

Grade 2

PREVIEW



# Expository & Opinion Writing

Deconstructing Text,  
Writing Essays, Reports,  
Response to Text



**Updated & Expanded Edition by Barbara Mariconda**  
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**Empowering**<sup>®</sup>  
Writers



# Introduction

## What You'll Find in this Guide

This book was designed to provide everything you'll need to teach expository and opinion writing as well as response to text in Grade 2. It includes not only opportunities for writing informational and opinion texts, but more importantly, we've deconstructed effective writing into all of the foundational concepts and discrete skills students need in order to be successful. Doing so empowers students to be able to analyze and annotate texts and to begin to respond to these texts in writing.

Writing is a complex task. Simply discussing the attributes of powerful texts as a prerequisite to writing is not enough. **Students must learn, through explicit, objective-driven instruction, the salient features of the genre, and author's purpose, and have a strong grasp of basic concepts that inform these understandings.** For example, before asking students to organize their writing by arranging like details into simple paragraphs, they must know how to sort and categorize. Before we suggest the use of more powerful vocabulary in their writing, we need to have students use it comfortably in spoken language. They need scaffolding to grasp and apply these concepts to the writing task. Skipping any of the foundational skills only results in frustration. Many writing resources make a lot of assumptions around these foundational concepts and students suffer the consequences.

**This guide includes clear, objective-driven lessons that cover the all-important foundational concepts, and then build writing lessons on this firm base of understanding.** Then, we begin teaching all of the specific skills that are the hallmarks of effective expository, opinion, and basic response to text writing.

This approach is extremely powerful for teachers and youngsters alike. Teachers begin to look at writing in more objective terms, in relation to specific skills taught. Students gain by having what can be an overwhelming process broken into manageable parts.

**For ease of use, this book is divided into tabbed skill sections.** Within each section you'll find a wide range of lessons – some very directed, others requiring more independence on the part of the student. These can be used at your discretion based on the needs of your students.

### The Skill Sections are as follows:

- Section 1: Recognizing Genre/Organization
- Section 2: Broad Yet Distinct Main Ideas/Reasons
- Section 3: Elaboration – Detail-Generating Questions
- Section 4: Research
- Section 5: Introductions and Conclusions
- Section 6: Authentic Writing Tasks

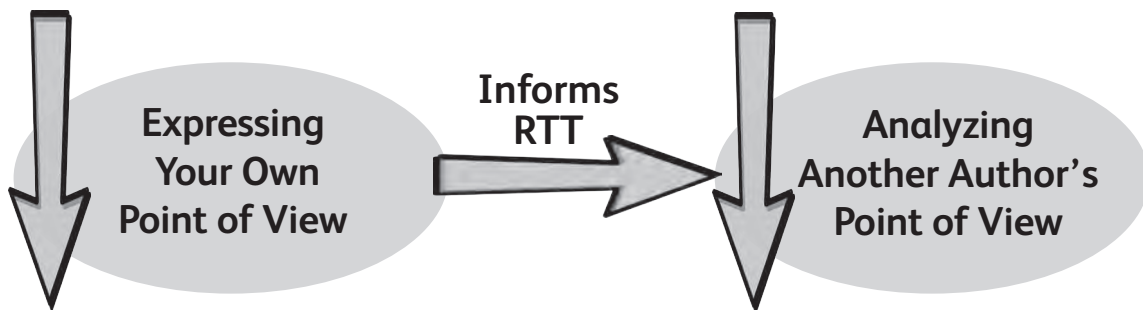
Note that Response to Text Activities are interspersed throughout this Guide. To find specific skills, see the [Response to Text Index](#), pp. 438-439.



## GENERATIVE VS. RESPONSIVE WRITING

In the real world, and now, more and more often in school, writing can be either motivated largely by the writer's interests, imagination, and personal experience (**generative writing**) or it can be in response to a text or number of texts (**responsive writing**). Both approaches have value and one should not be overlooked at the expense of the other. In the upper grades, writing assessments in many places have moved away from generative writing in favor of responsive writing. **Ex.** A student must read several texts on a topic and then respond to what they read in an evaluative way, demonstrating not only literal comprehension, but critical thinking and personal reflection in response to a question or series of questions. They must back their ideas, conclusions, or positions by citing evidence in the text and from their own relevant personal experience. This kind of literary analysis task obviously encourages the kind of logical thinking required in secondary school and beyond. *The challenge is that success in this type of task really is rooted in reading comprehension.* Students who are challenged readers have a distinct disadvantage that they don't experience in many generative writing tasks. **Also, keep this in mind – while the world of academia and work will always appreciate and require analytical writing in response to text, we will still need the next generation of authors who will generate original writing for others to respond to.** So, don't throw the baby out with the bath water! For these reasons we have included both generative and responsive developmentally appropriate writing tasks throughout the book.

## GENERATIVE VS. RESPONSIVE WRITING



- Crafting original work
- Nurturing tomorrow's authors
- Understanding Expository writing
- Increasing deep comprehension
- Creative, stylistic, critical thinking
- Writing to express reading
- Simulating research
- Academic writing
- Defending conclusions
- Pragmatic, deductive, inductive reasoning





# Grade 2 Year-at-a-Glance

For use when teaching expository/opinion and Response to Text writing across the course of a school year.

