and fascinating.





PLANNING AN EXPOSITORY PIECE

- 1. PICK your TOPIC.**
- 2. LIST what you know about your topic.**
- 3. CHOOSE at least 3 BROAD yet DISTINCT main ideas from your list. Be sure you can come up with at least 4 details to support the MAIN IDEAS you've chosen.**



Name: _____

PICK, LIST, CHOOSE, ASK, & FIND

1. **PICK** a topic _____

2. **LIST** what you already know about this topic (bullet points, not sentences):

3. **CHOOSE** main ideas (at least 2)

Main Idea #1 _____

Main Idea #2 _____

Main Idea #3 _____

Main Idea #4 _____

4. **ASK:** What do you still need to know?

5. **FIND:** Where might you find answers to these questions?



Student Page

Name: _____

SUMMARY

Look at your PICK, LIST, CHOOSE, ASK, & FIND worksheet to complete this summary of our upcoming unit.

Our class will be studying _____ .

We will read about _____

and discuss _____ .

We'll also study _____

and examine _____ .

We will use books and computers to learn about _____

_____, including

_____ .



Name: _____

REVISED SUMMARY

Please look over the summary you wrote when we were just beginning to study _____.
Now that we've completed the unit, re-write your summary to include what you've learned.

Our class just finished studying _____ .

We read about _____

and discussed _____ .

We found answers to our questions about _____ ,

_____ and

I was surprised to learn that _____ .

Now I understand why _____

_____ .

The only question I still have about this topic is _____

_____ .



Student Page

Name: _____

MAIN IDEAS - DON'T OVERLAP THEM! (1)

Read the TOPIC and related main idea sentences below. Then, write a one word “Blurb” that sums up what the main idea sentence is about. Next, see if you can figure out which detail sentence belongs to which main idea. Some may seem like they fit into more than one main idea category. That means they overlap; they are not distinct enough. Remember, the main ideas should be different from each other. If your main ideas are distinct enough, it will be clear which paragraph the detail belongs in. Write the number of the paragraph the detail sentence belongs in.

TOPIC: CAVING

MAIN IDEA SENTENCES:

BLURB:

MAIN IDEA #1: Caving is an interesting sport.

MAIN IDEA #2: As you climb deep into earth, you’ll see some unusual sights.

MAIN IDEA #3: You need to be fit to engage in the sport of caving.

DETAIL SENTENCES:

MAIN IDEA(S):

1. Start with short trips and work up to more challenging adventures.

2. You might get to see huge, colorful rock formations hanging like icicles from the cave’s ceiling.

3. Imagine using a taut line to ease yourself down a steep, slippery wall of rock.

4. To fully explore a cave, you might have to swim through an underwater spring.

Are the main ideas distinct enough? (Check one)

Yes. Choose (yes) if it was clear that each detail belonged with one of the main ideas.

No. Choose (no) if the details could fit in more than one main idea.



Name: _____

MAIN IDEAS - DON'T OVERLAP THEM! (2)

After researching the topic ITALY, read the summarizing framework below. Then, write a one word “Blurb” that sums up what the main idea sentence is about. Next, see if you can figure out which detail sentence belongs to which main idea. Some may seem like they fit into more than one main idea. That means they overlap; they are not distinct enough. Remember, the main ideas should be different from each other. If your main ideas are distinct enough, it will be clear which paragraph the detail belongs in. Write the number of the paragraph the detail sentence belongs in.

TOPIC: ITALY

MAIN IDEA SENTENCES:

MAIN IDEA #1: See the world famous sights of Rome.

MAIN IDEA #2: Food is at the heart of Italian culture.

MAIN IDEA #3: Explore the ruins of Pompeii.

BLURB:

DETAIL SENTENCES:

1. From oven-baked pizza to lobster-filled ravioli there’s endless variety on the Italian menu.
2. The huge, arched Roman Colosseum has stood in the center of the city for nearly 2,000 years.
3. Relics from life in ancient Pompeii were preserved beneath a thick layer of volcanic ash.
4. Gelato, the delicious Italian version of ice cream, comes in many familiar flavors.

MAIN IDEA(S):

Are the main ideas distinct enough? (Check one)

[] Yes. Choose (yes) if it was clear that each detail belonged with one of the main ideas.

[] No. Choose (no) if the details could fit in more than one main idea.

CHALLENGE: Research Italy via the Internet or the library and see if you can come up with some additional main ideas for an expository piece about Italy. On another sheet of paper, write main idea sentences based on your research.



Student Page

Name: _____

MAIN IDEAS - DON'T OVERLAP THEM! (3)

After researching the topic THE MISSISSIPPI, read the summarizing framework below. Then, write a one word "Blurb" that sums up what the main idea sentence is about. Next, see if you can figure out which detail sentence belongs to which main idea. Some may seem like they fit into more than one main idea. That means they overlap; they are not distinct enough. Remember, the main ideas should be different from each other. If your main ideas are distinct enough, it will be clear which paragraph the detail belongs in. Write the number of the paragraph the detail sentence belongs in.

TOPIC: THE MIGHTY MISSISSIPPI

MAIN REASON SENTENCES:

BLURB:

MAIN IDEA #1: Native Americans traveled on the Mississippi to trade with other tribes and early settlers.

MAIN IDEA #2: During the Civil War, many battles took place along the banks of the Mississippi.

MAIN IDEA #3: Sadly, the Mississippi has been cited as one of North America's most endangered rivers.

DETAIL SENTENCES:

MAIN IDEA(S):

1. Beaver pelts and deerskins were traded on the banks of the Mississippi in the early 1800s.
2. Oil spills are a major threat to the plants and wildlife of the Mississippi.
3. Confederate troops surrendered control of the river after the Battle of Vicksburg on July 4, 1863.
4. Erosion and flooding needs to be controlled to preserve the river.

Are the main ideas distinct enough? (Check one)

Yes. Choose (yes) if it was clear that each detail belonged with one of the main ideas.

No. Choose (no) if the details could fit in more than one main idea.

CHALLENGE: Research the Mississippi River via the Internet or the library and see if you can come up with some additional main ideas for an expository piece about the Mississippi River. On another sheet of paper, write main idea sentences based on your research.



Student Page

Name: _____

MAIN IDEAS/ REASONS - BROAD ENOUGH OR TOO NARROW? (1)

Read this group of main ideas for an expository piece about Working Dogs. If any one of the three is too narrow to be properly elaborated or overlaps with another, cross it out and replace it with a broad yet distinct main idea. (Remember, they may be okay as is!) Then write a main idea sentence for each main idea. You may use the sentence starters on the bottom of the page to help you.

