

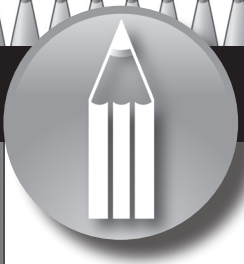


Grade 4 Informational Writing Guide

Student Pages for Print or Projection

SECTION 1: Recognizing Genre/Organization

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Student Page

Name: _____

NARRATIVE, INFORMATIONAL, OR OPINION?

Read the following paragraphs. Determine whether each paragraph is Narrative, Informational, or Opinion. Circle your response.

1. As I crept through the garden, I heard a cat hiss and felt the chill of an angry wind at my back. “You can do this,” I told myself. My hands were shaking as I snapped the magical pumpkin from its vine. “Hold it right there,” came an angry voice from the darkness. I started to run and the heavy pumpkin slipped from my grasp.

Narrative

Informational

Opinion

2. In my opinion, oatmeal is the most delicious and nutritious breakfast there is. It’s warm and it fills you up better than cold cereal. It’s amazing how many different ways you can serve it. Many people like to sprinkle their oatmeal with cinnamon and mix it with applesauce. Other people enjoy their hot cereal with brown sugar and sliced bananas. Served with fruit or just with milk and sugar, oatmeal is the world’s best treat on a blustery winter morning. Don’t you agree?

Narrative

Informational

Opinion

3. The rainforest has four levels. At the very top is the *emergent layer*, where the tallest trees tower above all the others and get most of the sunlight. Then the tops of all the other trees form the thick *canopy*. The branches of the trees in the canopy are usually covered with vines that provide camouflage for many rainforest birds. The next level is called the *under story* and it is a dark place where young trees as well as plants that need little light grow. The last level is the *forest floor*, which is even darker than the under story and covered with fallen branches, leaves, seeds and fruits.

Narrative

Informational

Opinion



Name: _____

INFORMATIONAL, OPINION, OR RESPONSE TO TEXT?

Read the following paragraphs. Determine whether each paragraph is Informational, Opinion, or Response to Text. Circle your response.

1. Building a house is a complicated process. First, a plot of land must be located on which a home can be built. An architect draws a plan that shows every nook and cranny of the proposed house, inside and out. The builder has to receive approvals from the town before beginning the build. The lot must be cleared so that large equipment can be brought in to dig the foundation and pour concrete. The house needs to be framed, walls built, and the roof raised. Electricians and plumbers must install wiring and pipes. Depending on the size of the house, the build could take six months to over a year.

Informational

Opinion

Response to Text

2. In the text titled Goldendoodles the author discusses the history of this hybrid “designer dog.” We learn that this crossbreed was introduced in 1992 by breeding Golden Retrievers with Standard Poodles. The author explains that “the combination of the gentle disposition of the Golden with the intelligence of the Standard Poodle results in a highly desirable family pet.” Due to the popularity of this breed, we learn, on page 2, about GANA – the Goldendoodle Association of North America, whose goal is to establish reliability in Goldendoodles’ coats, type, health, and temperament.

Informational

Opinion

Response to Text

3. While there are exciting and entertaining outdoor activities during each season of the year, in my view, summer provides the very best opportunities to be active outside. There’s nothing better than a swim in the lake or a plunge in the ocean during a day at the beach. I love every imaginable water sport, from swimming and diving to kayaking, boogie boarding, and paddle boarding. The warm sun on my shoulders and the refreshing splash of cool water makes a summer afternoon what I long for throughout all four seasons. Planning a picnic at the park, a hike in the woods, or a bike ride on a nature trail are best enjoyed during the summer. Winter sledding and skiing may be fun, but what can beat all of the opportunities available during June, July, and August, when school is mostly out, and the days are long?

Informational

Opinion

Response to Text



IS THAT A FACT OR AN OPINION?

At first, it might be challenging to tell informational writing and opinion writing apart. After all, the two types of writing are organized in much the same way with introductions and conclusions as well as main ideas (informational) or main reasons (opinion).

Here are some hints to help you tell the two apart.

Informational writing focuses on facts that inform you. Facts can be checked in books or online. For example:

1. There are five Great Lakes in North America.
2. The Komodo Dragon is the largest reptile in the world.

These two sentences would likely be found in informational texts.

While opinion writing may include facts, its purpose is to communicate an author's personal opinion on a topic. You could agree or disagree with it. For example:

1. Of the five Great Lakes in North America, Lake Superior is the most beautiful.
2. I think the Komodo Dragon is the most fearsome creature in all of Indonesia.

These two sentences present statements that you could agree or disagree with. They would likely be found in opinion writing.

So, as a general rule, when you're trying to decide if text is informational or opinion, just ask yourself:

- Does this sentence say something that I could check in a book or online? If so, it's probably a fact.
- Does this sentence say something I could agree or disagree with? If so, it's probably an opinion.

Here's another hint: Sentences that use phrases like "the best," "the worst," "the most," and "the least" are likely to be stating opinions. Words like "everybody," "nobody," "never," and "always" should alert you to that you are probably reading somebody's opinion.

1. The **best** way to celebrate your birthday is with a pool party.
2. The **most beautiful** flower in the world is the red rose.
3. Baseball is the **least** exciting sport in the world.
4. The **worst** vegetable of all is Brussels sprouts.

Remember: Opinion writing will include facts but informational writing should not include opinions.



Student Reference Page

SENTENCE STARTERS FOR OPINION WRITING

Pro

One thing I enjoy is _____.
My favorite _____ is _____.
I absolutely love _____.
It's easy to see why I like _____.
I really appreciate _____.
I heartily approve of _____.
I get really excited when _____.
I feel positive about _____.
There's nothing I'd rather do than _____.
I look forward to _____.
I am in favor of _____.
I adore _____.
I'm very impressed by _____.
I strongly support _____.
I'm fond of _____.

Con

One thing I dislike is _____.
My least favorite _____ is _____.
I absolutely hate _____.
It's easy to see why I dislike _____.
I just can't appreciate _____.
I completely disapprove of _____.
I get very disappointed when _____.
I feel negative about _____.
There's nothing I'd like to avoid more than _____.
I dread _____.
I am against _____.
I abhor _____.
I'm unimpressed by _____.
I strongly oppose _____.
I don't care for _____.

Opinion Statement

In my opinion, _____.
To me, _____.
According to my point of view _____.
My belief is that _____.
As I see it, _____.
My attitude is that _____.

My stance is that _____.
From my point of view, _____.
I think that _____.
It seems to me that _____.
My position is that _____.

Transition Words

- because
- for the reason that
- given that
- as cited by
- as demonstrated by the fact that
- since
- as evidenced by
- in view of the fact that
- as illustrated by
- as
- seeing that
- in light of the fact that
- supported by the fact that



Name: _____

STATING FACTS OR SHARING OPINIONS?

Look at the sets of sentences below. One states a fact, one shares an opinion. Write an **E** next to the sentence that states a fact. This is the kind of sentence that is meant to inform, which is the focus of informational text. Write an **O** next to the sentence that shares an opinion. This is the kind of sentence you would find in an opinion piece. The first one is done for you.

1. Vegetables are an essential part of a healthy diet.

E

Nobody likes broccoli.

O

2. Disney World is the most exciting vacation destination in the world.

Disney World is a popular vacation destination.

3. Everybody enjoys whale watching.

The Right Whale is a critically endangered species.

4. There's nothing better than going to the movies on a Friday night.

The movie Star Wars was released in 1977.

5. There are seven continents on Earth.

Of the seven continents on Earth, South America has the most fascinating history.

6. Exploration of the Antarctic began in the late 1800s.

I think the explorers who first ventured to the Antarctic were the bravest people ever.



Name: _____

READING #1

Title

Can you imagine the courage it takes to break new grounds in a faraway wilderness where animals you've never seen before roam and danger surely lurks? Do you wonder how it might feel to sail off into the horizon with no clear idea of your destination? Let's get to know the bold explorers who took on these unfathomable challenges to set foot on the Americas, the islands of the South Pacific, and the unforgiving Arctic for the very first time.

Few people realize that Christopher Columbus was not the first European to see the Americas. Leif Ericson, an explorer from Iceland, is considered the first. But Erickson never documented his journey so Columbus takes the credit for discovering America. He set out with three ships, called the Nina, the Pinta, and the Santa Maria, on a difficult voyage that he'd hoped would take him to India. Instead, his trip ended on the Caribbean Island he named San Salvador. He made three more journeys to what he called the "New World," and is said to have landed on the eastern coasts of Florida and Mexico as well as Central and South America. Interestingly, Columbus is credited with bringing horses to the New World and the orange seed to Florida.