MONTH 1	MONTH 2	MONTH 3	MONTH 4	MONTH 5
<p>Section 1: Recognizing Genre/Organization</p> <p><b>Baseline Assessment – for guidance see p. 368</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduce the Expository and Opinion Pillars, pp. 11-14</li> <li>Lesson 1: Creating Book Covers for Narrative Stories &amp; Expository Text, p. 21</li> <li>Lesson 2: Fact or Opinion, p. 31</li> <li>Lesson 3: Recognizing Genre and Introducing Opinion Writing, p. 34</li> <li>Lesson 4: <i>Text Detectives - Response to Text</i>, p. 37</li> <li>Lesson 5: <i>Expository, Opinion, or Response to Text?</i>, p. 39</li> <li>Lesson 6: <i>Strategic Reading - Informed Writing</i>, p. 41</li> <li>Lesson 7: <i>Strategic Reading - Organization and Text Conventions</i>, p. 53</li> <li>Lesson 8: Annotating and Analyzing Narrative Stories and Expository Pieces, p. 57</li> <li>Lesson 9: Sorting Details, p. 65</li> <li>Lesson 10: Autumn Sorting, p. 67</li> <li>Lesson 11: Annotating and Analyzing Expository Writing, p. 72</li> </ul>	<p>Section 1: Recognizing Genre/Organization</p> <p>Section 2: Broad Yet Distinct Main Ideas/Reasons</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lesson 12: <i>Comparing and Contrasting in Response to Multiple Text</i>, p. 90</li> <li>Lesson 13: Finding Irrelevant, Extraneous Details, p. 103</li> <li>Lesson 14: Recognizing Genre and Introducing Opinion Writing, p. 105</li> <li>Lesson 15: Recognizing Main Ideas and Supporting Details, p. 108</li> <li>Lesson 16: Expository Pieces for Comparison, p. 112</li> <li>Lesson 17: Cut and Paste, p. 119</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 2: Broad Yet Distinct Main Ideas/Reasons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lesson 1: Sort and Categorize, p. 137</li> <li>Lesson 2: Compare These Pieces, p. 145</li> <li>Lesson 3: Pick, List and Choose, p. 150</li> <li>Lesson 4: Main Ideas/Reasons - Don't Overlap Them!, p. 153</li> <li>Lesson 5: Matching Blurbs to Main Idea Sentences, p. 159</li> <li>Lesson 6: Alternatives to Boring, Redundant Main Idea/Reason Sentences, p. 162</li> <li>Lesson 7: Revising Boring, Redundant Main Idea/Reason Sentences, p. 166</li> </ul>	<p>Section 3: Elaboration – Detail-Generating Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lesson 8: Sentence Variety and Word Referents, p. 169</li> <li>Lesson 9: Main Idea/Reason Blurbs into Sentences, p. 175</li> <li>Lesson 10: The Missing Main Ideas and Reasons, p. 179</li> <li>Lesson 11: Recognizing Main Ideas/Reasons in Prompts &amp; Assignments, p. 184</li> <li>Lesson 12: <i>Turning Questions into Responses</i>, p. 190</li> <li>Lesson 13: <i>Turning Reading Questions into Responses</i>, p. 196</li> <li>Lesson 14: <i>Using Informative Verbs in Response to Text</i>, p. 201</li> </ul> <p><b>Section 3: Elaboration – Detail-Generating Questions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lesson 1: Just Okay.. or Much Better, p. 213</li> <li>Lesson 2: General vs. Specific, p. 218</li> <li>Lesson 3: Recognizing Overly General Words/Phrases and Specific Examples, p. 220</li> <li>Lesson 4: Break up that Grocery List, p. 226</li> <li>Lesson 5: What does it Look Like? Why is it Important? Grab Bag, p. 229</li> <li>Lesson 6: Describing Objects - What Does it Look Like? Why is it important? p. 232</li> <li>Lesson 7: What Does it Look Like? Why is it important? Sentence Matching, p. 236</li> <li>Lesson 8: Observe and Think Using Detail-Generating Questions, p. 239</li> </ul>	<p>Section 3: Elaboration – Detail-Generating Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lesson 9: Writing Sentences Using Detail-Generating Questions, p. 242</li> <li>Lesson 10: Recognizing Details in Expository Writing, p. 249</li> <li>Lesson 11: Your Turn - What Does She/He Look Like? Why is Their Job Important?, p. 251</li> <li>Lesson 12: Using Detail-Generating Questions in Paragraphs, p. 253</li> <li>Lesson 13: Using Detail-Generating Questions to Complete an Expository Essay, p. 262</li> <li>Lesson 14: <i>Reading and Summarizing Texts</i>, p. 269</li> <li>Lesson 15: <i>Paraphrasing</i>, p. 272</li> <li>Lesson 16: <i>Giving the Author Credit</i>, p. 280</li> </ul> <p>Continue to practice applying the Detail-Generating Questions</p> <p><b>Section 6: Authentic Writing Tasks</b></p> <p><b>Choose an appropriate prompt and apply all skills learned to this point</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lesson 2: 7-Day Process Writing Timeline, p. 384</li> </ul>	<p>Section 4: Research</p> <p><b>Mid-year Assessment - for guidance see p. 368</b></p> <p><b>Section 4: Research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lesson 1: Turning Why is it Important? into a Research Question? p. 286</li> <li>Lesson 2: <i>Look and Learn</i>, p. 289</li> <li>Lesson 3: Make it Your Own - Using Photos to Generate Research Questions, p. 292</li> <li>Lesson 4: <i>Finding Information in Charts, Graphs, and More</i>, p. 294</li> <li>Lesson 5: <i>Using Timelines</i>, p. 297</li> <li>Lesson 6: <i>Using Information from Maps</i>, p. 299</li> <li>Lesson 7: <i>Information in a Bulleted List</i>, p. 302</li> <li>Lesson 8: <i>Reading Strategically - using Text Conventions</i>, p. 304</li> <li>Lesson 9: <i>Recognizing Golden Bricks</i>, p. 307</li> <li>Lesson 10: <i>More on Quotes and Statistics</i>, p. 311</li> <li>Lesson 11: <i>Taking Simple Bulleted Notes</i>, p. 313</li> </ul>

(continued)

# Grade 2 Year-at-a-Glance



<b>MONTH 6</b> Section 5: Introductions and Conclusions	<b>MONTH 7</b> <i>Process Writing</i> Section 6: Authentic Writing Tasks	<b>MONTH 8</b> Review all skills as needed	<b>MONTH 9</b> Review all skills as needed	<b>MONTH 10</b> Review all skills as needed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson 1: Expository Pillar - Introduction Paragraph, p. 318</li> <li>• Lesson 2: Which Introduction Would You Rather Read? p. 323</li> <li>• Lesson 3: Using Questions to Write Introductions, p. 326</li> <li>• Lesson 4: Revising Weak Introduction Paragraphs, p. 329</li> <li>• Lesson 5: Adding an Introduction Paragraph, p. 331</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson 6: Expository Pillar - Conclusion Paragraph, p. 338</li> <li>• Lesson 7: Finding the Matching Conclusion 1, 2, p. 340</li> <li>• Lesson 8: Which Conclusion Would You Rather Read?, p. 343</li> <li>• Lesson 9: Summing it All Up with Definitive Words &amp; Phrases, p. 346</li> <li>• Lesson 10: From Summarizing Framework to Conclusion Paragraph, p. 349</li> <li>• Lesson 11: Using Definitive Words &amp; Phrases to Create Conclusion Paragraphs, p. 351</li> <li>• Lesson 12: Adding a Conclusion Paragraph, p. 355</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesson 1: Analyzing Prompts for Givens &amp; Variables, p. 369</li> <li>• Lesson 2: 7-Day Process Writing Timeline, p. 384</li> </ul> <p><b>Process Writing Piece</b></p> <p>Choose an appropriate expository topic and use the process writing timeline to put a fully developed piece together.</p> <p><i>Throughout the rest of the year, review all skills and apply to content area themes or units. (Read science or social studies texts and respond using the Response to Text skills learned and/or the expository/opinion skills.)</i></p> <p><i>Take time to include these Authentic Writing Tasks over the course of the year:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Special Projects, p. 389</i></li> <li>• <i>Literary Analysis, p. 397</i></li> <li>• <i>Lesson 3: Themes in Picture Books, p. 400</i></li> <li>• Lesson 4: Exploring Opinions, p. 409</li> </ul>	<p><b>Research Project</b></p> <p>Use a science or social studies theme to make an authentic application to the skills learned.</p>	<p><b>End of Year Assessment - for guidance see p. 368</b></p>	



## Let's Compare Expository, Opinion, and Response to Text

	EXPOSITORY	OPINION	RESPONSE TO TEXT
<b>Organization</b>	Expository/informative Pillar	Opinion Pillar	Expository/informative Pillar
<b>Purpose</b>	To inform	To state a personal opinion	To demonstrate comprehension
<b>Introduction</b>	Lead/topic sentence	Lead/opinion statement	Summarize the source material Turn the Question into the Response
<b>Body of Piece</b>	Main ideas	Main reasons	Main ideas
<b>Supporting Details</b>	What does it "look" like? Why is that important? Did you give a specific example? *Quotes, statistics, anecdotes, amazing facts	What does it "look" like? Why is it important? Did you give a specific example? *Quotes, statistics, anecdotes, amazing facts, personal experience	Paraphrase Compare/Contrast information Use evidence from all source material
<b>Conclusion</b>	Restate each idea	Restate each reason Restate the opinion	Reiterate topic and main ideas Synthesize information & draw conclusions

\*Students will learn to recognize these tools, but not be expected to apply to their own writing.



