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Chapter 1
Overview
Overview: Types of Writing

Genres of Writing: The Common Core State Standards include three domains of writing:

1. Narrative (personal and imaginative)
2. Informative/Explanatory (to inform, describe, explain, or analyze)
3. Opinion/Argument/Persuasive.

Narrative

Personal Narratives: The author tells a true story about him/herself because it is memorable.

Imaginative Narrative: A person, animal, or imaginary character goes through unusual actions, actions, actions to get something, or to solve a problem.

Informative/Explanatory (IDEA)

I = Inform: Categorize or sort information into parts, types, kinds, things, ways, or attributes.

D = Describe: Vividly describe the subject and tell the function of its parts: how they work, what they do, or why they are important.

E = Explain: Sequence information to explain steps, how to, or to tell what happened.

A = Analyze: To Analyze the Subject for a Specific Outcome or Conclusion using cause & effect, similarities (compare), or differences (contrast).

Opinion (K-5)/Argument (6)

Opinion: The writer expresses an opinion about a topic or story and backs it up by presenting and analyzing evidence.

Argument: The writer argues for or against a claim, issue, or truth backed by relevant reasons and credible evidence.
Overview: K-6 Organizers

Organizers: For K-6 instruction, this unique and dynamic program utilizes three basic organizers for students to plan and write these three genres. Below are descriptions of the three organizers. The descriptions include the amount of writing (from one sentence to five paragraphs), the grade-levels, and the types of writing.

1-Sentence to Sentences Organizer
Grades K-3: One-sentence, multiple sentences, or beginning paragraphs for narrative or informative/explanatory text.

1-Paragraph to Multiple Paragraphs Organizer
Grades K-6: Movie Scripts
Grades 2-6: One or paragraphs essays for narrative writing.

1-Paragraph to 5-Paragraph Organizer
K-6: Lecture Notes
Grades 2-6: One-paragraph or multiple paragraphs for narratives, informative/explanatory, or opinion/argumentative text.
At-A-Glance Pages: The at-a-glance pages provide administrators and teachers with a schoolwide tool for articulation, assessment benchmarks, and planning. This guide has four different chapters for the writing genres:

Chapter 2: Narrative
Chapter 3: Informative/Explanatory
Chapter 4: Opinion
Chapter 5: Argument

Each of these chapters begin with at-a-glance pages that display the organizers, brief descriptions, and suggested grade-levels. For example, At the beginning of the Narrative Chapter, the at-a-glance pages (below) provide a quick snapshot of the organizers utilized in K-6 narrative writing instruction. Notice each organizer is matched to specific grade-levels and assigned a writing stage. There are a total of eight narrative writing stages for K-6. Once teachers have assessed their students to a writing stage, they then go to the Nancy Fetzer Writing Institutes direct instruction lessons that are aligned to these stages. This provides a format for instruction to follow assessment.

At-A-Glance Narrative Organizers (K-6)

At-A-Glance Narrative Organizers (K-6)
Overview: Stages of Writing Assessment

Stages of Writing Assessment: Also included in the genre chapters are detailed descriptions of the different writing stages. Each page (sample below) identifies the characteristics of good writing: Content and Organization, Sentences, and Mechanics. Along with these descriptors are exemplar organizers and writing samples. Utilize these pages to assess student writing, and determine teaching points for writing lessons.

Rubrics: Elk Grove Unified School District has developed Common Core State Standard Writing Rubrics that can be downloaded from the following site: http://blogs.egusd.net/ccss/2012/01/12/ccss-aligned-rubrics-k-12/

Rubrics are highly recommended to grade student work. For ease of use, most rubrics are printed on one-page leaving little room for detailed descriptions. I suggest teachers use my stages of writing assessment pages as a resource for more specific understanding of standards-based writing.
Overview: Stages of Writing

Directions: The table (below) identifies the three domains of writing for grades K-6 and their Stages of Writing levels. Use this table to identify your grade-level stages, then flip to the listed pages for detailed descriptions. The content, organization, sentences, and mechanics are described at each stage, along with completed organizers and writing samples. Use these detailed descriptions to assess and determine each student’s writing stage.

Instruction: Assessment needs to drive assessment. After identifying a student’s Stage of Writing, the matching Stage of Writing lesson is utilized for instruction. These are highly-engaging direct instruction lessons that teach students how to plan their writing on their organizers. Organization and ideas, word choice, sentence fluency, and voice as well as mechanics are integrated into these lessons. (See Nancy Fetzer’s Writing Institute Manuals for the lessons.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Narrative</th>
<th>Informative/Explanatory</th>
<th>Opinion (K-5) Argumentative (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>Stages: 1-2 (pp. 14-15)</td>
<td>Stages: 1-2 (pp. 32-33)</td>
<td>Stages: 1-2 (pp. 50-51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade One</td>
<td>Stages: 1-4 (pp. 14-17)</td>
<td>Stages: 1-4 (pp. 32-35)</td>
<td>Stages: 1-4 (pp. 50-53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Two</td>
<td>Stages: 4-5 (pp. 17-19)</td>
<td>Stages: 3-6 (pp. 34-37)</td>
<td>Stage: 5 (pp. 54-55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Three</td>
<td>Stages: 4-6 (pp. 17-21)</td>
<td>Stages: 3-8 (pp. 34-39)</td>
<td>Stage: 5 (pp. 54-55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Four</td>
<td>Stages: 6-7 (pp. 20-23)</td>
<td>Stages: 7-11 (pp. 38-45)</td>
<td>Stages: 6-7 (pp. 56-59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Five</td>
<td>Stages: 6-8 (pp. 18-25)</td>
<td>Stages: 7-11 (pp. 38-45)</td>
<td>Stages: 6-7 (pp. 56-59)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade Six</td>
<td>Stages: 6-8 (pp. 18-25)</td>
<td>Stages: 7-11 (pp. 38-45)</td>
<td>Stages: 8-9 (pp. 62-67)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 2
Narrative Writing:
Organizers and Stages 1-8

Let’s Write Narratives!
At-A-Glance Narrative Organizers (K-6)

Stage: 1
Kinder-First Grades

Content: One Sentence
Story Opening

Stage: 2
Kinder-First Grades

Content: Sentences/Paragraph
Story Opening
Actions
Story Closing (Ending Reaction)

Stage: 3
First Grade

Content: Paragraph
Story Opening
(Secret Formula)
Actions w/Transitions
Story Closing
(Ending Reaction)

Stage: 4
First-Third Grades

Content: Paragraph
Story Opening
(Secret Formula)
Actions and Dialogue w/Transitions
Story Closing
(Secret Formula)
At-A-Glance Narrative Organizers (K-6)

Stage: 5
Second-Third Grades

Content: 1-3 Paragraphs
Beginning
Story Opening (Secret Formula)
Action (A happening to start story)
Reaction (Dialogue/Thoughts)
Middle
Actions and Reactions
End
Actions and Reactions
Story Closing: Reflection (Secret Formula)

Stage: 6
Third-Sixth Grades

Content: 1-3 Paragraphs
Beginning
Hook: Secret Formula/Dialogue/Thoughts
Come Alive Box
Problem
Middle
Actions and Reactions to Solve Problem
End
Solution: Actions and Reactions
Story Closing: Reflection (Secret Formula)

Stage: 7
Fourth-Sixth Grades

Content: 1-3 Paragraphs
Beginning
Hook
Come Alive Box
Problem
Middle
Actions, Dialogue, Thoughts, and Descriptions that lead to the solution.
End
Solution: Actions and Reactions
Story Closing: Reflection (Secret Formula)

Stage: 8
Fifth-Sixth Grades

Content: 5 or more Paragraphs
Introduction
Hook
Come Alive Box
Problem and Goal
Actions, Dialogue, Thoughts, and Descriptions that lead to the problem.
Plot
Actions: Obstacles, Crisis, Tragedies, Twists
Reactions: Dialogue, Thoughts, Descriptions
Climax: Most suspenseful event, last chance
Resolution
Solution: Actions, Dialogue, Thoughts, Descriptions
Theme
Theme: Reflection and Pledge

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Narrative: Stage One  
(Grades: K-1)

Content and Organization  
**Story Opening:** Character + Action  
Picture matches story sentence.

Sentences  
One complete sentence.  
Adjectives (optional)

Mechanics  
Capitals: Beginning of sentence and “I”.  
Uses end punctuation.  
Spaces between words.  
Letters printed correctly and snugged in words.

Kinder Organizer and Sample Writing

![Kinders draw pictures, form one-sentence stories, then write.]

First Grade Organizer and Sample Writing

![Students make their own organizers to plan their sentences, then write.]

A Note to Kindergarten Teachers: Developmentally, Kindergartners have great difficulty utilizing organizers to plan their own stories. Hence, the organizers are utilized ONLY for teacher modeling, interactive writing, or *Beginner-Level writing lessons. In these writing lessons, the teacher draws the organizers to plan stories. These organizer lessons expose students to the explicit steps to write narratives, with support from the teacher. They also expose students to the organizers, so they have the background and experience of using them when entering first grade.

During their own personal writing, most Kinders first plan their stories by drawing pictures on their writing papers, orally rehearse their sentences, then write.