TOPIC: WORKING DOGS

MAIN IDEA #1: Disability dogs

MAIN IDEA #2: Herding dogs

MAIN IDEA #3: Search and rescue dogs

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #1:

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #2:

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #3:

Sentence Starters:

- Dogs are _____ .
- Do you know anybody who _____ ?
- It is amazing how _____ .
- Dogs can be _____ .
- Some breeds are _____ .



Name: _____

MAIN IDEAS/ REASONS - BROAD ENOUGH OR TOO NARROW? (2)

Read this group of main reasons for an opinion piece about A Great Coach. If any one of the three is too narrow to be properly elaborated or overlaps with another, cross it out and replace it with a broad yet distinct main reason. (Remember, they may be okay as is!) Then write a main reason sentence for each main reason. You may use the sentence starters on the bottom of the page to help you.

TOPIC: A GREAT COACH

- MAIN REASON #1:** Knows the rules of the game
- MAIN REASON #2:** Gives everybody a chance
- MAIN REASON #3:** Cheers us on at every game

MAIN REASON SENTENCE #1:

MAIN REASON SENTENCE #2:

MAIN REASON SENTENCE #3:

- Sentence Starters:**
- Don't you agree _____ ?
 - Your team will _____ .
 - As everybody knows, a good coach _____ .
 - If you're struggling, _____ .
 - You will enjoy playing if _____ .



Student Page

Name: _____

MAIN IDEAS/ REASONS - BROAD ENOUGH OR TOO NARROW? (3)

Read this group of main ideas for an expository piece about hurricanes. If any one of the three is too narrow to be properly elaborated or overlaps with another, cross it out and replace it with a broad yet distinct main idea. (Remember, they may be okay as is!) Then write a main idea sentence for each main idea. You may use the sentence starters on the bottom of the page to help you.

TOPIC: HURRICANES

- MAIN IDEA #1:** Dangers of hurricanes
- MAIN IDEA #2:** Staying safe during a storm
- MAIN IDEA #3:** Having a flashlight

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #1:

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #2:

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #3:

- Sentence Starters:**
- Feel the power of _____ .
 - As the storm intensifies, _____ .
 - You could get hurt if _____ .
 - The worst storms cause _____ .



Name: _____

IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEAS/REASONS WITHIN A PROMPT (1)

Read this prompt/assignment. Circle the topic. Underline the three main ideas or reasons.

There are many diverse habitats in the world where you can view a wide variety of living things. Select one type of habitat and write an essay describing the climate, plants, and animals found there.

Fill in the blanks in the prewriting plan below.

YOUR TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA/REASON #1: _____

MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: _____

MAIN IDEA/REASON #3: _____

Do you think this assignment is expository or opinion? Why? _____

IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEAS/REASONS WITHIN A PROMPT (2)

Read this prompt/assignment. Circle the topic. Underline the three main ideas or reasons.

The school day is filled with the study of many different subjects. Write an essay describing your top three favorite subjects and explain what you enjoy about them.

Fill in the blanks in the prewriting plan below.

YOUR TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA/REASON #1: _____

MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: _____

MAIN IDEA/REASON #3: _____

Do you think this assignment is expository or opinion? Why? _____



Name: _____

NAMING GIVENS AND VARIABLES

Before writing to an assignment or prompt, an author must determine not only the genre, but the given and variable parts of that assignment. Read each assignment below, and answer the questions about genre, givens, and variables.

1. *You've read two articles about global warming. In response to these texts write an essay outlining two reasons for global warming. Be sure to cite evidence from the texts to support your response.*

- In what genre should the author respond? _____
- What is the GIVEN in this assignment? (What every writer needs to include.)

- What are the VARIABLES in this assignment? (What each individual writer must decide.) _____

2. *You've read two pieces titled The Lake in Winter and Ice Fishing in Wisconsin. Based on information in both texts, write an essay describing two ways people continue to enjoy bodies of water in the winter months.*

- In what genre should the author respond? _____
- What is the GIVEN in this assignment? (What every writer needs to include.)

- What are the VARIABLES in this assignment? (What each individual writer must decide.) _____

3. *You've read two stories that take place in specific historical periods. Josie – a Slave's Story takes place in South Carolina during the Civil War. Miriam's World takes place during the Holocaust in World War II. Based on these texts, imagine being a child in either setting. Write a story about a challenge you might encounter in this setting.*

- In what genre should the author respond? _____
- What is the GIVEN in this assignment? (What every writer needs to include.)

- What are the VARIABLES in this assignment? (What each individual writer must decide.) _____



Name: _____

GENERATING BROAD YET DISTINCT MAIN IDEAS/REASONS (1)

Think about the TOPIC listed in the larger box below. Ask yourself what you know about this topic. Then, write several distinct main idea “blurbs” about the topic on the lines below. Be sure that each main idea is distinct from the others. Use the example as a guide.

Example:

TOPIC: RAISING FUNDS
MAIN IDEA #1: Selling Popcorn
MAIN IDEA #2: A Car Wash
MAIN IDEA #3: A Talent Show

TOPIC: FITNESS ACTIVITIES

MAIN IDEA #1:

MAIN IDEA #2:

MAIN IDEA #3:

Select one of your main idea “blurbs” and develop it into a main idea sentence. Use the sentence starters at the bottom of the page if needed.

Sentence Starters:

- To meet your goals quickly, try _____ .
- A good way to _____ .
- Get together with _____ .
- Another successful strategy is _____ .
- It’s fun to _____ .



Student Page

Name: _____

GENERATING BROAD YET DISTINCT MAIN IDEAS/REASONS (2)

Your Favorite Relative is the topic of a planned opinion piece. Call to mind your favorite relative and think about all of the qualities he or she has that you admire. Then, write 3 distinct main reason blurbs and extend them into main reason sentences on the lines below. Be sure each main reason is distinct from the others. Use the sentence starters on the bottom of the page if needed.

<p>TOPIC: YOUR FAVORITE RELATIVE</p> <p>MAIN REASON #1: _____</p> <p>MAIN REASON #2: _____</p> <p>MAIN REASON #3: _____</p>

MAIN REASON SENTENCE #1:

MAIN REASON SENTENCE #2:

MAIN REASON SENTENCE #3:

Sentence Starters:

- One quality I admire is _____.
- I respect they way _____.
- _____ impresses me by _____.
- I appreciate the way _____.
- She/He always _____.