# Section 1: Recognizing Genre/Organization



## Teacher Background

Even in the earliest grades, the demands of the changing standards require that students understand the organizational structure of different genres. Before attempting to write, they need to be clear about the purpose of their writing, the audience, and the organizational framework. An understanding of each genre and its particular organizational structure is not only essential to satisfying the latest state standards for writing, but will help students improve their strategic reading and comprehension skills.

In broad terms, the genres students will encounter most frequently in school and beyond are narrative, expository, and opinion writing. Within each of these broad genres are “sub-genres.” Included in this section are lessons designed to help students recognize the key characteristics of each genre. Since any reading experience is an opportunity to “read with authors’ eyes,” you can reinforce these lessons during reading instruction just by asking students to identify the genre and author’s purpose of whatever material you are reading together. Also, draw their attention to the organizational structure of the text you’re reading. This reinforces the reading/writing connection in powerful ways.

## Defining Narrative, Expository, Opinion, Response to Text Writing

**Narrative Writing** – The first kind of texts children are exposed to are usually narrative stories. These stories focus on a main character in a setting who has a problem to solve, or an adventure or meaningful experience to share. The main character typically grows or changes in some way as the story develops. *Narrative writing is written for the purpose of entertaining an audience of others.* (See the Empowering Writers publication [The Comprehensive Narrative Writing Guide](#) for everything you need to know about narrative writing.)

**Expository/Informative Writing** – This genre is different from narrative writing in purpose, organization and tone. *Exposition is written for the purpose of informing an audience of others.* Therefore, the organization is rather linear, typified by an introduction paragraph, a number of paragraphs in the body of the piece, each with a broad yet distinct main idea and followed by a variety of supporting details. The piece ends with a conclusion paragraph that reiterates the main ideas. The tone of the expository piece is usually straightforward and the author works hard to present information in an organized, sequential fashion. This does not mean, however, that the piece cannot have style and a unique voice that holds the readers’ interest. Exposition includes the following sub-genres:

- the informational essay
- the “how-to” piece
- the “compare/contrast” piece
- response to text

The focus of all types of expository writing is on a TOPIC.

**Opinion Writing** – The purpose of opinion writing is to share a personal opinion. The successful opinion writer uses information strategically, showcasing facts that support his or her opinion.

With an organizational structure very similar to expository writing, opinion writing focuses on an issue or position that can be looked at from multiple points of view. In order to do this, students must be able to distinguish between fact and opinion and many of the activities provided here give them the opportunity to do just that. As students move on to middle school, opinion writing evolves into the similar but more sophisticated argumentative writing genre.



# Section 1: Recognizing Genre/Organization

**Response to Text Writing** – The purpose of Response to Text writing is to demonstrate deep comprehension of the source material.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Every time we discuss writing it's important to be clear about the genre. One way to do this is to be careful about the ways we refer to narrative vs. expository and opinion writing. We recommend referring to narrative texts as 'stories,' indicating that the writing is focused on a character in a setting faced with a problem or an adventure. Expository and opinion texts can be best referred to as 'pieces' with the focus on a topic or issue. Referring to expository or opinion pieces as stories confuses the issue for students.

The first activities in this section are intended to help students develop the foundational concepts they need for writing. They'll learn to recognize the difference between expository and narrative writing and how to organize their own ideas for writing in a chosen genre. Students will compare excerpts of narrative and expository writing side by side, with a focus on identifying the characteristics of expository writing. This will help them in terms of prewriting – knowing the salient characteristics of genre is essential as students begin to organize their ideas for a written piece.

You may worry that the time spent on these foundational lessons might be better spent writing, pencil to paper. However, these core lessons in genre, purpose, and organization are essential if students are to write with intention, a clear sense of purpose, with exemplars of strong writing to guide them. Too often we press students directly into writing tasks that overwhelm them because they don't understand what they're supposed to do, or how they're supposed to do it.

As you work through this initial section of the Guide, by all means have students engaged in journal writing and other free-writing activities. This maintains the ongoing development and application of sound-symbol connections, basic mechanics, conventional spelling, use of sight words, and the building of writing stamina. Then, as you move into Section 2, students will be best prepared to begin to compose expository writing in an informed way.





# Creating Book Covers



## for Narrative Stories and Expository Text



*How  
will this help  
students  
understand  
genre?*

### LESSON 1

#### Objective

Students use the written and visual cues on book covers to predict the genre of a book. To show what they have learned, students create their own book covers for both narrative and expository books about thematic material of their choice.

#### LESSON AT A GLANCE:

##### Whole Class & Independent Activity

- Discuss how book covers and titles hint at genre and purpose.
- Display a variety of narrative and expository/informative picture books and make predictions about genre and purpose.
- Have students choose a topic and outline a narrative story about that topic. Then, have students create a book cover for this narrative story and an accompanying book cover for an informational book on the same topic.

#### Procedure

1. Introduce this lesson by showing students examples of fiction and nonfiction picture books that focus on the same thematic material (**Ex:** One of Arnold Lobel's Frog and Toad adventures beside a nonfiction book about frogs and toads). Point out the differences between the two book covers. Review the purpose of narrative writing (to entertain) and the purpose of expository writing (to inform). Show students examples from your classroom library until you're confident they can recognize the differences between an informational (or expository) book cover and a story book (or narrative) cover. Use the following chart to guide your conversation:

##### Narrative story book covers usually feature:

- a title containing a character's name, a place, or suggestion of a problem
- creative artwork that looks "make believe"

##### Expository book covers usually feature:

- a title that names the topic
- realistic or photographic artwork that "looks real"

2. Reproduce the Narrative Book Cover Template, pp. 22-23, and have students fold it in half to resemble a real book cover. Reproduce the accompanying Summarizing Framework for Narrative Writing, p. 24.
3. Explain that students are going to create book covers and a corresponding summary for a narrative story they might write someday. Project and review the Completed Summarizing Framework for Narrative Writing, p. 25, as an example.
4. Brainstorm some ideas, keeping in mind that they will use the same thematic material later to create a related expository book cover. Here are some suggestions: frogs, farm animals, earthquakes, birthday parties, camping trips, going to the beach, getting a new pet. Remember, the topic needs to work for an informational piece also.
5. Have students choose their thematic material and complete their summarizing framework. Circulate as they work. Review their completed summary and help them choose a title. Then, provide students with crayons, markers, colored pencils and have them draw a picture for their book cover. (Some may need to draw the picture first before they can come up with a title.)
6. Follow the same procedure to create a book cover for an informational or expository book, using the Expository Book Cover Template, pp. 26-27, with the Summarizing Framework for Expository Writing, p. 28, and the example, p. 29.



# Summarizing Framework

## for Expository Writing

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us about your expository text by answering the questions below.