Captain James Cook was a British explorer who sailed to the gorgeous South Pacific and made the first maps of the area. In 1768, he set off on his first journey that took him to the tropical paradise of Tahiti where the gentle native people gave him a warm

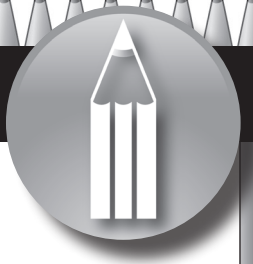


Student Page

welcome. He stopped on the East coast of Australia and brought word of the interesting animals he saw there, (including the kangaroo), back to England for the first time. On his third and final journey, Cook discovered the balmy Hawaiian Islands, but was killed by natives there. From his first voyage to his last, Cook was a very strict captain, but as a result of his firm hand, there were few accidents on his vessels.

Perhaps the boldest of all was the first explorer to venture to the icy North Pole on foot. Unfortunately, we don't know exactly who that explorer was. Could it have been Frederick A. Cook, an American doctor who says he reached the North Pole in 1908, but bad weather forced him to bunker down in an ice cave and he wasn't able to bring the news to the world until more than a year later? Cook's story was called into question by explorer Robert E. Peary who said he'd made it to the North Pole weeks before Cook. Was Cook the hero or was it Peary? That question was debated widely at the turn of the century and continues to this day. Cook's story is regarded as less credible since his claim to have been the first to reach the summit of Mount McKinley has been proven untrue.

From Columbus and Cook to the feuding duo of American arctic adventurers, explorers have a special place in our history. The question is, who are the great explorers of the future? Are they the marine biologists who dive into the unexplored depths of the ocean? Or, the astronauts who soar into space and bring back answers to our questions about other planets? Without a doubt, our world still needs people with the restless, daring spirits of explorers.



Name: _____

READING #2

Title

“And we’re off!” my dad said, smiling. He was in a good mood. Mom and I were too. Escaping a long, dreary winter, we were traveling to the Caribbean for a tropical island adventure. We were off to a good start: our plane was on time and take-off was smooth.

We settled in for the four-hour journey. Dad and Mom flipped through magazines while I started reading a book about Captain James Cook. I loved explorers and Cook was one of my favorites. He sailed the South Pacific in the 1800s. I envied him his adventures, but wished there was an unexplored corner of the world left for me to discover. I was reading about Cook’s landing on the island of Hawaii when the voice of the flight attendant rang out: “Prepare for landing.”

Hello, sun and fun! The island smelled like gardenias and the beach was gorgeous. I couldn’t get enough of the warm, clear waters and the fine, white sand. I was laying on that soft sand in the shade of a lime green umbrella when I finished my book about Captain Cook. I started daydreaming about finding an uncharted island of my own to explore. There I was: standing on the deck of my simple wooden ship, sails billowing in the wind and shouting “Land ho,” as I pointed to the horizon. My ship inched closer and closer to an island where Palm trees danced in the breeze and cute little monkeys swayed from vines...

“Elizabeth? Earth to Elizabeth.” It was my mother’s voice, dragging me back to reality. “What do you say we go snorkeling?”

“Sure,” I said. “Great idea!”



Student Page

It was a great idea indeed. Immersed in quiet of the underwater world, I took in the wonders surrounding me. Sea stars on the ocean floor looked like sunflowers in full bloom. A manta ray fluttered by, its velvety wings brushing against my leg. A pair of sea horses peeked out at me from a garden of sea grasses. A huge, green sea turtle swam past, its wrinkled face looking like a relic from a peaceful past. Tiny fish in every color of the rainbow twirled and drifted all around me.

Suddenly I felt a tap on my arm. I swung around and came face-to-face with a smiling bottlenose dolphin. He looked deep into my eyes and I got the funny feeling he'd been waiting for me.

He tapped his beak on my arm again and jerked his head in the direction of the open sea. The message was clear: follow me.

Should I? I definitely wanted to, but I felt a little uneasy. This dolphin seemed to have singled me out. Why?

He tapped his beak on my arm impatiently and gestured once again. I couldn't resist. I followed.

Time seemed to stop as I swam behind the dolphin. Further and further from shore we went, into deeper and deeper waters until I lost sight of the sea floor. There was a shadowy darkness below me and the silence seemed almost eerie.

Our journey back into the shallow water was quick. The dolphin led me to where he'd found me, clicked me a quick goodbye and headed back out into the deep waters.

It wasn't until later that day, as I sat on the beach watching the sunset, that I finally understood what the dolphin had been trying to tell me. There was a whole other world lying deep beneath the waves, teeming with all sorts of unknown life and waiting to be discovered. That's what I'd been looking for! That's what I could explore!

As the sun melted into a pink glow on the horizon, I saw a dolphin jump joyfully from the water and I knew that my adventures were just beginning.



Name: _____

Bears

It's hard to believe that these large, often ferocious relatives of the dog, raccoon, and panda are the inspiration for millions of cuddly soft stuffed toys! There are many kinds of bears, living in numerous places the world over. Their behavior and shared traits fascinate their human neighbors all around the globe.

Kinds of Bears and Where They Live

Many kinds of bears can be found in a wide variety of places, mostly in wild mountain, forest, and arctic areas. In fact, bears inhabit every continent except Africa, Antarctica, and Australia. The largest bear, the **Kodiak**, which weighs almost a ton is found in the

wilderness and wide open grasslands of Alaska. The Kodiak is related to the **Grizzly**. Grizzly bears, with their dark fur edged in white, live in many areas of the United States and Canada.

Brown Bears, which are smaller than the Kodiak and Grizzly, and the **North American Black Bear** (which isn't always black, but brown, white, gold, even bluish tinted) also live in the United States and Canada.

The coast of the Arctic Ocean is home to the distinctive white **Polar Bear**, thriving in the snow and ice. Asia is where the slow-moving **Sloth Bear** is

found, with its short black fur and bib of light colored fur.

Common Traits

What do all bears have in common? Scientists group them into a family of creatures called **Ursidae**. All bears are classified as **caniforms** meaning "dog-like" creatures. They have long snouts and **non-retractable** claws, just as dogs do.



Grizzly bear
(about 8 ft. long)



Of course, bears are larger than dogs. These large furry mammals have thick, weighty bodies and can stand on their hind legs. You can recognize bears by their rather squared off snouts, short rounded ears, and short stubby tails. Their feet are similar to human feet, complete with a heel and a sole. In fact, bears' hind feet also have five toes. Their long curved sharp claws are used to tear food and to move nimbly - they can even climb trees. Bears are **carnivores** meaning that they eat mostly meat. This is why they have numerous large teeth that can grind,



Polar bear at home in the snow and ice

crush, and tear meat. However, bears also eat vegetation.

Bear Behavior

Bear's behavior has always interested people. Some bears **hibernate**, retreating to their dens, doing without food, and entering a deep sleep state in which their **metabolism** (body function) slows down dramatically. These large animals, which may appear rather clumsy and slow, are actually very fast runners. A mother bear may charge at any threat to her cubs, human or animal. In order to fuel their hefty bodies bears must eat a lot. They've been known to raid campsites and cottages, **foraging** or digging through supplies and trash in order to find something edible. Bears also love

honey and have no problem batting down a bee's nest, swiping at it with their claws, and scooping out gobs of thick, sweet, honey. Their thick fur makes it difficult for bees to sting them, although bears gladly endure stings in order to eat the bee larvae in the honey. These amazing creatures communicate through a complicated **marking system** in which they claw, gnaw, or chew at tree trunks as a means of warning other bears to stay clear of their territory.

In your world travels, if you ever find yourself in a National Park, or hiking in a nature preserve, keep your eyes open for a member of the Ursidae family. If you spot any type of bear, stay calm and move quietly away. These beautiful, yet sometimes menacing creatures, and the habitats they live in certainly deserve our respect.



Name: _____

Scarecrows, Yesterday and Today

Drive through your neighborhood in October, and chances are you'll see a straggly bunch of hay-stuffed scarecrows surrounded by pumpkins and haystacks, slumping across porches and hitched up on front lawns. But besides being a favorite part of autumn décor, scarecrows have served a long and useful role in the lives of people all over the world. Let's take a look at the history of scarecrows, the various kinds of scarecrows, and at the ways we celebrate scarecrows nowadays.