Name: _____

GENERATING BROAD YET DISTINCT MAIN IDEAS/REASONS (3)

Study Skills is the topic of a planned expository piece. Call to mind everything you've learned from teachers and parents about the best way to be prepared for and to carry out homework and studying. Then, write 3 distinct main idea blurbs and extend them into main idea sentences on the lines below. Be sure each main idea is distinct from the others. Use the sentence starters on the bottom of the page if needed.

TOPIC: STUDY SKILLS

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #1:

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #2:

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #3:

Sentence Starters:

- One thing that's important to remember is _____.
- Good students always _____.
- I've learned to _____.
- It's critical to _____.
- The most successful learners _____.

BONUS: Using your summarizing framework and informative verbs, construct a simple summarizing paragraph explaining what you intend to explain to your readers.



Reference Page

Main Idea/Reason Sentence Starters

Have you ever wondered _____?

Do you realize that _____?

It is amazing to think about _____.

Surprisingly, _____.

Usually _____.

By the way, _____.

Lastly, _____.

There are many reasons why _____.

There are many ways in which _____.

How can _____?

There is no doubt that _____.

Why do _____?

Have you ever _____?

When do _____?

Of course _____.

For years, _____.

Sometimes _____.

You will find that _____.

Why are _____?

In many ways _____?

It is true that _____?

Where can _____?

I agree that _____.

I would rather _____.

Just imagine how _____.



THESAURUS OF GENERAL ADJECTIVES

interesting

appealing
fascinating
enthraling
intriguing
curious

nice

charming
delightful
enchanted
captivating
pleasant

pretty (as in a person)

beautiful
attractive
handsome
elegant
lovely
adorable
gorgeous
regal

great

terrific
incredible
fantastic
awesome
grand
magnificent
splendid
marvelous
excellent

big

enormous
gigantic
huge
immense
colossal
giant
massive

fun

enjoyable
entertaining
amusing
delightful
pleasant
satisfying

strange

bewildering
bizarre
curious
extraordinary
mysterious
odd
peculiar
unusual
weird

exciting

exhilarating
thrilling
sensational
electrifying
rousing
stimulating
death-defying
daring

dangerous

harmful
hazardous
perilous
risky
challenging

smart

clever
skillful
bright
intelligent
shrewd
brilliant

beautiful (as in a place)

charming
captivating
lovely
lush
majestic
splendid
breathtaking

scary

frightening
terrifying
alarming
shocking
horrifying
spooky
eerie

small

tiny
petite
little
miniature
microscopic
puny

hot

blazing
burning
flaming
scalding
scorching

cold

arctic
chilly
cool
freezing
frigid

difficult

hard
challenging
complex
demanding
perplexing
troublesome

easy

effortless
simple
uncomplicated
manageable
comfortable
a cinch

special

unique
exceptional
distinctive
extraordinary
meaningful

(animal – although a noun, students often benefit by having word referents to use: creature, beast, monster, critter, feathered/furry/four-legged friend, varmint, carnivore, herbivore, predator, hunter.)



Name: _____

BORING! REVISE! (1)

Read this author’s prewriting plan and the main idea sentences. Notice the boring, redundant sentences and lack of variety. Each sentence begins the same way.

TOPIC: CLIMATE CHANGE

- | | |
|---|--|
| MAIN IDEA #1: Rising sea levels | Climate change is causing sea levels to rise. |
| MAIN IDEA #2: Droughts and wildfires | Climate change is causing more droughts and wildfire. |
| MAIN IDEA #3: Habitat loss | Climate change is causing habitat loss for some species. |

This kind of writing does not spark the reader’s attention or make them want to read on. Using the sentence starters below, see if you can rewrite these sentences to make them more interesting.

RISING SEA LEVELS

DROUGHTS AND WILDFIRES

HABITAT LOSS

Sentence Starters:

- Imagine a world where _____.
- It’s shocking to learn that _____.
- What would happen if _____?
- Scientists believe that _____.
- Another climate change issue is _____.



Student Page

Name: _____

BORING! REVISE! (2)

Read this author’s prewriting plan and the main reason sentences. Notice the boring, redundant sentences and lack of variety. Each sentence begins the same way.

TOPIC: PLANTING TREES

MAIN REASON #1: Oxygen I like trees because they produce oxygen.

MAIN REASON #2: Food I like trees because they provide food.

MAIN REASON #3: Shade I like trees because they shade us from the sun.

This kind of writing does not spark the reader’s attention or make them want to read on. Using the sentence starters below, see if you can rewrite these sentences to make them more interesting.

OXYGEN

FOOD

SHADE

SENTENCE STARTERS:

- Another reason I love trees is that _____ .
- I like planting trees because _____ .
- Having trees planted ensures that _____ .
- Not only do I think trees are beautiful, but they _____ .
- It’s exciting to learn that _____ .
- Another reason to plant trees is _____ .

BONUS: You just constructed main reason sentences for an opinion piece, REVISE these for use in an expository.



Student Page

Name: _____

MAIN IDEA BLURBS INTO SENTENCES (1)

Look at this writer's EXPOSITORY PILLAR FRAMEWORK. The author has a good prewriting plan. Help the author by writing a complete MAIN IDEA SENTENCE for each main idea listed on the pillar.

TOPIC: Going to the Movies
Introduction: Lead/Topic Sentence

**MAIN IDEA #1:
Choosing a movie**

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

**MAIN IDEA #2:
Picking a seat**

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

**MAIN IDEA #3:
Selecting snacks**

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

CONCLUSION

Sentence Starter Suggestions

- Before you head for the theater you must _____.
- Dedicated movie goers know how to _____.
- When you're theater-bound you need to _____.
- It is important to _____.
- At the theater _____.
- Many movie-goers purchase _____.
- Movie fans agree that _____.
- For your viewing pleasure, be sure to _____.
- Another must is _____.
- Another decision would be _____.



Name: _____

MAIN REASON BLURBS INTO SENTENCES (2)

Look at this writer's OPINION PILLAR FRAMEWORK. The author has a good prewriting plan. Help the author by writing a complete MAIN REASON SENTENCE for each main reason listed on the pillar.

TOPIC/ISSUE: <u>Fast Food is Great</u> Introduction: Lead/Opinion Statement	
MAIN REASON #1: Delicious	
Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail
MAIN REASON #2: Convenient	
Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail
MAIN REASON #3: Inexpensive	
Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail
CONCLUSION	

Sentence Starter Suggestions

- Who doesn't enjoy _____?
- I absolutely adore _____.
- I can never resist _____.
- It's fun to choose _____.
- It's so easy to _____.
- In my opinion, _____.
- I love considering _____.
- What's easier than _____?
- Just hop in the car and _____.
- Fast food is _____.
- Another reason to love fast food is _____.
- Almost anyone can afford _____.
- What a bargain _____.



