WRITE FOR TEXAS

Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts

Online Companion Workbook

This Write for Texas Online Companion Workbook serves as an optional guide that participants can use as they work through each online resource.

This Companion Workbook includes the following:

1. Copies of the handouts for each resource—these handouts, which are also available electronically and can be downloaded, read, and/or printed within each resource, include the following:
    - **Classroom teacher handouts:** Instructional practices for teachers to use as they plan and implement reading and writing instruction in their content area classrooms
    - **Classroom templates:** Masters for students to use—these handouts can be kept in students' writing folders or notebooks
    - **Professional connection handouts:** Informative materials for teachers that provide background and research-based information related to effective content area reading and writing instruction
    - **Online activity handouts:** Materials for teachers to use as they complete online practice activities and view related videos
2. A brief explanation of how teachers use the handouts as they work through each online resource
3. Tips for how to use some of the materials and strategies in the classroom
4. Related online resource participant activities, including the following:
    - **Online practice activities and videos:** Opportunities for teachers to practice (sometimes in the role of a student or teacher) the reading and writing strategies (Some resources include videos.)
    - **Classroom teaching activities:** Opportunities for teachers to try the strategies in the classroom and think about how to incorporate the instructional practices into their content area curriculum
    - **Teaching journal questions:** Opportunities for teachers to think about and record (on paper or electronically) their responses to reflection questions, ideas, and other thoughts that relate to the online resources

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Handouts

Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts

Gateway Resource TEPT0001

Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts

GATEWAY RESOURCE ID: TEPT0001

Formal Writing Across the Content Areas

Formal Writing Across the Content Areas is the first online resource in the Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts series.

To locate this resource, go to the Write for Texas website: http://writefortexas.org. Click on the **Online Materials** tab at the top of the page. Next, click on the **Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts** tab in the column on the left side of the page. Then, after reading the information, click on **Formal Writing Across the Content Areas** (in the middle of the page) to begin working in the Project Share Gateway.

Formal Writing Across the Content Areas has four sections. The suggested time to complete all four sections is 40 minutes. You may complete this resource at your own pace. All sections may be completed in a single session, or you may log in multiple times as you work through the information and activities.

Materials and Activities by Section

Section 1. Formal Writing Across the Content Areas

- **Classroom teacher handout:** Incorporating Formal Writing in the Content Areas

  Read the handout. Think about similar writing activities you already incorporate in your content area instruction. Place a checkmark next to these writing activities on page 2 of the handout.

> **Tip:** Use the instructional protocol on the handout to introduce and teach one type of formal writing assignment at a time.

Section 2. Airtight Writing Tasks

- **Classroom teacher handout:** Developing Clear and Meaningful Content Area Writing Tasks

  Read the handout.

> **Tip:** Use pages 1 and 2 of the handout to help you develop "airtight" content area writing tasks or assignments.

- **Classroom teaching activity:** Develop an airtight writing task aligned with the content you will teach next week. Record the writing assignment in your teaching journal.

Section 3. Reading and Understanding Writing Prompts and Assignments

- **Classroom teacher handouts:** General Prewriting Guidelines for Essays (Handout 25) and Classroom Template: Sample Key Words (page 2 of Handout 25)

  Read the guidelines.

> **Tip:** Use the prewriting guidelines to teach your students how to read and understand writing prompts or assignments, develop a thesis, and generate and organize ideas. Read, write, and think aloud in front of the class. Teach only one strategy at a time. Include multiple opportunities for students to practice the strategy in pairs, in small groups, and individually. Provide copies of page 2 for students' writing folders or notebooks.

- **Online activity handout:** The Whole Family Under One Roof? (Handout 17)

  As you watch the video, refer to the handout.

- **Teaching journal question:** How will you explicitly model for your students how to use the guidelines on Handout 25 for reading and understanding essay prompts and assignments?

  Think about the question. Record your responses, ideas, and other thoughts in your teaching journal.

Section 4. Reading and Understanding Writing Prompts and Assignments

- **Classroom teacher handout and classroom template:** Authentic Writing Purposes

  Review the handout before watching the video.

> **Tip:** Use the handout to help students understand that how they craft their essay depends on their purpose or reason for writing. Model and teach the different purposes of writing by using mentor texts to show how an author's purpose affects both the content and how it is written. Keep in mind that writing purposes can overlap. Provide copies of the handout for students' writing folders or notebooks.

- **Online activity handout:** Mathematical Written Responses (page 1)
- **Classroom teaching handout and classroom template:** Mathematical Written Responses (page 2)

  Read both pages of the handout.

> **Tip:** Use the guidelines on page 2 of the handout to model and teach students how to write mathematical responses. Include multiple opportunities for students to practice with support. Provide copies of the guidelines for students' writing folders or notebooks.

- **Online practice activity:** On page 1 of the Mathematical Written Responses handout, review the sample question and written response. Identify the student's purpose for writing and briefly explain your rationale in your teaching journal. Refer to the Authentic Writing Purposes handout, if necessary.

Incorporating Formal Writing in the Content Areas

Description

- Refers to longer written assignments used several times per grading period
- Involves teachers using a variety of mentor texts to explicitly model how to read and write different text types, genres, and text structures or patterns encountered and used in specific disciplines
- Generally includes prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, conferencing, and publishing
- Helps students learn how practitioners or professionals in a specific discipline communicate and articulate ideas
- Focuses on students learning to transfer different types of genres and text structures to their own writing
- Improves comprehension of content area textbooks and enhances learning of content
- Includes almost any writing genre across content areas, especially if the genre has been introduced and taught

Instructional Protocol

- Explicitly introduce and teach—by modeling and thinking aloud—a type of formal writing specific to your discipline.
- Read aloud an example of a mentor text. Notice the characteristics of the genre and common text structures: concept and definition, sequence, compare and contrast, cause and effect, and problem and solution. Remember, authors usually use more than one pattern in a piece of writing.
- Model that particular type of writing (or genre) in front of the class. Think aloud as you show students one stage of writing at a time: prewrite, draft, revise, edit, conference, and publish.
- Merge opportunities for students to practice and apply (read and write) what they have learned about a genre and appropriate text structures with content learning. Differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all students.
- Schedule time for students to prewrite, draft, revise, edit, and conference with you and/or their peers.
- Teach and reinforce a variety of genres throughout the year.

Examples of Formal Writing Activities

	English	Math	Science	Social Studies
Literary				
Biographies	X	X	X	X
Memoirs	X	X	X	X
Poems	X	X	X	X
Personal narratives	X			X
Autobiographies	X			
Short stories	X			
Informational (Expository, Procedural, Persuasive)				
Essays	X	X	X	X
Summaries	X	X	X	X
Analyses	X	X	X	X
Interviews	X	X	X	X
Newspaper or magazine articles	X	X	X	X
Reports	X	X	X	X
Editorials	X	X	X	X
Procedures (how-to)	X	X	X	
Directions		X	X	
Letters	X			X
Reviews	X			
Critiques	X			
Observational notes			X	
Campaign speeches				X

Source: Teach for America. (2011). *Secondary literacy*. Retrieved from http://teachingasleadership.org/sites/default/files/Related-Readings/SL_2011.pdf

Developing Clear and Meaningful Content Area Writing Tasks

Writing tasks should be specific, meaningful, and aligned with your curriculum. In the second edition of *Writing in the Content Areas* (2005), Amy Benjamin describes these types of writing assignments as "airtight." These types of assignments elevate students' thinking and writing above the traditional, literal responses that can be copied verbatim from textbooks or other resources.

Four Tips for Developing Airtight Writing Tasks

1. **Specify the length of the writing in terms of content, not volume.** Avoid assigning a specific number of words or pages. Instead, ask students to develop a specific number of ideas, reasons, examples, results, or types based on the topic and genre of writing.

   Example: Give four examples of _____. Develop each one in a separate paragraph and use facts, figures, names, and places.

2. **Make sure the focus of the topic is narrow.** Rather than using a broad topic like "The reign of Ferdinand and Isabella," narrow the topic to "What is the historical context in which Ferdinand and Isabella reigned?"

3. **Include key question words** that elevate your students' thinking as they write. Formulate writing tasks at the Application and Analysis or the Synthesis and Evaluation levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (see below).

Level From Bloom's Taxonomy	Question Words	Sample Writing Tasks
Knowledge and Comprehension	• Explain in your own words • Identify • List • Describe • Summarize • Retell • Trace	• Explain in your own words how a jet engine works. • List the basic parts of a jet engine and tell what these parts do.
Application and Analysis	• Explain how • Explain why • Discuss the details in relation to the whole • Solve a problem by applying knowledge • Explain a relationship • How?	• Explain the function of the rotating and stationary blades in the compressors. • Explain the interaction between air movement and air temperature in a jet engine.

Level From Bloom's Taxonomy	Question Words	Sample Writing Tasks
Synthesis and Evaluation	• Create • Put together • Suggest • Judge • Agree/disagree • Defend/refute • Prioritize • Combine ideas • What if? Why?	• What would happen if the bypass duct clogged? • Why is kerosene or paraffin the fuel of choice for jet engines?

Source: Benjamin, A. (2005). *Writing in the content areas* (2nd ed.). Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

4. **Provide a teacher-developed (or student-generated) word bank** of 6 to 10 content area terms related to the specific writing topic and task. Be sure to review word meanings and usage in context. Emphasize the importance of students incorporating and spelling the specialized language correctly in their own writing.

	Social Studies	Science	Math	English
Writing Topic	Impact of the ancient Egyptians' technological achievements	Effects of glaciers on Earth	Linear and nonlinear patterns of data on graphs	Symbolic effect of the pearl on characters' lives
Word Bank	• civilization • hieroglyphics • architecture/ architectural • monuments • scribes • mathematics	• glaciation • erode • bedrock • climactic • retreat • advance	• slope • coordinates • equation • discrete function • ratio • representations	• conflicts • dynamic characters • imagery • irony • corruption • harmony • tragedy

Examples of Leaky vs. Airtight Writing Tasks

Below are some examples of writing tasks for the three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Each set illustrates how a "leaky" (unclear, vague, and poorly crafted) writing task can be rewritten to become airtight.

KNOWLEDGE AND COMPREHENSION THINKING LEVEL

SOCIAL STUDIES/HISTORY

Leaky: Write a two-page report, double-spaced, describing the spice trade route and its influence on the Age of Exploration. Use at least two sources.

Airtight: The spice trade routes played an important part in the Age of Exploration. Copy a map of the spice trade routes. Explain each route in one paragraph. Your explanations should describe how at least four geographic features (e.g., mountains, bodies of water, deserts) influenced the decisions of the travelers. In another paragraph, describe the importance of spices during the 15th century. Include specific examples of at least two spices and describe what the spices were used for.

ENGLISH

Leaky: Watch the biographical movie *Amadeus* and write a three-page report summarizing the life of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Use one other source about Mozart.

Airtight: Watch the movie *Amadeus* and discuss Mozart's challenges and choices. Describe three different challenges and three different choices in one paragraph each. Develop each paragraph by referring to specific scenes. Be sure to note names, dates, and places as you watch the film.

APPLICATION AND ANALYSIS THINKING LEVEL

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Leaky: Explain the workings of [a complex system, such as a nuclear reactor, municipal government in a large city, or the circulatory system].

Airtight: Explain the workings of [a complex system]. Begin by defining what a complex system is and identify the system of your report. Develop your report by explaining each of the following in one or more paragraphs: purpose, leadership, structure, and parts. Be sure to explain how the parts relate to the whole, to the leadership, and to one another in the functioning of the system. Write a one-paragraph proposal for your paper in which you explain why you chose this particular system and provide a general overview (one or two sentences) describing the system.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Leaky: Discuss the contributions of a historical figure who had an impact on society in the United States between the Civil War and World War I. Your report should be two to three pages in length.

Airtight: Analyze one positive and one negative aspect of the accomplishments of a controversial historical figure between the Civil War and World War I. A controversial person is someone who is positive to some and negative to others. Your analysis should be at least 10 paragraphs and include an overall summary of the person's professional accomplishments, the characteristics of the time, the place in which the person had influence, and specific examples of positive and negative accomplishments. Consider what types of people benefited from this person's accomplishments and what types of people suffered because of them.

SYNTHESIS AND EVALUATION THINKING LEVEL

SCIENCE

Leaky: Write a 10-page research paper that describes the process of cloning. Do you think humans will ever be cloned? If so, make a prediction as to when human cloning will happen and what the advantages or disadvantages will be.

Airtight: Write a researched position paper of at least 25 paragraphs that discusses the cloning process and ethical dilemmas. Approximately 20% of your report should describe the process and give some background of the technology of cloning. In the remaining 80%, present at least three specific cases of cloning and explain why each is either morally acceptable or unacceptable to you.

INTERDISCIPLINARY

Leaky: Write a 1,000-word position paper about animal rights. Give reasons for your opinions.

Airtight: Select one of the following areas of animal rights and write a position paper of 8 to 10 paragraphs:

- Animal rights regarding medical experimentation and research
- Animal rights regarding the cosmetics industry
- Animal rights and the protection of endangered species
- Animal rights regarding the food industry
- Animal rights versus the rights of the pet industry

Begin with an arguable thesis statement. State the issue(s) of controversy and who the stakeholders are. If advocacy groups speak for this issue, state who they are and their agendas. State your position clearly and support it with facts and figures, specific examples, analogies, historical background, and projections for the future. Support your facts and figures with research from a variety of sources, including disinterested (neutral) institutions as well as animal rights advocates and those with a commercial interest.