The text gives information about:

\_\_\_\_\_ .

The author's purpose is to:

\_\_\_\_\_ .

# Text Detectives - Response to Text



## LESSON 4

### Objective

Students are introduced to the genre of writing called “Response to Text,” they recognize its purpose and the key characteristics that set it apart from straightforward expository writing.

### Procedure

1. Tell the class that in school, college, and in many work settings they will be required to read a text of some kind and respond to it in writing to demonstrate that they understood what they read. Explain that this genre of writing is called “Response to Text.”
2. Review the purpose of narrative, expository, and opinion writing and chart the following as you review:
  - Narrative:** Purpose – to entertain (focus on a main character in a setting with a problem, adventure, or interesting experience).
  - Expository:** Purpose – to give information (focus on a TOPIC).
  - Opinion:** Purpose – to share a personal opinion (focus on a point of view).
3. Add **Response to Text** to this genre list and discuss the following definition: *Purpose: to demonstrate deep comprehension as illustrated through evidence from the text.*
4. Introduce some of the “clue words” that indicate “Response to Text” by clearly referring to a source text. You might want to chart and post some of these for future reference:
  - The author tells us that \_\_\_\_.
  - In this text we learned that \_\_\_\_.
  - In this article, we read about \_\_\_\_.
  - The author explains \_\_\_\_.
  - We found out that \_\_\_\_.
  - The reader discovers that \_\_\_\_.
5. Photocopy, distribute, and project Text Detectives – Response to Text, p. 38, and explain that they’ll be presented with two excerpts to read and that their job will be to underline the “clue words” that point toward “Response to Text.” Read through the boxed “Clue Words/Phrases” together. Discuss what it means to refer to a text. Work through the first example together (Sea Turtles), underlining the clue words/phrases. Read the second example (Helping Dogs) aloud with students following along. Then have students approach the second excerpt independently, circulating to offer guidance as needed.
6. To close the lesson, challenge the class to come up with additional Response to Text Clue Words or Phrases and chart these for future reference.

### KEY:

1.
    - In this text we learned that
    - The reader discovers
  2.
    - The author tells us that
- The author explains that
  - In the article we read about
  - We found out that
  - The author explains
  - We found out that

### LESSON AT A GLANCE:

#### Whole Class and Independent Activity

- Review narrative, expository and opinion genres with the class.
- Add Response to Text.
- Introduce “clue words.”
- Identify them in sample text.





# Student Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## TEXT DETECTIVES - RESPONSE TO TEXT

As we grow up, we're often asked to read a text and respond to it in writing. We do this kind of writing to show that we understand what we've read. Read the response to text paragraphs, below, and underline all of the clue words or phrases that indicate the "Response to Text" genre. (The clue words will refer to a source text.)

### SAMPLE RESPONSE TO TEXT CLUE WORDS OR PHRASES:

- The author tells us that \_\_\_\_\_.
- In this text we learned that \_\_\_\_\_.
- In the article, we read about \_\_\_\_\_.
- The author explains \_\_\_\_\_.
- We found out that \_\_\_\_\_.
- The reader discovers that \_\_\_\_\_.

1. In this text we learned that animals often live in groups. The author explains that some animal groups have strange names. We found out that groups of monkeys are called **troops**. The reader discovers that a group of kangaroos is called a **mob**. In the article we read about groups of zebras called **zeals**.



2. The article Squirrels gave lots of information about these small furry animals. The reader discovers that squirrels are related to chipmunks and woodchucks. The author explains that squirrels' sharp front teeth never stop growing. We found out that squirrels use their sharp teeth to crack open nuts. The author tells us that squirrels build nests called **dreys**.



# Strategic Reading – Informed Writing



## LESSON 6

### Objective

Students learn strategies for close reading that provide valuable information about organization that will later inform their writing.

Strategies include:

- Skimming and scanning for an overview of the entire text.
- Recognizing the importance of headings, keywords, diagrams, illustrations.
- Writing a summary based on information provided (text conventions).

### Important Vocabulary

*title, topic, headings, bold-face print, italicized print, keywords, diagram, photograph, illustration, caption*

### Procedure

1. Explain to the class that they will be reading a selection titled Owls and that they'll be learning some strategies for how to read more effectively in order to glean the most information from the text.
2. Photocopy pp. 43-44, and distribute copies to the class and project it on the white board. *To build context and background begin by showing the students numerous online images of a variety of owls and discuss what, if any, prior knowledge they might have.* Then, ask them to listen carefully as you read the text aloud to them. (This is particularly important for students who may have difficulty reading the piece independently.) This will give them a sense of what the text is all about.
3. Explain that, before they read an expository piece, it's important to look for certain cues that can provide valuable information to aid the reader's understanding. Direct their attention to the text and ask them to annotate it together, labeling the important parts. Use the Strategic Reading Procedure to inform your discussion. A Reference Page of these questions follows this lesson, pp. 51-52.
4. First, circle the **title**. Ask them what the **title** reveals (the **topic**). Remind them that the topic tells the reader what the entire piece will be about. **Model** labeling this for students and have them do the same.
5. Next, for reference purposes, number each paragraph. Circulate and assist students as they do the same.
6. Point out and underline the **headings**. Explain that the headings allow you to quickly skim and scan the piece and get a sense of the **main ideas** of the piece.
7. Ask them to help you fill in the summarizing framework, based solely on the title and headings.

Chart:

TOPIC: Owls

MAIN IDEA #1: Appearance

MAIN IDEA #2: Behavior

### LESSON AT A GLANCE:

#### Whole Class Activity

- Introduce students to text conventions.
- Model skimming, scanning.
- Point out how cues improve reading.
- Summarize piece.

**\*PLEASE NOTE:** Our expectation is not for children to read and complete this analysis independently. This is a whole class, teacher-guided process intended to show children how to analyze texts.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# OWLS



*great horned owl*

If you are ever outside at night you might hear HOOT! HOOT! That is the sound of an owl. Let's learn what owls look like and discover some interesting owl behaviors.

## Owl Appearance

Owls come in many sizes and colors. All owls have large heads and flat faces. Their eyes are very big to help them see in the dark. Owls stand up very straight. Unlike most birds, owls can turn their heads almost all the way around! They have sharp, hooked beaks and claws

called **talons** for catching their prey. Their feathers are usually brown and gray to blend in with the trees. They have large, strong wings that help them dive for food.

## Owl Behavior

Owl behavior is interesting! These birds are **nocturnal**. This means that they are awake at night. During the night these **predators** hunt for food. They eat small animals like mice, squirrels, and rabbits. Sometimes they even eat other birds or a small cat. They don't chew. They rip their prey apart and swallow big pieces. Later they spit up **pellets** of fur, bones, and feathers that they can't digest. You can sometimes find owl pellets on the forest floor. If you do, you'll know that an owl is nearby.



*Owl catching prey*

If you ever take a walk near the woods, or through an open field at night, listen for the hoot of an owl. Watch for its big eyes and large wings as it swoops to catch its prey. Look around the ground for owl pellets. You will know this bird by its appearance and its behavior!