CHALLENGE: Assume the opposite viewpoint about fast food and revise this pillar accordingly. Then write main reason sentences to support this opposing view.



Name: _____

TURNING QUESTIONS/PROMPTS INTO RESPONSES (1)

REMEMBER: When writing a response to text you will be given a question or prompt to consider. Within the question or prompt you'll find a key phrase that you'll need to address. One effective way of getting started is to use this key phrase in the first line of your response. This key phrase becomes your *TOPIC SENTENCE*.

DIRECTIONS: Read each question/prompt below and underline the key phrase. Then, on the lines beneath the question/prompt, use this key phrase in your **TOPIC SENTENCE**.

1. Using evidence from the text, describe the circumstances leading up to the Titanic disaster.

2. Write an essay explaining the advantages and disadvantages of solar energy. Be sure to cite examples from the text.

3. Based on examples in the story, explain the way Meggie felt and the reasons for her strong feelings.

4. Write an essay explaining how the poet used numerous images from nature to set a mood. Use specific examples.



Student Page

Name: _____

TURNING QUESTIONS/PROMPTS INTO RESPONSES (2)

REMEMBER: When writing a response to text you will be given a question or prompt to consider. Within the question or prompt you'll find a key phrase that you'll need to address. One effective way of getting started is to use this key phrase in the first line of your response. This key phrase becomes your *TOPIC SENTENCE*.

DIRECTIONS: Read each question/prompt below and underline the key phrase. Then, on the lines beneath the question/prompt, use this key phrase in your **TOPIC SENTENCE**.

1. You read two articles on desert habitats. Write about the many similarities and differences between two major deserts. Be sure to include evidence from both texts in your response.

2. The article on the history of space travel included charts and timelines. Using this information, write an essay that highlights two major accomplishments of the NASA space program during these years.

3. You read two stories based on the theme of "friendship." Using examples from each story, describe what Molly and Alfredo learned about what it means to be a good friend.

4. Compare the biographical articles on Abe Lincoln and Martin Luther King, Jr. Write an essay outlining the contributions of each toward civil rights in the United States. Be sure to cite examples from the texts.



Name: _____

THE MISSING MAIN IDEA (1)

Read each paragraph. Think about the specific details in each sentence. Ask yourself what the paragraph is all about and write a BLURB in the margin. Then write a MAIN IDEA SENTENCE on the line above the paragraph that tells what the entire paragraph is about.

MAIN IDEA: _____

When you surf you ride the crest of the wave--the higher the wave, the better! The wave carries you along the top of fast-moving water at high speeds. Standing upright, the challenge involves balancing and steering by shifting your weight along the surf board. It is not a sport for the nervous or the overly cautious person! You must enjoy the thrill of the roaring surf and the risk of wiping out!

MAIN IDEA: _____

Most important is the surfboard itself--it should be lightweight and constructed of fiberglass. They come in various lengths and styles to suit the needs of the wave riders. Well-fitting swimming trunks are a must--you wouldn't want to lose your suit in a wipe out! A wet suit is helpful to protect you in cooler climates where the water is cold.

MAIN IDEA: _____

Of course, Hawaii is the most desired surfing spot in the world because of its thirty-foot waves. California is another favorite. There are over 40 surfing beaches in Southern California alone. Since not everyone is capable of surfing the big waves, many people prefer to body surf or boogie-board along coasts where waves are less ferocious--for example, along the Atlantic coast. And Australia and Africa boast big waves as well, and where there's waves, there's surfing!

BONUS: What is the TOPIC of this piece? _____

Write a good title for this piece. _____



Student Page

Name: _____

THE MISSING MAIN REASON (2)

Read each paragraph. Think about the specific details in each sentence. Ask yourself what the paragraph is all about and write a BLURB in the margin. Then write a MAIN REASON SENTENCE on the line above the paragraph that tells what the entire paragraph is about.

MAIN REASON: _____

My parents are always talking about wanting me to be responsible and to learn how to save money. I think they're right. It is important to learn how to budget and save. But, the way I see it, first you have to earn some money in order to save some! If they paid me a weekly allowance I'd set aside a little for spending on things that I want, and I'd save the rest for some bigger goal. I could even put some money away toward my college education. I'd feel proud to show my parents how responsible and mature I would be if I had some allowance money to manage.

MAIN REASON: _____

I think there are more chores around the house that need to be done that my parents never seem to get to. Wouldn't they appreciate having help raking the leaves or washing the car? I'd love to prove to my mom that I can load and unload the dishwasher and it would be fun to learn to do the laundry. I believe that taking on some chores of my own in exchange for a weekly allowance would benefit everyone in the house.

MAIN REASON: _____

If I slacked off on my chores I wouldn't get paid. A great idea would be to put a weekly chore checklist on the refrigerator door. As I completed each chore I'd check it off the list. Then Mom or Dad could take the list and inspect my work. If the work was done well for a certain number of weeks or months I could ask for a raise. Either way, both me and my parents would feel accountable to each other in a way that would be fair. I believe in the idea of a fair wage for work well done!

BONUS: What is the TOPIC of this piece? _____

Write a good title for this piece. _____

What is the author's position? _____

Do you agree or disagree with this position? Why or why not?

Write your reasons on the back of this sheet.



Student Page

Name: _____

Sentence Variety and Word Choice (1)

Read each dull main idea/reason sentence below. Revise each sentence by varying the sentence structure, and replacing overly general adjectives with more specific, vivid adjectives to create main idea sentences that your audience will read with enthusiasm. Also, try using word referents to replace the double underlined topic word in each sentence.

Ex. Multiplying fractions is hard.

Revision: Most people agree that this complicated mathematical procedure is challenging!

1. Going to the amusement park is fun.

Revision: _____

2. Dinosaurs were really big.

Revision: _____

3. Learning about mummies is interesting.

Revision: _____



Name: _____

Sentence Variety and Word Choice (2)

Read each dull main idea/reason sentence below. Revise each sentence by varying the sentence structure, and replacing overly general adjectives with more specific, vivid adjectives to create main idea sentences that your audience will read with enthusiasm. Also, try using word referents to replace the double underlined topic word in each sentence.

Ex. Collecting stamps is fun.

Revision: Would you believe that this educational hobby is an enjoyable, satisfying activity?