General Prewriting Guidelines for Essays

Note: *Although essays—one type of formal writing—are sometimes referenced in this handout, these general guidelines apply to writing a variety of genres or text types across content areas. The guidelines are designed to help students become thoughtful and process-oriented, rather than product-oriented, readers and writers. These guidelines are not meant as a strict sequence for prewriting. Writing is a recursive process, and a student may choose to develop the thesis or central or controlling idea after generating and organizing ideas related to the topic.*

Read and Understand the Prompt or Assignment

Prompts or writing assignments are often jam-packed with text, making it difficult to locate the key information that tells students what they need to know about the topic.

Suggestions for teaching students to read and understand writing prompts or assignments include the following:

- **Read** the entire prompt or assignment.
- **Reread** the prompt, sentence by sentence.
- **Circle words or phrases that are not recognized and understood.** Think about how the words are used. Try to figure out what the words mean in relation to the words surrounding them. Use a dictionary or thesaurus to determine and/or confirm word meanings.
- **Lightly section off information about writing logistics** (length/page requirements, grading criteria, formatting guidelines, due dates, etc.). Sectioning off logistics leaves the information directly related to the essay's specified topic and purpose. Although the logistical information is important, it can overwhelm and camouflage what the essay is supposed to be about.
- **Underline or highlight sentences that are questions or commands.** Look for key words, such as *argue*, *compare*, *cover*, *discuss*, or *list*. These key words also help to establish the purpose of an essay. Optional: Write the questions and imperatives at the top of the page.
- **Identify whether the topic is specified** or whether students have a choice of what to write about. If the topic is specified, do your students have a clear understanding of it?
- **Determine the purpose of the assignment or prompt.** Teach students to use the key words to determine the purpose. Is the purpose to explain or prove? Think about how the purpose affects the type of writing. Teach students to narrow the topic based on the purpose for writing.
- **Look for any information about the audience.** Teach students to search for information in the prompt or assignment about the audience. Teach students to think about what most people know about the topic.
- **Determine the type of essay required.** Teach students to use the prompt or assignment to imagine the kind of essay they will write. Have criteria been established for how the writing will be evaluated? Is a rubric included? Teach students to think about similar types of writing that they have done and to ask questions when they are not sure of the task.

Sample Key Words

Key Word	Description
Analyze	• Break the issue or problem into separate parts. Discuss, examine, or interpret the parts and how they are related. • Look at the validity and persuasiveness of any reasons, supporting facts, or evidence given for a position. Determine whether the conclusion is justified on the basis of these claims.
Compare and Contrast	Describe similarities and differences between two or more objects, situations, or ideas. Consider providing before-and-after comparisons.
Define	Tell or explain what a particular word or term means in the essay. Go beyond a dictionary definition to clarify the way in which the term or phrase is used.
Describe	Give a detailed account, naming characteristics, parts, or qualities.
Discuss	Include explanations, reasoning, pro and con arguments, examples, analysis, and so forth.
Evaluate	Determine the value of something to discover how good or bad it is. Consider arguing that something is good or bad and explaining the logic of the reasoning. Use relevant evidence.
Explain	Help the reader understand the reasoning behind a position by showing logical development. Consider demonstrating how something works or how to do something step by step (procedural).
Illustrate	Give examples (do not draw pictures) to clarify and elaborate ideas.
Prove	Support opinions with logical arguments and evidence, including facts, expert opinions, quotations, and/or expressions of commonly accepted beliefs.
State	Tell the reader opinions and/or facts in a convincing and concise way.

Source: The California State University. (2008). *The California State University expository reading and writing course*. Long Beach, CA: Author.

Develop the Thesis Statement or Central/Controlling Idea

Tips for developing a clear and concise thesis or central/controlling idea include the following:

- **Get to the point.** Teach students to answer the question "What will you write about and why is it important?" Often, the answer to this question becomes the thesis.
- **Be sure of yourself.** Teach students to write like they believe it. Why should the reader believe a thesis or central/controlling idea if students do not sound like they believe it? Teach students to avoid words and phrases like *I think*, *I believe*, *might*, *maybe*, and *possibly*.
- **Do not believe the one-sentence myth.** Teach students that a thesis or central/controlling idea can be more than one sentence long. The thesis statement should be as concise as possible, but sometimes it may take more than one sentence to state the purpose and main focus or point of the essay.
- **Do not be afraid of change.** Teach students that if they realize they are writing about something different from the thesis or central/controlling idea—and they think the new idea is better than what was originally planned—to go with it and revise the thesis or central/controlling idea.
- **Clearly address the topic or prompt.** Questions to ask include the following:
  - **So what?** Does the thesis or central/controlling idea teach readers something new or challenge an idea they have? Why is it significant? Does it compel the reader to think differently or take action? How much background information do the readers need to understand the topic and the thesis? Why should the reader care about the topic or subject?
  - **What are its implications?** What will change if the thesis or central/controlling idea is true? Will people have to think differently, take action, and/or change a policy? Does the essay present a new or different perspective? Teach students to ask themselves whether they can support the thesis or controlling idea with evidence.
  - **Is it original?** Nothing is more boring to readers than something they have heard before. Although the author may believe passionately in something and want to present the argument or position in a certain way, he or she should try to offer something different from what most readers have already heard.
  - **Is it focused enough?** Focus on a sufficiently narrow aspect of the subject area. Topics that are too broad or large need to be limited or narrowed, so that the writer has a manageable topic to develop.

Generate and Organize Ideas Related to the Topic

After the topic or subject is identified and/or the thesis is developed, teach students to think about the main points and supporting ideas related to the topic. A variety of idea-generation strategies are typically taught and used to help students come up with these points and ideas. These strategies are designed to help students brainstorm as many related facts, examples, reasons, comparisons, contrasts, and causes and effects that they can think of before they begin to write their essays.

Typical brainstorming strategies include the following:

- **Free association.** As the most commonly used brainstorming technique, free association is useful for generating topic ideas and developing supporting arguments. This method can help students conceptualize a lot of different thoughts and ideas about their topic. The steps in this strategy include the following:
  - **Write the topic or thesis sentence** on the top of a piece of paper.
  - **Circle the key words.**
  - **List anything that relates to that topic.** Think of related terms from class and from readings. Include ideas that are related to the general topic.
  - **Examine the list.** Are any of your ideas similar or related? Divide these ideas into separate groups or connect them with lines.
  - **Weigh relevance.** Some ideas that do not relate to the topic may seem to have potential but do not have enough evidentiary support. Teach students not to include these ideas for now. Students can return to these ideas later if necessary.
- **Webbing and clustering.** Mapping ideas that come to mind about a topic is another popular brainstorming strategy. The strategy typically involves the following steps:
  - **Write a key word or phrase** in the center of a page with a circle drawn around it.
  - **Write related ideas** around the circle. Draw lines to signify which ideas should be classified together. Identify subtopics to the main topic during this process.
  - **Add supporting details** that branch off the subtopics.

  By grouping ideas in this fashion, students begin to order and decide what they want to say and, often, how they want to say it. Once students have recognized how the ideas are clustered or structured in the web or map, students can focus their energy on drafting and explaining the branches or links between the main ideas and points.
- **Informal outlining.** This strategy involves listing main ideas and the details related to the topic in the order in which they will be addressed. If ideas are randomly listed during a free-association brainstorming activity, they can be numbered to show the proposed progression and development of ideas within the essay.

Source: The University of Texas at Austin Undergraduate Writing Center. (2001–2005). *Virgil: Online writing tutorial*. Retrieved from http://uwc.utexas.edu

The Whole Family Under One Roof?

Introduction

A Victorian family circa 1860 (Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

If you're like many Americans, you have just spent a few days in close quarters with your parents, grandchildren, siblings, etc. You're ready to go home, or ready for them to go home. But for a growing number of families in which adult children can't afford to live on their own, this is the new normal.

These "boomerang" children have been the butt of jokes on late-night television and even in commercials, but what's so bad about moving back in with your parents? Could extended families under one roof—a common arrangement in years past—be the way of the future?

The Only Faithful Human Institution

John L. Graham *is a professor of business at the University of California, Irvine. He is the co-author with Sharon Graham Niederhaus of "Together Again: A Creative Guide to Successful Multigenerational Living."*

December 27, 2011

I live on a cul-de-sac in Irvine, Calif., that includes eight 2,500-plus-square-foot homes. When we moved into the neighborhood 27 years ago, six of those homes included two baby-boom parents with children and two couples with empty nests. Now there are no longer children on our street, although adult kids are still living in two of the homes. In my house we now have three spare bedrooms — we keep the doors and the heating vent shut to conserve energy.

Houses like mine are a root of the current world financial crisis. In 2006, housing prices in the United States began to crash. That's about when our last daughter left for college. Our house, along with millions of others across the country, literally became worth less when the last kid moved out. The demand for big houses declined even while the new home builders were madly adding more square feet. Circa 2012 housing in the U.S. has lost about a third of its value, down from $25 trillion to $16 trillion by some estimates. This sharp decline in value of the American housing stock has catalyzed a worldwide restructuring of our economic systems. And just wait until 2020 when the full burden of baby-boomer retirement and decrepitude is recognized.

The cure for this demographic disaster is the pooling of resources across generations that we are already seeing in America. The idea of the nuclear family is now obviously obsolete. We are all reverting to the old reliance on the extended family that anthropologist Margaret Mead correctly described as the only faithful human institution. The government won't be there to help on this one. Boomerang kids are actually a blessing in disguise. They're allowing us to relearn how to live in multigenerational arrangements as humans almost always have. Yes, the lessons for balancing proximity and privacy are tough, but such learning is essential for all of us in the 21st century.

I'm Not Seeing a Boomerang

***Michael J. Rosenfeld**, an associate professor of sociology at Stanford University, is the author of "The Age of Independence: Interracial Unions, Same-Sex Unions and the Changing American Family."*

December 26, 2011

One of the stories parents like to tell ourselves is that our young adult children want to move back in with us. Our 20-somethings are referred to as the Boomerang Generation, noted for their failure to launch. There is just one problem with the story of the Boomerang Generation: It is not true.

Census data show that what is really new about young adulthood is the percentage of young adults who live on their own. From 1880 to 1970 the percentage of U.S. born women in their twenties who lived on their own (not with parents and not with a husband) was always less than 15 percent. By 1980, the percentage of young adult women who lived on their own had risen to 27 percent, and to 33 percent in 1990, to 39 percent in 2000, and to 42 percent today. The delay of marriage and the extension of singleness can make it appear as if young people are more likely to return to the parental nest. If one examines single people in their twenties, who are the people who have the option of living with their parents, the percentage who live with their parents is now about 45 percent. That may seem high but it isn't: in the past single people in their 20s nearly always lived with their parents.

The Great Recession has actually had no effect whatsoever on the percentage of young adults living with their parents in the United States. This is not so surprising; the (even greater) Great Depression did not affect family structure much, and neither did the Industrial Revolution. Family structure changes slowly over time. Economic ups and downs have little effect on who lives with whom.

A Sensible Use of Spare Rooms

Sharon Graham Niederhaus *is a co-author with John L. Graham of "Together Again: A Creative Guide to Successful Multigenerational Living."*

December 27, 2011

The direct consequence of the turn of the century residential building boom is that now, in 2012, there are a lot of spare rooms in all those houses. Indeed, the chances are the greatest in the last 50 years that an adult family member is now living in your spare bedroom.

Multigenerational living is ahead for all of us. Baby boomers will be living with their kids as they begin to experience the infirmities of old age. By 2020 they'll need help with their disabilities, and the most sensible helpers will be members of the extended family living close by. The practice now of living together as adults across generations will be a big help.

Boomerang kids and baby boomers are learning about the balancing act between proximity and privacy that will be required in the modern families of the remainder of this century. Both physical structures and financial arrangements are being developed to accommodate such changes. For example, approximately one-third of American homes can be remodeled to include an accessory apartment with a separate kitchen and entrance. The major home builders have finally begun to experiment with such designs as well. Cross-generational financial agreements are burgeoning including shared real estate investments and adult children moving back home while saving money to repay college loans (which are exempt from bankruptcy proceedings).

Extended family members are already creatively designing a new future in these tough times. Indeed, now is the time to get ready for the coming changes in the American family.

Source: Multiple authors. (2011, December 26). The whole family under one roof? *The New York Times.* Reprinted with permission.

Authentic Writing Purposes

Purpose for Writing	Description
To inform and explain	• State main point and purpose • Convey information accurately and objectively in an interesting way • Combine facts and information with writer's knowledge and experience
To express and reflect	• Communicate personal thoughts, ideas, feelings, and life experiences • Think back to gain insight and contemplate what was learned
To persuade	• Attempt to persuade reader to accept a particular position • Describe the problem, propose a solution, and provide justification and evidential support
To analyze and make inferences	• Take apart and closely examine phenomena, people, places, or things that are difficult to understand or explain • Ask "how" and "why" questions that lead to a deeper understanding
To evaluate and make judgments	• Focus on the value or worth of a person, object, idea, or other phenomenon • May specify the criteria as either "good" or "bad"
To question and explore	• Wrestle with a question or problem • May lead to further in-depth research of a topic, another avenue of thinking, or a new area of inquiry

Source: Gallagher, K. (2011). *Write like this: Teaching real-world writing through modeling and mentor texts.* Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

Mathematical Written Responses

Mathematical written responses combine mathematics knowledge with writing skills to communicate computations and provide an analysis of the processes used to solve the problem. These types of responses are often used for open-ended questions that may have one correct answer, multiple answers, or more than one possible method of solution.

Sample Question

Students recorded attendance data for their homeroom over 2 weeks. Then the class calculated the percentage of students present. The results are shown in this table. What is the mode percentage of the attendance data? What is the mean percentage of the attendance data? What is the median percentage of the attendance data? Show and explain your work.

Homeroom Attendance Data		
December Dates	**Students Present (21 Total)**	**% of Students Present**
5	19	90%
6	21	100%
7	20	95%
8	19	90%
9	18	86%
12	17	81%
13	19	90%
14	15	71%
15	16	76%
16	20	95%

Sample Written Response

1. The mode of the students present in homeroom over the 2-week period from December 5 to 16 is 90%. Mode is the value that appears most often in the data. 90% appears three times.