A scarecrow perched in fields

The Need for Scarecrows

Thousands of years ago when people began to plant crops instead of hunting and gathering wild foods they realized they needed to protect their harvest from birds and animals. Anyone who has a garden knows that not only birds, but rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, even foxes and bears can venture in and in a single evening eat all of the food! At first people probably hid around their fields and jumped out to scare away any varmints that decided to dine there. In fact, in England and other places, people hired children to be **bird shooers**. Bird shooers or bird scarers had special wooden gadgets called **clappers** that they'd shake and smack together. The racket they made would scare the critters away. The problem was, people would get

tired sitting by the field. They'd get distracted or fall asleep, allowing the hungry animals to have a feast. So, it became clear that another solution was necessary. They needed bird scarers who could frighten away birds and animals at all hours of the day and night. Soon the idea of fooling the crop stealers with **mannequins** or models of people made from wood and cloth caught on. Historians say that the scarecrow's history goes back at least 3,000 years and that they have been used all over the world to protect grain, vegetables and fruits from birds and animals.

Scarecrows around the World

You can find scarecrows just about anyplace people grow food! In ancient Egypt people planted wheat along the shore of the Nile River. Plump birds called

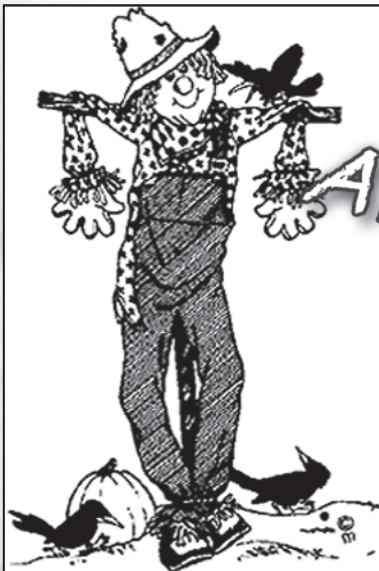


Student Page

quail would fly in and eat the grain. Farmers began to place wooden stakes in the ground hung with nets that flapped in the wind. The movement would frighten some of the quails, but others persisted in eating the wheat. The Egyptian farmers would hide and scare the quails into the nets. Then they'd capture the quail and eat them for dinner. These ancient net contraptions were perhaps the first scarecrows. The Greeks fashioned wooden life-sized statues to look like their god of the gardens, **Priapus**, who

had a frightening angry appearance. They placed these Priapus statues in their vineyards to frighten off birds and animals. In Japan, farmers protected their rice fields by hanging old clothes and rags, rotting meat and fishbones to tall poles. The wind moved these around, frightening any would-be diners – and if the motion didn't discourage them the smell would! These smelly scarecrows were called **Kakashis**. In Italy during the Middle Ages, between the years 1154-1485, farmers placed animal skulls on the end

of a post to scare away critters. During this same time period German farmers crafted wooden witches to stand guard in their fields. When German immigrants came to the U.S. in the 1800's they made scarecrows they called **bootzamon** or the **bogeyman**. These scarecrows were dressed very much like farmers, in overalls and an old coat or shirt, its head covered in a floppy hat, the body stuffed with hay, a red bandana tied around its neck. Clearly, these influenced our image of what scarecrows look like.



Scarecrow Names Around the World

America: Scarecrow

England: Hayman

Greece: Priapus

Italy: Spaventapasseri

Japan: Kakashis

Malaysia: Orang-orang

Philippines: Tao-tao

Scotland: Tattybogle



Fun with Scarecrows

Scarecrows seem to have captured the imaginations of people all over the world, as evidenced by the many scarecrow celebrations that take place. Arts and craftspeople, both professional and amateur, enjoy gathering old clothes, rags, and stuffing in order to make their own scarecrows, just for fun. Some find creative materials such as pumpkins and gourds for their heads, and use paint and other materials to create expressive faces. People display these in front of their houses in the autumn or use them as part of their Halloween displays. Scarecrows are the inspiration for fall festivals all over the world. Edmonton, Alberta, in Canada hosts a Scarecrow Festival every October.

Guests come in Halloween costumes and are treated to games, face-painting, and story-telling. Of course, scarecrows are displayed and enjoyed by over 10,000 visitors who attend each year. The Annual Scarecrow Festival in West Kilbride, Scotland, featured a competition for the best hand-made scarecrow. Likewise, at the Scarecrow Festival in St. Charles, Illinois, spectators can see scores of unique and creative scarecrows, while enjoying music, dancing, and fun. These are just a few of the

thousands of scarecrow celebrations people flock to throughout the autumn season.

This fall, as you walk through your neighborhood or take drive in the country, see if you can spot a scarecrow. Think about their long and interesting history, imagine their counterparts all over the world, and perhaps plan on a little fall fun by making a scarecrow of your own. Scarecrows have certainly been a source of creativity and necessity for thousands of years.



A group of hand-made scarecrows on display at local festival



Name: _____

YOU BE THE EDITOR!

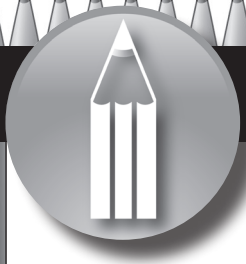
Imagine you're the editor of a science magazine for kids. Your assistant sent you this article, but forgot some of the most important parts that will help the reader learn from the text. Your job is to provide the missing parts.

1. Read the entire piece. What is the **topic** – in other words, what is the text **all about**?

Is this an informational or opinion piece? How do you know?

2. Based on the **topic**, create a **title** for this piece that will help the reader figure out what they'll be learning about. Write your title, in large print, across the top of the article.
3. Number each paragraph.
4. Circle the **introduction**.
5. Bracket the **body** of the piece.
6. Box the **conclusion**.
7. Read the first paragraph in the body of the piece (*paragraph 2*). It is missing a **heading** that tells the reader what the entire paragraph is about. Identify the main idea in order to create a heading and write it in the blank at the beginning of the paragraph. Do the same thing for paragraphs 3 and 4.
8. Read paragraph 1 again. The writer has forgotten to italicize or bold the **key vocabulary words**. Use the diagram in the middle of the page to help you identify these key vocabulary words. Underline these words to help the reader.
9. Insert **captions** beneath the diagram and the photo to explain what the reader is looking at.
10. Scan the remaining paragraphs and underline any key vocabulary words that should have appeared in bold or italicized print.
11. Fill in the summarizing framework, below.

<p>TOPIC: _____</p> <p>MAIN IDEA #1: _____</p> <p>MAIN IDEA #2: _____</p> <p>MAIN IDEA #3: _____</p>
--



Title _____

You've all seen how someone cracks open an egg when cooking or baking. What's inside an egg? Clearly, there's a yellow part and a clear part. But do you know the other important things about that egg that help a chick grow and hatch?

Heading:

Let's look closely at everything inside an egg. The clear liquid part is called the white or albumin. The albumin protects the yolk (yellow part of the egg) and provides nutrition for the developing chick. There is also a thin

white skin or lining called the shell membrane that protects the egg from bacteria that might harm the egg. At the wider end of the egg there is an air space

that forms when the egg is laid. There also may be a small white spot on the yolk. This white spot could be the beginning of a chick!