*Owl pellet*



# Comparing and Contrasting

## In Response to Multiple Texts



### Teacher Background: Comparing & Contrasting in Response to Multiple Texts

As students move into the middle grades they begin to conduct research to inform their expository/informative writing. They'll also be required to access multiple sources of information in order to glean the facts and information necessary for a thorough response. They must be able to synthesize what they've read, selecting information from each source that is relevant to their assignment. Inherent in this process is the ability to compare and contrast what they've read and to express pertinent similarities and differences coherently in their writing.

This will require students to not only read *each* text strategically to fully understand the content, but to skim and scan *both* texts a second time to filter and identify information appropriate to the specific requirements of their writing task. This process involves sorting and categorizing – the kind of reasoning used in creating Venn diagrams.

The following simplified lesson will provide a strong foundation for the critical thinking necessary for these tasks.



# Comparing and Contrasting

## In Response to Multiple Texts

### LESSON 12

#### Objective

Students use simple skimming and scanning skills to highlight key information in two different texts to understand how to approach a compare-and-contrast writing assignment. Then they sort this relevant information onto a comparison grid.

#### Procedure

1. Lead students in annotating and analyzing the following texts: Frogs and Toads. (Follow the same process outlined earlier in this section.)
2. Explain that when authors write they often have to refer to more than one text to find the information they need to inform their writing. In order to do this it's helpful if authors know, in advance, what specific information they'll need to complete their writing assignment.
3. Project and discuss the writing assignment below and copy and distribute Discussion Questions, p. 95.

**You have read two informative texts about interesting creatures – Frogs and Toads. Write about one way the frog and toad are the same and one way that they're different.**

4. Walk them through the Discussion Questions, p. 95. Use the annotated teacher page p. 96, as a guide.
5. Distribute copies of the Comparison Grid, p. 97, and project this. Citing information in both texts, lead students in filling in the comparison grid with simple bulleted notes. (See sample, p. 98)
6. Finally, project the Exemplar Text, p. 99, and have the class match the details in this piece with the evidence in both source texts. If the evidence came from Frogs have them underline it in the Exemplar Response in *green*. If it came from Toads underline it in *brown*. In this way students begin to see the clear connection between the source material and the written response to it.

**BONUS:** Have students fold a paper in half and draw a frog on one side and a toad on the other. Then label each picture, like a diagram, highlighting the differences.

#### LESSON AT A GLANCE:

##### Whole Class Activity

- Annotate and Analyze Frogs and Toads.
- Discuss writing assignment using discussion questions.
- Fill out Comparison Grid.
- Project Written Response to Exemplar.



# Annotated Page

## FROGS — topic

introduction

When you walk by a pond, lake, or stream, look around. You might see or hear a frog! Let's find out what frogs look like and learn about where they live.

appearance

Would you know a frog if you saw one? Frogs are small creatures with slick, smooth skin. They have bulging eyes that can look in all directions. This is important since frogs don't have necks to turn this way and that. Frogs have long, strong legs in back for jumping and short legs in front. Full-grown frogs do not have tails. They have long, sticky tongues for catching bugs. They also have tiny teeth in the roof of their mouths to hold onto prey. Frogs come in all different colors!

habitat

Frogs live everywhere except in Antarctica! They spend a lot of time in water, but some live on land. Most frogs live in warm climates and in rain forests. Some frogs live in trees! Others live in burrows underground. These long-legged leapers live near water where they can keep their skin moist and lay eggs. All frogs hatch from eggs laid in the water.

Be on the lookout for these interesting amphibians! You'll recognize frogs by their <sup>1.</sup> appearance and now you know where to find them. <sup>2.</sup> Frogs are amazing creatures!







# Annotated Page

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - FROGS & TOADS

You have read two informative texts about Frogs and Toads. Write about one way the frog and toad are the same and one way that they're different.

1. Fill in the summarizing frameworks, below, for each text:



FROGS

TOPIC: frogs

MAIN IDEA #1: appearance

MAIN IDEA #2: habitat

TOADS

TOPIC: toads

MAIN IDEA #1: appearance

MAIN IDEA #2: habitat

2. What do you notice about these main ideas? they are the same

3. What are the "givens" in the boxed assignment or the two things you MUST write about?  
one similarity and one difference

4. Go back to each text. Circle the similarity and difference that you plan to write about.  
(Similarity might be that they're both amphibians, difference might be one has teeth, the other doesn't or the type of skin - selections will vary.)

5. Fill in a SUMMARIZING FRAMEWORK that shows the main ideas you selected, one similarity and one difference.

TOPIC: Comparing Frogs and Toads

MAIN IDEA #1: Both are amphibians that start life in the water

MAIN IDEA #2: Legs are different

# Compare These Pieces



*How can this help students enhance their writing?*

## LESSON 2

### Objective

Main Ideas/Main Reasons: Are they distinct or overlapping? Students recognize the difference between an ineffective expository piece organized around a series of non-distinct, overlapping main ideas and a more successful piece on the same topic

organized around a series of more distinct main ideas. Students begin to understand that expository and opinion pieces organized around broad yet distinct main ideas/reasons can be much more effectively elaborated.

### LESSON AT A GLANCE:

#### Whole Class Activity

- Read two expository pieces.
- Identify the expository piece that has broad yet distinct main ideas.
- Compare these pieces.
- Do the same for the two opinion pieces.

### Procedure

1. Copy and project the pair of texts, both titled Tex, pp. 146-147. Read through the pieces with the class. Point out the main ideas in bold and underline for extra emphasis. Write a blurb in the margin beside each paragraph in the body of the piece.
2. Compare both versions of the texts, eliciting responses from students to such questions as:
  - Which text gives you more information? Why?
  - Which text is more interesting to read? Why?
  - Does every detail in each paragraph relate to the corresponding main idea?
  - What is the difference between the main idea sentences in each pair of expository pieces?

In the first version of Tex, the main ideas are: **playful, fast, fun**. Each of the main ideas overlap, which makes the piece repetitious and overly general. Ask students how much we really learn from this piece.

In the second version of Tex, the main ideas are: **Caring for Tex, Training Tex, Playing with Tex**. See how each is different and that if you wanted to add a detail, it would be clear where that new detail belonged. Ask students if anybody can think of a new detail to add to any one of these three paragraphs. How about “*We even brush his teeth!*” – where would that detail belong? Ask students: What did you learn from the first version of Tex? How about the second? Which version makes you more eager to visit a zoo?

3. Copy and distribute both versions of the opinion piece I Love Fall, pp. 148-149. Project as you read together.
4. Review the author’s purpose for opinion writing (to share a personal opinion) and discuss which of these two versions better supports the author’s opinion. In the first version, the main reasons are: **Good Weather, Fun, and Awesome**. They overlap and the piece is repetitious. In the second version, the broad yet distinct main reasons are: **Back to School, Autumn Holidays, and Changes in Nature**.

In the I Love Fall (2) text, be sure to point out the **opinion language** that indicates the author’s point of view: *My absolute favorite... I love... I adore... It’s fun... Who doesn’t enjoy... It feels good... I enjoy... I like nothing better than...* Discuss how this language is subjective – it might be true for the author, but not everyone shares this point of view.