2. The mean of the attendance data is 87%. Mean is the average of a set of numbers. To find the mean, I found the sum of the attendance percentages and divided by the number of percents.

   $90 + 100 + 95 + 90 + 86 + 81 + 90 + 71 + 76 + 95 = 874$
   $874 \div 10 = 87.4$
   87.4 rounded to nearest whole number is 87.

3. The median of the attendance data is 90%. The median is the middle value in a list of statistics ordered from least to greatest. I listed the data from least to greatest. 90 is in the middle.

   71 76 81 86 90 | 90 90 95 95 100

Activity

Identify the student's purpose for writing. Write the purpose and briefly explain your rationale.

Guidelines for Writing Mathematical Responses

1. Carefully read the question.
2. Locate (circle or underline) all the important information and data.
3. Identify the audience or readers of your writing. Questions to ask include the following:
   - Does the reader have the same degree of mathematical knowledge as I do? If not, does the reader have more or less?
   - Does the reader have the same mathematics vocabulary as me? Should I explain some words?
   - Has the reader already solved the problem? Is my purpose to show evidence that I can solve it?
   - Is my audience my teacher, peers, younger children, or adults?
   - Is my reader assessing my knowledge? Or am I simply explaining the process to my audience?
4. Break down the question into parts (a, b, c or 1, 2, 3).
5. Answer all parts of the question in an organized and focused manner.
6. Label each part of the question in your response.
7. Make connections between each step.
8. Include a response to each part of the question. Explain the sequence of steps to solve the problem and the strategy used.
9. Provide evidence of computation with correct results.
10. Include graphs, charts, number lines, and diagrams as needed.
11. Explain in complete sentences each step of the process to solve the problem. When possible, explain how you knew to do something (e.g., I used .25 or 25% because they are equal.).
    - Write a minimum of two sentences for each part.
    - Restate the question in the first sentence and include the answer.
    - Explain the process used to answer the question in subsequent sentences.
12. Use mathematics-specific vocabulary throughout the response.
13. Include definitions for vocabulary words to demonstrate understanding.
14. Revise your writing. Questions to ask include the following:
    - Is your answer clear and easy to understand?
    - Does each part of the question have an answer and process steps?
    - Have you used math vocabulary appropriately?
15. Edit the response to ensure your writing uses correct spelling, grammar, and mechanics.

Source: Scallin, S. M. (2006). Written response to mathematical questions: Computation and composition. In S. L. Pasquarelli (Ed.), *Teaching writing genres across the curriculum: Strategies for middle school teachers* (pp. 77–90). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Handouts

Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts

Gateway Resource TEPT0002

Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts

GATEWAY RESOURCE ID: TEPT0002

Writing Expository Text Summaries

Writing Expository Text Summaries is the second online resource in the Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts series.

To locate this resource, go to the Write for Texas website: http://writefortexas.org. Click on the **Online Materials** tab at the top of the page. Next, click on the **Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts** tab in the column on the left side of the page. Then, after reading the information, click on **Writing Expository Text Summaries** (in the middle of the page) to begin working in the Project Share Gateway.

Writing Expository Text Summaries has three sections. The suggested time to complete all three sections is 45 minutes. You may complete this resource at your own pace. All sections may be completed in a single session, or you may log in multiple times as you work through the information and activities.

Materials and Activities by Section

Section 1. Expository Summary Elements

- **Classroom teacher handout:** Elements of an Expository Text Summary
- **Classroom template:** Expository Text Summary Mini-Chart

  Read the handouts.

> **Tip:** Introduce each of the elements, usually one at a time. Explicitly model how to identify the elements in mentor texts. After you have modeled and taught the elements, post the mini-chart in the room and/or have students place it in their writing folders or notebooks.

- **Classroom teacher handout:** Introducing the Elements of Expository Text Summaries

  Read the expository mentor text, model summary, and annotated summary on the handout.

- **Classroom teaching activity:**

  Think about how you could introduce and teach the elements of this genre by using a mentor text and model summary related to a topic in your content area. Write your ideas in your teaching journal.

Section 2. Expository Text Structures

- **Online practice activity handout:** Sample Expository Text Structures
- **Classroom teacher handout and classroom template:** Common Text Structures (teacher and student versions)

  Review the handouts.

> **Tip:** Model and teach the common expository text structures on the handout one at a time by using mentor texts related to your content area. Provide copies of the student version of the handout for students' writing folders or notebooks.

- **Online practice activity:** On the Sample Expository Text Structures handout, read the texts and highlight or underline specific text structure characteristics and key words in each sample text. Use the Common Text Structures handout as a resource.

Section 3. Guidelines for Writing Expository Summaries

- **Classroom teacher handout:** Guidelines for Writing Expository Text Summaries
- **Classroom teacher handout and classroom template:** Example Graphic Organizers for Expository Text Structures

  Review the guidelines and sample graphic organizers on the handouts.

> **Tip:** Model and teach students how to use the example graphic organizers to plan and write expository summaries using specific text structure characteristics. Include multiple opportunities for students to practice in pairs, in small groups, and individually. Provide copies for students' writing folders or notebooks.

- **Classroom teacher handout:** Sample Lesson: Writing an Expository Summary

  Read the handout and imagine delivering a similar lesson to your students.

- **Classroom teacher handout and classroom template:** Expository Text Summary Revision Guide

  Review the handout.

> **Tip:** Use the guide as you model and teach your students how to revise expository text summaries. Then, give the guide to students before they begin drafting and have them use it as they revise their own summaries (independently or with peers).

- **Teaching journal questions:**
  - Why is it important to teach students how to identify text structure and complete a corresponding graphic organizer before they begin to write their summaries?
  - Students are often asked to summarize, but typically, there is little instruction on how to write a good summary. How do you plan to use these resources to teach students to summarize expository text in your content area?

  Think about the questions. Record your responses, ideas, and other thoughts in your teaching journal.

Elements of an Expository Text Summary

Note: *Writing a summary of an expository text is an authentic writing task that follows the reading of the text. An effective summary of an expository text is an accurate, concise restatement of the text's main ideas and important details. A summary should be paraphrased or written in one's own words—not copied verbatim from the original text.*

1. **Begins with a clear and concise topic sentence that reflects the overall meaning of the original text.** A summary of an expository text typically opens with a topic sentence that explains what the text is about and suggests the contents of the summary. A summary usually does not begin with a traditional introduction.
2. **Includes all the main ideas and important supporting details in the body of the summary.** A summary of an expository text distinguishes the important from the less important information in the text.
3. **Does not repeat any information.** A standard conclusion is not needed in a summary of an expository text.
4. **Does not include any trivial or unimportant information.**
5. **Uses purposeful and precise words to suggest a category, rather than listing all the examples or details in the original text.** For example, if writing about sports, use the word *exercising*, instead of listing all the different actions, such as biking, jogging, and weightlifting. Or use the word *equipment*, rather than listing all the exercise items, such as a bike, running shoes, mats, and weights.

Source: Pasquarelli, S. L. (2006). Expository summary writing. In S. L. Pasquarelli (Ed.), *Teaching writing genres across the curriculum: Strategies for middle school teachers* (pp. 105–119). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Expository Text Summary Mini-Chart

- Begins with a clear and concise topic sentence that reflects the overall meaning of the original text
- Includes all the main ideas and important supporting details in the body of the summary
- Does not repeat any information
- Does not include any trivial or unimportant information
- Uses purposeful and precise words to suggest a category, rather than listing all the examples or details in the original text

Introducing the Elements of Expository Text Summaries

Expository Mentor Text

During the era of the yellow fever epidemic of 1793, doctors believed in the healing powers of nature—the body would heal itself by getting rid of toxins or poisons. The doctor's job was to help the body along with the process.

Most of the medical treatment was very gentle. Herbal teas were used to break low-grade fevers. A glass of brandy was prescribed to help a patient go to sleep.

Other symptoms required slightly more extreme measures. Bloodletting, or phlebotomy, was one of these procedures. Doctors would open a vein with a lance and draw off a small amount of blood into a bowl. They believed that with less blood in the ailing person's body, the remaining blood would be able to flow more freely and normally.

Bloodletting, an ancient and trusted medical practice, was in use for more than 2,500 years. It was used to relieve headaches, depression, disease, and anxiety. It was even used with broken bones. Yellow fever also called for this form of treatment.

Model Summary

In 1793, doctors believed in the healing power of nature. They used gentle procedures, such as teas and brandy. They also used more drastic procedures, such as phlebotomy, or bloodletting, which was an ancient medical practice. During this procedure, doctors would drain a small amount of the ill person's blood to hopefully make the remaining blood flow more freely. Bloodletting was used for a variety of illnesses, including yellow fever.

Annotated Model Summary

In 1793, doctors believed in the healing power of nature *[paraphrased topic sentence from original text]*. They used gentle procedures, such as teas and brandy *[main idea 1]*. They also used more drastic procedures, such as phlebotomy, or bloodletting *[main idea 2]*, which was an ancient medical practice *[important detail]*. During this procedure, doctors would drain a small amount of the ill person's blood to hopefully make the remaining blood flow more freely *[important detail]*. Bloodletting was used for a variety of illnesses [*reduced list of other illnesses to a category: "variety"]*, including yellow fever *[important detail]*.

Sources:

Murphy, J. (2003). *An American plague: The true and terrifying story of the yellow fever epidemic of 1793*. New York, NY: Clarion.

Pasquarelli, S. L. (2006). Expository summary writing. In S. L. Pasquarelli (Ed.), *Teaching writing genres across the curriculum: Strategies for middle school teachers* (pp. 105–119). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Sample Expository Text Structures

Note: *The following texts are adapted from the Whales Online website, which is no longer active.*

Concept and Definition

Living in Waters of Trouble

Cetaceans (whales, dolphins, and porpoises) live in a marine environment that is threatened by many outside factors. One of the threats is change in climate. Within polar regions, melting ice causes ocean currents to change that can trigger a domino effect, such as temperature change, which will, in turn, change the marine ecosystem. Another threat to cetaceans is habitat loss caused by rising sea levels from climate and temperature change.

In addition to natural changes, pollutants affect cetaceans. One type, chemical pollution caused by oil spills and industrial waste, are toxins to whales, dolphins, and porpoises. Another type of pollution that affects marine life is hard waste pollution. It has often been documented that coastal dolphins become tangled in fishing nets, plastic bags, fishing line, and offshore nets. This hard waste pollution can kill or disfigure these animals.

Lastly, another danger to marine life is the fishing industry. Fishing driftnets are still used around the world. These driftnets are made from rope that whales and dolphins do not easily detect. Many swim into these nets and are killed.

Sequence

Snapshop Oil Spill History

Several of the worst oil spills in marine history have occurred in recent times. In 1997, three oil spills in Asia affected shellfish and beaches. On January 7, in Japan, a Russian tanker leaked 5,200 tons of heavy fuel oil on beaches and threatened shellfish beds. On July 2, also in Japan, a tanker leaked 1,500 tons of crude oil onto a fishing ground famous for its seafood. Lastly, on October 15, 1997, a huge tanker carrying 120,000 tons of fuel leaked and coated several smaller islands off Singapore.

From 1998 to 1999, there were three significant oil spills in Nigeria and Australia. On January 12, 1998, the largest oil spill in Nigeria (40,000 barrels) threatened fish and destroyed fishing nests. In 1999, Australia was affected by two significant spills. The first spill, on June 28, occurred when a faulty pipe coupling caused 270,000 liters of crude oil to spill, damaging beaches and killing marine life. The second occurred on August 3, when an oil ship was unloading and a breach caused 80,000 liters of light crude oil to leak.

Compare and Contrast

Chemical and Nutrient Pollution

Many types of pollution affect whales, dolphins, and porpoises. The differences between noise pollution and chemical pollution are vast, but they have similar effects on these marine animals.

Chemical pollution may cause disease and destroy food supplies and natural habitats. Some chemicals are so toxic that they may even cause death. Chemical pollutants hurt marine animals by accumulating in the body tissue while they are feeding and are passed on through mother's milk. Most affected are those who are found along coastlines and feed on other animals in the food chain that may also have been affected by the chemical pollution.

Noise Pollution

Noise pollution in the form of underwater blasts from military sonar or seismic testing can travel more than 100 kilometers. These loud noises are more damaging to whales, porpoises, and dolphins than previously thought. Research suggests that seismic blasts can kill marine animals that are too close. In addition, some blasts have been documented to cause lung and sinus hemorrhages, disease, or maybe even death of the marine animal. Perhaps the most documented detriment of noise pollution is the interruption of the marine animal's sonar capabilities. This interference threatens the marine animals' survival. Although noise and chemical pollution are very different, they are similar in nature because both harm the health and well being of cetaceans.

Cause and Effect

Chemical and Nutrient Pollution

Many types of pollution affect whales, dolphins, and porpoises. The differences between noise pollution and chemical pollution are vast, but they have similar effects on these marine animals.

Chemical pollution may cause disease and destroy food supplies and natural habitats. Some chemicals are so toxic that they may even cause death. Chemical pollutants hurt marine animals by accumulating in the body tissue while they are feeding and are passed on through mother's milk. Most affected are those who are found along coastlines and feed on other animals in the food chain that may also have been affected by the chemical pollution.

Problem and Solution

Internationally Recognized Spill Cleanup Solutions

There are four solutions that environmentalists typically try when an oil spill occurs. One solution is called the "monitor-only" approach. This solution is, at the moment, considered "best practice" only when the water is deep and the location is considered remote. Another solution to contain oil spills is called the "mechanical containment" approach. In this approach, cleanup crews use booms and skimmers to contain the oil. This solution only works when the spill is small and seas are calm. A third solution is the "insitu burning oil" approach. This solution is considered dangerous because as the oil is set on fire, it creates substantial toxic air pollution. Lastly, for shoreline spills, environmentalists use the "shoreline cleanup" approach, in which they mechanically remove oily sand from beaches and shorelines.