*Beginner-Level Writers have the skills to write independently one or more sentences.*
Narrative: Stage Two  
(Grades: K-1)

Narratives: Sentences and Simple Paragraphs

**Content and Organization**

**Story Opening:** Character + Action

**Events:** Sequenced actions. Reactions optional (emotions and dialogue/thoughts without quotation marks)

**Story Closing:** The main character’s reaction after the experience. What did the character feel, think, or wish?

**Sentences**

- Different sentence beginnings.
- Adjectives
- Transitions (optional)

**Mechanics**

- Capitals: Beginning of a sentence and “I”
- End Punctuation
- Spaces between words.
- Letters snuggled in words.

---

**Kinder Organizer and Sample Writing**

Teacher draws organizer for modeling, interactive writing, or for Beginner-Level writing lessons.

A Beginner-Level student wrote the story, then drew a picture to match.

---

**First Grade Organizer and Sample Writing**

Students draw their own organizers to plan their stories, then write (sample below).

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Narrative: Stage Three
(Grade 1)

Organizer

Content and Organization

**Story Opening:** Secret Formula (Setting + Character + Action)
**Events:** Sequenced actions and reactions (dialogue/thoughts/emotions without quotation marks)
**Story Closing:** The main character’s reaction after the experience. What did the character feel, think, or wish?

Sentences

Different Sentence Beginnings.
Simple & Compound Sentences
Adjectives
Transitions (temporal words to signal event order)

Mechanics

Commas: After common transitions (when needed).

Sample Writing

**Lucky Squirrel**

On a worm nite near the moutuns a sleepy bird was snoring in his cosy nest. From out of nowhere, a hard egcorn hit him on the hed. Quickly, the bird flew to the seed to carry it back to his nest. When he flew by a squirrel, he aksidntly dropt the egcorn. Munch, the squirrel ran out and ate the nut. He that he was one lucky guy.
Narrative: Stage Four  
(Grades 1-3)

Content and Organization

Story Opening: Secret Formula (Setting + Character + Action)

Events: Sequenced actions and reactions (dialogue/thoughts/emotions with quotation marks); Transitions signal event order.

Story Closing: The main character’s reaction after the experience. What did the character feel, think, or wish?

Sentences

Expand Sentences.
Different Sentence Beginnings.
Adjectives
Transitions (temporal words to signal event order)

Mechanics

Capitals and Stops.
Commas: After common transitions, series, conjunctions, and dates.
Quotation Marks

Organizer

Sample Writing

The Scary Night

On a dark windy night, I was sleeping like a baby in my cozy bed. Suddenly, I woke up when I heard a loud banging on my window. I screamed at the top of my lungs, “Help!” Quickly, my parents race into my room to save me. They shouted, “What’s wrong?” I cried, “Someone is breaking in!” My brave dad raced to the window and opened the curtains only to find a branch! Looking back, I decided to only wear earplugs during stormy night weather.
Personal Narrative: Stage Five  
(Grades 2-3)

### Content and Organization

#### Beginning

Story Opening (Secret Formula: Setting + Character + Action)  
Actions and Reactions (dialogue/thoughts/feelings) related to the start of the story.

#### Middle

One well-elaborated event or short sequenced events using details to describe the Actions and Reactions (dialogue/thoughts/feelings).

#### End

Actions and Reactions  
Story Closing: Reflection (Transition + Character + Reflection)

### Sentences

Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words  
Expand Sentences  
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:  
- Nouns (precise, specific nouns)  
- Adjectives (modify important nouns)  
- Figurative Language (makes images pop)  
- Verbs (tell how action is performed)  
- Transitions (temporal words to signal order of events)

### Mechanics

Capital and Stops  
Commas in a Series, Conjunctions, and Dates  
Commas after Transitions (if needed)  
Quotation Marks

---

**My Kind Dad**

Last Saturday night, I grabbed my softest pillow and sleeping bag, then headed out the door to my friend's slumber party. When I left, I shouted, “I'm leaving! I hope I can stay up all night!” As fast as lightning, I raced to his house smiling and giggling. Knock, knock! There I was taping my foot, but no one asered. After awhile my friends mom opened the door and asked, “Why are you here?” Suddenly crocodile tears fell down my face because I came on the wrong night. Later that evening back at home, my amazing dad put up a tent so we could sleep in the backyard. Forever after I thought, “I'm lucky to have a great dad!”

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Imaginative Narrative: Stage Five
(Grades 2-3)

Stage 5
Imaginative Narrative

Content and Organization

Beginning
Story Opening (Secret Formula: Setting + Character + Action)
Actions and Reactions (dialogue/thoughts/feelings) related to the start of the story.

Middle
One well-elaborated event or short sequenced events using details to describe the Actions and Reactions (dialogue/thoughts/feelings).

End
Actions and Reactions
Story Closing: Reflection (Transition + Character + Reflection)

Sentences
Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
- Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
- Adjectives (modify important nouns)
- Figurative Language (makes images pop)
- Verbs (tell how action is performed)
- Transitions (temporal words to signal order of events)

Mechanics
Capitals and Stops
Commas in a Series, Conjunctions, and Dates
Commas after Transitions (if needed)
Quotation Marks

Sample Writing

```
It was the moment when dusk meets the arid desert as the famished snake prayed on a big, fat mouse. The terriefed rodent thought, "Oh no! I'm going to be snake dinner." Snake hissed, "Sss! I love mouse dinners!"
```

Quickly, because mouse always did things fast, he ran behind a gigantic boulder. Snap! Snake's tongue popped out of his mouth almost catching the helpless rodent. Mouse barely escape what was a sure death. Uset and livid, Snake raced to catch the mouse and thought, "I wonder where that varmint is going?"

As mouse approached a cactus, he stuck out his tongue at Snake. Angry, Snake chase Mouse in circles. Before he realize what happened, Snake was tangled around a prickly cactus. Pitter-patter, that trickery mouse fooled Snake. From that day on, Snake only ate day-old road kill.

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Personal Narrative: Stage Six
(Grades 3-6)

Stage 6
Personal Narrative
(real experiences)

Content and Organization

Beginning
Hook: Dialogue, Thoughts, or Secret
Formula (Setting + Character + Action).
Come Alive Box to establish the
situation, and introduce narrator
and/or characters.
Problem/Want/Need established if a
part of the story.

Middle
Sequenced Event with Descriptive
Actions and Reactions (dialogue/
thoughts/feelings) that develop the
experiences, events, and responses
of the characters to the situations.
Transitions include temporal words
or phrases

End
Actions and Reactions
Story Closing: Reflection
(Transition + Character + Reflection)

Sentences
Uses correct and varied sentence
structures
Different Sentence Beginnings and
Important Words
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise nouns)
Adjectives (modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (makes images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (cohesive and coherent phrases)

Mechanics
Demonstrates grade level appropriate
conventions; errors are minor and
do not obscure meaning.
Imaginative Narrative: Stage Six
(Grades 3-6)

Stage 6
Imaginative Narrative

Content and Organization
Beginning
Hook: Dialogue, Thoughts, or Secret Formula (Setting + Character + Action).
Come Alive Box to establish the situation, and introduce narrator and/or characters.
Problem/Want/Need established if a part of the story.

Middle
Sequenced Event with Descriptive Actions and Reactions (dialogue/thoughts/feelings) that develop the experiences, events, and responses of the characters to the situations.
Transitions include temporal words or phrases

End
Actions and Reactions
Story Closing: Reflection
(Transition + Character + Reflection)

Sentences
Uses correct and varied sentence structures
Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise nouns)
Adjectives (modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (makes images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (cohesive and coherent phrases)

Mechanics
Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning

Sample Writing

Brave Mrs. Puffin

It was a dark overcast day on a small isolated island when Mrs. Puffin landed and floated on the high rolling swells of the salty, chilly ocean. Off in the distance were crashing waves pounding on the rocky cliffs of the small piece of land. A blanket of white bubbles spread across the shore after each wave smashed on the small coastline. High above the shore were towering cliffs speckled with jagged rocks. Flapping her wings, Mrs. Puffin took off from the sea and soared to the open land in the center of the island covered with long, silky grass and rows of Stuart bushes.

When she landed, she hopped towards a long, dark burrow to check on her egg. Being in the narrow tunnel, lay her egg on a bed of grass. Suddenly, she started hopping around and flapping her wings shouting, “Where are you? Mr. Puffin?”

In the distance, she heard loud splashing then spotted a vicious shark trying to attack her husband. Terrified, she cried, “No! Leave him alone! You barbarian!”

The sky got then shot down towards the shark and bopped him on the head. That’s when her husband got away. Shark turned toward Mrs. Puffin, sneered, and showed her sharp teeth and yelling, “How dare you interrupt my meal?”

Mrs. Puffin shouted, “That meal is my husband!” Quickly, the happy bird couple flew back to their home, hoping their baby egg was still safe.

Immediately, when they landed they looked into the burrow but no egg was to be found. What happened? Out popped baby puffin! What a wonderful surprise! Mr. Puffin smiled and stated, “Welcome my baby bird! You are the son of a brave mother! From that day on, the Puffin family learned never to fly alone.”
Personal Narratives or Imaginative Narratives

Content and Organization

Beginning
Hook: Secret Formula/Dialogue/Thoughts
Come Alive Box to establish the situation, and introduce narrator and/or characters.
Introduce a Problem/Need/Want

Middle
Sequenced Events with Descriptive Actions and Reactions (dialogue/thoughts/feelings) that vividly convey the experiences, events, and responses of the characters.
Transitions include a variety of transitional words and phrases that smoothly sequence the events.