Heading:

If a fertilized egg is kept warm, many changes will take place

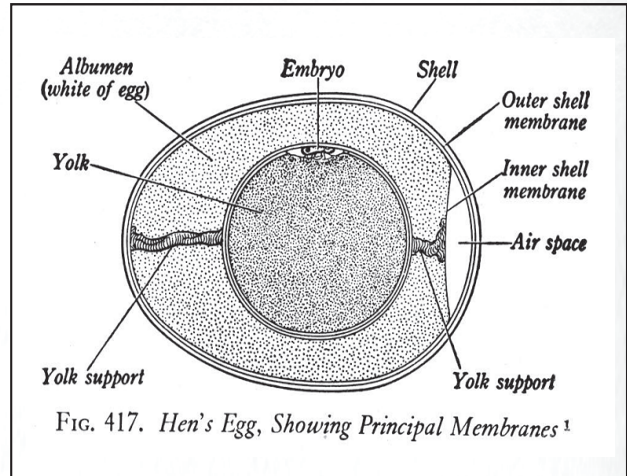


FIG. 417. Hen's Egg, Showing Principal Membranes¹

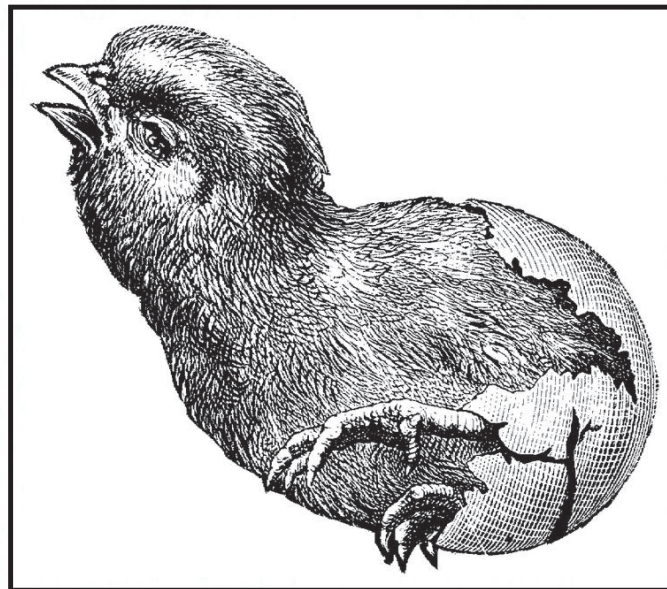
inside the shell. The white spot will get bigger and bigger. It becomes a group of cells that will multiply and grow into a chick. This group of cells is called the embryo. The heart, blood vessels, and eyes begin to form. Soon the chick's head, body, and legs start to appear. A clear pouch called the amniotic sac surrounds and protects the embryo. Soon feathers begin to sprout.



Heading:

In three weeks the chick will hatch. Hatching requires a lot of hard work on the part of the chick. They must stretch and move against the hard shell. They use something called an egg tooth to make a crack in the shell. The egg tooth is a sharp white cap on the end of the beak that helps the chick poke a hole in the shell. Once that is accomplished

the egg tooth falls off. The shell quivers and breaks open a little at a time as the chick works on opening the shell. The chick breathes heavily with the exertion it takes to

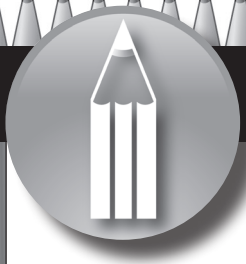


push apart the shell. The chick usually starts peeping before

it's emerged. When it finally hatches the chick is wet and cold. It needs to warm up beside the mother hen. Sometimes farmers keep chicks warm with a heated cage called an incubator.

Soon the chick will grow into a hen or rooster and the cycle, from the simplest cell inside the shell, to an embryo, to a newly hatched

chick, will begin again. So, what do you think comes first – the chicken, or the egg?



Student Reference Page

INFORMATIONAL PILLAR

INTRODUCTION
Lead/Topic Sentence

Main Idea #1 _____

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

Main Idea #2 _____

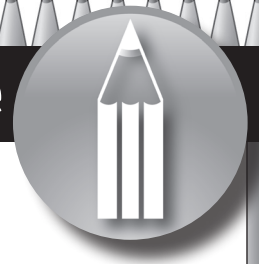
Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

Main Idea #3 _____

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

Conclusion

Informational Summarizing Framework
 TOPIC: _____
 MAIN IDEA #1: _____
 MAIN IDEA #2: _____
 MAIN IDEA #3: _____



OPINION PILLAR

INTRODUCTION

Lead/Opinion Statement

Main Reason #1 _____

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

Main Reason #2 _____

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

Main Reason #3 _____

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

Conclusion

Creative Restatements of Main Reasons

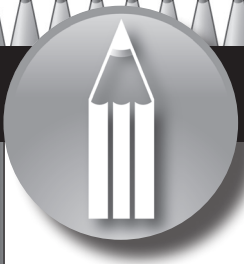
Opinion Summarizing Framework

TOPIC: _____

MAIN REASON #1: _____

MAIN REASON #2: _____

MAIN REASON #3: _____



Student Page

Name: _____

SIAMESE CATS

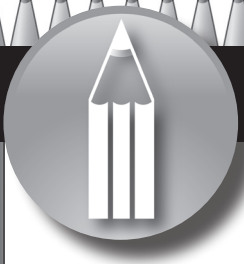
One of the oldest cat breeds in the world, the Siamese cat is a popular pet in the United States today. Let's learn more about the regal history, elegant appearance and unique needs of this charming breed.

Siamese cats were brought to America from Thailand back when it was called Siam. It is believed that the royal family of Siam kept these exotic felines as pets and that they were sometimes used to guard ancient temples. The breed arrived in America in 1878 when a Siamese cat was given as a gift to the wife of President Rutherford Hayes, who was a well-known cat lover. Mrs. Hayes said that the "mahogany-colored feline enjoyed making grand entrances" when she was entertaining at the White House. By the early 1900s, Siamese cats were exhibited in American cat shows.

These beautiful animals are known for their distinctive appearance. They move gracefully with their tails held high as though they know just how lovely they are. The royal cats of Siam have sparkling, bright blue eyes with a slight slant that adds to their exotic appearance. They have short, cream colored fur that darkens to a rich chocolate brown on their ears, face and toes. This elegant breed takes good care of its slim, muscular body so that it needs very little extra grooming. In some Siamese, the bright eyes are closely set and they can appear cross-eyed.

Unlike most cats, a Siamese is not an independent creature. They crave the company of their owners and will meow loudly and persistently to get it. If left alone too often, they are likely to get into mischief. I know of a Siamese who shredded a large quilt with its claws one lonely afternoon. All are capable of such destructive behavior, so be prepared to spend lots of time playing with your pet. Like a dog in a cat body, some even play fetch and most can be trained to walk on a leash.

With their interesting history and undeniable beauty, Siamese cats can be great companions to those who understand their unique needs. They are an excellent choice for people who have lots of time to devote to a pet.



Student Page

Name: _____

SIAMESE CATS

1. This is an example of what kind of writing? Circle one:

Informational Opinion

2. Number each paragraph.

3. Circle the **introduction**.

4. Box the **conclusion**.

5. Circle the **title** and identify the **topic**.

6. Underline the **lead** in red.

7. Underline the **topic sentence** in blue.

8. Underline each **MAIN IDEA** sentence. Write a blurb (a word or two) in the margin next to the paragraph explaining what the entire paragraph is about.

9. Read this detail: *Owners will need to spend a great deal of time at home so their furry friends don't get depressed.*

Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # _____

10. What word referent for "cat" is used to describe the Siamese in the second paragraph? _____

11. Number the references to each main idea restated in the conclusion. Use paragraph numbers.

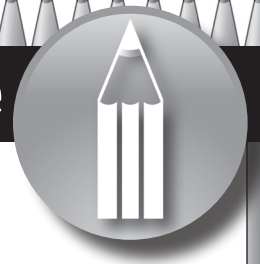
12. Fill in the summarizing framework/author's prewriting plan:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____



Name: _____

THE UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL SIAMESE

There is no doubt that dogs, big or small, make wonderful pets. However, I believe cats are an equally good choice. My absolute favorite is the regal Siamese cat. After all, who wouldn't love a pet with an elegant beauty, a melodic voice and a loving nature?

Once you see the gorgeous blue-eyes of a Siamese, you will surely agree that this is a majestically beautiful animal. Its short, silky fur is cream-colored with rich brown highlights around the face, toes and ears. I love the proud way they walk with their heads and tails held high. I also appreciate their good grooming habits. Shedding is never a problem with a Siamese and they always keep their fur very clean.

Siamese are not only lovely to look at, but they've got surprisingly expressive voices. These cats will yowl and meow to let you know when they need food or attention. It is amazing how effectively they communicate with their people. It is very hard to understand why some people find the vocalizations of Siamese shrill and annoying. Even at top volume, my cat's voice is nothing less than music to my ears!

With a Siamese, you will never be lonely. More than any other pet, these cats crave your company. I enjoy the way my Siamese cuddles up on my lap and looks at me with adoration in her eyes. Agile and energetic, they'll play with you for hours and you can even teach them to walk on a leash. But the absolute worst thing you can do is leave your Siamese at home alone too often. They will surely become restless and anxious which can result in all sorts of destructive behavior.

Do you appreciate exotic beauty? Can you tolerate a noisy pet? Do you have lots of time to devote to your cat? If you answered yes to these three questions, a Siamese is definitely the pet for you. Without a doubt, these big-mouthed beauties are just as loyal and loving to their owners as any dog.