Source: Pasquarelli, S. L. (2006). Expository summary writing. In S. L. Pasquarelli (Ed.), *Teaching writing genres across the curriculum: Strategies for middle school teachers* (pp. 105–119). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Common Text Structures

Text structures, also known as organizational patterns, are the way a writer organizes and presents information. Key words differentiate and characterize each structure and serve as signals to help identify the structure. Authors may use more than one structure within a text. Learning how to identify a text's structure aids comprehension and locating and recording main ideas and important details.

Text Structure	Key Words	Examples of Content Area Writing
Concept and Definition The writer describes or explains a topic or phenomenon by listing unique characteristics, features, and examples.	for example, involves, can be, defined, for instance, also, within, contain, make up	• Provide a detailed definition of *democracy*. • What is figurative language?
Sequence The writer either tells the reader how to do something (step-by-step) or describes how something is done or happened.	to begin with, first, second, in addition, next, then, last, finally, another, also, earlier, later, now before, after, following, while, meanwhile, during, not long, when, on (date)	• Write a science lab report. • Explain how to solve a complex, multistep math problem. • Provide a chronological account of the events.
Compare and Contrast The writer explains the similarities and differences between at least two objects or ideas. The purpose is to develop the relationship between them and, in the process, explain both in detail.	different from, same as, alike, like, similar to, unlike, as well as, yet, either . . . or, not only . . . but also, compared to, in contrast, while, resembles, although, most, however, on the other hand, opposite, opposed to, similarly	• Compare and contrast a trapezoid and a parallelogram. • Compare and contrast Oedipus and Creon as leaders. • Compare and contrast the major elements in Christianity and Buddhism.
Cause and Effect The writer presents a reason or motive for an event, situation, or trend and then explains its result or consequence.	because, so that, thus, unless, therefore, as a result of, led to, then, reasons for, then . . . so, for this reason, consequently, an explanation for, this reason, nevertheless, thus, accordingly	• Explain how Descartes' discovery of the coordinate plane changed mathematics. • How and why do plants grow? • How and why do totalitarian governments form?

Text Structure	Key Words	Examples of Content Area Writing
Problem and Solution The writer states a problem and lists one or more solutions for the problem. A variation of this pattern is the question-and-answer format, in which the author poses a question and then answers it.	a problem is, a solution is, solved by, an alternative, possible answer, issue, therefore, conclusion, evidence is, a reason for	• What should be done about global warming? • How can the Federal Reserve keep economic crises from spinning out of control?

Sources:

Stempel, A. R. (2010). *An introduction to analytical text structures.* Retrieved from http://www.adlit.org/article/39554

Teach for America. (2011). *Secondary literacy.* Retrieved from http://teachingasleadership.org/sites/default/files/Related-Readings/SL_2011.pdf

Common Text Structures: Student Version

Text structures, also known as organizational patterns, are the way a writer organizes and presents information. Key words differentiate and characterize each structure and serve as signals to help identify the structure. Authors may use more than one structure within a text. Learning how to identify a text's structure aids comprehension and locating and recording main ideas and important details.

Text Structure	Key Words
Concept and Definition The writer describes or explains a topic or phenomenon by listing unique characteristics, features, and examples.	for example, involves, can be, defined, for instance, also, within, contain, make up
Sequence The writer either tells the reader how to do something (step-by-step) or describes how something is done or happened.	to begin with, first, second, in addition, next, then, last, finally, another, also, earlier, later, now before, after, following, while, meanwhile, during, not long, when, on (date)
Compare and Contrast The writer explains the similarities and differences between at least two objects or ideas. The purpose is to develop the relationship between them and, in the process, explain both in detail.	different from, same as, alike, like, similar to, unlike, as well as, yet, either . . . or, not only . . . but also, compared to, in contrast, while, resembles, although, most, however, on the other hand, opposite, opposed to, similarly
Cause and Effect The writer presents a reason or motive for an event, situation, or trend and then explains its result or consequence.	because, so that, thus, unless, therefore, as a result of, led to, then, reasons for, then . . . so, for this reason, consequently, an explanation for, this reason, nevertheless, thus, accordingly
Problem and Solution The writer states a problem and lists one or more solutions for the problem. A variation of this pattern is the question-and-answer format, in which the author poses a question and then answers it.	a problem is, a solution is, solved by, an alternative, possible answer, issue, therefore, conclusion, evidence is, a reason for

Sources:

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Teach for America. (2011). *Secondary literacy.* Retrieved from http://teachingasleadership.org/sites/default/files/Related-Readings/SL_2011.pdf

Guidelines for Writing Expository Text Summaries

1. Carefully read the text.
2. Determine the topic.
3. Identify the text structure (how the author arranged the ideas)—concept and definition, sequence, compare and contrast, cause and effect, and/or problem and solution.

   Look for key words or signal words that indicate how the text is organized.

   If the author uses more than one text structure, select the one that applies to how most of the main ideas are presented.
4. Draw or select an appropriate graphic organizer to match the text structure.
5. Record the most important information (main ideas and important details) in the graphic organizer.
6. Begin the summary by writing a topic sentence.

   Reread the first part of the original text. Look for one or two sentences that state the thesis, or what the text is about. Then, paraphrase that part in your own words. Do not copy from the original text.
7. Use the main ideas and important details recorded in the graphic organizer as a guide to write the body of the summary.

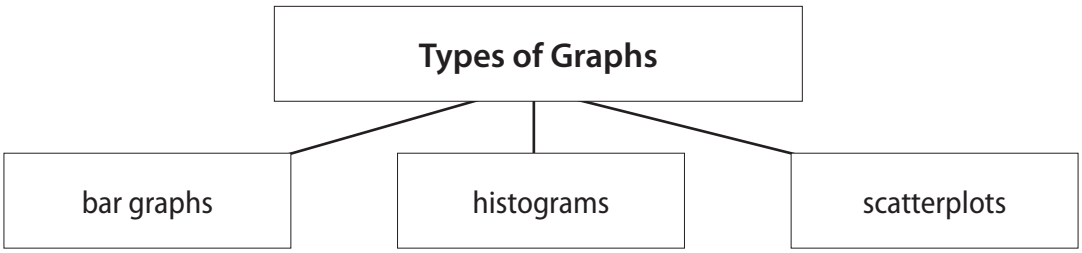
   Write in complete sentences. Use a variety of sentence patterns, including simple, compound, and complex. Vary sentence beginnings—start sentences with an adverb, a phrase (prepositional, participial, or infinitive), or an introductory clause. Break up long, rambling sentences (often run-on sentences) into two or three shorter sentences.

   Use a verb or noun that suggests a general category for specific verbs or nouns individually listed in the original text.
8. Revise your draft by doing the following:
   - Locating and deleting trivial information
   - Locating and deleting repeated information
   - Checking that your topic sentence describes the overall meaning of the original text
9. Edit your draft for grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.
10. Produce a final draft of your summary.

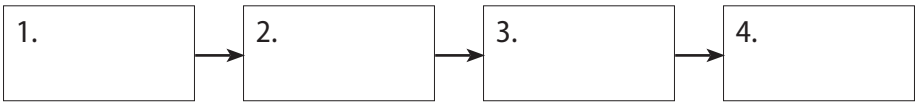
Source: Pasquarelli, S. L. (2006). Expository summary writing. In S. L. Pasquarelli (Ed.), *Teaching writing genres across the curriculum: Strategies for middle school teachers* (pp. 105–119). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Example Graphic Organizers for Expository Text Structures

Concept and Definition



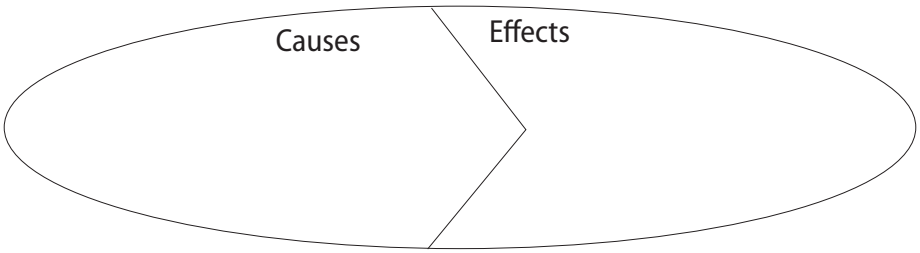
Sequence



Compare and Contrast

	Size	Composition	Orbit
Mars			
Jupiter			

Cause and Effect



Problem and Solution

Problems	→	Solutions
	→	
	→	

Source: Pasquarelli, S. L. (2006). Expository summary writing. In S. L. Pasquarelli (Ed.), *Teaching writing genres across the curriculum: Strategies for middle school teachers* (pp. 105–119). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Sample Lesson: Writing an Expository Summary

Objective

Students will learn how to write a summary of an expository text after watching the teacher model the process.

Materials

- Expository text
- Wall chart of text structures and patterns

Part 1: Reading and Identifying Text Structure

Opening

Teacher: Today we will learn how to write summaries of expository texts. Writing summaries helps us develop a better understanding of the materials we read and helps us remember and recall the material. First, I will read the entire article aloud. Please follow along on your copy.

Snapshop Oil Spill History

Several of the worst oil spills in marine history have occurred in recent times. In 1997, three oil spills in Asia affected shellfish and beaches. On January 7, in Japan, a Russian tanker leaked 5,200 tons of heavy fuel oil on beaches and threatened shellfish beds. On July 2, also in Japan, a tanker leaked 1,500 tons of crude oil onto a fishing ground famous for its seafood. Lastly, on October 15, 1997, a huge tanker carrying 120,000 tons of fuel leaked and coated several smaller islands off Singapore.

From 1998 to 1999, there were three significant oil spills in Nigeria and Australia. On January 12, 1998, the largest oil spill in Nigeria (40,000 barrels) threatened fish and destroyed fishing nests. In 1999, Australia was affected by two significant spills. The first spill, on June 28, occurred when a faulty pipe coupling caused 270,000 liters of crude oil to spill, damaging beaches and killing marine life. The second occurred on August 3, when an oil ship was unloading and a breach caused 80,000 liters of light crude oil to leak.

— Adapted from Whales Online

Instruction

Teacher: The first thing I do is figure out the structure, or organizational pattern. Identifying the structure will help me determine the most important parts and help me structure my summary.

Take a moment to look at the wall chart to refresh your memory of the different expository text structures. Then, look back at the sample text we just read.

Teacher pauses for students to look at text and wall chart.

Teacher: What did you notice about the text?

Student: One of the first things I noticed is that there are specific dates and other time words. I think this is a feature of sequence text structures.

Teacher: Good! Let's read the wall chart for sequence text. Who can read the first item?

Student: The writer lists items or events in numerical or chronological order.

Teacher: Good. Who wants to share what they are thinking about the sample text and the text structure?

Student: I think this definitely describes the text we just read. The writer recounts the oil spills by date, beginning with the earliest and ending with the most recent.

Teacher: Let's look for key words that signal when a disastrous oil spill occurred. I will circle the key words and phrases on the display copy, and you circle the same ones on your copy. In the first paragraph, we will circle: "In 1997," "On January 7," "On July 2," and "Lastly, on October 15, 1997." Who can tell us what dates to circle in the second paragraph?

Student: In the second paragraph, we will circle "From 1998 to 1999," "On January 12, 1998," "In 1999," "on June 28," and "on August 3."

Teacher: Good. How many total oil spills are included in the article? Raise your hand when you have an answer and be ready to cite text that supports your claim.

Teacher pauses.

Student: Six oil spills.

Teacher: Good! There are six. How did you find the number so quickly?

Student: The first paragraph includes the text "three oil spills in Asia," and the second paragraph says "three significant oil spills in Nigeria and Australia." I just added them together.

Teacher: Excellent. I love how you read carefully and paid attention to important details. Let's draw a graphic organizer that reflects the text structure. I need to include six places to record information for each of the oil spills in the text. Who has a suggestion for a way to show the information graphically? Take a moment to think about it and sketch out a plan.

Teacher pauses for students to think about and design a graphic organizer.

Teacher: Who has an idea for a graphic organizer to share?

Student: I think that we can keep this graphic organizer pretty simple. I drew six boxes connected by arrows to represent the chronological order of the six oil spills.

Teacher: That sounds like a good plan. I like how you incorporated a way to show the chronology of events. A graphic organizer should follow the text type and help us note the key points. I will draw that here for everybody to see.

Teacher draws six boxes connected by arrows.

Clear Task Assignment

Teacher: I will write the important details for the first one, and then you can do the rest with a partner. You can use a different type of graphic organizer if you choose. The important part is to show the details and the order of events.

Teacher writes the following notes on the graphic organizer.

Teacher: In the first box, I will write when it happened: "January 7, 1997." Then I will write where the spill occurred: "Japan." Next, I will write who or what was responsible: "a Russian tanker." Then I will write how much oil spilled: "5,200 tons of heavy fuel oil." And the result was that "oil leaked on beaches and threatened shellfish beds."

Now it is your turn to complete the important details for each of the oil spills discussed in the article.

Teacher allows time for students to complete the assignment.

Part 2: Writing a Summary Topic Sentence

Teacher: Now that we have completed our graphic organizer and identified the main ideas and supporting details, we are ready to begin drafting a summary of the text. First, let's review the elements of a summary on our Expository Text Summary Mini-Chart.

Teacher points to the mini-chart.

The first thing I notice is that a summary begins with a topic sentence that reflects the overall meaning of the original text. To determine the topic sentence of my summary, I will think about what the entire summary should be about.