End
Solution: Actions, Reactions, and Descriptions
Story Closing/Conclusion: Character’s reflection after the experience (Transition +

Sentences
Uses correct and varied sentence structures
Different Sentence Beginnings
Different Important Words
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
- Nouns (precise nouns)
- Adjectives (sensory details that modify important nouns)
- Figurative Language (makes images pop)
- Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (cohesive and coherent phrases)

Mechanics
Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning

Organizer

Sylvia scolded her “Speak up! You’re running this scene, moment.”

1. Terrified, yet prepared, with a second’s thought
   - hair stood on end
   - eyes wide
   - mouth dropped
   - heart racing
   - breath short
   - body rigid
   - hands trembling

2. Leaping
   - feet treading
   - body flinging
   - mind racing
   - heart pounding
   - spirit soaring
   - body adrift

3. Cried
   - “Get off of me, you flying mouse!”
   - tears streaming
   - sobs shaking
   - voice trembling
   - spirit shattering
   - body trembling

4. Panicked and confused
   - “I need to calm down. I need to get my wits about me if I am going to live.”
   - mind chaotic
   - body shaking
   - spirit swirling
   - heart racing
   - breath short

5. Suddenly I stepped and thought
   - heart pounding
   - breath short
   - spirit soaring
   - body rigid
   - mind racing

6. Carefully
   - “I’m safe now.”
   - “I feel safe.”
   - “I can breathe.”
   - “I can think.”
   - “I can see.”

7. When startled
   - “I feel safe.”
   - “I can breathe.”
   - “I can think.”
   - “I can see.”
   - “I can feel.”

Before closing her eye, Sylvia thanked her lucky stars that she made it back by the skin of her teeth.
“Hush! You’re ruining this scenic moment! Sylvia blasted as she wagged her finger and snarled her upper lip at her squeaky shoes. Even though she was alone in the foothills of the majestic Sierra mountains, she spoke to objects without a second thought.

After her brief, one-sided argument she decided to turn her morning stroll into an adventure. Quickly, she turned down a narrow, dusty path smiling, humming, and gazing. Her pesty boots did not cooperate. They continued to moan and squeak at every step. Her cushy jacket and thick pants protected her from the thicket as she walked deeper into the woods. She marveled aloud, “The lush valleys and the crisp air make me feel alive! I feel like I am in heaven!”

Suddenly, from out of nowhere a little bunny dashed out from a low dense bush. Surprised and frightened, Sylvia bent over trying to catch her breath, and yowled, “My goodness, you silly little varmint! You scared the stuffing out of me!” After a few moments of terror, she pulled her wits together, took a deep breath, chuckled and thought, “It was only a bunny. Get a hold of yourself!”

She continued down the path, determined to enjoy the experience. Up ahead around the turn on the trail she spotted group of small trees shaking and stirring. Snap! Branches started breaking and leaves flew threw the air. Determined to quell her fear, she convinced herself it was another rabbit. Whoosh! Sharp, pointy claws flashed towards her face.

Terrified, yet prepared to save herself, she vaulted over a large rock, bolted through a stand of trees, then disappeared into a deep, dark cave. Splash! She wailed, “Oh no! Ewww! I’m wet and sticky!” Unknowingly, she landed in a pool of smelly mud situated in the middle of the cave. High above her, icy-cold droplets that felt like shards of glass landed on her face. After wiping her cheeks, dozens of bats darted past her, but one caught its wings in her hair as she cried, “Get off me you flying mouse!” Luckily the bat unfurled itself from her tangled locks.

Panicked and confused, she lurched, flailed, and darted all around. After colliding in the wall of the cave, she stopped and thought, “I need to calm down!”

Carefully, she felt her way to the opening of the cave and exited relieved, but unaware of the ferocious bear lurking nearby. When she spotted the beast, she reacted like a pro. Quickly, she grabbed a sweet apple and succulent meat from her backpack and threw it at the bear to devour.

Without a second’s thought she hightailed it back to her safe and calm campsite. Bounding into her tent she promised herself, “I will never hike alone again. What was I thinking?”

Zipping her tent door shut, she tucked her weary body into her warm sleeping bag, laid her head on her soft pillow, and sighed with relieve. Before she closed her eyes, Sylvia thanked her lucky stars that she made it back by the skin of her teeth.
Narrative: Stage Eight
(Grades 5-6)

Personal Narratives or Imaginative Narratives

Content and Organization

Introduction
Hook: Pulls reader into story.
Come Alive Box: Establishes the situation. Develops the mood, and introduces narrator and/or characters (APE = Appearance, Personality, & Emotions)

Problem and Goal
Conflict: Actions, Dialogue, and Thoughts that lead to the problem, need, or want.
Descriptions: Change Mood, Create Images

Plot
Events: Sequenced events (filled with actions, reactions, and descriptions) that lead to the resolution. Obstacles, Crisis, Twists, or Tragedies may also be included.
Pacing: A rhythm or beat created by interesting and convincing actions. The result creates a build-up, tension, and intrigue to the climax.
Reactions: Dialogue, Thoughts
Transitions include a variety of transitional words, phrases, or clauses that smoothly signal changes in time or place of the action or event.
Descriptions: Change Mood, Create Images

Climax: Most suspenseful event, last chance.
Resolution
Solution: Actions, Reactions, and Descriptions
Conclusion: Reflection and Pledge

Theme
Theme: A Reflection and Pledge reveals the message of the story.

Sentences
Different Sentence Beginnings
Different Important Words
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise nouns)
Adjectives (sensory details that modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (makes images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (cohesive and coherent phrases)

Mechanics
Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning

Organizer

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A Hero at Sea

It was a sunny afternoon out on the gentle rolling waves of the ocean, where an excited young girl and her father were gliding across the deep blue sea in their swift sailboat. Stretching from the crystal-blue sky were warm, shimmering rays of sunlight that seemed to reach down and hug the two maritime adventurers. Mary, standing proudly at the helm, gleefully asked her father, "Dad, do you think we can stay out longer?"

Zip-zip, whoosh! The father's outstretched arms pulled lines from the mast as he answered, "Of course, it's a beautiful day!" As Mary smiled from the good news, a gentle breeze tickled the sails and combed through her long brown hair.

After a bit, black ominous clouds filled the sky turning it from bright blue to dreary gray. Dad scratched his head and mumbled, "This doesn't make sense. The weather forecast was sunny and warm."

Then out of nowhere the main sail boom shook and shuddered as a gale of wind and crashing waves whacked the boat. Whoo, whoo went the wind. The screaming sound of the monstrous storm made the girl shudder with fear as she thought, "I'm scared and dad looks worried!"

Splash! Without warning, a claw-like wave reached at their deck flinging their bodies into the treacherous ocean. When they landed in the icy water, salty sprays of seawater whipped across their faces. Both grabbed, clutched, and seized floating objects to try and stay afloat. Teeth chattering, the girl looked around, and panicked as she wailed, "Dad! Where are you?"

Through the darkness her dad grabbed her frozen, frail body with his strong arms, and pushed her up onto a floating cooler. Staring his daughter straight in the eyes, he demanded, "Whatever you do, don't let go!"

Off in the distance a lighthouse stood on the edge of the land like a soldier shining its bright light in their direction. It scanned and roamed, but didn't stop.

Immediately, the dad ordered, "Kick hard! Just keep swimming to the lighthouse!" Huff-puff the current was too strong, keeping the two from moving.

"Oh no Dad," the girl cried, "What's going to happen? They can't see us and we can't move!" At that moment, the dad's eyes popped out of his head like two fists, then he lifted the lid on the cooler, pulled out a big metal spoon, and started beating on the floating cooler.

At once, they both gathered deep gulps of air in their lungs, then shrieked, "Help! Help!"

Within minutes their disaster ended. Through the thick fog, they heard a motor racing towards them, and saw a light peeking through the haze. A loud, yet comforting voice shouted, "I see you! You're safe!"

Although every inch of the girl's body felt like an ice cube, her heart was warm with love and gratitude. When the man pulled them into his boat, he joked, "I think that spoon saved your lives!"

On the shore crowds of people cheered and shouted with joy as the boat landed. "Yah, they're safe!"