Name: _____

THE UNIQUE AND BEAUTIFUL SIAMESE

1. This is an example of what kind of writing? Circle one:
Informational Opinion
2. Number each paragraph.
3. Circle the **introduction**.
4. Box the **conclusion**.
5. Circle the **title** and identify the **topic**.
6. Underline the **lead** in red.
7. Underline the **author's position** in blue.
8. Underline each **MAIN REASON** sentence. Write a blurb (a word or two) in the margin next to the paragraph explaining what the entire paragraph is about.
9. Circle all of the **opinion language**.
10. Number the references to each main idea restated in the conclusion. Use paragraph numbers.
11. Fill in the summarizing framework/author's prewriting plan:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN REASON #1: _____

MAIN REASON #2: _____

MAIN REASON #3: _____



Student Page

Name: _____

A LONGER SCHOOL DAY?

Our school board is discussing a plan to add an hour to our school days. If this happens, we would stay at school until 4 PM every single day. I am opposed to this plan because it would leave us with little time to spend with our families and enjoy the activities we need to stay physically fit.

I certainly agree that learning is important, but so is family time. If we leave school at 4, it will be nearly dinnertime before we arrive at home. We will not have a minute to relax before we need to help prepare the meal and set the table. Then, we will eat our food in a rush so that we have time to help clean up and do our homework before bedtime. Dinner hour is supposed to be a time to catch up with your family members and tell them about your day. It loses its value when it is hurried and stressful. As Robin Fox, a professor at Rutgers University in New Jersey says, “Sharing a meal with loved ones should be considered a special event that can almost take on the form of a ritual or ceremony, as it was practiced by our ancestors for whom finding food was a constant struggle.”

Everybody knows that exercise is vital to good health. But did you know that many research studies have shown that exercise improves memory and learning? It is too bad that, on an average school day, we spend most of our time sitting at a desk or in front of a computer. It is during those after-school hours that most of us get our exercise. I enjoy a bike ride or a hike in the woods after school. My friend Brianna takes ballet in the late afternoon and my brother has an after school karate class. This is also the time when sports teams have all of their practices and some of their games. Would we have enough time for these activities if we stayed at school until 4? In my opinion, certainly not. In fact, during the winter months dusk would already be falling by the time we left school, so even if we could squeeze in some time for exercise, we’d be limited to indoor activities.

Do you enjoy relaxing family dinners? Is physical fitness important to you? If so, you will surely agree with me when I say extending the school day by an hour is not a good idea!



Student Page

Name: _____

A LONGER SCHOOL DAY?

1. This is an example of what kind of writing? Circle one:

Informational Opinion

2. Number each paragraph.

3. Circle the **introduction**.

4. Box the **conclusion**.

5. Circle the **title**.

6. Underline the **lead** in red.

7. Underline the **topic sentence** in blue.

8. Underline each **MAIN REASON**. Write a blurb (a word or two) in the margin next to the paragraph explaining what the entire paragraph is about.

9. Read this detail: *Kids who get regular exercise are less likely to have behavior problems in the classroom too.*

Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # _____

10. Circle the opinion language throughout the piece.

11. Number the references to each main idea restated in the conclusion. Use paragraph numbers.

12. Fill in the summarizing framework/author's prewriting plan:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN REASON #1: _____

MAIN REASON #2: _____

MAIN REASON #3: _____



Name: _____

THE HONEY BADGER

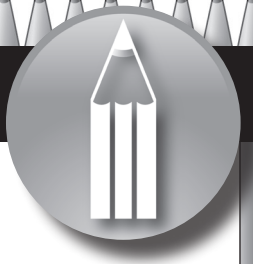
Picture yourself in the golden grasslands of Africa. As you watch from a safe distance, a group of six young lions chase down an animal that looks a lot like a big skunk. You think it's all over for the black and white beast. Think again. Growling with rage, it lashes out at the cats with long, sharp claws. Now you're guessing the lions wish they'd never tangled with a honey badger! Considered to be the most fearless animal in the world, the honey badger never backs down from a battle. Not only will this gutsy brute take on animals twice its size, but it will "skunk" you in the blink of an eye, ignore bee stings, and can even bounce back from a cobra bite.

With a thick stripe of white fur down its back, the honey badger not only looks like a skunk, but smells like one too! These nasty weasels can unleash a stink bomb that smells worse than the spray of a skunk. A single badger claims a territory of up to 200 square miles for itself and marks it with its disgusting odor. One sniff and you'll get the message: stay away, far away.

A swarm of angry bees won't stop the bold badger when he's craving honey! It doesn't think twice about raiding a buzzing beehive because its thick, leathery skin protects it from stings. Amazingly, they can be stung over and over again without flinching. Beekeepers find it very difficult to protect their hives from these crafty weasels who've been known to pick locks, escape from traps and tunnel under fencing to attack a hive.

A snake bite? No problem. It's all in a day's work for the honey badger as it hunts down one of its favorite meals: cobra. Incredibly, honey badgers can survive snake bites that would kill humans, and scientists aren't sure exactly why. Some believe that the mildly venomous bee stings help them build up an immunity to the stronger toxins of snakes. Others think that the snake's fangs can't penetrate the badger's thick skin deeply enough to deliver a serious bite. Whichever the case, even the worst snake bite will just cause the badger to fall deeply asleep for a while and wake up fully recovered.

Who would want to mess with a honey badger? With the ability to unleash a cloud of sickening scent, withstand bee stings and chow down on venomous snakes, the brash beast seems more like a monster than a flesh-and-blood mammal. Without a doubt, the honey badger deserves the title of "World's Most Fearless Animal."



Name: _____

THE HONEY BADGER

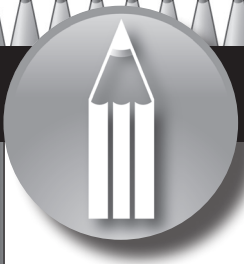
1. This is an example of what kind of writing? Circle one:
Informational Opinion
2. Number each paragraph.
3. Circle the **introduction**.
4. Box the **conclusion**.
5. Circle the **title** and note the **topic**.
6. Underline the **lead** in red.
7. Underline the **topic sentence** in blue.
8. Underline each **MAIN IDEA**. Write a blurb (a word or two) in the margin next to the paragraph explaining what the entire paragraph is about.
9. Read this detail: *To the honey badger, the stings are a small price to pay for the tasty meal of bee larvae found within the honey.*
Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # _____
10. Circle the word referents in paragraphs 1 and 3.
11. Number the references to each main idea restated in the conclusion. Use paragraph numbers.
12. Fill in the summarizing framework/author's prewriting plan:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____



Student Page

Name: _____

OPAL AND ME

One of the reasons we enjoy certain books is that we relate to the main character. We understand how the character thinks and feels because there are times and events in our lives that are similar in some ways to events in the book. I loved the book “Because of Winn-Dixie” by Kate DeCamillo. The main character, India Opal Buloni, was like me in a number of ways. We are both kind to animals. Like Opal, (Her dad calls her by her middle name) I sometimes pray when I’m worried, and we can be convincing when we are trying to persuade someone. These are the reasons that I understood Opal and cared about what happened to her in the story.

It is clear that Opal is an animal lover. The story begins when she meets a dirty, smelly dog in the Winn-Dixie supermarket. The dog caused a commotion in the store and the manager wanted to call the dog pound to get rid of him. Opal steps in and says the dog belongs to her and brings him home, simply because she couldn’t stand to see the poor dog hurt. At home she bathed him, brushed his coat, and fed him until he was healthy again. Then she named him Winn-Dixie. I would do the same thing. Throughout the years I’ve rescued a bird with a broken wing, a baby squirrel with a chewed up ear, and a skinny abandoned kitten. I brought them all home and convinced my mom to take them to the vet. I learned how to feed the bird with an eye dropper, and how to clean the squirrel’s infected ear with a long cotton swab. I fed the kitten and played with her every day. We eventually set the bird and squirrel free and the kitten became our family cat that we called Buddy.