To help, I will reread the first part of the original text. It says: "Several of the worst oil spills in marine history have occurred in recent times." That sounds like the thesis statement or topic sentence because the article explains some of the worst oil spills in history. That is what the article is mainly about.

Now I need to use the same key ideas but write the topic sentence in my own words. I think the original sentence states that several significant oil spills have taken place in recent times. I notice that a total of six significant oil spills took place during the late 1990s. I will try to include all that information in my own summary topic sentence.

How about this sentence? "During the late 1990s, there were six significant oil spills in the world."

I think it reflects the overall meaning of the original text. What do you think?

Student: I like it, but I think we can revise it to make it more concise.

Teacher: Great idea! Who has a suggestion to make it more concise?

Student: "During the late 1990s, there were six significant oil spills in the world's oceans."

Teacher: Good job. Now it is much clearer and to the point. We will use this sentence as the opening to the summary.

Part 3: Recording Main Ideas in the Body of the Summary

Instruction

Teacher: Now I am ready to write the body of my summary. I will refer back to my graphic organizer and use information that I listed earlier.

The first thing I will do is think about how to use the notes in each box to create well-constructed sentences.

Let's try it together with the first box and include the date, place, and event to write the first supporting sentence.

We need to say when it happened, so let's start with the date: "On January 7, 1997 . . ."

Next, I want to say what happened: ". . . a Russian tanker dropped 5,200 tons of oil..."

Now I want to say where it happened: ". . . in an ocean near Japan."

So the sentence reads: "On January 7, 1997, a Russian tanker dropped 5,200 tons of oil in an ocean near Japan."

We will go back and revise when we are finished with the first draft.

Let's continue writing. Who has a suggestion for the effect, or what happened as a result of the oil spill?

Student: "This spill contaminated beaches and nearby shellfish beds."

Teacher: I will write that down. I like how you used the word *contaminated*. It is a strong, powerful verb.

Let's do another one together. Who has a suggestion for how to turn the information in the second box into complete sentences that include the important details?

Student: "On July 2, 1997, a tanker dropped 1,500 tons of crude oil in an ocean near Japan. The spill also destroyed fertile fishing grounds."

Teacher: Good job. That was a great way to capture all the information.

Clear Task Assignment

Teacher: Now that we have completed sentences from the first two boxes, it is your turn. Write the remainder of the body of the summary. Convert the notes in the last four boxes of the graphic organizer into well-written sentences. Refer to the Expository Summary Mini-Chart as you write. Remember, you will have time to revise and edit your summary after you complete the draft.

Source: Pasquarelli, S. L. (2006). Expository summary writing. In S. L. Pasquarelli (Ed.), *Teaching writing genres across the curriculum: Strategies for middle school teachers* (pp. 105–119). Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Expository Text Summary Revision Guide

1. Reread and think about your summary.
2. What do you notice? Use the elements in the table below to guide your thinking and revising.
3. Make one or more of the following revisions to improve your summary: Replace or substitute all or parts of it, add to it, delete (take things out) from it, or reorder (rearrange) it.

Elements of an Expository Summary An expository summary is an accurate, concise restatement, written in one's own words, of a text's main ideas and important details.	
Clear and concise topic sentence	• Explains the topic in the writer's own words • Is not copied word for word from the original text • Suggests the contents of the summary • Reflects the overall meaning of the original text • Is not a traditional introduction
All main ideas and important supporting details in body	• Is written in complete sentences that make sense • Is written in the writer's own words—not copied word for word from the original text • Has various types of sentences (e.g., simple, compound, complex) • Varies sentence beginnings • Includes transitional words and phrases
No trivial or unimportant information	• Focuses on the identified main ideas and important supporting details • Contains only significant facts and details about the topic • Does not elaborate details
No repeated information	• Sticks to the point • Does not include redundant information • Does not reiterate key ideas • Does not include a conclusion
Purposeful and precise word choice	• Is clear and easy to understand • Includes specific, powerful words • Suggests a category instead of listing all examples or details in the original text

Handouts

Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts

Gateway Resource TEPT0003

Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts

GATEWAY RESOURCE ID: TEPT0003

Writing Expository Essays

Writing Expository Essays is the third online resource in the Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts series.

To locate this resource, go to the Write for Texas website: http://writefortexas.org. Click on the **Online Materials** tab at the top of the page. Next, click on the **Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts** tab in the column on the left side of the page. Then, after reading the information, click on **Writing Expository Essays** (in the middle of the page) to begin working in the Project Share Gateway.

Writing Expository Essays has three sections. The suggested time to complete all three sections is 1 hour. You may complete this resource at your own pace. All sections may be completed in a single session, or you may log in multiple times as you work through the information and activities.

Materials and Activities by Section

Section 1. Writing Essays

- **Classroom teacher handout:** General Guidelines for Drafting Essays (Handout 19)

  Read the handout. Then, before watching the video, reread the information about meaningful transitions on page 3 of the handout.

> **Tip:** Use the guidelines to teach your students how to draft the introduction, middle, and end of an essay. Write, reread, and think aloud in front of the class. Teach only one part of the essay at a time. Provide guidance and support as students practice drafting each part of an essay individually, with a partner, or in a small group.

Section 2. Expository Essay Elements

- **Classroom teacher handout:** Expository Essay Elements (Handout 20)
- **Classroom teacher handout:** Expository Essay Elements Mini-Chart (Handout 21)

  Read the handouts.

> **Tip:** Introduce each of the elements, usually one at a time. Explicitly model how to identify the elements in mentor texts. After you have modeled and taught the elements, post the mini-chart in the room and/or have students place it in their writing folders or notebooks.

- **Classroom teaching activity:** Think about the content you currently teach or will teach during this grading period. Determine two or three expository essay topics that your students could clarify or explain by using facts, details, and examples. Record the topics in your teaching journal.
- **Online activity handout:** Solidarity and Support (Handout 12)

  Read the expository essay, "Solidarity and Support."
- **Classroom teacher handout and online activity handout:** Model Lesson: Analyzing Expository Essays Tool (Handout 23)

  As you watch the video, refer to Handout 23. After the video, finish reading the model lesson on the handout.
- **Classroom teacher handout and classroom template:** Analyzing Expository Essays Tool (Handout 22)

Tip: Use a mentor expository text and this tool to model and teach your students how to analyze and identify how authors craft the different expository elements in a text. Use familiar text that they have already read, if possible. Focus on one or two elements at a time. Provide copies for students to use during the lesson. Include opportunities for students to practice incorporating the targeted elements in their own expository essays.

Section 3. Writing an Introductory Paragraph

- **Online activity handout:** Writing an Introductory Paragraph for an Expository Essay (Handout 27)

  Review the handout before watching the video. Note that the prompt on the handout has been edited for clarity and differs slightly from the prompt read in the video.
- **Online practice activity:** After watching the video, write an introductory paragraph for the expository essay on Handout 27.
- **Teaching journal questions:** Why is it important to practice writing the same types of texts that you assign your students to write? How did you feel before, during, and after writing this part of an expository essay?

  Think about the questions. Record your responses, ideas, and other thoughts in your teaching journal.

General Guidelines for Drafting Essays

Note: *These general guidelines apply to writing a variety of genres or text types across content areas. Specific elements of expository essays, persuasive essays, and personal narratives are included as separate handouts. These guidelines are designed to help students become thoughtful and process-oriented, rather than product-oriented, readers and writers. These guidelines are not meant as a strict sequence for writing an essay. Writing is a recursive process, and a student may choose to write the body of the essay before writing the introduction or may even start by writing the conclusion.*

Beginning of the Essay: Drafting the Introduction

The introduction is the author's chance to grab the reader's attention, show why ideas are worth considering, and give a brief overview of the subject or argument. There are, of course, many ways to write an introduction, and some types are better suited than others for certain essays.

Students' essays will get off to a good start when they include the following in the introduction:

- A "hook" to get the reader's attention
- Background information the audience may need about the topic
- A thesis statement—a central or controlling idea

Begin with a concise, yet intriguing, first sentence.

Remember, the introduction is just an introduction—not the entire essay. Start with something interesting, rather than just summarizing the essay.

Be specific.

Being too general can affect the overall quality of the essay. If you generalize, the development of ideas will be weak or minimal. A good essay presents specific and well-chosen ideas and examples that substantially support the main points and the argument or position.

Do not restate the prompt or question.

For most prompts and assignments with specified topics, the reader more than likely knows what the prompt is. Restating it only takes up space and can be interpreted as a lack of creativity.

Avoid using clichés.

Clichés are overused expressions that often are considered boring or uncreative and may even result in the reader not wanting to read the rest of the essay.

Stay away from dictionary definitions to introduce the topic.

Using a dictionary definition is often a sign that the author is having difficulty beginning the essay. The dictionary also may not be considered an appropriate source for some topics.

Avoid extraneous information on the subject.

Throwing in irrelevant information signals that the author is just filling up the required number of paragraphs or pages.

Do not drive the reader away.

The introduction should make the reader want to read the rest of the essay. For instance, although beginning an essay with, "This essay is about. . ." may appear straightforward, it falls short of motivating one to read on. Wordiness and simple grammar errors also leave a poor first impression.

Revisit the introduction after drafting the entire essay.

Reread the introduction. As you develop ideas and craft the essay, your understanding of the topic may change. Adjust the first paragraph and/or thesis, if necessary.

Middle of the Essay: Drafting the Body

In the body of the essay, authors develop ideas that focus on the topic and the thesis or central/controlling idea. Teach students to fully develop and sustain this focus throughout the essay. Usually, there is no set number of paragraphs that authors need to write.

Here are some tips for writing clear and concise paragraphs and using meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections.

Vary the length of the paragraphs.

There is not a set number of sentences per paragraph. Often for a paragraph to be well developed, it needs more than five sentences; sometimes a one-sentence paragraph is appropriate.

Consider the white space on the page when writing. Try to break down the thoughts as much as possible. A series of long paragraphs can be intimidating to readers and can make it more difficult for them to process the argument. Vary the length of paragraphs to make the essay more reader friendly. Balance the paragraphs according to the length of the essay.

Focus and develop one idea in each paragraph.

A well-written paragraph becomes its own independent "chunk" of writing. Introduce a thought with an opening sentence, develop it throughout the paragraph, and then wrap it all up in a concluding sentence.

Vary sentence length within the paragraphs.

Avoid entire paragraphs of choppy, simple sentences or lengthy, rambling, complex sentences filled with commas and conjunctions. Interspersing long and short sentences makes an essay more interesting.

Use meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections.

Meaningful transitions help to establish logical connections between ideas, sentences, and paragraphs in the essay. Meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the flow of the essay by clearly showing the relationships among the ideas. Transitions also help the reader understand those relationships. A transition can be a single word, a phrase, a sentence, or a paragraph.

Although transitions are not a substitute for good organization, they can make the organization clearer and easier to follow. Transitions help to bind the essay into a unified, coherent, well-developed whole. Transitions help readers to connect with what has come before in a sentence, paragraph, or section and to anticipate and better comprehend what is coming next.

Examples of Different Types of Transitional Words and Phrases

Transitions that mean "to add"	*and*, *furthermore*, *in addition to*
Transitions that mean "to compare"	*also*, *likewise*, *as well*
Transitions that mean "to contrast"	*but*, *however*, *alternatively*
Transitions that mean "to prove"	*consequently*, *thus*, *therefore*
Transitions that mean "to show relationships in time"	*first*, *second*, *third*, *finally*, *then*
Transitions that mean "to give an example"	*for example*, *for instance*
Transitions that mean "to summarize, conclude"	*finally*, *in conclusion*

End of the Essay: Drafting the Conclusion

Good conclusions can be tricky to write. They provide closure and review important information. Conclusions need to accomplish these tasks without being boring, redundant, or off topic. A concluding paragraph supports the thesis or central/controlling idea.

The following tips can help your students write a strong conclusion that leaves a lasting impression.

Do not stretch to fit the page requirement.

Stretching the conclusion until you meet the page limit results in irrelevant fluff that only weakens the essay. If the essay is not long enough, go back and further develop the content by elaborating on the main points. Always add to and strengthen the evidence or idea development, rather than simply extending the conclusion.

Avoid adding new information and leaving loose ends.

Do not introduce new information in the conclusion. Writers have little time in a conclusion to adequately develop new ideas, which can leave the audience hanging. Instead, take the thesis or central/controlling idea a step further (e.g., discuss its implications; re-emphasize the significance and relevance of your topic, position, or argument).

Do not repeat the thesis or central/controlling idea.

The reader has already read the thesis or central/controlling idea, so it does not need to be repeated verbatim. The conclusion should state the thesis in a new way or further develop it. You can sum up the important points made throughout the essay, but for short essays, this summary usually is unnecessary. Ask yourself: "Will readers remember what I wrote, or do I need to remind them?"

Avoid resorting to clichés.

The conclusion should be memorable. Clichés (i.e., old metaphors and tired phrasing such as "In conclusion . . .") typically make the essay sound unoriginal. As a result, a reader may discount what the author has to say. Instead, use vivid images and colorful language that will leave an impression on readers. Because these are the last words the audience will read, make them count.

Source: The University of Texas at Austin Undergraduate Writing Center. (2001–2005). *Virgil: Online writing tutorial*. Retrieved from http://uwc.utexas.edu

Expository Essay Elements

English Language Arts and Reading Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills Glossary Definition

Expository essay: a type of informational text that clarifies or explains something

Elements

An expository essay is a multiparagraph essay that conveys information about a topic. The number of paragraphs is not predetermined. The essay includes a beginning, a middle, and an end. The writer explains, describes, and informs the reader about a topic by using facts, details, and examples in a clear and concise way.

1. Clear, concise, and defined thesis statement

The thesis is typically stated in the first paragraph of the expository essay. To narrow the focus or topic, writers need to determine which aspect of a topic they will write about. For example, if the topic is music, the writer needs to ask, "What kind of music?" Then, the writer can ask, "What do I want my readers to know about that kind of music?"