1. The swamp is a strange place.

Revision: _____

2. In Antarctica it's cold.

Revision: _____

3. A hummingbird is really small.

Revision: _____



Student Page

Name: _____

Revising Paragraphs with Word Referents (1)

Read the paragraph below. Notice the redundant use of the topic word. Create a list of word referents for the topic word. Then, REVISE this passage, replacing the underlined topic words with effective, informative word referents. If you don't know much about sea turtles you'll need to do a little research to learn about their appearance, habitat, and behavior. You might also want to use a thesaurus to help generate appropriate adjectives and nouns.

Sea turtles are increasingly facing threats from humans. Sea turtles are often caught or tangled in nets intended for large fish such as swordfish or sharks. Another threat to sea turtles is that their habitats are being destroyed by housing and other development along the seacoasts where they lay eggs. Poachers also kill sea turtles for their eggs and meat, which are used for food, as well as their shells which are sold to collectors. Sea turtles are also compromised by polluted water and climate change.

Sea Turtles

Adjectives

Nouns

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Your Revision:

Sea turtles are increasingly facing threats from humans. _____ are often caught or tangled in nets intended for large fish such as swordfish or sharks. Another threat to _____ is that their habitats are being destroyed by housing and other development along the seacoasts where they lay eggs. Poachers also kill _____ for their eggs and meat, which are used for food, as well as their shells which are sold to collectors. _____ are also compromised by polluted water and climate change.



Name: _____

Revising Paragraphs with Word Referents (2)

Read this paragraph about wolfdogs. Find and underline each redundant use of the topic word. Then, REVISE this passage, and using carets, revise the underlined topic words by inserting effective, informative word referents.

Why Not Buy a Wolfdog as a Pet?

Have you ever heard of a mix between a dog and a wolf? These wolfdogs are bred because some people love the idea of owning an exotic pet. One type of wolfdog, called a “wolador” is half timber wolf and half Labrador retriever. The owners of these and other varieties of wolfdogs are often seeking a pet with the appearance of a wolf and the disposition of an ordinary domestic dog. The problem is that it is impossible to accurately predict the temperament of a wolfdog. Because of their wild ancestry, wolfdogs can be skittish, unpredictable, and aggressive. As wolfdogs mature their wild nature becomes more pronounced. Many states have laws limiting the ownership of wolfdogs, and report owners being attacked or even killed by these wolfdogs.



Name: _____

PREPARING TO WRITE A RESPONSE TO TEXT

You've read the text titled Birds of Prey, p. 82. In response to this text, write an essay comparing the characteristics of two predatory birds in the article. Be sure to use evidence from the text to explain how you could tell these birds apart.

1. Underline the **given elements** in this writing assignment.
2. What are the **variable elements** in this writing assignment - in other words, what decision do you need to make as the author?
3. **Read and annotate** the text and **write a summarizing framework** for this piece.
 TOPIC: _____
 MAIN IDEA #1: _____
 MAIN IDEA #2: _____
 MAIN IDEA #3: _____
 MAIN IDEA #4: _____
4. In your summarizing framework, **circle the main idea** that will be most helpful in crafting your response. Locate and **circle the paragraph in the text**.
5. What **annotation markings** can help guide your response?
6. After you've selected two birds of prey, **highlight** the characteristics that make them unique. Highlight the first predatory bird's characteristics in yellow, and the second predatory birds characteristics in pink.
7. Write a **topic sentence** using the given elements that you underlined as your "topic."
8. Write a **main idea sentence** for each of the predatory birds you selected.
9. Use **CITING SENTENCE STARTERS** to reference evidence in the text:
 - In the text titled Birds of Prey we learn _____.
 - In paragraph _____ the author states that _____.
 - The author describes the way that _____.
 - Another example the author notes is _____.
 - In the information provided about foraging we learn that _____.
 - The author also discusses _____.
 - Additionally, the text includes the fact that _____.
 - This informative text also explains _____.



Annotated Page

PREPARING TO WRITE A RESPONSE TO TEXT

You've read the text titled Birds of Prey, p. 82. In response to this text, write an essay comparing the characteristics of two predatory birds in the article. Be sure to use evidence from the text to explain how you could tell these birds apart.

1. Underline the **given elements** in this writing assignment. (*characteristics of 2 predatory birds*)
2. What are the **variable elements** in this writing assignment - in other words, what decision do you need to make as the author? (*which birds you will select*)
3. **Read and annotate** the text and **write a summarizing framework** for this piece.
 TOPIC: Birds of Prey
 MAIN IDEA #1: Owls
 MAIN IDEA #2: Hawks
 MAIN IDEA #3: Osprey
 MAIN IDEA #4: Eagles
4. In your summarizing framework, **circle the main idea** that will be most helpful in crafting your response. Locate and **circle the paragraph in the text**. (*Answers will vary*)
5. What **annotation markings** can help guide your response? (*Main idea blurbs*)
6. After you've selected two birds of prey, **highlight** the characteristics that make them unique. Highlight the first predatory bird's characteristics in yellow, and the second predatory birds characteristics in pink. (*Answers will vary*)
7. Write a **topic sentence** using the given elements that you underlined as your "topic."
 (*Ex. Owls and osprey possess unique characteristics that help us identify them*)
8. Write a **main idea sentence** for each of the predatory birds you selected.
 (*Ex. The nocturnal owl is a bird of prey that's difficult to spot.*
 Osprey can be seen near lakes and other bodies of water.)
9. Use **CITING SENTENCE STARTERS** to reference evidence in the text:
 - In the text titled Birds of Prey we learn _____.
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EXEMPLAR RESPONSE

Ex. SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK

TOPIC: Birds of Prey

MAIN IDEA #1: Owl

MAIN IDEA #2: Osprey

Birds of Prey

The text, Birds of Prey, compares a number of raptors including owls and osprey. These raptors are easy to tell apart if you know what to look for. While owls and osprey share many characteristics, they also vary in a number of ways including appearance, behavior, and habitat.

According to the article, we learn that all of the many varieties of owls, from the tiny Saw Whet Owl to the Great Grey Owl are nocturnal, so they are easier to spot at night. The author explains that owls have a special configuration of wing feathers that help them to “fly silently and surprise their prey.” Like all raptors owls have sharp talons and a curved beak. We learn that the owls’ feathers surrounding their eyes and beaks make the owl appear to have a concave face, which helps “channel sound into their ears.” We also learn that owls have powerful night vision and can turn their heads almost completely around in order to spy prey.