After that treacherous day, the girl realized she looked death straight in the eyes and won. Never again would she take life for granted. Instead she decided she was going to make every day the most important day of her life. She would treat her life like she only had a day to live.
Chapter 3
Informative/Explanatory Writing:
Organizers and Stages 1-11

Let’s Write Information!
At-A-Glance Informative/Explanatory Organizers (K-6)

Stage: 1
Kinder-First Grades

Content: One Sentence
Big Idea

Stage: 2
Kinder-First Grades

Content: Sentences/Paragraph
Big Idea
Information (about big idea)

Stage: 3
First-Third Grades

Content: One Sentence
Topic Sentence
(Secret Formula)

Stage: 4
First-Third Grades

Content: Paragraph
Topic Sentence
(Secret Formula)
Details
(Information that tells about the Big Idea)
Conclusion
(Secret Formula)
At-A-Glance Informative/Explanatory Organizers (K-6)

**Stage: 5**
Second-Third Grades

### Categories Organizer

**Content: Content: Paragraph**
- Topic Sentence
  - (Secret Formula)
- Details
  - (Categorize the Information to tell about the Big Idea)
- Conclusion
  - (Secret Formula)

### Sequence Organizer

**Content: Paragraph**
- Topic Sentence
  - (Secret Formula)
- Details
  - (Sequence the Information to tell about the Big Idea)
- Conclusion
  - (Secret Formula)

**Stage: 6**
Second-Third Grades

### Description Organizer

- **is/are**

1. Draw a Picture.
2. Label the Nouns.
3. Add Adjectives

- **is/are**

**Content: Paragraph**
- Topic Sentence
  - (Definition of the Subject)
- Details
  - (Describe the Subject and Tell the Function of its Parts)
- Conclusion
  - (Repeat the Definition using Different Words)
At-A-Glance Informative/Explanatory Organizers (K-6)

Stage: 7
Third-Sixth Grades

Categories Organizer

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content: Paragraph

Hook
Topic Sentence
(Secret Formula)
Details
(Categorize the Information to tell about the Big Idea)
Conclusion
(Secret Formula)
Snappy Ending

Sequence Organizer

<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content: Paragraph

Hook
Topic Sentence
(Secret Formula)
Details
(Sequence the Information to tell about the Big Idea)
Conclusion
(Secret Formula)
Snappy Ending

Stage: 8
Third-Sixth Grades

Description Organizer

_________ is/are ___________.

_________ is/are ___________.

Content: Paragraph

Hook
Topic Sentence
(Definition of the Subject)
Details
(Describe the Subject and Tell the Function of its Parts)
Conclusion
(Repeat the Definition using Different Words)
Snappy Ending
Stage: 9
Fourth-Sixth Grades

Content: One Sentence
Thesis Sentence
(Secret Formula)

Stage: 10
Fourth-Sixth Grades

Content: 5-Paragraph Essay
Introduction
Hook
Thesis Statement

Body
Main Idea Paragraphs
(If needed, begin with a descriptive paragraph, then choose to categorize or sequence the main idea paragraphs to tell about the thesis statement.)

Conclusion
Repeat Thesis Statement
(Use different words)
Snappy Ending

Stage: 11
Fourth-Sixth Grades

Cause & Effect Organizer
Hook: Big Idea
Before
Describe or Explain
What was Before the Change:

What Caused Change?
List Issues or Events:
1. ______________
2. ______________
3. ______________
4. ______________

After
Describe the Change:

Explain the Effects:

Conclusion: Snappy Ending:

Compare or Contrast Organizer
Hook: Big Idea

Attribute
A: ______________
A: ______________
A: ______________

Compare

Effects
E: ______________
E: ______________
E: ______________

Conclusion: Snappy Ending

Content: Answering Document-Based Questions: 1-Paragraph or 5-Paragraph Essay
Introduction: Hook, Topic Sentence or Thesis Statement

Body: Details or Main Idea Paragraphs. Choose Organizer.

Conclusion: Repeat Topic Sentence or Thesis Statement, and a Snappy Ending
Informative/Explanatory: Stage One
(Grades: K-1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content and Organization</th>
<th>Big Idea Sentence</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Information Sentence:</strong> Form sentence by naming the Subject and Big Idea.</td>
<td>One complete sentence. Adjectives (optional)</td>
<td>Capitals: Beginning of sentence and “I”. Uses end punctuation. Spaces between words. Letters printed correctly and snuggled in words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subject:</strong> Who/What is the information about?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Big Idea:</strong> What information did you learn about the (subject)?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Picture matches information sentence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kinder Organizer and Sample Writing

Kinders draw a picture, forms a sentence, then writes.

First Grade Organizer and Sample Writing

Students make their own organizers to plan their sentences, then write.

A Note to Kindergarten Teachers: Developmentally, Kindergartners have great difficulty utilizing organizers to plan their own text. Hence, the organizers are utilized ONLY for teacher modeling, interactive writing, or *Beginner-Level writing lessons. In these writing lessons, the teacher draws the organizers to plan information. These organizer lessons expose students to the explicit steps to write informative/explanatory text, with support from the teacher. They also expose students to the organizers, so they have the background and experience of using them when entering first grade.

During their own personal writing, most Kinders first plan their information by drawing pictures on their writing papers, orally rehearsing their sentences, then writing.

*Beginner-Level Writers have the skills to write independently one or more sentences.
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Two  
(Grades: K-1)

### Big Idea Sentence and Details

**Content and Organization**
- **Topic Sentence:** State the Big Idea about the Information. Tell the Subject + Big Idea.
- **Details:** The information sentences that tell about the Big Idea. These detail sentences are organized in a sequence or categories.

**Sentences**
- Different sentence beginnings.
- Adjectives
- Transitions (optional)

**Mechanics**
- Capitals: Beginning of a sentence and “I”
- End Punctuation
- Spaces between words.
- Letters snuggled in words.

---

#### Kinder Organizer and Sample Writing

Teacher draws organizer for modeling, interactive writing, or for Beginner-Level writing lessons.

![Kinder Organizer Example](image)

A Beginner-Level student wrote the information, then drew a picture to match.

---

#### First Grade Organizer and Sample Writing

Students draw their own organizers to plan their stories, then write (sample below).

![First Grade Organizer Example](image)

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# Informative/Explanatory: Stage Three
(Grades 1-3)

## Content and Organization

**Topic Sentence**
- **Topic Sentence**: Secret Formula (Setting + Subject + Big Idea)
- Setting = Time and Place
- Subject = Who/What is the information about?
- Big Idea = What about the (subject)? What information is the paragraph telling about the (subject)?

## Sentences

- Different Sentence Beginnings
- Simple & Compound Sentences
- Adjectives
- Transitions (Temporal words to signal order of events, Category words to signal different details)

## Mechanics

- Commas: After common transitions (when needed).

---

### Organizer

```
During stormy weather in the tall mountains, sediment flows, slides, and moves down the hills causing landslides to change.
```

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Informative/Explanatory: Stage Four  
(Grades 1-3)

**Content and Organization**

- **Topic Sentence**: Big Idea of Information: Setting + Subject + Big Idea
- **Details**: Information is about the big idea, and organized in a sequence or categories.
- **Expand Details**: Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about details.
- **Conclusion**: Repeat the Topic Sentence (Subject + Big Idea) using different words. (Setting usually omitted.)

**Sentences**

- **Expand Sentences**.
- **Different Sentence Beginnings**.
- **Adjectives**
- **Transitions** (Temporal words to signal order of events, Category words to signal different details.)

**Mechanics**

- **Capitals and Stops**.
- **Commas**: After common transitions, series, conjunctions, and dates.
- **Quotation Marks**

---

**Organizer**

- Coastal Erosion
- All year long on the coastline, erosion changes the landforms. Day after day, violent waves crash against the land. The turbulent surf devours hillsides like a shovel scooping up dirt. Whoosh, sizzle! The baking sun and strong winds break away sediment of rocks, pebbles, and plants. Finally, large chunks of land weaken and crack, then fall into the sea. Erosion transforms the ocean lands.

---

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**Content and Organization**

**Topic Sentence:** Tells the big idea of the information. Use the Secret Formula: Setting + Subject + Big Idea.

**Body:** Information or the details about the big idea (topic sentence). Identify the text structure for the details (categories or sequence). Draw the organizer and label details.

**Details:** Decide what information needs to be written about each detail. Types of information about details:
1. Define It
2. Describe It
3. Tell About It
4. Back It Up (examples)

**Expand Details:** Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about each detail sentence.

**Conclusion:** Repeat the Topic Sentence (Subject + Big Idea) using different words. (Setting usually omitted.)

---

**Sentences**

Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words

Expand Sentences

Effective and Accurate Word Choices:

- **Nouns** (precise, specific nouns)
- **Adjectives** (modify important nouns)
- **Figurative Language** (images pop)
- **Verbs** (tell how action is performed)
- **Transitions** (Temporal words to signal order of events, Category words to signal different details)

**Linking Words** Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

**Mechanics**

Capitals and Stops

Commas: In a Series, Conjunctions, and Dates

Commas after Transitions (if needed)

Quotation Marks

---

**Organizer**

---

**Sample Writing**

---

**Please Note:** Write paragraphs to stand on their own, or write paragraphs with headings and graphics to make books about the topic.
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Six  
(Grades 2-3)

Description Paragraphs: Topic Sentence, Details, and Conclusion

**Content and Organization**

- **Topic Sentence:** Tells a definition of the subject. Use the Secret Formula: 
  
  Subject = Define It.

- **Body:** Draw a picture of the subject, label the important parts, describe each part, then tell the function of the parts.

- **Functions:** Types of information about each part of the subject:
  1. How the part works
  2. What the part does
  3. Why the part is important

- **Expand Details:** Add more information to sentences.

- **Conclusion:** Repeat the Topic Sentence (Subject = Define It) using different words.

**Sentences**

- Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words

- **Expand Sentences**

- **Effective and Accurate Word Choices:**
  - **Nouns** (precise, specific nouns)
  - **Adjectives** (modify important nouns)
  - **Figurative Language** (images pop)
  - **Verbs** (tell how action is performed)
  - **Transitions** (Temporal words to signal order of events; Category words to signal different details.)
  - **Linking Words** Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

**Mechanics**

- **Capitals and Stops**

- **Commas:** In a Series, Conjunctions, and Dates

- **Commas after Transitions** (if needed)

- **Quotation Marks**

Please Note: Write paragraphs to stand on their own, or write paragraphs with headings to make books about the topic.
Content and Organization

Hook: Grabs the reader’s attention.