Common approaches for developing a thesis or controlling idea statement include the following:

- **Make a connection.** Compare your topic with something you learned or studied in class or know a lot about. Consider making a connection that the reader might not normally make.
- **Refute an accepted idea.** Present new evidence or interpret existing evidence in a new way.
- **Find something new.** Look at a topic from a new perspective. Think of an aspect that has been overlooked.
- **Define.** Offer a definition of a key term that will get readers to see a controversial issue in a new way.
- **Evaluate.** Make an assessment about something's quality or utility.
- **Argue cause and effect.** Explain how something happened or will happen because of something that was done.
- **Propose a change.** Suggest that something needs to be done that has never been tried before.

2. Specific supporting details

Supporting details explain the thesis and the topic. Details should be specific; add substance to the essay; and are presented in a logical, organized way. Writers may use their own unique experiences or view of the world as the basis for writing or to connect their ideas in interesting ways.

Details are often brainstormed before the author begins to write. These supporting details help the writer to determine the main points or ideas in the essay that support the thesis and which organizational structure would best suit the topic.

Types of supporting details include the following:

- Examples
- Facts and statistics
- Reasons
- Causes and effects
- Incidents
- Definitions
- Comparisons and contrasts
- Definitions
- Steps in a process

Supporting details are often then grouped into categories based on commonalities. The groupings or categories typically become the main points or ideas that the writer will fully explain in the essay.

Each paragraph should be limited to the explanation of one general idea.

Writers should focus on the thesis. Writers should include paragraphs (no set number) that have topic sentences directly related to the thesis and details that present the following:

- Main ideas that develop or support the thesis statement
- Evidence from the text (embedded quotations) to support these ideas, including examples, illustrations, statistics, and so forth
- Analysis of the evidence and central ideas in which the writer integrates his or her own ideas, values, beliefs, and assumptions

The type of evidential support (whether factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal) varies. Because students are often required to write expository essays with little or no preparation, essays may not have a great deal of statistical or factual evidence.

Writers should include enough details to fully explain each piece of information. Writers should also try to "show and not tell." They should not assume that the reader has prior knowledge or understanding of the topic. Writers should use words that clearly explain and describe in detail, rather just state ideas. Writers should try to leave no reader question unanswered.

Writers should keep their writing interesting and not focus on the formulaic nature of expository writing. The goal should be to leave readers with a better understanding and lasting impression.

There should be no inconsistencies or extraneous information. The details should support the main points or ideas to fully explain the thesis statement.

3. Clearly organized structure

Expository essays need an organizing structure that logically presents the main ideas and supporting details related to the thesis statement. Writers should select the structure that is best suited to a thoughtful and engaging explanation of the topic.

Common expository organizational patterns include the following:

- **Concept and definition.** Describe a topic by listing characteristics, features, and examples.
- **Sequence.** List items or events in numerical or chronological order.
- **Compare and contrast.** Explain how two or more things are alike and/or how they are different.
- **Cause and effect.** List one or more causes and the resulting effects.
- **Problem and solution.** State a problem and list one or more solutions for the problem. A variation of this pattern is the question-and-answer format, in which you pose a question and then answer it.

The writer also should use meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections to enhance the logical movement of the essay and clearly show the relationships among ideas, making the writer's train of thought easy to follow.

4. Strong introduction

Expository essays need an introduction that grabs the reader's attention. The introduction should show why the writer's ideas are worth considering and provide a brief overview of the topic.

Common ways to introduce expository essays include the following:

- **Solve a problem.** Problem solving will almost always grab your reader's attention, especially in an academic context. It is also a good way to set up your thesis statement, which will then help the reader better understand it. This type of introduction can set up your conclusion by allowing you to return to the problem and show how the things you wrote solve the problem or that the problem needs further inquiry.
- **Start with an anecdote, a quotation, a question, or an interesting fact.** This form of introduction often will appeal to a reader's emotions. Interesting anecdotes, quotations, questions, and facts can quickly interest readers and make them want to read more. Try to think of an interesting, shocking, or weird fact about your topic.
- **Acknowledge what others have said on the subject.** For some topics, the amount of literature available can be overwhelming. If you are writing about a popular topic, it is best to acknowledge in your introduction that much has been written on the subject. Your introduction needs to convey why your essay is important and how it is different from all the other literature that already exists on the subject.
- **Point out an irony or a paradox.** Paradoxes are seemingly contradictory statements. They are great to use in introductions to get the reader's attention.
- **Use an analogy.** If your topic is a bit obscure or abstract, try connecting it to something more familiar to your reader.
- **Jump into the content.** This strategy is good for audiences who do not like to read anything they do not have to. Sometimes, it can be more dramatic to start with your thesis.

5. Strong conclusion

The conclusion should not simply restate the thesis, but rather readdress it based on the evidence provided. Because this is the part of the essay that will leave the most immediate impression on the reader, it should be effective and logical.

Writers should not introduce new information in the conclusion; rather, writers should synthesize and resolve the information already presented in the body of the essay.

Writers use many types of conclusions. Below is a list of ideas for bringing closure to an essay. Writers can incorporate more than one of these types into a conclusion.

Common types of conclusions include the following:

- **Summary.** Sum up all of your main points. This is the most basic and popular type of conclusion, but be careful not to repeat your thesis.
- **Link to beginning.** This type of conclusion is a nice companion for an introduction that features anecdotes, quotes, problem solving, and so forth. Tying the ending to your beginning gives readers a satisfying sense of closure. You might refer back to a certain image or phrase in your introduction. Keep in mind that this method works better in some essays than in others. In other words, if you try too hard to connect your conclusion to your introduction, it may come off as contrived and artificial.
- **Larger context.** This type of conclusion is good for obscure and abstract topics for which the details cause readers to lose sight of the main point. This type of conclusion reminds your readers of the big picture by answering the following questions: Why does my topic matter? What are the consequences of what I am suggesting or proposing?
- **Call to action.** This is a common approach for proposal essays that asks your readers to respond to your position or argument with a specific action.

6. Purposeful and precise word choice

The writer's word choice in an expository essay should be accurate, concise, clear, and concrete. Effective word choice reflects a keen awareness of the expository purpose and maintains a tone appropriate to the purpose and audience. Writers often focus on word choice to improve their first drafts.

To improve writing, writers can replace overused words with stronger, more powerful ones or use phrases and sensory details that describe, explain, or provide additional detail and connections.

7. Varied sentence structure

Sentences are the building blocks of writing. The ways sentences are constructed affect the fluency or the flow of the writing. Expository essays are enhanced when the writer uses purposeful sentences that are varied in both length and structure.

Examples of how writers can vary sentences to improve their writing include the following:

- Using a variety of sentence patterns: simple, compound, and complex
- Combining short sentences with prepositional phrases, appositive phrases, or participial phrases
- Combining short sentences by linking items of equal importance with a coordinating conjunction
- Combining short sentences containing ideas that are of unequal importance with a subordinating conjunction
- Starting sentences in different ways
- Using an adverb
- Using prepositional, participial, or infinitive phrase
- Using an introductory clause
- Breaking up long, rambling sentences (often run-on sentences) into two or three shorter sentences

Expository Essay Elements Mini-Chart

- Clear, concise, and defined thesis statement
- Clearly organized structure
- Strong introduction
- Specific supporting details
- Strong conclusion
- Purposeful and precise word choice
- Varied sentence structure

Solidarity and Support

Susan Newman *is a social psychologist, a blogger for "Psychology Today Magazine," and the author of "Under One Roof Again: All Grown Up and (Re)learning to Live Together Happily."*

December 26, 2011

Not since the Great Depression have so many young adults turned to their immediate relatives as an economic lifeline. In the 1960s, for example, independence was the strived-for virtue—returning home, "unthinkable." If children didn't grow up, find jobs, and live independently, parents were seen as enablers, the children as failures. That stigmatized view has faded fast during the recession.

Family of origin has become a lifeboat for roughly one in five 25- to 34-year-olds who move in with parents to wait out the economic storm. Sure, there are potential complications and emotional minefields left over from the parenting years, but once the kinks are sorted out, the benefits for young and old are clear.

Some argue that living with parents stunts development and prolongs adolescence. I see the camaraderie as an opportunity to get to know each other in ways not possible when living together as parent and child. Delayed maturity in young adults happens only if parents continue to cater to their adult children's needs as if they were still 10-year-olds. Living with parents as young adults provides the chance to know parents as people and similarly for parents to see their adult children as grownups with ideas, skills, and talents to admire.

Bunking in with parents allows struggling young adults to save for an apartment or house, to hold out until they find a meaningful job, or to start to pay down student loans—the average being $24,000, but soaring over $100,000 for some. In return, most adult children assist parents in-kind.

Rather than having a negative effect, the recession has renewed values with the emphasis on family solidarity and support. The advantages of the multigenerational family, a model immigrant families have always practiced, will keep more parents and young adults together. Even when young adults can afford a place of their own, many say, "I'm still here." Money will be saved on housing but will be spent on consumer goods, aiding the economy. However, living under the same roof for the long or short haul will remain a configuration that defines American families in the foreseeable future.

Source: Newman, S. (2011, December 26). Solidarity and support. *The New York Times.* Reprinted with permission.

Model Lesson: Analyzing Expository Essays Tool

Note: *The questions below are useful when teaching students to read mentor texts like a writer. As the essay is analyzed, help students notice how the author crafts the different elements and how these elements might be used in their own writing.*

TITLE: Solidarity and Support

Expository Elements	Analysis and Responses
Clear, concise, and defined thesis statement	
What is the author's main thesis or central/controlling idea?	Newman's overall thesis seems to both observe a trend and argue that the trend is positive: "That stigmatized view [of adult children living at home] has faded fast during the recession."
Which approach (make a connection, refute an accepted idea, find something new, define, evaluate, propose a change) did the author use in building this thesis? Elaborate.	Newman reveals her plan to refute an accepted idea in the second paragraph when she chooses her side in the debate. She writes: "Sure, there are potential complications and emotional minefields left over from the parenting years, but once the kinks are sorted out, the benefits for young and old are clear." So, in a sense, she is dismissing what some people expect to come out of living under one roof ("complications and emotional minefields") and arguing that, in reality, "the benefits for young and old are clear."
Is this approach effective? If so, what makes it effective? If not, why not?	I do think this approach is effective. The author takes a topic that many people feel anxiety about and gives reasons for hope.

Expository Elements	Analysis and Responses
Strong introduction	
What type of introduction does the author use?	The author jumps into the content by immediately introducing the recent shift in U.S. living arrangements.
Is the author's introduction effective? If so, what makes it effective? If not, what would improve it?	I like the way the introduction puts the topic in its historical context. I do think, however, that more specifics might have made it even stronger. The author also could have hooked the reader with an anecdote, possibly outlining one family's circumstances.
Specific supporting details	
Do all of the body paragraphs have a logical connection to the thesis? Is each one limited to the explanation of one general idea?	Yes. The author uses each paragraph to approach a different element of the larger topic of multigenerational living.
List some of the supporting details and explain whether they are effective in supporting the author's thesis. If so, what makes them effective? If not, what would improve them?	The author uses specifics as evidence to back up her points. In the second paragraph, she says, "Family of origin has become a lifeboat for roughly one in five 25- to 34-year-olds who move in with parents to wait out the economic storm." And later in the essay, she discusses the average student loan debt. These facts and figures make her argument more convincing.

Expository Elements	Analysis and Responses
Clearly organized structure	
Is the essay well organized? Describe the type of organizational pattern that the author uses.	It is well organized. Each paragraph tackles a specific issue. In the third paragraph, for example, the author directly addresses critiques of her argument. In the fourth, she explores the financial effects of the topic. In the fifth, she presents her conclusion, summing up her argument and projecting into the future.
Are the transitions effective in forming connections among ideas and sections of the essay? If so, what makes them effective? If not, what could improve them?	Although the author's organization makes the essay fairly easy to read, she does not use many transition words or phrases. Her essay's readability might be improved if she inserted more transition language between her various points.
Strong conclusion	
What type of conclusion does the author use?	She concludes with a summary and the larger context.
Is the author's conclusion effective? If so, what makes it effective? If not, what would improve it?	The conclusion is effective at summing up her argument and projecting it into the future when the author writes that "living under the same roof for the long or short haul will remain a configuration that defines American families in the foreseeable future."

Expository Elements	Analysis and Responses
Purposeful and precise word choice	
Is the author's word choice effective? If so, what makes it effective? If not, what would improve it?	The author uses strong and powerful words to explain why she thinks multigenerational living arrangements are beneficial. She uses words such as *stigmatized*, *lifeboat*, *economic storm*, *camaraderie*, *bunking in*, *renewed values*, and *configuration*. These words are effective because they help convince the reader that her position has merit.
Varied sentence structure	
What types of sentences does the author use?	The author uses a majority of complex sentence structures. The sentences are rather long and rambling. She does not vary the length.
Is the author's use of sentences effective? If so, what makes them effective? If not, what would improve them?	The author's use of sentences is not that effective. Their complex structure and her overuse of dependent phrases and clauses make it difficult to read and understand. She needs to simplify the structure and provide both long and short sentences.
Author's style or craft	
Which aspects of the author's writing style do you plan to incorporate in your next essay?	I plan on incorporating the use of specific evidence into my work. I also liked how the author used counterarguments to directly address critiques of her argument.

Analyzing Expository Essays Tool

Note: *The questions below are useful when teaching students to read mentor texts like a writer. As the essay is analyzed, help students notice how the author crafts the different elements and how these elements might be used in their own writing.*

TITLE:

Expository Elements	Analysis and Responses
Clear, concise, and defined thesis statement	
What is the author's main thesis or central/controlling idea?	
Which approach (make a connection, refute an accepted idea, find something new, define, evaluate, propose a change) did the author use in building this thesis? Elaborate.	
Is this approach effective? If so, what makes it effective? If not, why not?	