Osprey share some traits with owls, but differ in other ways. We learn, in paragraph four, that like owls, osprey have sharp talons and beaks, but they are “diurnal,” which means they hunt during the day. You won’t find osprey in heavy woodlands because they live and hunt near “lakes, rivers, and other waterways.” Ospreys have white heads and a distinctive black band of color extending from their eyes along the sides of their heads, and their bellies are white. The author explains that these water-loving hunters build nests of sticks on top of telephone poles and can be easily seen during the day.



EXEMPLAR RESPONSE

Ex. SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK

TOPIC: Birds of Prey

Main Idea #1: Owl

Main Idea #2: Osprey

Birds of Prey

The text, Birds of Prey, compares a number of raptors including owls and osprey. These raptors are easy to tell apart if you know what to look for. While owls and osprey share many characteristics, they also vary in a number of ways including appearance, behavior, and habitat.

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Name: _____

PREPARING TO WRITE A RESPONSE TO TEXT

You've read the text titled Giant's Causeway, pp. 37-38. In response to this text, write an essay describing two ways that the Giant's Causeway is unique. Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your response.

1. Underline the **given elements** in this writing assignment.
2. What are the **variable elements** in this writing assignment - in other words, what decision do you need to make as the author?
- 3 **Skim and scan** the text and **write a summarizing framework** for this piece.
4. In your summarizing framework, **circle the Main Ideas** that will be most helpful in crafting your response. Locate and **circle the paragraph in the text**.
5. What **text conventions** can help guide your response?
6. After you've located the paragraphs that describe the unique characteristics you've chosen, **highlight your first unique characteristic** in the text with a yellow highlighter. Then, highlight the second unique feature in pink.
7. Write a **topic sentence** using the given elements that you underlined as your "topic."
8. Write a **main idea sentence** for each of unique characteristics that you selected.
9. Use **CITING SENTENCE STARTERS** to reference evidence in the text:
 - *In the text titled Giant's Causeway we learn that* _____ .
 - *On page 37 the author states that* _____ .
 - *The author describes* _____ .
 - *The photographs show* _____ .
 - *It is interesting to note that* _____ .
 - *The Legend of Finn MacCool claims that* _____ .
 - *It's clear that* _____ .
 - *Another unique characteristic is* _____ .



Annotated Page

PREPARING TO WRITE A RESPONSE TO TEXT

You've read the text titled Giant's Causeway, pp. 37-38. In response to this text, write an essay describing two ways that the Giant's Causeway is unique. Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your response.

1. Underline the **given elements** in this writing assignment. Giant's Causeway
2. What are the **variable elements** in this writing assignment - in other words, what decision do you need to make as the author? (which 2 unique characteristics)
3. **Skim and scan** the text and **write a summarizing framework** for this piece.
 TOPIC: Giant's Causeway
 MAIN IDEA #1: Peculiar Landscape
 MAIN IDEA #2: How it Was Formed
 MAIN IDEA #3: Legend of Finn MacCool
4. In your summarizing framework, **circle the Main Ideas** that will be most helpful in crafting your response. Locate and **circle the paragraph in the text.** (Bold-faced Caption: Peculiar Landscape and Legend of Finn MacCool)
5. What **text conventions** can help guide your response? (headings, bold, italicized keywords)
6. After you've located the paragraphs that describe the unique characteristics you've chosen, **highlight your first unique characteristic** in the text with a yellow highlighter. Then, highlight the second unique feature in pink. (Examples will vary)
7. Write a **topic sentence** using the given elements that you underlined as your "topic."
8. Write a **main idea sentence** for each of unique characteristics that you selected. (Ex. The terrain of the Giant's Causeway is very unusual.) Another unique thing about the Giant's Causeway is the Legend of Finn MacCool.)
9. Use **CITING SENTENCE STARTERS** to reference evidence in the text:
 - In the text titled Giant's Causeway we learn that _____ .
 - On page 37 the author states that _____ .
 - The author describes _____ .
 - The photographs show _____ .
 - It is interesting to note that _____ .
 - The Legend of Finn MacCool claims that _____ .
 - It's clear that _____ .
 - Another unique characteristic is _____ .



EXEMPLAR RESPONSE

Ex. SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK

TOPIC: Giant's Causeway and Finn MacCool

Main Idea #1: Peculiar Landscape

Main Idea #2: Legend of Finn MacCool

Giant's Causeway

The Giant's Causeway is unique in many ways. Not only the landscape itself, but the legend associated with it makes it a popular tourist attraction.

Without a doubt, the Giant's Causeway is a truly peculiar landscape. On page 37, columns 1 and 2, the author explains that there are only a few places in the world that resemble this natural attraction located in Northern Ireland. This rocky area is made up of thousands of stone pillars. Each pillar is a polygon or many-sided figure. There are some interesting statistics in the text, including the following: the pillars can have 4, 5, 7 or 8 sides and some stand more than 35 feet tall. The author describes these columns as being packed close together "as though a giant had driven thousands of stone spikes into the ground, side by side, forming a honeycomb pattern." The photographs feature these stone pillars, surrounded by water, and clearly show their unusual shape and arrangement.

Another unique thing about the Giant's Causeway is the Legend of Finn MacCool. Most landforms don't have their own legend, but the Giant's Causeway is an exception. On page 38, the author explains that the people of Northern Ireland concocted a story to explain how the Giant's Causeway was formed. Since people didn't understand the science of geology they invented stories to explain nature and the world. The author describes the legend about a "grand warrior" named Finn MacCool and another giant, his enemy, The Red Man, who lived across the sea in Scotland. The story claims that Finn built this large rocky causeway across the sea in order to meet The Red Man for a battle. But, when Finn saw the size of the Red Man his wife fooled the Red Man by disguising Finn as his own baby. Reasoning that if Finn's baby was that size, Finn must be huge, so the Red Man ran back to Scotland, ripping up the path behind him.

The Giant's Causeway is unique, not only because of its interesting rock formations, but because of the legend surrounding it, making it a popular travel destination.



Annotated Page

EXEMPLAR RESPONSE

Ex. SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK

TOPIC: Giant's Causeway and Finn MacCool

Main Idea #1: Peculiar Landscape

Main Idea #2: Legend of Finn MacCool

Giant's Causeway

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Another unique thing about the Giant's Causeway is the Legend of Finn MacCool. Most landforms don't have their own legend, but the Giant's Causeway is an exception. On page 38, the author explains that the people of Northern Ireland concocted a story to explain how the Giant's Causeway was formed. Since people didn't understand the science of geology they invented stories to explain nature and the world. The author describes the legend about a "grand warrior" named Finn MacCool and another giant, his enemy, The Red Man, who lived across the sea in Scotland. The story claims that Finn built this large rocky causeway across the sea in order to meet The Red Man for a battle. But, when Finn saw the size of the Red Man his wife fooled the Red Man by disguising Finn as his own baby. Reasoning that if Finn's baby was that size, Finn must be huge, so the Red Man ran back to Scotland, ripping up the path behind him.