5. Finally, based on the teacher background information in this section, introduce the vocabulary: “broad yet distinct” main ideas (for expository writing) and “broad yet distinct” main reasons (for opinion writing). “Broad” means that they are general enough so that you can add many more specific details and “distinct” means that they are different from one another. Discuss this concept with the class and point out the ways in which this concept is reflected in the sample pieces.



# Student Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## I Love Fall (1)

Fall is the best season of all. It's nice outside, it's fun, and it's really awesome. I will tell you why fall is so great.



I like to **be outside** in the fall. It's so fun to rake leaves and jump in them. My favorite fun time outside is on Halloween. We get to walk around at night trick-or-treating and getting candy. It's awesome to get in a costume and scare people. It's cooler outside, too.

Fall is a **fun** time of year. You get to go back to school and see all your friends. It's awesome to go shopping for school supplies. It's fun to go to the apple orchard or out to the pumpkin farm. It's fun to walk through the pumpkin patch and pick the most awesome pumpkin. Then you can carve a jack-o-lantern!

I think fall is **awesome!** Halloween and Thanksgiving come in fall and I think these holidays are the most fun! You get to play soccer with your team after having the summer off. Plus, it's fun to meet your new teacher.



So that is why I like fall. It's nice outside, it's really fun and awesome. Do you like fall?





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## I Love Fall (2)

My absolute favorite season is fall! I love going **back to school**, and watching changes in nature. Another reason to adore fall is the special holidays! Let's talk about all the things to love about fall!



In fall I look forward to **going back to school**. After a long summer it's fun to see your school buddies again. It's exciting to meet your new teacher. I love to see how the classroom is decorated. And who doesn't enjoy getting school supplies? It feels good to put new crayons, pencils, and markers in a brand new backpack.

In fall there are many **changes in nature**. I like seeing the leaves turn colors and fall. It's fun to rake the autumn leaves into a pile and jump in! The cooler fall nights are a nice change after the hot summer days. I enjoy watching animals get ready for winter. Squirrels collect nuts and bury them. It gets dark earlier and it's nice to go inside and light a fire in the fireplace.

**Autumn holidays** are my favorites! In October it's Halloween! We get to dress up and go trick-or-treating. I like nothing better than to make my costume and eat candy for the next week! Then in November it's Thanksgiving. The whole family gets together to eat turkey and all the fixings. We watch the parade on TV and then watch football. It is so much fun!



See why fall is my favorite season? I love going back to school. It's fun watching the changes in nature. And, fall holidays are the best! How do you feel about fall?



# Turning Questions Into Responses

## LESSON 12

### Objective

Students learn to recognize key elements in a question, and repeat those elements as part of their response orally, and then in writing.

### Procedure

1. Explain to students that the proper way to answer a question is to use a complete sentence. Share the following example of questions and answers with them. (You can write this on the whiteboard or chart it for them to see.)

How do you feel today?	Okay.
Or...	
How do you feel today?	Today I feel okay.

- Ask them which is a complete answer. (*the second*)
  - Next, underline the key elements in the **question**. (*you – feel – today*) Ask a student to come up and underline the key elements in the answer or response. Point out that a key word is “you” in the question, but in the response it’s “I.”
  - Explain that you’ll ask the question, aloud, and then have them respond in a complete sentence. Point to each word in the complete sentence as they read it.
2. Tell the class that they’ll be practicing responding in complete sentences. (Option – you might give tokens or tickets of some kind throughout the day whenever students respond to you orally in complete sentences and then provide some kind of prize.) Boxed below are some questions to ask individual students, and/or the entire class, orally, and have them respond verbally. The answers should be obvious. You may revise the questions to suit your classroom. Chart questions and responses, highlighting the repeated key elements in each.

• Where is the <u>pencil sharpener</u> ?	<u>The pencil sharpener is on the worktable.</u>
• What <u>time</u> is <u>lunch</u> ?	<u>Lunch time is 12:10.</u>
• What is your <u>music teacher’s name</u> ?	<u>Our music teacher’s name is Ms. Santos.</u>
• What is our <u>room number</u> ?	<u>Our room number is 230.</u>
• What <u>grade</u> are you <u>in</u> ?	<u>We are in second grade.</u>
• What <u>day</u> do you <u>have gym</u> ?	<u>We have gym on Wednesday.</u>
	<b>Etc.</b>

### LESSON AT A GLANCE:

#### Whole Class and Independent Activity

- Discuss answering questions in complete sentences.
- Identify key elements of a question.
- Practice answering in complete sentences.



# Student Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## TURNING QUESTIONS INTO RESPONSES (1)

**DIRECTIONS:** Read each question. Fill in the blanks so that the answer is in a complete sentence. Read the response to check yourself!

1. What animal is that?

*That animal is a*

\_\_\_\_\_ .

2. What is the seal balancing?

*The seal is balancing a*

\_\_\_\_\_ .

3. Where is the ball?

*The ball is on the seal's*

\_\_\_\_\_ .

4. What is on the seal's head?

*On the seal's head there is a*

\_\_\_\_\_ .

5. What is the seal's name?

*The seal's name is*

\_\_\_\_\_ .



**BONUS:** Color in the picture of Sammy the Seal. Write a complete sentence about Sammy the Seal on the lines below.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





## Using Detail-Generating Questions

### LESSON 8

#### Objective

Students use observation skills and logical reasoning to complete elaboration using the “What Does it Look Like? Why is it Important?” strategy.

#### Procedure

1. Review the detail-generating questions, “What Does it Look Like? Why is it Important?” with the class.

Also discuss some of the important foundational concepts that inform elaboration in expository writing:

- the importance of specific vs. general details.
  - each detail belongs in a separate sentence. (Break up the grocery list.)
2. Explain that one way to generate powerful detail is by carefully examining photographic and/or video images. Looking at the images is a way to answer, “What Does it Look Like?” and applying the question, “Why is it Important?” can often be answered through observation and critical thinking.
  3. Project the image of the frog, Observe and Think Using Detail-Generating Questions (1), p. 240. You can supplement this with some similar online images.
  4. Read aloud the “Just the facts” sentence beside the photo: Frogs have long strong back legs. Ask the children what description is included in this factual sentence. (*long, strong back legs*).
  5. Ask them to look carefully at the photo and ask themselves: “*Why is it important for frogs to have long, strong back legs?*” Tell them that a clue is presented in the photo. If they need further prompting, ask them why a frog would leap into the water. (*To escape an enemy or catch a bug.*) Further prompt them to make a connection between these two facts. (*Long, strong legs help frogs leap from enemies or catch a bug.*)
  6. GUIDED PRACTICE – Instruct students to proceed with the two other photos on p. 240, and the second activity sheet on p. 241, in a similar manner. Circulate, offering assistance, discussion, and suggestions. Close the lesson by reviewing the effectiveness of the detail-generating questions and sharing powerful examples aloud.

**Ex. Observe and Think (1)** *Birds build nests to lay eggs in and to protect their babies.*

*I have a wool hat to keep my head warm in cold weather.*

**Observe and Think (2)** *Use a rake to clean up fallen autumn leaves.*

*Wolves have sharp teeth to catch and eat their prey.*

*Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from the sun.*

**BONUS:** Encourage students to go back to each sentence and add details!

**Ex.** I have a warm wool hat with ear flaps to keep my head warm in cold, snowy weather.

#### LESSON AT A GLANCE:

##### Whole Class and Independent Activity

- Review *What Does it Look Like? Why is it Important?*
- MODEL extending just the facts.
- GUIDED PRACTICE – students practice revising and extending.