Expository Elements	Analysis and Responses
Strong introduction	
What type of introduction does the author use?	
Is the author's introduction effective? If so, what makes it effective? If not, what would improve it?	
Specific supporting details	
Do all of the body paragraphs have a logical connection to the thesis? Is each one limited to the explanation of one general idea?	
List some of the supporting details and explain whether they are effective in supporting the author's thesis. If so, what makes them effective? If not, what would improve them?	

Expository Elements	Analysis and Responses
Clearly organized structure	
Is the essay well organized? Describe the type of organizational pattern that the author uses.	
Are the transitions effective in forming connections among ideas and sections of the essay? If so, what makes them effective? If not, what could improve them?	
Strong conclusion	
What type of conclusion does the author use?	
Is the author's conclusion effective? If so, what makes it effective? If not, what would improve it?	

Expository Elements	Analysis and Responses
Purposeful and precise word choice	
Is the author's word choice effective? If so, what makes it effective? If not, what would improve it?	
Varied sentence structure	
What types of sentences does the author use?	
Is the author's use of sentences effective? If so, what makes them effective? If not, what would improve them?	
Author's style or craft	
Which aspects of the author's writing style do you plan to incorporate in your next essay?	

Writing an Introductory Paragraph for an Expository Essay

Prompt

Read the following:

> If you are like many Americans, you have just spent a few days in close quarters with your parents, grandchildren, siblings, etc. You are ready to go home or ready for them to go home. But for a growing number of families in which adult children cannot afford to live on their own, this is the new normal.
>
> These "boomerang" children have been the butt of jokes on late-night television and even in commercials, but what is so bad about moving back in with your parents?

Think carefully about the following question: Could extended families under one roof—a common arrangement in years past—be the way of the future?

Write (the introductory paragraph of) an essay explaining the benefits of extended families living under one roof becoming a common arrangement in America.

Be sure to do the following:

- Clearly state your thesis or controlling idea
- Organize and develop your explanation effectively
- Choose your words carefully for the purpose and audience
- Use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentences

Source: Various authors. (2011, December 26). The whole family under one roof? *The New York Times*.

Introductory Paragraph

(You may also write on the back of this handout.)

Handouts

Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts

Gateway Resource TEPT0004

Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts

GATEWAY RESOURCE ID: TEPT0004

Writing Persuasive Essays

Writing Persuasive Essays is the fourth online resource in the Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts series.

To locate this resource, go to the Write for Texas website: http://writefortexas.org. Click on the **Online Materials** tab at the top of the page. Next, click on the **Teaching Expository and Persuasive Texts** tab in the column on the left side of the page. Then, after reading the information, click on **Writing Persuasive Essays** (in the middle of the page) to begin working in the Project Share Gateway.

Writing Persuasive Essays has three sections. The suggested time to complete all three sections is 1 hour, plus preparation and class time to implement a classroom teaching activity with your students. You may complete this resource at your own pace. All sections may be completed in a single session, or you may log in multiple times as you work through the information and activities.

Materials and Activities by Section

Section 1. Persuasive Essay Elements

- **Classroom teacher handout:** Persuasive Essay Elements (Handout 30)
- **Classroom template:** Persuasive Essay Elements Mini-Chart (Handout 31)

  Read the handouts.

> **Tip:** Introduce each of the elements, usually one at a time. Explicitly model how to identify the elements in mentor texts. After you have modeled and taught the elements, post the mini-chart in the room and/or have students place it in their writing folders or notebooks.

- **Classroom teacher handout and classroom template:** Analyzing Persuasive Writing Tool

  Read the questions posed for each persuasive essay element.

> **Tip:** Use a mentor persuasive text and this tool to model and teach your students how to analyze and identify how authors craft the different persuasive elements in a text. Use familiar text that they have already read, if possible. Focus on one or two elements at a time. Provide copies for students to use during the lesson. Include opportunities for students to practice incorporating the targeted elements in their own persuasive writing.

- **Classroom teaching activity:** Think about the content you teach. Select a mentor persuasive text that would be a strong model to introduce and teach the elements of persuasive essays. In your teaching journal, write the title of this text and explain how it aligns with your curriculum.

Section 2. Determining Purpose and Audience

- **Classroom teacher handout and classroom template:** Differences Between Expository and Persuasive Essays

  Read the handout.

> **Tip:** Use the handout with mentor texts to teach students the differences between these two types of informational essays. Provide copies for students' writing folders or notebooks.

- **Classroom teacher handout and classroom template:** Writing Persuasively: Purpose + Audience = Word Choice

  Read the handout.

- **Classroom teaching activity:**
  - Think about the content you currently teach or will teach during this grading period. What are two or three debatable and interesting issues that you could use as topics for persuasive essays? Record the topics in your teaching journal.
  - Plan and prepare a teacher think-aloud lesson to model how to use this persuasive prewriting handout for one of your topics. Teach the lesson to your students.
  - Have students work in pairs to complete the handout before they begin writing their own persuasive essays.

Section 3. Noting Reasons and Researching Evidential Support

- **Classroom teacher handout and classroom template:** Noting Reasons and Researching Evidential Support

  Read the guidelines on the handout.

> **Tip:** Introduce the guidelines (page 1) and the Reasons and Evidential Support Chart (page 2) by modeling for students how to complete the steps. Write, reread, and think aloud in front of the class. Provide guidance and support as students practice formulating reasons and evidence to convince their readers to agree with their position or opinion. Have students work individually, with a partner, or in a small group. Provide copies for students to use in their own writing.

- **Classroom teacher handout:** Sample Lesson: Teaching Counterpoints in Persuasive Writing
  - Read the sample lesson on the handout.
  - Reread Step 2 of the Noting Reasons and Researching Evidential Support handout, which details a procedure to organize information, including counterpoints, in persuasive writing.
- **Teaching journal questions:** How often do you incorporate persuasive essays into your content area instruction? How do you plan to incorporate these resources into your curriculum?

  Think about the questions. Record your responses, ideas, and other thoughts in your teaching journal.

Persuasive Essay Elements

English Language Arts and Reading Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills Glossary Definition

Persuasive essay: text written with the intent to persuade or convince the reader of something

Elements

A persuasive essay is a multiparagraph essay designed to influence the attitudes or actions of a specific audience on specific issues. The number of paragraphs is not predetermined. The essay includes a beginning, a middle, and an end.

The purpose of a persuasive essay is to persuade readers to adopt the writer's point of view on an issue and/or agree with a suggested course of action. To accomplish this purpose, writers need to develop a logical and reasonable argument that supports their opinions.

Writers establish a position and include detailed and relevant evidence logically organized to support their viewpoint. They differentiate between fact and opinion, consider and respond to other views, and anticipate and answer concerns and counterarguments. A well-written persuasive essay is based on sound reasoning, detailed and relevant evidence, and a thorough consideration of alternatives.

1. Clear, concise, and defined thesis

In the first paragraph of a persuasive essay, writers should present the thesis. In a persuasive essay, the thesis statement presents the writer's position on a topic.

The thesis statement should clearly and directly state a supportable position—one that people could have differing opinions on—related to the topic. The thesis can include a recommendation for action.

The thesis needs to be narrow in focus. To present an effective argument, the thesis must be supported by evidence. If the thesis is too broad, the writer will typically need more evidence to convince readers of his or her position.

Writers need to think about how they want to approach a topic—what type of position or claim they will take in their essay. This is one way to narrow the focus of a thesis. Writers need to consider their position and knowledge on the topic, their audience, and the context of the essay.

Even if writers begin with one type of claim, they can also use several other types to develop their argument within a persuasive essay.

Persuasive essays can include the following types of claims:

- Fact or definition: things that have already happened, are happening now, or will happen in the future and reasons for such occurrences
- Cause and effect: one person, thing, or event causing another thing or event to occur
- Value: morality of an issue, what something is worth, or a call for a judgment to be made
- Solution or policy: an advocating for or against a plan of action to be taken

2. Strong introduction

Persuasive essays should include an introduction that captures the audience's attention and presents the debatable topic. The introduction clearly establishes the writer's position on the topic in a thesis statement.

The importance of the topic is clearly conveyed to the audience. Background information related to the topic may be presented. A strong introduction entices the audience to read on and consider the writer's opinion.

Writers may begin their persuasive essays with a startling fact or a probing question. Effective introductions often include sincere and straightforward language, rather than strong or emotional words that may offend some readers.

3. Well-developed argument with strong evidential support

After writers define their position in a thesis statement, they are ready to develop the argument that will defend their thesis.

First, writers should consider their audience. Questions to consider include the following:

- What does the audience already know about the topic?
- What is the audience's point of view about this topic? Do they already agree or disagree with my position?
- What are the chances of changing the opinions and actions of the audience?
- Are there any sensitive issues I should be aware of?

Next, writers develop their argument by using specific reasons and evidence to convince their audience. Writers must create a logical argument by fitting the facts together, so that they lead to a reasonable conclusion.

The reasons and evidence the writer uses to support his or her position should be specific and well chosen. The writer may choose to recognize the complexities of the issue, use his or her unique experiences or view of the world as a basis for writing, and/or connect ideas in interesting ways.

Each paragraph should present one of the strong reasons that support the writer's position and logically connect the reason to the thesis statement (presented in the opening paragraph).

In addition to supporting the writer's own opinion, the persuasive essay should also consider and explain differing points of view (counterarguments) regarding the topic. Writers should point out why opposing opinions do not align with their positions and, if possible, expose faulty reasoning. The writer is trying to prove, through the use of factual information, why his or her opinion is better.

Because the reasons must be supported with evidence, it is also important to explain how and why the evidence supports the thesis. Writers should make sure that each supporting reason or fact can be verified either through their own experience or from a reliable source. Writers may include evidence that is factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal.

Examples of different types of evidence include the following:

- Facts that can be proven
- Expert opinions or quotations
- Definitions that state the meaning of a word or phrase
- Statistics that offer scientific support
- Examples that provide powerful illustrations to support facts
- Anecdotes or incidents—often based on the writer's personal experiences
- Emotional appeals that are carefully chosen to provide support for reasons (can have positive or negative connotations to sway the audience's emotions)
- Counterarguments that give reasons and evidence to disprove opposing positions
- Calls to action that urge the audience to do something

4. Clearly organized structure

The organizing structure of the essay should clearly present the writer's position and ensure that all ideas (pro and con) are strongly related to the position and the topic. By sustaining this focus throughout the persuasive essay, the writer is able to create an argument that is unified and coherent.

The writer's progression of ideas should be logical and well controlled. The most common type of organization used in persuasive essays is order of importance. Writers begin with the least important point or reason and build up to the most important point or reason that supports their position. As a result, the audience is more likely to remember the most convincing and important point that the writer has made in the essay.

Meaningful transitions and strong sentence-to-sentence connections enhance the flow of a persuasive essay by clearly showing the audience the relationships among ideas, making the writer's argument easy to follow. Transitions that are often used in persuasive writing include *although*, *admittedly*, *however*, *still*, *on the other hand*, *instead*, *while it is true that*, *nevertheless*, and *nonetheless*.

5. Strong conclusion

A strong conclusion does not simply restate the thesis, but rather readdresses it in light of the evidence provided. The conclusion should be logically drawn from the arguments. Writers should not introduce new information in the conclusion. Instead, they should synthesize the information presented in the body of the essay—restate why the topic is important, review the main points, and/or review the thesis. If writers want to persuade their audience to take some action, they can also make a recommendation in the final paragraphs.

6. Purposeful and precise word choice

The writer's word choice in a persuasive essay should be reasonable and forceful, but also objective. Writers should avoid the use of words that show bias or highly charged emotions. Effective word choice reflects a keen awareness of the persuasive purpose and maintains a tone appropriate to the purpose and audience. Writers often focus on refining their word choice to improve their first drafts.

Examples of how word choice can refine and improve writing include replacing overused words with stronger, more powerful ones and inserting phrases and sensory details that describe, explain, or provide additional detail and connections.

7. Varied sentence structure

Sentences are the building blocks of writing. The ways sentences are constructed affect the fluency or the flow of the writing. Expository essays are enhanced when the writer uses purposeful sentences that are varied in both length and structure.

Examples of how writers can vary sentences to improve their writing include the following:

- Using a variety of sentence patterns, including simple, compound, and complex
- Combining short sentences with prepositional phrases, appositive phrases, or participial phrases
- Combining short sentences by linking items of equal importance with a coordinating conjunction
- Combining short sentences containing ideas that are of unequal importance with a subordinating conjunction
- Starting sentences in different ways—for example, with an adverb; with a prepositional, participial, or infinitive phrase; or with an introductory clause
- Breaking up long, rambling sentences (often run-on sentences) into two or three shorter sentences

Persuasive Essay Elements Mini-Chart

- Clear, concise, and defined thesis
- Clearly organized structure
- Strong introduction
- Well-developed argument with strong evidential support
- Strong conclusion
- Purposeful and precise word choice
- Varied sentence structure

Analyzing Persuasive Writing Tool

Note: *The questions below are useful when teaching students to read mentor texts like a writer. As the writing is analyzed, help students notice how the author crafts the different elements and how these elements might be used in their own writing.*

TITLE: _____

Persuasive Elements	Analysis and Responses
Clear, concise, and defined thesis statement	
What is the author's position on the topic?	
Does this thesis state a supportable position (or opinion) that is open for debate (with both pros and cons)?	
What type of position or claim (fact or definition, cause and effect, value, or solution) does the author make?	
Strong introduction	
How does the author capture the reader's attention (e.g., solve a problem; start with an anecdote, quotation, question, or interesting fact; point out an irony or paradox; jump into content)?	
Is the author's introduction effective? If so, what makes it effective? If not, what would improve it?	
Well-developed argument with strong evidential support	
How many reasons does the author give to develop the argument? What types of supporting evidence does the author use?	
Does the author explain differing points of view (counterarguments) to convince readers why his or her position is better?	