Another trait Opal and I share is our need to pray when we’re worried. In chapter five Opal prays for her mom. She also prays for the mouse that Winn-Dixie caught in church. Opal talked to God about how lonely she felt in her new town. Likewise, when I get in bed at night and turn off the light I take some time to pray. Like Opal, I pray for my family and anyone I’m concerned about. When my grandmother was sick with

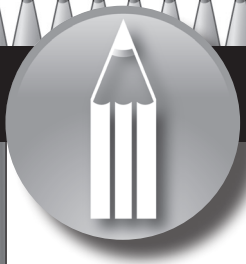
(continued)



pneumonia I prayed every night that she'd get better. I'm sure my prayers helped my bird, squirrel, and kitten recover from their injuries. Sometimes when I'm worried or sad I just tell God about it, just as Opal did. When my best friend Crystal moved away I'd talk about how much I missed her and how I worried that I'd never find a friend like her again. Just talking about it made me feel a little less lonely and sad.

Opal could be convincing when she put her mind to it! So can I. In chapter two I was rooting for her when she approached her dad about allowing her to keep Winn-Dixie. She used a clever argument. Knowing her dad, as a preacher, always talked about helping the less fortunate, she explained how she'd met a "less fortunate" at the store, without admitting right away it was a dog. She explained how the dog needed her and appealed to her dad's sympathy. Later, in chapter 8, she convinced Otis to give her a job at Gertrude's Pets. I managed to do the same thing with my bird, squirrel, and kitten, telling mom that she'd brought me up to respect and care for the world and all God's creatures. How could she disagree with that? Another time I convinced my Aunt Linda to let me baby-sit for my little cousin Mia. Aunt Linda is a little overprotective and doesn't like to leave Mia with a sitter. I explained to her that I'd taken a Red Cross baby-sitting course and that my mom would be home, just blocks away. I also reminded her that it was good for her to get out of the house once in a while. Pretty soon I had a regular baby-sitting job.

Throughout the book I wanted things to turn out well for Opal. I could feel her pain and worry right along with her because I understood how she thought. This is one reason I loved the book so much. I felt that Opal and I, although our lives were very different, shared a lot of similar traits – being kind to animals, turning to prayer when we're worried, and being convincing when we're trying to accomplish something. When I read the last word of this book I felt sorry the story was over – as though I was closing the book on a little piece of myself.



Student Page

Name: _____

OPAL AND ME

- Number each paragraph. Circle the introduction paragraph and box the conclusion.
What type of text is the author writing about? _____
Is this response an informational or opinion text? _____
How do you know? _____
- Put a bracket around the BODY of the piece. Underline the MAIN IDEA/REASON SENTENCE at the beginning of each body paragraph. Write a blurb (a word or two) in the margin beside each body paragraph that tells what the whole paragraph is about.
- What three traits did the author share with Opal? _____

- Each paragraph provides examples of an action that reflects a shared character trait of Opal and of the author. Underline Opal's examples in *green* and the author's examples in *blue*.
- How do you know the author actually read the book? _____

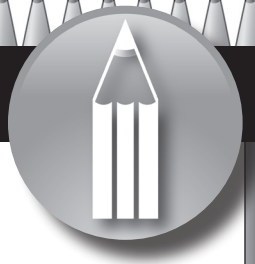
- If the author wanted to add the following detail, in which paragraph would it belong?
Opal also was able to convince Otis to come to her party and play his guitar.
Paragraph # _____
- In which paragraph would this detail belong? *My mom wound up loving Buddy just as the preacher came to love Winn-Dixie.* Paragraph # _____
- In paragraph 3, the word *likewise* is used. What does *likewise* mean? _____
- The author restates each main reason in the conclusion. Identify these by labeling them. Use numbers to refer to the corresponding paragraphs.
- Use the following framework to summarize this text:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA/REASON #1: _____

MAIN IDEA/REASON #2: _____

MAIN IDEA/REASON #3: _____



Name: _____

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

For anybody who loves nature and history, a trip to Great Smoky Mountains National Park is a must. Spanning the western reaches of North Carolina into eastern Tennessee, the park is the perfect place for hiking, fishing and learning about the Appalachian region of the United States.

For an experience you'll never forget, try hiking on one of the 800 trails in Great Smoky Mountains National Park. To challenge yourself, plan a strenuous hike up steep, rocky terrain. Or, take it easy on a trail that meanders its way through beautiful, level wilderness areas to overlooks where you can enjoy amazing views. On a hot summer day, your best choice is always a trail that takes you to a breathtaking waterfall where you can splash around and cool off. Be assured: there are many to choose from.

There is simply no better place in the world to go fishing than Great Smoky Mountains National Park. With a staggering 2,115 miles of streams within its borders, the park is one of the last places on Earth with wild trout habitats. Along with brown, rainbow and brook trout, you can catch smallmouth bass. You could hire a guide to take you to the most remote streams in the backwoods or just count on advice of helpful park rangers. Either way, you will surely enjoy the fishing adventure of a lifetime.

Without a doubt you'll find it fascinating to learn about the people who lived in the Appalachian Mountains centuries ago when you explore the historic buildings that have been preserved within the park. There are more than 80 in all, including homes, churches and barns. The most interesting is The Hannah Cabin, which was built in 1864 and has a handmade brick chimney. This tiny, rustic home was considered fancy in its day and it reminds us of how much we depend on our modern-day comforts and conveniences.

Who wouldn't want to see Great Smoky Mountains National Park? From hiking and fishing to discovering remarkable relics from the past, the park has something for everyone and a beauty all its own. Plan your trip today!



Name: _____

GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

1. This is an example of what kind of writing? Circle one:

Informational Opinion Narrative

2. Number each paragraph.

3. Circle the **introduction**.

4. Box the **conclusion**.

5. Circle the **title**.

6. Underline the **lead** in red.

7. Underline the **topic sentence** in blue.

8. Underline each MAIN REASON. Write a blurb (a word or two) in the margin next to the paragraph explaining what the entire paragraph is about.

9. Circle the opinion language throughout the piece.

10. Read this detail: *You might even see a bear along the trail; there are more than 1,500 living with the park!*

Where does this detail belong? Paragraph # _____

11. Number the references to each main idea restated in the conclusion. Use paragraph numbers.

12. Fill in the summarizing framework/author's prewriting plan:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN REASON #1: _____

MAIN REASON #2: _____

MAIN REASON #3: _____



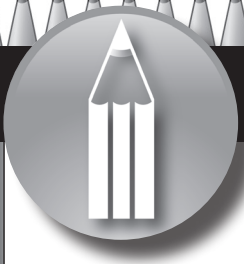
Name: _____

THE SPHYNX CAT

The Sphynx is a truly unique breed of feline. These hairless cats are highly prized the world over and are recognized by the International Cat Association and many other cat registries. Its beginnings as a breed, the special care required, and its winning personality make the Sphynx an interesting pet.

Before the late 1960's the Sphynx was not recognized as a breed. But in 1966, in Toronto, Canada, an ordinary black and white cat named Elizabeth gave birth to a very unusual kitten. The kitten was named "Prune." But the name was not the most unusual thing about this kitten! The kitten was born without hair. Every once in while a genetic mutation occurs and among a litter of regular kittens a hairless kitten might be born. Prune's owner decided to try to breed hairless cats by a process called *selective breeding*, matching hairless cats with other hairless cats. The result was a breed originally called **Canadian Hairless Cats**. The name was eventually changed to "Sphynx" in honor of a famous Egyptian Statue of a slim, stately cat looking out over the desert.

These distinctive cats look very different from ordinary cats. Though hairless, they are covered in soft fuzz. Those who run their hand along this sleek feline's back might describe it as feeling like a warm peach, or a suede-covered hot water bottle! They come in all colors, solid and spotted, the color appearing as pigment on the skin itself. Without fur their flesh appears loose and wrinkly. These medium- sized cats are hardy and energetic. Their ears and eyes seem larger than those of a regular cat, but that's because they appear more prominent without all the fur.

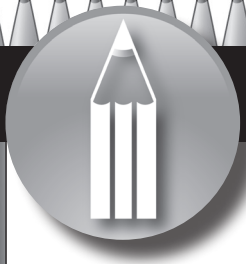


Student Page

Hairless cats do require some special care. Their lack of fur means their skin is exposed and it's important to keep it clean and moisturized. Weekly bathing is recommended, taking special care to rinse well between this cat's many skin folds. Drying the Sphynx thoroughly will prevent these unusual cats from catching a chill. Between baths baby wipes are an effective way to keep this hairless creature clean and fresh. Many Sphynx owners, especially those in cold climates, keep their cats indoors. And, as with all breeds of cats, cleaning their teeth and ears will help prevent infection. A clean, sweet smelling litter box is also a must.

