

Introduction has included three broad yet distinct details.

White pearly seashells, relaxing under the shade, and playing volleyball? It's the beach we're talking about!

Shiny rainbows across the beautiful shells... of course you want the shell! First reason I love about the beach is that there is many different types of shells. Imagine this, every single shell calling out your name, saying, "Take me home!" But you better hurry up and pick those shells because they can go back to the ocean just because of a little wave. **Note: The underlined transitions are predictable.**

Ahhh... just relaxing under a palm tree, with a drink, and letting your toes getting wet in the water... now that's relaxing! You can always relax at the beach, no matter what. Another way to relax is to close your eyes, hear the sounds, and take a deep breath.

S W O S H ! B O O M ! Volleyball is a great sport to play at the beach. You can run, jump, and even at the same time in volleyball!

This is why I love the beach... just forget the sharks and jellyfishes... think of the positive things. Relaxing, volleyball, and best, collect seashells.

Informational/Opinion Writing

Grade 5 Sample

The Beach

Feedback for Improvement

Topic: the beach

Main Idea #1: shells

Main Idea #2: relaxation

Main Idea #3: volleyball

This young author has attempted to write an informational piece about the beach. There are some things that he has done well, but there is also room for improvement, especially when it comes to transitions. Although most of the sentences flow nicely, there are others that do not.

In addition, **a conversation about genre would be helpful**. Although this assignment was to write an informational piece, and this does provide information to the reader, it is full of opinion language (*I love...Ahhh...now that's relaxing...*) suggests that the author's purpose is to express and support a strong opinion about the topic. **This is an important distinction to make**, and one that the author needs to be clear about. **A straight piece of informational writing should stick to objective information rather than these types of opinion statements.**

What worked:

Let's look closer at the strengths first. This student has chosen broad yet distinct main ideas/reasons for the beach experience. He elaborates on these main ideas/reasons throughout the piece and does a fair job supporting them with details. The use of the **detail generating questions**, "*What does it look like? Why is that important?*" would help this author further elaborate.

Feedback with Prescriptive Lesson:

CHOOSE a Focus Skill: What skill will make the biggest impact for this writer?

Transitions and Sentence Variety: A closer look reveals an area where there is room for growth. The second paragraph reads...*The first reason I love about the beach is that there is many different types of shells.* Later in the paper he writes...*Another way to relax is to close your eyes, hear the sounds, and take a deep breath.* These are weak and predictable transitions. This child needs help with sentence variety.

- Section 2 Lesson 10: Alternatives to Boring, Redundant Main Idea/Reason Sentences
- Section 2 Lesson 11: Revising Boring, Redundant Main Idea/Reason Sentences
- Section 2 Lesson 12: Main Idea Blurbs into Sentences
- Section 4 Lesson 11: Transitional Words and Phrases

With the Empowering Writers curriculum, students are exposed to transition sentence starters to help with sentence flow. Let's look at an example...

- *It's amazing to think about the different types of shells,* instead of...*The first reason...*
- *Who wouldn't enjoy closing their eyes, listening to nature sound, while taking deep breaths?* instead of...*Another way.*

Young writers need to be given a variety of transition words and phrases to use in place of redundant, predictable language. Once you give them the words to use and teach them how to make their sentences flow naturally, one to another, it will make a big impact in their writing.