Persuasive Elements	Analysis and Responses
Do all of the body paragraphs have a logical connection to the thesis? Is each limited to the explanation of a single reason that supports the argument?	
Is the author's argument effective (convincing)? If so, what makes it effective? If not, what would improve it?	
Strong conclusion	
What type of conclusion does the author use (summary, link to beginning, larger context, or call to action)?	
Is the author's conclusion effective? If so, what makes it effective? If not, what would improve it?	
Clearly organized structure	
Is the writing well organized? If so, what makes it easy to follow? If not, what would improve it?	
Do the transitions effectively connect ideas and sections of the writing? If so, what makes them effective? If not, what would improve them?	
Purposeful and precise word choice	
Are the author's tone and word choice effective and appropriate for the audience? If so, what makes them effective? If not, what would improve them?	

Persuasive Elements	Analysis and Responses
Varied sentence structure	
What types of sentences does the author use?	
Are the author's sentences effective? If so, what makes them effective? If not, what would improve them?	
Author's style or craft	
Which aspects of the author's writing style do you plan to incorporate in your next piece of persuasive writing?	

Differences Between Expository and Persuasive Essays

An Expository Essay		A Persuasive Essay
The purpose is to present facts and information in an explanatory way.	**Purpose**	The purpose is to present one side or point of view to convince the reader to accept that viewpoint or to take a particular action.
A clear, concise, and defined thesis statement or central/controlling idea that clearly focuses on the topic or prompt is evident in the introduction of the essay.	**Thesis**	The position statement on a topic or issue is evident in the introduction of the essay.
Language and word choice are formal and academic.	**Tone**	Language and word choice may be casual and personal (but no slang).
Writers can use either first, second, or third person, as long as they clearly explain what they think about something.	**Point of View**	Writers can use either first or third person, as long as they establish and sustain a persuasive tone.
All ideas center on the thesis statement and help to explain the topic. Specific supporting details (factual, logical, statistical, or anecdotal) fully explain and clearly describe the topic.	**Development of Ideas**	All ideas center on a clear position that represents the writer's viewpoint on the issue and forms the basis of the argument. Specific examples (but no false evidence) support the position and make it convincing and powerful.
Ideas related to the thesis are presented in a logical way that best explains the topic and shows relationships among ideas. There are a variety of ways to organize ideas (e.g., anecdotes, examples, compare and contrast, cause and effect).	**Structure and Organization**	Ideas are presented in a way that maximizes their persuasiveness. Example structure: A writer builds an argument so that the strongest reason or evidence is at the end of the essay.

Writing Persuasively: Purpose + Audience = Word Choice

Note: *Both your audience and the purpose of your writing determine the words, language, and level of detail you should use to communicate your position or opinion effectively and to persuade your readers to consider your point of view.*

PURPOSE: Think about what you know about a topic or issue to help you decide on a position. For some assignments, research the topic to fully understand all perspectives.

Ask yourself: What is my purpose?

❑ To inform my readers of things they may not know about this topic or issue

❑ To convince my readers of my point of view

❑ To bring about change in my readers' thinking

❑ To challenge my readers' thinking about the issue

AUDIENCE: Think about the readers you will try to persuade.

Ask yourself: Who is my audience?

❑ Novices in the field ❑ Experts in the field ❑ Friends ❑ Family

❑ Teachers ❑ Students ❑ Others: _____

My audience's level of background knowledge and detail about the topic or issue is:

I think their beliefs and values toward the topic are:

WORD CHOICE: Think about both purpose and audience to determine the word choice for your writing.

Ask yourself: What will be the tone of my writing (my attitude or feelings toward the topic)?

❑ Casual ❑ Formal ❑ Positive ❑ Negative ❑ Sincere ❑ Assertive ❑ Objective

❑ Optimistic ❑ Reassuring ❑ Sympathetic ❑ Enthusiastic ❑ Respectful

❑ Other: _____

Ask yourself: What type of word choice (language, vocabulary, and sentence structure) will most effectively convey this tone and my position or opinion to my audience?

My Audience	Word Choice
❑ Unfamiliar to me	• Use formal word choice. • Provide background information if readers are unfamiliar with the topic.
❑ Familiar to me	• Use casual word choice. • Provide less background information if readers are familiar with the topic.
❑ Mature, adult, or advanced	• Use sophisticated vocabulary and terminology. • Use complex details.
❑ Younger or less experienced	• Use simple vocabulary. • Provide explanations and definitions.

Source: Pasquarelli, S. L. (Ed.). (2006). *Teaching writing genres across the curriculum: Strategies for middle school teachers*. Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Noting Reasons and Researching Evidential Support

Step 1: Complete the Reasons and Evidential Support Chart

1. Record the topic or issue you will address.
2. State your position or opinion.
3. Brainstorm and list three or more reasons that support your position, opinion, or claim.
4. List possible evidence you already know that might support each reason.
5. Conduct research to verify possible evidence and find additional evidential support. Include at least three different types of evidence to support each reason. Evidence may include facts; expert opinions or quotations; definitions; statistics that offer scientific support; examples that illustrate facts; anecdotes or incidents, including the writer's personal experiences; emotional appeals to sway the audience's emotions; or calls to action that urge the audience to do something.
6. In the "Yes, but . . ." section, provide at least one counterargument, or reason someone might disagree with your position, and tell why your position is better.
7. If you cannot find sufficient evidence for a reason, search for a more compelling reason in your source material.

Step 2: Organize the Information in the Reasons and Evidential Support Chart

8. Reread all of your reasons, evidential support, and counterpoints.
9. Sort the reasons based on their importance. Which will be most convincing? Do not forget to include your "Yes, but . . ." counterpoints. Number the reasons in the order that will be most convincing. Begin with the least important and build to the most important.
10. Think about how to present the evidence to support each reason. Number the evidence in the order that you will present it.
11. Share with a partner how you organized your ideas and why.

Reasons and Evidential Support Chart

Persuasive Topic or Issue:		
My Position:		
Reasons	**Possible Evidence (What I Already Know)**	**Evidence From My Research**
Yes, but . . .		
Reasons someone might disagree with my position:	**Evidence why my position is better:**	

Sources:

Pasquarelli, S. L. (Ed.). (2006). *Teaching writing genres across the curriculum: Strategies for middle school teachers.* Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Portland Public Schools. (Spring 2010). *Grade 5 expository writing: Persuasive.* Retrieved from http://www.ridge.k12.wa.us/cms/lib01/WA01000666/Centricity/Domain/294/G5_Persuasive_Spring_2010-1.pdf

Sample Lesson: Teaching Counterpoints in Persuasive Writing

Objective

Students will learn how to think about and use counterpoints effectively in persuasive writing after watching the teacher model the process.

Materials

- Reasons and Evidential Support Chart displayed at front of room (see last page of this handout)
- Student copies of Noting Reasons and Researching Evidential Support handout

Opening

Teacher: We have learned that the purpose of persuasive writing is to convince or persuade the reader to agree with your position or opinion. We have noted many strong reasons and supporting evidence on the Reasons and Evidential Support Chart for our position on bike lanes.

Let's look at the bottom section of the chart, called "Yes, but . . ." Take a few minutes to look over this section. We will complete the section together today.

Teacher pauses for a few minutes for students to review the handout.

Instruction

Teacher: Who can tell me how the "Yes, but . . ." section of the chart could help us improve our persuasive writing?

Student: This section of the chart is where you imagine what your reader might be thinking about your topic. It is important to stop to think about the audience of your essay.

Teacher: Yes, good explanation! What preconceived ideas or beliefs do you think readers might have about your topic? Will they agree with you? Well, maybe, but probably not 100%.

Remember, because your purpose for writing is to persuade, you can assume that some of your readers probably do not yet agree with you. Some readers likely have a very different opinion, perspective, or experience from yours.

I will show you how to think about your readers and the differing viewpoints they may have about your topic. Remember, I have chosen to write about the need for more bike paths and lanes in our city.

I wonder whether all my readers would agree with me that we need more bike paths and lanes in the city. Some of my readers might think: "So what? I don't ride a bike. None of my friends ride bikes. What do I care?" Others might think that bike lanes and paths are too expensive to build. I bet some readers even believe that there are already plenty of bike lanes and paths in our city. Why build more? I have thought of a lot of reasons why readers might disagree with me. How can I convince them to agree with my position and see the need for more bike lanes and paths?

One way I can persuade them is to point out one or two opposing or differing points of view and then provide a counterargument. That means I will identify a different viewpoint and explain why it is faulty.

To persuade those who think bike lanes are too expensive, I will write a counterargument. I will argue that the cost of bike lanes and paths is worth the money and that they are not too expensive.

I will write these arguments on my Reasons and Evidential Support Chart. In the first column of the "Yes, but . . ." section, I will list a reason that someone might disagree with my position. I will write: "Bike lanes and paths are expensive."

Write on the displayed chart.

Because I want to support my position and persuade the reader, I will include evidence why my position is better. I will use the "yes, but . . ." pattern to develop ideas for my counterargument. I do not want to be disrespectful. I want to strongly persuade, not shame, mock, or bully my readers. Let me show you what I mean.

In the right column of the "Yes, but . . ." section, I will list evidence why my position is better:
"**Yes**, bike lanes and paths cost money, **but** bikes cause less wear and tear on the roads, so less is spent on road repairs."

Write on the displayed chart.

"**Yes**, bike lanes and paths cost money, **but** bike paths increase tourism and tourism money could help pay for the paths."

Write on the displayed chart.

"**Yes**, bike lanes and paths cost money, **but** biker safety has no price tag—it outweighs the cost."

Write on the displayed chart.

So the counterpoints are that bikes cause less wear and tear, so they are a better expenditure in the long run; that the city will have more money from an increase in tourists; and that the safety of residents is more important than any perceived cost.

I want to include some of this counterpoint in my persuasive essay. I will take a few minutes to write about the first counterpoint that I listed. I may or may not keep this information in the final version.

First, I will write a sentence from my chart and combine some of the ideas. This will be the topic sentence of my paragraph:
"**Yes**, bike lanes and paths are expensive to build, **but** over time, they are actually cheaper for the city."

Write the topic sentence on the board.

Now I will write some more sentences to support my main idea:
"Bikes do not wear out roads as quickly as cars do. The heavier cars are hard on the asphalt, which needs expensive repairs. When you look at the long-term costs of roads for cars compared to lanes for bikes, bike lanes cost less money."

Write the remainder of the paragraph on the board.

What do you notice about the first sentence?

Student: The first sentence uses the same "Yes, but . . ." pattern from the chart: "**Yes**, bike lanes are expensive to build, **but** over time, are actually cheaper for the city."

Teacher: What are some other ways I could have composed my counterpoint?

Student: "Although bike lanes are expensive to build, they are cheaper over time."

Teacher: Yes, I like how you phrased that one. Who has another suggestion?

Student: "Some people believe that bike lanes are expensive, but so are roads."

Teacher: What do you notice about the construction of these sentences?

Student: The sentences use a comma between the opponent's side and the writer's side.

Clear Task Assignment

Teacher: Think of some ideas your readers might have that go against your position. Counter by providing evidence why your position is better. List these ideas in the "Yes, but . . ." section of your Reasons and Evidential Support Chart.

Use the ideas from your chart, my example, and the sample sentence patterns to write a counterargument paragraph for your persuasive essay. Notice that I wrote four sentences in my paragraph. Try to write at least three or four sentences in yours. Include a comma in your counterpoint sentence like our examples. Make sure you give evidence to support why your position is better. Do not make your opponents' point for them. Instead, use this paragraph as another chance to prove to readers why your position is better.

Write the steps of the assignment steps on the board.

Reasons and Evidential Support Chart

Persuasive Topic or Issue: Bike lanes and paths in our city		
My Position: Our city needs more bike lanes and paths.		
Reasons	**Possible Evidence (What I Already Know)**	**Evidence From My Research**
More lanes and paths reserved for cyclists along existing streets and roads would allow more people to bike.	Lots of people, like me, like to ride bikes. Riding bikes is not always safe on roads, sidewalks, or walkways. Parents often do not allow children to ride on public streets or in crowds.	People often do not bike because they feel it is too dangerous. The No. 1 thing that makes people feel safer is more bike lanes. Adding bike lanes results in more people riding bikes to work and to school. Increased bike riding cuts gas consumption, improves air quality, and reduces dependence on imported oil.
More bike lanes would reduce accidents between bikes and cars.	When bikes and cars are too close together, accidents happen.	Bike lanes reduce accidents. Bike lanes reduce bike riding on sidewalks, which is dangerous to both pedestrians and cyclists (cars more likely to hit them).
Bike lanes would encourage people to visit more parts of the city.	Some of the great places to visit in the city can be reached only on foot or by bike.	Bike lanes heighten awareness of cyclists. Bike lanes preserve open space. Bike lanes allow for affordable exercise and recreation.
Bike lanes would bring tourists to our city.	More bike lanes and paths is one more reason to visit our city.	Bike lanes can boost the economy—major improvements in bike infrastructure create jobs.
Yes, but . . .		
Reasons someone might disagree with my position:	**Evidence why my position is better:**	

Sources:

Pasquarelli, S. L. (Ed.). (2006). *Teaching writing genres across the curriculum: Strategies for middle school teachers.* Greenwich, CT: Information Age.

Portland Public Schools. (Spring 2010). *Grade 5 expository writing: Persuasive.* Retrieved from http://www.ridge.k12.wa.us/cms/lib01/WA01000666/Centricity/Domain/294/G5_Persuasive_Spring_2010-1.pdf