These unusual hairless cats are extremely social and loveable. Unlike some cats, the Sphynx is extremely affectionate and playful. Their owners report that their hairless pets seem to have a sense of humor and will clown around for attention. This relatively new breed prefers to have company, whether human, feline, or even canine! They love to be held and to cuddle up against their masters in bed at night (possibly, in part, because it keeps them warm). These athletic and energetic cats love toys and games. The Sphynx is sometimes sought as a therapy cat, because of its loving and attentive disposition.

It's easy to understand why this newcomer to the world of cats has attracted the attention of cat lovers and others. The history of the breed and interesting appearance, the care required, and loving temperament make the Sphynx an appealing pet for many.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - SIAMESE & SPHYNX

You have read two informational texts about two different cat breeds, the Siamese and the Sphynx. Write an essay comparing these two breeds. Be sure to discuss the appearance and temperament of both breeds, citing examples from the text.

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

SIAMESE CATS

THE SPHYNX CAT

TOPIC: _____

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

MAIN IDEA #4: _____

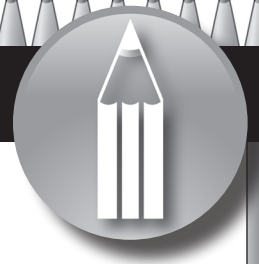
2. What do you notice about these summarizing frameworks? _____

3. What are the “givens” in the boxed assignment? _____

4. Go back to each text. Based on your main idea “blurbs” in the margins, circle the “appearance” paragraph in yellow, the “temperament” paragraph in pink.

5. If you were going to expand the text Siamese Cats what is another main idea you might include? _____

BONUS: Go back to each source and circle all of the ways the authors refer to the cats described in these texts. (We call this technique the use of “word referents.”)



Name: _____

COMPARISON GRID

	SIAMESE	SPHYNX
Appearance		
Temperament		



Student Page

Name: _____

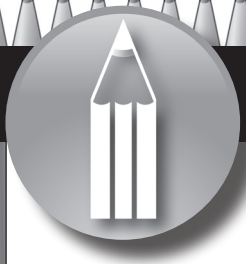
EXEMPLAR TEXT

Without a doubt, felines known as the Siamese and the Sphynx stand out from ordinary house cats. While both breeds share some characteristics they also differ from one another in a number of ways. Let's explore the similarities and differences in appearance and temperament between these two unique breeds.

Based on the descriptions of appearance in both texts, it would be easy to distinguish between a Siamese and a Sphynx. In Siamese Cats we learn that the Siamese is a graceful, elegant breed with sparkling blue slanted eyes that give the cat an exotic appearance. Sometimes the eyes can be set closely together making the cat appear cross-eyed. The fur on the body of the Siamese is a cream color, with chocolate brown fur around its ears, face, and toes. It has a slim, muscular body. Conversely, the Sphynx is hairless, its body covered in soft "peach fuzz." The author of The Sphynx Cat explains that the skin of the Sphynx is pigmented in a variety of colors and patterns that show through the almost invisible layer of fuzz. Their skin, without the usual covering of fur, can appear wrinkly and loose. For the same reason, the eyes and ears of the Sphynx can seem unusually large.

Despite the differences in appearance these two breeds share a number of temperament traits. Both the Siamese and the Sphynx are highly sociable and affectionate creatures that crave company. The Siamese, however, if deprived of companionship, can get bored and engage in destructive behavior. The author provides an anecdote about one Siamese cat left alone that shredded a large quilt. Another similarity is that these unique breeds are both playful. In fact, the author of Siamese Cats points out that these "dogs in cat's bodies" can be taught to play fetch and to walk on a leash. The Sphynx was described as "comical, playful, and attention seeking." Another distinction is that the Sphynx, because of its loving and attentive disposition, are sometimes used as therapy cats.

Certainly, these unusual breeds, the Siamese with its long history, and the much "younger" Sphynx, offer their owners and cat lovers everywhere much to enjoy, from appearance to temperament.



Student Reference Page

Name: _____

SUMMARIZING YOUR INDEPENDENT READING

What are you reading? After reading a story, highlight the important parts by completing the Narrative Writing Summarizing Framework below. If you're reading nonfiction, summarize what you learned from it using the Informational Writing Summarizing Framework.

Narrative Writing Summarizing Framework

Title _____

Author _____

This story is about _____
Main Character

The problem, adventure or experience was that _____

Single significant main event

The problem is solved, adventure/experience concluded when _____

Solution/conclusion

Informational Writing Summarizing Framework

Title _____

Topic _____

Main Idea #1 _____

Main Idea #2 _____

Main Idea #3 _____

etc.: _____



Name: _____

IRRELEVANT, EXTRANEOUS DETAILS IN INFORMATIONAL TEXT

Read the informational paragraphs below and identify the **MAIN IDEA** of each. Then, find the detail sentence that does NOT support the **MAIN IDEA** and cross it out.

1. Training a puppy is not hard, but it does require patience. You'll need to reward your puppy for good behavior. Tasty treats like little pieces of hot dog or cheese make the best rewards. Kittens love to play with balls of string and toy mice. Another way to reward your puppy is by giving it a favorite toy.

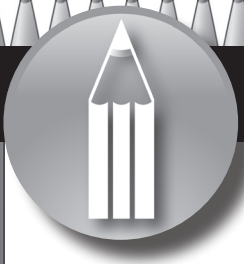
What is the **MAIN IDEA** of this paragraph?

2. The winter months are known as "cold season." Some people think it is the cold weather that causes these sicknesses, but that is not true. Colds are caused by viruses. In the summer, you might get poison ivy. The best way to avoid catching a cold is to wash your hands often, get enough sleep and eat healthy foods.

What is the **MAIN IDEA** of this paragraph?

3. Tyrannosaurus Rex is probably the best known of the dinosaurs. Speedy and ferocious, it stood 15-20 feet tall and preyed upon smaller dinosaurs, especially Triceratops. Some dinosaurs could fly. The T-Rex had an enormous head and a mouthful of bone-crunching teeth, but strangely short arms.

What is the **MAIN IDEA** of this paragraph?



Student Page

Name: _____

IRRELEVANT, EXTRANEIOUS DETAILS IN OPINION WRITING

Read the opinion paragraphs below and identify the **MAIN REASON** of each. Then, find the detail sentence that does **NOT** support the **MAIN REASON** and cross it out.

1. If you had an extra dollar, would you prefer to spend it or save it? I am definitely for saving it, and you should be too. After all, we are going to need some expensive things, like cars, in the future. You might be surprised at how quickly your savings add up even when you only save a dollar or so at a time. Some cars use more gas than others. I save at least half of the money I get from my relatives on my birthdays and on holidays. In my opinion, everybody should make this a habit.

What is the **MAIN REASON** of this paragraph?

2. In my opinion, a ferret is the world's greatest pet. It doesn't need to be walked like a dog and it is much friendlier than a cat. My friend says ferrets look like otters. Plus, nothing is more entertaining than watching your ferret play! Some people think that ferrets smell., but the solution is easy. Simply keep your ferret's cage clean and wash it with baby shampoo once in a while. Don't you wonder why more people don't choose ferrets as pets?

What is the **MAIN REASON** of this paragraph?

3. What would we do without technology? You' ll surely agree that we all use a variety of electronic devices, but computers are definitely the most essential in our daily lives. Everybody uses them to download music and play games. We also depend on them to help us keep in touch with family and friends who live far away. Clue and Monopoly are great board games. In my opinion, everybody needs either a tablet or a laptop.

What is the **MAIN REASON** of this paragraph?

BONUS: Circle the words and phrases that tell you these are passages from opinion pieces.



HOW TO MAKE A PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY SANDWICH

READ AND COMPARE THE FOLLOWING "HOW-TO" PIECES.

How to Make a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich

Get some bread. Toast it if you want. Put peanut butter on it. This is going to be your lunch. Put some jelly on the bread. Slap the two pieces of bread together. Eat it.

How to Make a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich

A peanut butter and jelly sandwich is a nutritious lunch that will keep you full all afternoon. Let's learn what supplies and ingredients you need, figure out the steps to make the sandwich, and then serve it.

First, you have to get your ingredients and supplies. You'll need bread and a jar of peanut butter and jelly. You'll also need a knife, a plate, and a napkin. Then you're ready to begin.

Next, it's time to prepare the sandwich. Take two slices of bread. You can use white, wheat or an English muffin. Toast it if you like. Spread peanut butter on one slice and jelly on the other. Your next step is to slap the two slices of bread together.