Topic Sentence: Tells the big idea of the information. Use the Secret Formula: Setting + Subject + Big Idea.

Body: Information or the details about the big idea (topic sentence). Identify the text structure for the details (categories or sequence). Draw the organizer and label details.

Details: Decide what information needs to be written about each detail. Types of information about details:
1. Define It (Definitions)
2. Describe It (Concrete and Vivid)
3. Tell About It (e.g. Facts, Explanations)
4. Back It Up (e.g. Examples, Quotes)

Expand Details: Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about each detail sentence.

Conclusion: Repeat the Topic Sentence (Subject + Big Idea) using different words. (Setting usually omitted.)

Snappy Ending: Interesting Ending.

Sample Writing

- **Dolphin Dinner**
  - Splash: What makes a lot of noise when eating? The answer is dolphins. Everyday in the coastal regions these crafty creatures have a clever way to kill their prey. When dolphins spot schools of fish, they slap them with their tail flukes so the fish soar in the air. Once they land, they become dazed and paralyzed. Now that the fish can’t move, the dolphin easily herds them together into a floating meal. Finally, this playful sea animal is all business. It scoops up the fish with evenly spaced teeth. These amazing mammals love to play, but are serious hunters when hungry.

Please Note: Write paragraphs to stand on their own, or write paragraphs with headings and graphics to make books about the topic.
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Eight  
(Grades 3-6)

Description Paragraphs: Hook, Topic Sentence, Details, and Conclusion, Snappy Ending

**Content and Organization**

**Hook:** Grabs the reader’s attention.

**Topic Sentence:** Tells a definition of the Subject. Use the Secret Formula: 
Subject = Define It.

**Body:** Draw a picture of the subject, label the important parts, describe each part, then tell the function of the parts.

**Functions:** Types of information about each part of the subject:
1. How the part works
2. What the part does
3. Why the part is important

**Expand Details:** Add more information to sentences.

**Conclusion:** Repeat the Topic Sentence (Subject = Define It) using different words.

**Snappy Ending:** Interesting Ending.

**Sentences**

Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)

**Expand Sentences**

Effective and Accurate Word Choices:

- **Nouns** (precise, specific nouns)
- **Adjectives** (modify important nouns)
- **Figurative Language** (images pop)
- **Verbs** (tell how action is performed)
- **Transitions** (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)

**Linking Words:** Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

**Mechanics**

Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.

---

**Organizer**

**The Statue of Liberty**

Imagine a piece of art welcoming people into a country. For over one hundred twenty years in New York Harbor, the Statue of Liberty is a national treasure that always greets visitors with an uplifted arm while standing on a pedestal made of concrete and granite. Under Lady Liberty’s feet is a chain symbolizing freedom. Clutched in her left hand is a tablet with July 4, 1776 written on it for the Signing of the Constitution.

ON IT FOR THE SIGNING OF THE CONSTITUTION:

- She wears a flowing robe around her figure and a seven-spiked crown for the seven seas and continents in the world. Raised in her right hand is a torch coated in gold leaf. From the bottom to the top, this national monument is glorious. Wave hello! She will wave back!
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Nine
(Grades 4-6)

Thesis Statement

**Content and Organization**

**Thesis Statement:** Secret Formula (Setting + Subject + Big Idea)

**Setting = Time and Place**
**Subject = Who/What is the information about?**
**Big Idea = What about the (subject)? What information is the paragraph telling about the (subject)?**

**Mechanics**

Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.

**Sentences**

**Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)**
**Expand Sentences**
**Effective and Accurate Word Choices:**
- **Nouns** (precise, specific nouns)
- **Adjectives** (modify important nouns)
- **Figurative Language** (images pop)
- **Verbs** (tell how action is performed)
- **Transitions** (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)
**Linking Words:** Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

Organizer: Formal Thesis Statement

In the year 1848 along the South Fork of the American River, John Marshall (a foreman) discovered gold that caused a population explosion, forever changing the state of California.
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Nine
(Grades 4-6)

Thesis Using Inquiry Questions

**Content and Organization**
Thesis: Three questions formed from the inquiry question starters. The description question is always first (if needed).

**Sentences**
Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
- Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
- Adjectives (modify important nouns)
- Figurative Language (images pop)
- Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)
Linking Words: Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

**Mechanics**
Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.

Organizer: Inquiry Questions for Thesis

Choose three inquiry questions about the Subject or Topic:

**DESCRIBE IT:** What does (subject) look like? or What is/are (subject)?

**TELL WHERE:** Where do/does...?

**TELL WHEN:** When do/does...?

**TELL WHAT:** What if...?

**EXPLAIN WHY:** Why do/does (subject)....?

**EXPLAIN HOW:** How can or do/does...?

Inquiry Questions formed about comets:

1. What is a comet made of?
2. Where do they come from?
3. What if Earth collided with a comet?
**Informative/Explanatory: Stage Ten**  
(Grades 4-6)

**Essay: Introduction, Body (Categorize or Sequence) Paragraphs, Conclusion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Content and Organization</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hook:</strong> Grabs the reader’s attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis Statement:</strong> Tells the big idea of the information. Use the Secret Formula: Setting + Subject + Big Idea.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Body</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization:</strong> Paragraphs organized by Description, Categories, Sequence, Cause and Effect, Compare/Contrast. Draw the organizer and main ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Details:</strong> Decide what information needs to be written about each detail. Types of information about details:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Define It (Definitions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Describe It (Concrete and Vivid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tell About It (e.g. Facts, Explanations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Back It Up (e.g. Examples, Quotes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expand Details:</strong> Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about each detail sentence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Conclusion</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repeat the Thesis Statement:</strong> (Subject + Big Idea) using different words. (Setting usually omitted.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snappy Ending:</strong> Interesting Ending.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Sentences</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effective and Accurate Word Choices:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nouns</strong> (precise, specific nouns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adjectives</strong> (modify important nouns)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Figurative Language</strong> (images pop)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Verbs</strong> (tell how action is performed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transitions</strong> (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Linking Words:</strong> Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mechanics</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Organizer**

Please Note: Write essays to stand on their own, or write essays with headings and graphics to make books about the topic.
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Ten
(Grades 4-6)
Essay: Writing Sample

Comets

I see comets! They’re everywhere! Many comets can be seen with the naked eye. Although they often appear very faint, they can look like a small fuzzy object in the sky. However, someone might ask, “What is a comet made of? Where do they come from? What would happen if the Earth went through the trace of a comet?” Comets are made of many things, and they come from two main places in space. Also, scientists do not know what will happen if the Earth goes through a tail of dust left by a comet.

Some people think that comets are made of a few simple ingredients. These are frozen gases, dust, and rock particles. Although, when comets get too close to the Sun, they can develop tails. The tails are made of gas and dust. A comet’s tail looks white or yellow. It is made of tiny particles that are about the size of the particles in smoke. Plasma tails often look blue because they contain carbon monoxide ions. Solar ultraviolet light breaks down the gas molecules making the tails glow. No matter what direction the comet is moving, the tail always points away from the Sun. The interesting tails can show us the way the comet is moving which might tell us where it came from.

Comets are observed to come to the Solar System from all directions. One main place is the Oort Cloud and the Kuiper Belt. The Oort Cloud was named after Jan Oort who suggested its existence in 1950. This cloud is placed on the outskirts of the Solar System. Although, some comets come to the Solar System from closer in, this place is called the Kuiper Belt, which is located past the orbit of Pluto. Long period comets (which take more than 200 years to completely orbit the Sun) come from the Oort Cloud. The Oort Cloud may hold as many as a trillion comets! Short period comets take less than 200 years to orbit the Sun, and they come from the Kuiper Belt. No matter where comets come from or how long they take to orbit the Sun, they leave comets leaving trails of dust.

What will happen when Earth gets caught colliding with the trace of a comet’s shooting stars? Also, known as a meteor shower! The particles from the dust and gas enter the Earth’s atmosphere and most burn in a bright, lovely light show. However, some meteors shower happen annually. This happens when the orbit of Earth takes it through the path of debris left by the “space snowball.” In the end, the show performed by meteors is very beautiful and often applauded by people of all ages.

Comets are shocking in so many ways—they are made of many things, including dust, gases, rock particles, and “tails”! They come from all directions from the Oort Cloud or the Kuiper Belt, and the particles in the trails become “shooting stars” when hit by the Earth. It’s so amazing how comets go through so many things in their short lives. However, what do you think would happen if a comet itself hit Earth?
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Eleven (Grades 4-6)

**Compare/Contrast Paragraphs: Hook, Topic Sentence, Details, and Conclusion, Snappy Ending**

---

**Content and Organization**

**Hook:** (Optional) Gets reader’s attention.

**Topic Sentence:** Tell the big idea of the information (to determine which is best or to explain similar or different outcomes.). Use the Secret Formula: Setting + Subject + Big Idea.

**Body:** Information or the details that tell about the change or why the event occurred.

**Details:** Each Box Includes:

- **Attributes:** List characteristics to compare/contrast about the big idea.
- **Compare/Contrast:** Use a T-Graph to list differences for each attribute.
- **Effects:** Explain which is better, and why. or Explain outcomes for each attribute.

**Expand Details:** Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about each detail sentence.

**Conclusion:** Repeat the Topic Sentence (Subject + Big Idea) using different words, then state the results of the similarities or differences.