# Student Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## OBSERVE AND THINK USING DETAIL-GENERATING QUESTIONS (1)

Writing improves when authors observe carefully, ask questions, and draw conclusions. Look at each photograph below. Read the “just the facts” sentence beside it. Then ask, “Why is that Important?” Revise the “just the facts” sentence by adding your conclusion. The first one has been done for you.



**Frogs have long, strong back legs**  
*that help them jump into the water.*  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Birds build nests**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



**I have a wool hat**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_





# Using Detail-Generating Questions to Complete an Expository Essay

## LESSON 13

### Objective

Students apply the detail-generating questions, “What does it Look Like? Why is it Important?” in order to provide relevant supporting details in the body of an expository essay.

### Procedure

1. Review the detail-generating questions, “What does it Look Like? Why is it Important?” with the class. Discuss the importance of including specific detail to support the main ideas in an expository essay.
2. Explain that they will have an opportunity to use these questions to fully elaborate two paragraphs of an expository essay about a familiar topic: *My House*. Photocopy, project, and distribute Using Detail-Generating Questions to Complete an Expository Essay, p. 263.
3. Direct their attention to the My House template, p. 264. Point out that the introduction, main ideas, and conclusion of this essay are given. After reading through all of these, have the students write a blurb in the margin beside each main idea sentence that explains what that entire paragraph will be about. Then, use this information to chart a summarizing framework that represents this piece of writing.

**Ex. TOPIC:** My House

**MAIN IDEA #1:** My living room

**MAIN IDEA #2:** My room

4. Next, ask the children what’s missing from this essay. (specific supporting detail sentences) Explain that their job will be to think about their house (topic), their kitchen (main idea #1), and their room (main idea #2). They will need to think of the important details in each room and for each detail ask, “What does it Look Like? Why is it Important?”
5. Photocopy, distribute, and project Expository Pillar – My House, p. 265. Ask children to name some of the important details about MAIN IDEA #1 – My Kitchen, and MAIN IDEA #2 – My Room. As they talk about what’s important about these rooms, MODEL how to write each of 4 details, one in each detail box.
6. After the pillar is filled in, MODEL how to take a single detail and elaborate on it by applying “What does it Look Like? Why is it Important?”

### LESSON AT A GLANCE:

#### Whole Class and Independent Activity

- Review detail-generating questions.
- Model using questions to revise.
- GUIDED PRACTICE.



# Using Detail-Generating Question to Complete

## an Expository Essay



Ex.

<b>TOPIC</b> My House	
<b>Main Idea #1</b> <u>my living room</u>	
couch	tv
family photos	fireplace
<b>Main Idea #2</b> <u>my room</u>	
bed	stuffed animals
toy box	desk

- Next, you will have students fill in their pillar with 2 to 4 details per main idea. (You can assign the number of details according individual student needs.)
- Provide students with the sentence starters below, and direct them to use these to write detail sentences. Remind them to apply “What does it Look Like? Why is it Important?” to each detail. They can write their details on the My House template.

### My House - Sentence Starters:

- I absolutely love \_\_\_\_\_.
- My family enjoys \_\_\_\_\_.
- We spend time \_\_\_\_\_.
- After school I go \_\_\_\_\_.
- On one side you’ll see \_\_\_\_\_.
- The walls are \_\_\_\_\_.
- We have a \_\_\_\_\_.
- Sometimes we \_\_\_\_\_.
- Each day I \_\_\_\_\_.
- It’s fun to \_\_\_\_\_.
- Let’s take a look at \_\_\_\_\_.
- I love being in the \_\_\_\_\_.
- My friends and I \_\_\_\_\_.
- You’ll notice \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ always brighten my mood.
- Sometimes we \_\_\_\_\_.
- I love to \_\_\_\_\_.
- Here we like to \_\_\_\_\_.

**NOTE:** You may move forward with GUIDED PRACTICE, approaching 1 to 4 details per day, depending on individual student’s needs. It is advisable to guide the pacing of this lesson, checking their work before giving them the go-ahead to move to their next detail. For students who are working more quickly, provide an optional art connection that they can move to. This might involve creating a collage, diorama, or illustration of each room.



# Student Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## MY HOUSE

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Would you like to take a tour of my house? Follow me through the kitchen and bedroom to see what makes my home so comfortable.

### **MAIN IDEA #1:**

Let's take a walk through the kitchen! \_\_\_\_\_

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### **MAIN IDEA #2:**

Have a look at my bedroom. \_\_\_\_\_

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### **CONCLUSION:**

Now that you've had a chance to take a tour of my house, what do you think of my kitchen? Can you see how comfortable my bedroom is? How does it compare with your house?



## ELABORATION TOOLS FOR RESPONSE TO TEXT TASKS

When writing in response to text, it's important to cite evidence from the source material without copying word for word. Here are some ways to cite evidence in interesting ways:



- **SUMMARIZE**

In a sentence or two, *summarize* the topic and main ideas of the source text. Notice the **informative verbs**.

*Ex. In the text, Owls, the author **describes** the owl's appearance and **explores** owl behavior.*

- **PARAPHRASING**

Use words with almost the same meaning as those in the text.

*Ex. Instead of saying: Owls are nocturnal. These birds of prey are only active at night.*

- **CITE THE SOURCE TEXT**

Find information in the text and tell where you found it.

*Ex. In paragraph 3 the author states that owls are nocturnal.*





# Paraphrasing

## LESSON 15

### Teacher Background:

Paraphrasing is another important tool, not just for response to text or research simulation tasks, but in any essay or report writing that is informed by way of source material. “Saying it in your own words” is a tricky challenge for students. Even in upper grades, students often tend to copy source material word for word. This is the time for a conversation about plagiarizing, or taking or implying credit for the written words of another author.

### LESSON AT A GLANCE:

#### Whole Class Activity

- Explain the purpose of paraphrasing.
- Annotate text.
- Student will apply response to text strategies.
- Use sentence starters to paraphrase.

### What are reasonable expectations for second-graders in regard to paraphrasing?

- Have students use a highlighter to pinpoint answers to comprehension questions.
- Guide students in replacing these key words with nearly synonymous words or phrases. (*word referents*)
- Use sentence starters to reframe source material.

### Objective

Students learn to pinpoint and highlight answers to comprehension questions, and replace key words in their responses with nearly synonymous words or phrases. They will also use sentence starters to reframe this source material.

### Procedure

1. Ask the class how they'd feel if another student looked at their paper during a spelling test and copied their answers. (They'll probably say it isn't fair....it's cheating, etc.) Explain that the same is true for writers. It isn't fair to copy another writer's words and use them as your own. So, if you have to answer a response to text question in writing, you have to be careful not to just copy the words from the source text.
2. Project, photocopy, and distribute copies of the text titled Skunks and accompanying questions pp. 274-275.
3. Annotate the text with the class. Have students point out the introduction and circle it. Have them underline the main idea sentences, write a blurb in the margin for each body paragraph (appearance, protecting themselves), box the conclusion.