The Giant's Causeway is unique, not only because of its interesting rock formations, but because of the legend surrounding it, making it a popular travel destination.



Name: _____

THE URBAN IGLOO

It was unbelievable! Overnight the city had been transformed into a white crystal wonderland. Day had dawned a dull gray. The sidewalks disappeared in drifts, roads identifiable only by a few brave brown tire tracks in the snow. Not a patch of black asphalt was visible. Parked cars nosed out of snow banks, some almost completely covered with heavy white snow. The high-rise buildings glistened with ice. There was not a single yellow taxicab in sight, or a city bus. The raised subway tracks at the end of 128th Ave. were blanketed in the heavy white stuff and were completely silent.

My reverie of winter window gazing was interrupted by the sound of the buzzer. I ran to the apartment keypad and pressed the button. “Come on down! I’ve been waiting out here forever!” It was my best friend, Marcus. “Selena, you going to waste a snow day sitting in the window daydreaming, or what?”

“I’m coming!” I yelled, already pulling on my heavy coat, boots, hat, and gloves. I headed down the three flights and out the door. The icy air hit me as I crossed the stoop. My breath turned to frosty puffs in front of my face.

Marcus had two snow shovels. “I bet we can make some money shoveling these sidewalks,” he said. His words were garbled behind his scarf that was covering his nose and mouth. I shrugged, grabbed a handful of snow, packed it hard, and tossed it at him. The last thing I wanted to do was shovel snow. Besides, there was way too much of it for two kids to move. Marcus brushed the snow off of his jacket. “Let’s get to it,” he said, ignoring my efforts to distract him. “I bet Mr. Linowitz will pay us!” I looked skeptically at Linowitz Market. Not a light on inside. Mr. Linowitz was probably at home in bed. But Marcus wouldn’t be dissuaded. He stood one snow shovel in a snow bank in front of me and attacked the invisible sidewalk with the other. Finally, I sighed. Once Marcus made his mind up about something...

It was slow going at first, but little by little we cleared a skinny path. We piled the snow on a snow bank in a driveway between two parked, half-buried cars. It was like standing in a cold, white tunnel. I stared at the wall of white, thinking about how some people live in climates where this kind of snow was the rule rather than the exception. That’s when I had an idea. As Marcus continued slaving over our pathetic little path I put my shovel aside, faced the mountain of snow in the driveway, and began tunneling into it by scooping and carving out chunks of snow with my gloved hands. By the time my fingers were wet and numb I’d created a small cavern. All around the indentation I packed the snow hard, while continuing to dig an even deeper cavity in the huge snowy mound. Back aching, I stepped away to observe my handiwork. The opening I’d made was about 3 feet high, 2 feet wide, and 4



Student Page

feet deep. The opening arched on top like a curved doorway. I crept inside the cozy but chilly space and sat down. Let Marcus continue shoveling his little trail! I was going to enjoy my urban igloo! I continued to carve and shape this small snowy abode from the inside, waiting for Marcus to realize I was gone.

Finally his red-cheeked face appeared in the opening. “Wow!” he mumbled through his soggy scarf, jamming himself in beside me.

“What do you think?” I asked.

“Awesome!” Marcus replied, his eyes round as dinner plates.

“Wait here!” I said and dashed out of the igloo to the stoop, up the stairs and into my family’s apartment. I gathered some granola bars, a deck of cards, two old pillows, a blanket, and a bottle of chocolate milk and shoved it all into my backpack. In a moment Marcus and I were sitting on the pillows, a blanket over our laps, having a snack and playing rummy.

After several hands of rummy there was a low rumbling, clanking sound in the distance that grew louder and louder. Marcus raised an eyebrow, and the two of us scrambled out of the igloo to have a look.

It was just in the nick of time! We watched in horror as the giant city snow plow rattled and groaned toward the driveway like a hungry yellow monster. In a flash its long curved metal plow exploded into the back of our igloo, collapsing the walls and thrusting the snow out of the way in huge clumps. I caught a glimpse of a few playing cards sticking out of the demolished mess like small red flags, and the edge of our blanket disappearing beneath the gigantic wheels of the plow.

“That could have been us,” I murmured. Marcus looked a little pale. My hands felt sweaty and I was suddenly feeling hot and cold at the same time. We backed away from the plow and as the driver backed up he rolled down the window.

“Hey kids,” he yelled. “It ain’t safe playin’ around in the snow out here. Get yourselves inside where you belong on a snow day like this.”

I suddenly very felt cold and very wet. I shivered. Marcus stood staring at what used to be our igloo.

“What are you waiting for!” the driver hollered. “Get in the house!”

Marcus and I went in, peeled off our wet coats, gloves, boots and socks. I microwaved us some hot chocolate and we sat on the couch. Marcus turned to me and said, “I guess there’s a reason why people don’t build igloos in the city, Selena.”

I nodded, but wouldn’t look at him. Marcus was so annoying when he was right.



entertaining
beginning

THE URBAN IGLOO

setting

It was unbelievable! Overnight the city had been transformed into a white crystal wonderland. Day had dawned a dull gray. The sidewalks disappeared in drifts, roads identifiable only by a few brave brown tire tracks in the snow. Not a patch of black asphalt was visible. Parked cars nosed out of snow banks, some almost completely covered with heavy white snow. The high-rise buildings glistened with ice. There was not a single yellow taxicab in sight, or a city bus. The raised subway tracks at the end of 128th Ave. were blanketed in the heavy white stuff and were completely silent.

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main character

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main event

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Annotated Page

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suspense

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main event

problem

After several hands of rummy there was a low rumbling, clanking sound in the distance that grew louder and louder. Marcus raised an eyebrow, and the two of us scrambled out of the igloo to have a look.

It was just in the nick of time! We watched in horror as the giant city snow plow rattled and groaned toward the driveway like a hungry yellow monster. In a flash its long curved metal plow exploded into the back of our igloo, collapsing the walls and thrusting the snow out of the way in huge clumps. I caught a glimpse of a few playing cards sticking out of the demolished mess like small red flags, and the edge of our blanket disappearing beneath the gigantic wheels of the plow.