**Snappy Ending:** Interesting Ending.

---

**Sample Writing**

**Young Sitting Bull was a Leader**

Young Sitting Bull was very different from the boys in his tribe because he was a born leader. Everything he did was “careful and deliberate.” Leaders always do their best and try to do things correctly. They are also brave. Like when he killed a buffalo at 10 years old. No other brave had done this. Again, he stood out. Sitting Bull’s father was the chief. Most sons follow in the father’s footsteps because their fathers show them how to lead. The other brave sons were followers, so there were no expectations to lead. In the story Sitting Bull’s actions were very different from the other tribal members. Sitting Bull announced he would join the elders on a raid. He stood up to the grown men, and they respected him like a leader. Other boys his age stayed home. They didn’t dare go out to fight. The final act showed his leadership and how his different from the rest was when he hit the Crow warrior with a coup stick. After that, he always stood out as a special brave warrior, a leader.

Please Note: Write paragraphs to stand on their own, or write paragraphs with headings and graphics to make books about the topic.
Informative/Explanatory: Stage Eleven
(Grades 4-6)

Content and Organization

Hook: (Optional) Gets reader’s attention.

Topic Sentence: Tells the big idea of the information (to explain a change, or why an event happened). Use the Secret Formula:
Setting + Subject + Big Idea.

Body: Information or the details that tell about the change or why the event occurred. Draw the Cause & Effect organizer and label “Before”, “What caused the change?”, and “After”.

Details:
“Before” Box: Describe conditions before the change; or Tell what was happening before the event.
“What caused the change?” Box: List the issues or sequence the events that led to the change or the event.
“After” Box: What are the consequences or the effects of the change or the event?

Expand Details: Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about each detail sentence.

Conclusion: Repeat the Topic Sentence (Subject + Big Idea) using different words. (Setting usually omitted.)

Snappy Ending: Interesting Ending.

Sentences

Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)

Expand Sentences

Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
Adjectives (modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)
Linking Words: Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

Mechanics

Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.

Organizer

Hooks and Snappy Endings are planned separately.

Sample Writing

Bacon’s Rebellion

Back in 1675 in the Virginia settlement of Jamestown, frontier settlers were willing to fight for freedom and less government control due to the rebellion led by Nathaniel Bacon, a wealthy plantation owner. Before the rebellion, an increasing number of commoners were experiencing a phenomenon in the colonies. Free men had many privileges not available to them in Britain: They voted, owned land, freely worshiped, and increased their wealth. Over a sixteen year period, Governor Berkeley, elected by the King, greatly decreased or stopped these freedoms. He raised taxes, ended voting, limited land ownership, and refused protection in the frontier. This drastic change caused the colonists to risk their lives to keep their freedoms, instead of being controlled by the government. Nathaniel Bacon led the frontiersmen in the rebellion. Although the men were unsuccessful in the end, this event was one of the first of many times colonists would risk their lives for freedom.

Please Note: Write paragraphs to stand on their own, or write paragraphs with headings and graphics to make books about the topic.
Chapter 4
Opinion Writing:
Organizers and Stages 1-7

Let’s Write Opinions!
At-A-Glance Opinion Organizers (K-5)

Stage: 1
Kinder-First Grades

What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!
Draw a picture about your favorite part of the book.

Title:______________________

Content
Picture: Opinion and Proof
Writing: Title

Stage: 2
Kinder-First Grades

What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!
Draw a picture and write about your favorite part of the book.

My favorite book was_________.

One of the______ parts was when

Content: 2-3 Sentences
Picture: Opinion
Writing: Title, Opinion, Proof

Stage: 3
First-Second Grades

What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!
After reading your book, fill in the boxes below.

Write the Author's Name.

Write the Title of the Book.

Author's First Name:_____________

Title:_____________________

Opinion:
Circle what you felt about the book: interesting, funny, exciting, sad, scary, etc.

Back It Up!
Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Make a Connection!
Draw a picture of your connection.

Content
Picture: Opinion, Proof, Connection
Writing: Author, Title

Stage: 4
First-Second Grades

What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!
Write a paragraph about your favorite part of the book.

This book was so______ that I______

Describe what happened in your paragraph. Include verbs such as: "chose," "wanted," "liked.

Opinion: interesting, funny, exciting, etc.

One of the______ parts was when

This reminded me of

Make a connection to yourself, another book, or the world.

because

Tell about your connection and why it is similar to the book.

This book is

Content: 1-Paragraph
Author and Title
Opinion, Reaction, and Proof
Connection and Recommendation
At-A-Glance Opinion Organizers (K-5)

### Stage: 5
**Second-Third Grade**

**Content: 1-3 Paragraphs**

**Introduction:**
- Quick Summary or Topic Background
- Opinion

**Body:**
- Reasons that Support Opinion

**Conclusion:**
- Repeat Opinion
  - Connection, Reflection, or Recommendation

### Stage: 6
**Fourth-Fifth Grades**

**Content: 1-2 Paragraphs**

**QS = Quick Summary of the Book or Topic**

**O = Opinion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QS: Quick Summary</th>
<th>O: Opinion</th>
<th>T: Transition</th>
<th>E: Evidence</th>
<th>A: Analysis</th>
<th>M: Make a Connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Stage: 7
**Fourth-Fifth Grades**

**Content: 5-Paragraph Essay**

**Introduction**
- Quick Summary
- Opinion

**Body**
- Transition
- Evidence
- Analysis
- Make a Connection

**Conclusion**
- Conclusion
- Reflection
Opinion: Stage One
(Grades: K-1)
Opinion Picture about a Topic or Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content and Organization</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Picture: Opinion and Proof</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>Capitals: Title of a Story/Text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing: Title</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Organizer and Sample Writing

What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!
Draw a picture about your favorite part of the book.

Title: ______________________

What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!
Draw a picture about your favorite part of the book.

Title: ______________________
Penguins!
Opinion: Stage Two  
(Grades: K-1)

Opinion and Proof about a Topic or Text

**Content and Organization**

- Picture: Opinion
- Writing: Title, Opinion, Proof

Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.

**Sentences**

- Different sentence beginnings.
- Adjectives
- Transitions (optional)

**Mechanics**

- Capitals: Title of a Story/Text.
- Beginning of a sentence and “I”
- End Punctuation
- Spaces between words.
- Letters snuggled in words.

---

**Organizer and Sample Writing**

**What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!**

Draw a picture and write about your favorite part of the book.

My favorite book was **Title! Underline it!**

One of the (best, funniest, most interesting, saddest, etc.) parts was when

---

My favorite book was *The Little Red Hen.* One of the saddest parts was when the animals took a nap and the hen did all the work.
Opinion: Stage Three
(Grades 1)

Content and Organization
Picture: Opinion, Proof, Connection
Writing: Author, Title

Sentences
n/a

Mechanics
Capitals: Beginning of, sentences, proper nouns, "I", dates, titles.
Commas: After common transitions (when needed).

Opinion, Proof, and Connections Pictures

Organizer and Sample Writing

What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!
After reading your book, fill-in the boxes below.

Write the Author’s Name.

Write the Title of the Book.
Capitalize the first word and all the important words in the title. Don’t forget to Underline it!

Opinion!
Circle how you felt or what you thought about the book: interesting, funny, exciting, sad, scary, etc.

Back It Up!
Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Make a Connection!
Draw a picture of your connection.

What's Your Opinion and Back It Up!
After reading your book, fill-in the boxes below.

Write the Author’s Name.

Write the Title of the Book.
Capitalize the first word and all the important words in the title. Don’t forget to Underline it!

Opinion!
Circle how you felt or what you thought about the book: interesting, funny, exciting, sad, scary, etc.

Back It Up!
Draw a picture of your favorite part.

Make a Connection!
Draw a picture of your connection.

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Opinion: Stage Four
(Grades 1)

Opinion Paragraph about a Topic or Text

**Content and Organization**
- Introduce Topic/Book: Author and Title
- State Opinion, Reaction, and Proof
- Connection and Recommendation
- Concluding Statement

**Sentences**
- Expand Sentences.
- Different Sentence Beginnings.
- Adjectives
- Transitions: Temporal words to signal order of events, Category words to signal different details. Linking words to connect opinion, reasons, and conclusion.

**Mechanics**
- Capitals and Stops.
- Commas: After common transitions, series, conjunctions, and dates.
- Quotation Marks

---

**Organizer and Sample Writing**

What’s Your Opinion and Back It Up!

Write a paragraph about your favorite part of the book.

Author’s Full Name: [ ]

Title! Underline it!

wrote [ ]

This book was so [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] that I [ ]

Opinion: interesting, funny, exciting, etc.

Describe what happened to you when you read: “laugh so hard my sides hurt.” “couldn’t put it down.”

One of the [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] parts was when [ ]

(back it up! Tell about your favorite part of the book.)

This reminded me of [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

Make a connection to yourself, another book, or the world.

because [ ] [ ] [ ]

Tell about your connection and why it is similar to the book.

This book is [ ] [ ] [ ]

(fabulous, a must read, the best, marvelous, superb, etc.)

---

Bobbie Kalman wrote What is a Bat?

This book was so interesting that I felt like a scientist when I asked my teacher to read it. One of the interesting parts was the bats drinking nectar with long long tongues while flying above the flower. This reminded me of a book about honeybees, the bees fly around flowers just like the bats.