(continued)



# Student Page

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## READ, HIGHLIGHT, PARAPHRASE (1)

With your class, read and annotate this text!

### Skunks

Have you ever smelled something terrible outside your window at night? It might smell like burning rubber and could make your eyes water. If you do, sneak a peek out your window. You will probably see a small black and white animal. Do you know what it is? It is a skunk! These creatures of the night can be recognized by their unique appearance and telltale way of protecting themselves.

Would you know a skunk if you saw one? Most are about the size of a cat. They have black and white fur. Some are spotted. Others have big white stripes down their backs. These forest animals have small ears and bushy tails.

Skunks protect themselves in an interesting way. When an enemy comes too close the skunk turns and lifts its tail. It shoots a horrible smelling spray. The stinky mist can travel up to 10 feet! Most animals stay far away from these black and white creatures. So do people!

So, the next time you are out at night be on the lookout for these interesting animals. If you meet a skunk, move away slowly. If it sprays, don't worry! You can take a special bath to get rid of the smell!





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## QUESTIONS ABOUT SKUNKS

1. What color are skunks?

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2. What kind of tails do skunks have?

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3. How far can a skunk spray?

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### Sentence Starters:

- In this article we learn that \_\_\_\_\_.
- According to this text, \_\_\_\_\_.
- The author describes \_\_\_\_\_.
- This text explains that \_\_\_\_\_.
- In paragraph 2 we find out that \_\_\_\_\_.
- In paragraph 3 the author says that \_\_\_\_\_.





# Information in a Bulleted List

## LESSON 7

### Objective

Students learn that a bulleted list is a simple way to collect and review related pieces of information.

### Procedure

1. Gather the children and begin to chart a bulleted list of their names on the board. Pause and ask them to help you with your list. They should pick up on the fact that you are not charting random names, but the collection of all of the names of students in the class. Ask them what **TOPIC** you should list on the top that “umbrellas” your list. (Our Class)
2. Explain that oftentimes when researching they’ll come across a bulleted list. Define the bullet as a heavy dot that precedes each word in a list of related items.
3. Beside your class list, write the following **TOPIC: Living Things**. Have individual students come up and add a bullet followed by the name of a living thing. Point out that they’ve created a bulleted list.
4. Photocopy, project, and distribute Information in a Bulleted List, p. 303. Walk students through the activity, leading them to identify the **TOPIC (mammals)** and guiding them in adding to the bulleted list. If a student isn’t sure if a creature is a mammal, ask the class how to find out for certain. (Create a research question and look online.)
5. Finally, MODEL how they can create sentences that incorporate information from the bulleted list into informative sentences, using sentence starters.

**Ex.** *An example of an African mammal is the giraffe.*

*This list of mammals includes the domesticated dog.*

6. To close the lesson, ask students some practical times they might make a bulleted list. (homework, grocery list, steps in a recipe, etc.)

### LESSON AT A GLANCE:

#### Whole Class Activity

- Introduce a simple bulleted list.
- MODEL creating sentences using keywords from the list.
- GUIDED PRACTICE.



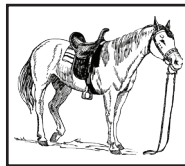
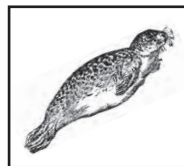
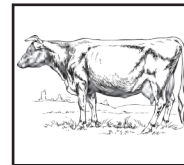
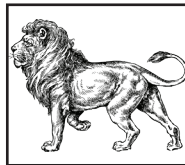
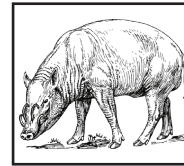
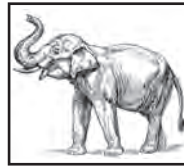
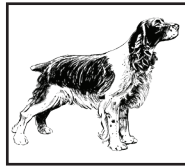
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## INFORMATION IN A BULLETED LIST

Sometimes information can be presented in a bulleted list. A **bullet** is a dot placed in front of each item on the list. Look at the details in the bulleted list, below. What do you suppose is the TOPIC that umbrellas this list? Read the list, fill in the TOPIC, and add several more bulleted items to the list. (*Hint: each animal on the bulleted list gives birth to live young.*)

TOPIC: \_\_\_\_\_

- dogs
- elephants
- pigs
- deer
- lions
- giraffes
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_



Now, using the sentence starters, write several sentences based on the information on this list.

**Sentence Starters:**

- An example of a mammal would be \_\_\_\_\_.
- The list also includes \_\_\_\_\_.
- A \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_.
- Another example \_\_\_\_\_.
- Bullet point three highlights \_\_\_\_\_.
- This list of mammals \_\_\_\_\_.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



# Theme in Literature

## Teacher Background:

### Theme in Literature – What’s it All About?

The characters, motivation, problems, challenges, and adventures described through story action all generally point to the theme of a narrative piece of writing. ***The theme is the abstract idea that drives the action and character development and is usually an ideal held in high esteem by the author.*** The main character’s interaction with other characters often raises questions about theme. In addition, the setting can influence or forward the theme. An example of this would be a story about a camping trip that will require *perseverance* on the part of the main character. A harsh natural landscape and stormy weather would add to the challenge and serve to show how perseverance is a necessity for survival.

Below you will find a list of common literary themes. As you look through the list, think of stories you’ve read that seem to embrace each ideal or theme:

#### COMMON LITERARY THEMES

- |                          |                          |               |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| • Courage                | • Perseverance           | • Cooperation |
| • Compassion             | • Honesty                | • Kindness    |
| • Responsibility         | • Loyalty                | • Forgiveness |
| • Hard Work              | • Learning from Mistakes | • Friendship  |
| • Being True to Yourself | • Importance of Family   |               |

An easy way to explore the idea of “theme” is through fables. Sometimes fables demonstrate a simple lesson, but often that lesson is rooted in a more abstract theme. Arnold Lobel’s [Fables](#) are perfect for this purpose.

#### IMPORTANT TIPS:

In addition, posting a chart of **Common Literary Themes** for student reference is helpful. Have children review these every time they read fiction and discuss what the theme might be. Then, refer to the detail-generating questions: **What Does it Look Like?** **Why is that Important?** and apply these to the story theme you’ve identified. For example, if you think the theme is “loyalty,” what does loyalty look like? Why is it important in the story? This will help point to the evidence in the text that will support what the reader sees as the theme. If evidence cannot be found, you’ve likely identified the wrong theme.





## COMMON LITERARY THEMES

- Courage
- Perseverance
- Cooperation
- Compassion
- Honesty
- Kindness
- Loyalty
- Responsibility
- Appreciating what you have
- Forgiveness
- The Value of Hard Work
- Learning from Mistakes
- Determination
- Being True to Yourself
- Importance of Family
- Friendship

*Can you think of any others?*



# Student Reference Page

## FRAMING QUESTIONS FOR READING AND RESPONDING TO LITERATURE

- Who is the **main character**? (*point of view character or protagonist*)
- Where is the **story** set?
- What is the main character's **problem, challenge, or adventure**?
- What does the main character want?
- Where does the author use **suspense**?
- How does the main character **feel** about the situation?
- How does the main character **show** his/her feelings?
- How was the **main event** resolved?
- **What would you do** if faced with a similar challenge or adventure?