“That could have been us,” I murmured. Marcus looked a little pale. My hands felt sweaty and I was suddenly feeling hot and cold at the same time. We backed away from the plow and as the driver backed up he rolled down the window.

“Hey kids,” he yelled. “It ain’t safe playin’ around in the snow out here. Get yourselves inside where you belong on a snow day like this.”

I suddenly very felt cold and very wet. I shivered. Marcus stood staring at what used to be our igloo.

“What are you waiting for!” the driver hollered. “Get in the house!”

Marcus and I went in, peeled off our wet coats, gloves, boots and socks. I microwaved us some hot chocolate and we sat on the couch. Marcus turned to me and said, “I guess there’s a reason why people don’t build igloos in the city, Selena.”

conclusion

I nodded, but wouldn’t look at him. Marcus was so annoying when he was right.



Name: _____

PREPARING TO WRITE A RESPONSE TO TEXT

You've read two very different texts about snow days, Safety First: The Necessity of Snow Days and The Urban Igloo. Write an essay comparing these two texts. Be sure to address the differences in genre, organization, and author's purpose. Also, describe at least one key characteristic in each text that is unique to the genre.

1. Underline the **given elements** in this writing assignment.
2. What are the **variable elements** in this writing assignment – in other words, what decision do you need to make as the author?
3. **Annotate and Analyze** Safety First: The Necessity of Snow Days and write a **summarizing framework** for this piece.

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

What is the genre of this piece? _____

What is the author's purpose? _____

How do you know? _____

What pre-writing tool did the author use to shape this text? _____

4. Fill in the summarizing framework below for The Urban Igloo.

This story is about _____

The problem was that _____

The problem was solved when _____



Student Page

What is the genre of this piece? _____

What is the author's purpose? _____

How do you know? _____

What pre-writing tool did the author use to shape this text? _____

5. Name one characteristic you'll describe in the narrative story. Highlight this in yellow.

6. Name one characteristic you'll describe in the expository text. Highlight this in pink.

7. Write a **topic sentence** based on what the prompt is asking. _____

8. Write **two main idea sentences**, one for your description of the key characteristics in the expository text, and another for the narrative text.

9. Use **citing sentence starters** to reference evidence in the text:

- *In the first text the author used* _____.
- *Another major difference is that* _____.
- *You can recognize a narrative piece by* _____.
- *In the second text it's clear that* _____.
- *The organizational strategy* _____.
- *The author's purpose was* _____.



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1. Underline the **given elements** in this writing assignment.
(Compare the two texts – genre, organization, author's purpose.)
2. What are the **variable elements** in this writing assignment – in other words, what decision do you need to make as the author?
(which key characteristic of each genre to describe.)
3. **Annotate and Analyze** Safety First: The Necessity of Snow Days and write a summarizing framework for this piece:

TOPIC: Necessity of Snow Days

MAIN IDEA #1: snowfall amounts

MAIN IDEA #2: timing of storm

MAIN IDEA #3: dangerous conditions

What is the genre of this piece? expository

What is the author's purpose? to inform

How do you know? The text provides information and facts about the topic and organizes this information according to a number of broad yet distinct main ideas followed by details.

What pre-writing tool did the author use to shape this text? expository pillar.

4. Fill in the summarizing framework below for The Urban Igloo.

This story is about Selena and Marcus enjoying a snow day

The problem was that Selena built an igloo that got crushed by a snow plow.



Annotated Page

The problem was solved when when they escaped just in time and went indoors.

What is the genre of this piece? narrative

What is the author's purpose? to entertain

How do you know? The text focuses on a character in a setting, facing and solving a problem

What pre-writing tool did the author use to shape this text? narrative diamond

5. Name one characteristic you'll describe in the narrative story. Highlight this in yellow. Possible responses: characters, problem, solution, dialogue, a significant main event, etc
6. Name one characteristic you'll describe in the expository text. Highlight this in pink. (Possible responses: focus on a topic, introduction, headings, photographs and charts, conclusion.)
7. Write a **topic sentence** based on what the prompt is asking. The two texts we read, Safety First: The Necessity of Snow Days and The Urban Igloo differ in genre, organization and purpose.
8. Write **two main idea sentences**, one for your description of the key characteristics in the expository text, and another for the narrative text.
Ex. One key characteristic of an expository piece is the text conventions - bold main idea headings. The most significant characteristic of the narrative text is the focus on a character.
9. Use citing **SENTENCE STARTERS** to reference evidence in the text:
 - *In the first text the author used* _____.
 - *Another major difference is that* _____.
 - *You can recognize a narrative piece by* _____.
 - *In the second text it's clear that* _____.
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EXEMPLAR RESPONSE

Ex. SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK

TOPIC: Difference between Two Texts

Main Idea #1: Safety First: The Necessity of Snow Days

Main Idea #2: The Urban Igloo

The two texts we read are different in terms of genre, organization, and author's purpose. Safety First: The Necessity of Snow Days is an expository text while The Urban Igloo is a narrative story.

There are many key characteristics that the author includes in Safety First: The Necessity of Snow Days that tell us that the genre is informative or expository. The text focuses on the topic of why snow days are necessary for safety's sake and is organized into main ideas followed by details. Each main idea appears as the first sentence in each body paragraph. Another characteristic of informative texts is that all of the sentences that follow the main idea sentence relate to it. These details explain and support the main idea. For example, following the main idea of paragraph 4 "dangerous conditions" we read details about how high winds can down tree branches, how icy roads can cause cars to skid and have accidents, and how extreme cold can cause children waiting for buses to get frostbite. All of these informative details are specific examples of the main idea: "dangerous conditions."

The Urban Igloo is a very different type of text. This narrative story focuses on a character named Selena and her friend Marcus. It takes place in a city after a snowstorm. Like all narrative stories, it includes action, description, dialogue, and the main character's (sometimes called the point of view character) feelings. It is organized very differently than the expository text, following a beginning, middle, and ending format. The story begins with an entertaining beginning in which the point of view character (Selena) gazes out on the city streets blanketed in snow. The story moves into the main event (the middle and largest part of the story) where Selena and Marcus go outside in the snow and Selena builds an igloo in a driveway covered in deep drifts. The problem is that they narrowly escape the igloo as a city plow clears it away. Instead of being written to provide information, this story is written to entertain the reader. The reader can imagine being Selena and/or Marcus, can relate to their experience, and feel their feelings right along with them.

Although both texts are about snow days, it is clear that they differ in genre, organization, and purpose.



Annotated Page

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Although both texts are about snow days, it is clear that they differ in genre, organization, and purpose.