I wonder if they ever bump into each other. This book is superb and a must read!
Opinion: Stage Five  
(Grade 2-3)
Opinion 1 or 3 Paragraphs about a Text

Content and Organization
Introduction
Quick Summary of the Text:
Narrative: Title, author, main character and the problem or main event of story.
Information: Title, author, subject and big idea of the information.
Topic Sentence: Tells the big idea of the information. Use the Secret Formula: Subject + Big Idea.

Body
Details: List Reasons that Support Opinion
Expand Details: Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about each detail sentence.

Conclusion
Repeat the Thesis Statement: (Subject + Big Idea) using different words.
Snappy Ending: End with a connection, reflection, or recommendation.

Sentences
Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
Adjectives (modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)
Linking Words: Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

Mechanics
Capitals and Stops
Capitalize Titles of Text
Commas: In a Series, Conjunctions, and Dates
Commas after Transitions (if needed)
Quotation Marks

Organizer and Sample Writing

| Title: Angela Johnson wrote "Julius!"  
| Opinion: In the story, Julius is a funny pig.  
| Transition: Often,  
| Reason:  
| Expand: then chases  
| Conclusion: That pig is hilarious!  

| Title: Angela Johnson wrote "Julius!"  
| Opinion: In the story, Julius is a funny pig.  
| Transition: At the store,  
| Reason:  
| Expand: because he is so fat  
| Conclusion: If you want to tickle your funny bone, then read this story!  

| Title: Angela Johnson wrote "Julius!"  
| Opinion: In the story, Julius is a funny pig.  
| Transition: Also,  
| Reason:  
| Expand: dances  
| Conclusion: If you want to tickle your funny bone, then read this story!  

| Title: Angela Johnson wrote "Julius!"  
| Opinion: In the story, Julius is a funny pig.  
| Transition:  
| Reason:  
| Expand: by  
| Conclusion: If you want to tickle your funny bone, then read this story!  

My Opinion:  
Angela Johnson wrote "Julius!"  
This book is about a girl named Maya who got a pig. In the story, Julius is a funny pig.

Often, he acts like a dog, then chases cats. At the store, Julius dresses in a big, silly dress because he is so fat.
Also, he dances with Maya by swinging her around like a tornado. That pig is hilarious.
If you want to tickle your funny bone, then read this story!
Opinion: Stage Five  
(Grade 2-3)  
Opinion 1 or 3 Paragraphs about a Topic

Content and Organization

Introduction

Hook + Background: Grabs the reader’s attention, then tells about the event, problem, issue, trend, idea, rule, claim, or value that led to the opinion.

Topic Sentence: Tells the big idea of the information. Use the Secret Formula: Subject + Big Idea.

Body

Details: List Reasons that Support Opinion

Expand Details: Add more information to sentences by telling more, why or how about each detail sentence.

Conclusion

Repeat the Thesis Statement: (Subject + Big Idea) using different words.

Snappy Ending: End with a connection, reflection, or recommendation.

Sentences

Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)

Expand Sentences

Effective and Accurate Word Choices:

Nouns (precise, specific nouns)

Adjectives (modify important nouns)

Figurative Language (images pop)

Verbs (tell how action is performed)

Transitions (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)

Linking Words: Words or phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

Mechanics

Capitals and Stops

Commas: In a Series, Conjunctions, and Dates

Commas after Transitions (if needed)

Quotation Marks
**Opinion: Stage Six**  
(Grades 4-5)

<table>
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**Opinion Paragraph about a Text**

**What is Your Opinion?**

**QS:** Joseph Bruchac wrote "A Boy Called Slow".

**O:** This book was mostly about how Sitting Bull earned his name.

**T:** Fairness was a major theme in the story.

**E:** In the beginning of the narrative, the author cleverly used dialogue and actions of many characters to reveal fairness.

**E:** The tribe and family spent months observing the young children's behaviors before deciding on their names.

**A:** Most families/pairs gave their children their names at birth. Yet, Slow's tribe believed a name describes the person therefore, Slow's tribe named its babies fairly, described Slow and behaviors.

**M:** This tradition is like a team giving each player a nickname.
### Content and Organization

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### Opinion: Stage Six (Grades 4-5)

#### Opinion Paragraph about a Topic

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#### Organizer and Sample Writing

**QS = Quick Summary: Be Polite!**

**Author’s Full Name** wrote _______ to (tell, explain, describe, persuade) the reader _______. What was the Author’s purpose for writing this information?

**Opinion: What do you think of the...**

**Author’s Tone**

**Topic, Ideas**

**Point of View**

**Information**

**T = Transition**

**E = Evidence**

✓ “Direct Quote” or ✓ Paraphrase

**A = Analyze**

EXPLAIN How does evidence support the opinion?

**M = Make a Connection**

What is Your Opinion?

**QS:** The research article “Tropical Plants Zone” explains how plants provide a healthy work environment in office buildings.

**O:** Plants need to be a part of the work place.

**T:** The research from NASA reported many findings about plants benefit the quality of air.

**E:** This study showed how plants absorb harmful gases, then clean air remains, so people avoid sickness. Also offices without plants had a higher number of illnesses.

**A:** If plants remove contaminants from the air inside offices, then business would benefit filling their rooms with plants. The office would look beautiful and be filled with healthy productive employees.

**M:** This reminds me of dental floss. So many people could floss to avoid cavities, just like so many businesses could use plants to avoid illnesses.
Opinion Essay about a Topic or Text

**Content and Organization**

**Introduction**
QS: Quick Summary  
O: Opinion

**Body**
T: Transition  
E: Evidence  
A: Analysis  
M: Make a Connection

**Conclusion**
C: Conclusion  
R: Reflection

**Sentences**

- Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)
- Expand Sentences
- Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
  - Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
  - Adjectives (modify important nouns)
  - Figurative Language (images pop)
  - Verbs (tell how action is performed)
  - Transitions (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)
- Linking Words: Words or phrases (e.g., consequently, specifically) to expand sentences or add new sentences to details.

**Mechanics**

Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.

---

**Organizer**

**QS** = Scott O’Dell wrote the historical fiction novel *Island of the Blue Dolphins* based on a true story about a young Indian girl named Karana. The story takes place during the early 1800’s on an island off the coast of southern California. In the story, the main character Karana tells about eighteen years of hardships and struggles she faced surviving alone on the island.

**O** = This book is packed with many themes, but courage is a constant message throughout the story.

**T:** Karana was staring death in the eyes. She needed to decide between survival or the role of a woman in her tribe.

**E:** She pondered, “I thought about these things for two days and on the third night when the wild dogs returned to the rock, I made up my mind that no matter what befell me I would make the weapons.”

**A:** More often than not, a kid wouldn’t think of breaking a cultural rule in fear of the consequences, but Karana realized her life was on the line. That’s when she decided to face this fear in order to survive.

**M:** I connected to this part of the story because it reminded me of the time my mom risked her life trying to save our dog from drowning in the river. Karana could have died in the ocean, but she cared more about her brother, than her own life. I wonder why some people risk their lives, while others turn away?

**C:** This convincing evidence proves the character was a courageous, fearless young woman.

**R:** This book may deeply affect readers, most especially young girls, to believe in themselves and face their fears no matter the odds or hardships.

---

©2011 Nancy Fetzer
Scott O’Dell wrote the historical fiction novel *Island of the Blue Dolphins* based on a true story about a young Indian girl named Karana. The story takes place during the early 1800’s on an island off the coast of southern California. In the story, the main character Karana tells about eighteen years of hardships and struggles she faced surviving alone on the island. In the beginning of the novel, the author wrote suspenseful actions that revealed courage.

Karana was staring death in the eyes. She needed to decide between survival or the role of a woman in her tribe. She pondered, “I thought about these things for two days and on the third night when the wild dogs returned to the rock, I made up my mind that no matter what befell me I would make the weapons.” More often than not, a kid wouldn’t think of breaking a cultural rule in fear of the consequences, but Karana realized her life was on the line. That’s when she decided to face this fear in order to survive.

This young girl was also courageous when she leapt overboard from the boat that was taking her tribe to the mainland. She jumped into the dangerous ocean, and swam ashore to the island because her younger brother was accidently left behind. Most characters would stay on the boat fearing they would die if they dived into the violent ocean. As a matter of fact, all the other members of the tribe tried to convince Karana not to jump. Therefore, she would never have been blamed for leaving her brother behind. However, Karana, was always a motherly figure to her brother. She would never have forgiven herself if she left behind her own sibling. She risked her life to save a family member. It was her only choice.

I connected to this part of the story because it reminded me of the time my mom risked her life trying to save our dog from drowning in the river. Karana could have died in the ocean, but she cared more about her brother, than her own life. I wonder why some people risk their lives, while others turn away? Karana faced her fears in this part of the story just like Brian in the novel *Hatchet*. Both realize they had to be brave, clever, and willing to do whatever it would take to survive. I thank both of these characters for teaching me never to give up and to believe in myself.

This convincing evidence proves the character was a courageous, fearless young woman. This book may deeply affect readers, most especially young girls, to believe in themselves and face their fears no matter the odds or hardships.
Chapter 5
Argumentative Writing:
Organizers and Stages 8-9

Let's Write Arguments!
### At-A-Glance Argument Organizers (Grade 6)

**Stage: 8**
**Sixth Grade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pick a Side! Now Start Arguing!</th>
<th>Pick a Side! Now Start Arguing!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>B:</strong> Background: Why should I care? Introduce the issue and why it is important.</td>
<td><strong>B:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A:</strong> Argument: Pick a side! Choose and state your debatable argument:</td>
<td><strong>A:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. POLICY: Argue for/against a policy: <em>Due to the (explain problem), (proposed action) should be...</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. CLAIM: Argue the causes or effects of what happened: <em>(Name the person, place or thing) caused (name what thing or event happened).</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ISSUE: Argue the value of something: <em>(Name the subject of the argument) is (give your opinion).</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. FACT: Argue if something is a fact: <em>(Although many people believe that (from opposition), actually (your claim about fact).</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>T:</strong> Smooth transition! Words that smoothly transition to the paragraph.</td>
<td><strong>T:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>R:</strong> This better make sense! Give a relevant reason for the argument.</td>
<td><strong>R:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E:</strong> Back it up! Back it up! What credible evidence backs up your reason?</td>
<td><strong>E:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>E:</strong> What does that evidence mean? How does it support your argument?</td>
<td><strong>E:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Content: 1-2 Paragraphs**

- **B:** Background
- **A:** Argument
- **T:** Transition
- **R:** Reason
- **E:** Evidence
- **E:** Explain

Citation:
### At-A-Glance Argument Organizers (Grade 6)

#### Stage: 9
**Sixth Grade**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B = Background. Start with a Hook!</th>
<th>A = Argument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T:</td>
<td>T:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R:</td>
<td>R:</td>
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<tr>
<td>E:</td>
<td>E:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E:</td>
<td>E:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Body (Repeat for all 3 Reasons):**
The Body includes THREE paragraphs that show the evidence and research that support the thesis statement or argument.

T = Transition: Words that smoothly connect to the paragraph.
R = Reason: Give a relevant reason for the argument (claim or issue).
E = Evidence: Back the reason up with credible evidence.
E = Explain: Explain how the evidence supports the claim or issue.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C = Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| S = Snappy Ending |

#### Content: 5-Paragraph Essay

**Introduction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B: Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: Argument</td>
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</table>

**Body**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>T: Transition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R: Reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E: Explain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Conclusion**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C: Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R: Reflection</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Argument: Stage Eight
(Grade 6)

Organizer and Sample Writing

Pick a Side! Now Start Arguing!

B: Background: Why should I care?
Introduce the issue and why it is important.

A: Argument: Pick a side!
Choose and state your debatable argument:
1. POLICY: Argue for/against a policy:
   Due to the [explain problem], [proposed action] should be...
2. CLAIM: Argue the cause or effect of what happened:
   [Name the person, place or thing] caused [name what thing or event happened.]
3. ISSUE: Argue the value of something:
   [Name the subject of the argument] is [give your opinion].
4. FACT: Argue if something is a fact:
   Although many people believe [fact from opposition], actually [your claim about fact].

T = Transition: Smooth transition
Words that smoothly transition to the paragraph.

R = Reason:
This better make sense!
Give a relevant reason for the argument.

E = Evidence:
Back it up! Back it up!
What credible evidence backs up your reason?

E = Explain:
What does that evidence mean?
How does it support your argument?

Pick a Side! Now Start Arguing!

Why is it that, when people are hungry they often turn to fast food to feed their cravings? These meals are inexpensive, save time, and are quite tasty.

B: As a matter, The National Restaurant Association reports, “Americans spend well over $100 billion a year on this type of nourishment.” But, one must wonder if this type of food is detrimental?

A: Although most people think fast food is unhealthy, actually it has many nutritious benefits.

T: One convincing reason people should continue this diet
is the increase in the number of salads on the most popular restaurants’ menus.

R: Angela Ogunjimi from the National Institute of Health reports,
“According to the New York Times, McDonald’s sells more salads that any restaurant in the country.”

E: This news report demonstrates that high numbers of people still eat fast food, but their choices are changing from greasy, fatty foods to healthy choices.

Citation: Advantages and Disadvantages of Fast Food, 15 Decembebr 2012.
www.livestrong.com

Content and Organization

B: Background
A: Argument (Claim)
T: Transition
R: Reason
E: Evidence
E: Explain

Sentences

Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words
(Domain-Specific)
Expand Sentences
Effective and Accurate Word Choices:
Nouns (precise, specific nouns)
Adjectives (modify important nouns)
Figurative Language (images pop)
Verbs (tell how action is performed)
Transitions (appropriately clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.)
Linking Words: Words, phrases and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.

Mechanics

Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.
Argument: Stage Nine
(Grade 6)

Argument Essay about a Topic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content and Organization</th>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
<td>Different Sentence Beginnings and Important Words (Domain-Specific)</td>
<td>Demonstrates grade level appropriate conventions; errors are minor and do not obscure meaning.</td>
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**B =** Something amazing is coming! The 21st century but some archaic tools are used for preparing the future. Budget problems and no training hinders classrooms from reaching the future.

**A =** Cell phones are valuable educational tools. 1. Save money. 2. Increase teaching time, and 3. Increase parent participation.

**T:** The first benefit

**R:** Educator’s pocketbooks

**E:** Merriam-Webster’s website, the average cost of a hardback dictionary is slightly over $20.

C + R Research, 22 percent of young children and 60 percent of tweens own a cell phone.

**E:** Cell phones have apps for dictionaries, thesaurus, calculators, and so much more.

Updates keep cell phones up-to-date while paper tools become filled with out-of-date info.

**T:** While monetary costs compelling

**R:** Increase instructional minutes

The Journal of Educational Research, Leonard states, “Limiting the number of intrusions into the classroom setting is essentially protecting the learning environment from possible negative effects of the surrounding media.”

**E:** Decrease lost time when students need to get up and get learning tools. Also avoid behavior problems. Cell phones are small and can be stored in desk to quickly retrieve.

**T:** The most exciting and convincing reason

**R:** Home-school partnerships

**E:** New Common Core State Standards & Technology allows for 24/7 access to information, constant social interaction, and easily spread digital content.

**E:** Parents can easily access digital information.

Blogs can be used to communicate with teacher.

Paper assignments easily lost and don’t come with easy access to the teacher or sites to assist parents.

**C =** Conclusion

All teachers should promote cell phones as a valuable learning aide, to increase learning time, and parent partnerships.

**S =** Snappy ending

Don’t go backwards, leap forward into the future. Become classrooms that prepare students for 21st Century, not the 20th century.
Cell Phones in the Classroom

The 21st Century is coming! No, wait! Believe it or not, that time is now. Yet, walk into classrooms across America and students are using the same archaic tools to prepare for their futures. Budget problems and lack of professional development hinder classrooms from operating like futuristic learning centers. A simple and effective solution to this problem comes in a small package. Cell phones are valuable educational tools. These amazing devices will save teachers money, increase their teaching time, and develop home-school partnerships.

The first benefit immediately affects educators’ pocketbooks. Most teachers spend a great deal of personal funds purchasing learning aides and tools for their students. According to the Merriam-Websters’ website, the average cost of a hardback dictionary is slightly over twenty-dollars. To equip one class set of the necessary reference tools (thesaurus, atlas, etc.) exceeds hundreds of dollars, possibly closer to one-thousand dollars. These are essential resources every student utilizes on a daily basis. Yet, many classrooms lack these aides or have out-of-date copies. The cell phone, on the other hand, includes these common resources as well as calculators, and the internet. Imagine students utilizing the most up-to-date learning tools every year with no monetary cost to the teacher. Teachers don’t need to imagine because the tools are already available. According to the marketing company C&R Research, “...22 percent of young children (ages 6 to 9) own a cell phone and 60 percent of tweens (ages 10 to 14) own a cell phone.” These devices, not only provide students with learning aides, but also supply instant updates. This is a must for every twenty-first century. Without this modern tool in the classroom, students are forced to utilize out-of-date materials, or educators will need to fork-out big bucks to stock their classrooms with more current editions.

While the monetary costs are compelling, the increase in instructional minutes is a cogent reason for this tool. The time students waste retrieving reference tools and other aides is alarming. As a matter fact, in The Journal of Educational Research, author Lawrence Leonard states “Limiting the number of intrusions into the classroom setting is essentially protecting the learning environment from potential negative effects of the supporting environment.” Cell phones are hand held devices easily stored in student’s desks. These tools will virtually eliminate the wasted time students spend to retrieve resources from book shelves. Another time
saver is the phone itself. In a TESL journal publication, authors Weschler and Pitts conducted an experiment to measure the differences between paper dictionaries and electronic dictionaries. They reported, “Our students could look up words about 23% faster with electronic dictionaries.” This tool provides every teacher with more instructional time and less hassles from transitions.

The most exciting and convincing reason for cell phones is the home-school partnerships they will build. National researcher and advisor, Tanya Roscorla reports, “In English language arts, the standards call for students to use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing, as well as to interact and collaborate with others. This includes writing blog posts and commenting on blogs...” Parents will be thrilled to access digital information and communicate via classroom blogs eliminating the hassles and confusions caused by paper assignments. Parents and teachers can easily partner in the education of their students.

All teachers should promote cell phones as valuable learning aides to increase learning time and home-school connections. The time is now to take advantage of this valuable tool that most students already own. Don’t take baby steps into 21st Century learning. Instead, soar through the process with these valuable tools.

Works Cited