Finally, you serve it. Put your sandwich on the plate and cut it in half. You can do triangles or rectangles. Get a napkin for any drips. Eat your peanut butter and jelly sandwich with an apple and a glass of milk.

So now you know what you need to make and serve a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Yum!



HOW TO MAKE A PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY SANDWICH

READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATIONAL PIECE AND COMPARE IT TO EARLIER VERSIONS.

How to Make a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich

Whether you're eating at home or at school, a tasty peanut butter and jelly sandwich is a great choice for lunch. With just a few simple supplies and ingredients you can easily prepare and serve one of America's best-loved sandwiches.

One of the reasons why peanut butter and jelly is so popular is because it doesn't require fancy kitchen gadgets or complicated ingredients. All you really need is a jar of your favorite peanut butter and another of jelly or jam. You'll have to choose between crunchy and smooth peanut butter. The crunchy type has little pieces of peanuts in it, which is preferred by diners who appreciate a little crunch. The smooth type is just as tasty and spreads easily and evenly on your sandwich. Select a jelly or jam made from your favorite fruit - anything from traditional grape to strawberry or raspberry. For a tangier twist try orange marmalade or blueberry jam. Each creates an interesting and unique combination of flavors when paired with peanut butter. Of course, you'll also need bread. You can use thinly sliced white bread or thick, crusty wheat bread. Some people prefer to have their peanut butter and jelly on an English muffin or a bagel, toasted or plain. Whatever your choice of ingredients you'll need a plate, knife, and napkin for ease of preparation.

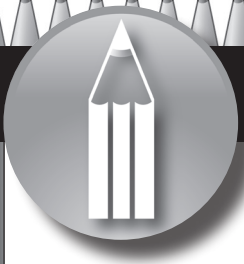


Student Page

Assembling your sandwich is easy. Place two slices of bread side by side on the plate. Use a butter knife to swab up a tablespoon or two of peanut butter and spread it evenly on one piece of bread. Wipe off the knife with a napkin and then scoop and swab on an equal portion of jelly to the other piece of bread. Pick up your slice of peanut buttered bread and carefully align it above its partner. Gently press them together and your delectable sandwich is complete.

Serving your sandwich is a breeze. Slice it in half or on a diagonal and cut off the crusts if you don't like them. Wipe any drips of peanut butter or jelly off of the plate for a neater presentation. For added nutrition and eye appeal you might add some fruit or raw veggies to the plate. Present the dish with a neatly folded napkin and lunch is served!

Now you know how to make yourself a healthy meal to enjoy at home or carry to school in your lunch box. With just a couple of simple kitchen tools and three basic ingredients you can serve up a nutritious and delicious lunch. It's easy to see why the peanut butter and jelly sandwich is an American favorite.



Student Page

Name: _____

SHARKS

READ AND COMPARE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATIONAL PIECES.

Sharks

Sharks live in the ocean. I wish I could see a shark. They catch and eat other fish. There are many interesting things about sharks. They have no bones. They have lots of teeth. They have really tough skin. If they lose a tooth, it grows back. Their scales are like armor. You don't want to meet a shark in the water because they could attack. But sharks are interesting to read about. They are good hunters.

Sharks

Most people are afraid of sharks, but these ocean predators have many interesting features. I will tell you all about sharks.

The first interesting feature is that sharks have no bones. Instead they have cartilage, which is like what we have in our ears and noses. Cartilage is softer than bone and can bend a little. It helps them swim faster.

The second interesting thing about sharks is their scales. They have scales that feel like sandpaper. Their scales do not stand up like most fish. But their scales are really sharp and hard and help protect them.

The third interesting thing about sharks is their teeth. They have two and sometimes three rows of teeth. If they lose a tooth, it grows back. The sharp teeth help them grab and rip apart their food. Even baby sharks have lots of teeth.

So, sharks are interesting because of their cartilage, teeth, and scales. Have you ever seen a shark?



SHARKS

READ THE FOLLOWING INFORMATIONAL PIECE AND COMPARE IT TO EARLIER VERSIONS.

Sharks

Sharks are fascinating creatures that live in oceans around the world. Fearsome predators, they range in size from the massive Whale Shark to the 8-foot long Mako Shark to the tiny Dwarf Lantern Shark who measures just six inches long on the average. Big or small, sharks have the flexible bodies, thick skin and sharp teeth they need to be excellent hunters.

Sharks are flexible because they have no bones. Instead, they have a skeleton made of cartilage, the same hard but bendable material in human ears and noses. Because cartilage is lighter and more pliable than bone, it allows sharks to swim faster. It also helps them to flex their bodies in order to make quick turns. This gives them a definite advantage when chasing down prey.

Sharks have skin that is very different from the large, shiny scales that cover the bodies of most fish. Shark skin is comprised of small v-shaped scales that are as hard as teeth and very sharp. As the marine biologists at the Florida Museum of Natural History explain, this thick, tough skin is "more like armor than skin." It not only protects the shark from attacks by other sea creatures, but can scratch any that come too close.

Most importantly, sharks have two to three rows of sharp teeth that are made for grabbing prey and piercing flesh. If a shark loses a tooth, it grows back. In fact, a shark may produce, use and shed an incredible 6,000 teeth in a single year. If you are very lucky, you might find one washed up on the beach some day. Amazingly, even baby sharks have multiple rows of menacing teeth and they are born knowing exactly how to use them!

With speedy, lightweight bodies, tough skin and rows of sharp teeth, sharks are perfectly adapted for their lives as predators of the sea. Without a doubt, seeing a shark swimming freely in the ocean would be an unforgettable experience.



Student Page

Name: _____

PIZZA

READ AND COMPARE THE FOLLOWING OPINION PIECES.

Pizza

I think pizza is the world's best food. The crust is chewy. It is cheesy. You can eat it hot or cold. Sometimes the crust is crispy. You can get it with meatballs or pepperoni on top.

Everybody loves pizza. You could also get a mushroom pizza. It's good with salad and an ice cold soda. There are different kinds of pizza with thin or thick crust.

You can make pizza at home or have it delivered or have it in a restaurant. That's why I like pizza.



PIZZA

READ AND COMPARE THE FOLLOWING OPINION PIECES.

Pizza

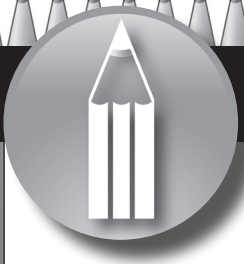
Imagine a food that tastes good hot or cold. You get to pick the type of pizza and the toppings. You get to make it at home or get it from a take-out place or go to a restaurant. In my opinion, pizza is the best food in the world.

There are many different kinds of pizza. Some pizzas have thick, chewy crusts. Others have thin crispy crusts. You can get a large pie for the whole family, or a small personal size pizza for one person. I prefer a personal pizza with a crispy crust. Pizzas can even be round or rectangular.

Then there are the toppings. In my opinion a really good pizza has a lot of melted cheese and pepperoni. You can also get meatballs, sausage, bacon, mushrooms, onions, peppers, even fancy toppings like shrimp, clams, and pineapple. There is even a potato pizza. You can get a white or red sauce pizza. Some people even put salad on a pizza, but I'd never do that!

You can make your own pizzas or you can get a take-out pizza. Some people make pizza on the grill. Some make it in their oven. They can make it from scratch or buy the dough. You can get frozen pizza at the store. But I'd rather do take-out pizza. Restaurant pizza is always better. Plus it's good to have it delivered. No mess that way. You also get a bigger choice of toppings.

I would eat pizza for breakfast, lunch or dinner if I could and I'm sure you would too. With melted mozzarella cheese and pepperoni piled onto a crispy crust, it is the perfect food.



Student Page

Name: _____

PIZZA

READ THE FOLLOWING OPINION PIECE AND COMPARE IT TO EARLIER VERSIONS.

Pizza

Imagine a food that you can eat with your hands, a tasty treat that is equally good hot or cold. From the first bite to the last, your taste buds tingle with the irresistible flavors of spicy tomato sauce and yummy melted cheese. In my opinion, pizza is the best food in the world because you can get it with so many different kinds of toppings, including vegetables, meat, and even unusual but surprisingly delicious specialty ingredients.

There are many types of pizzas. I enjoy a thin-crust pizza with vegetable toppings when I'm not too hungry. My usual selection is the Margarita Pizza which has a crispy crust topped with slices of tomato, melted mozzarella cheese and fresh leaves of basil. Another option when you want to eat light is a thin-crust pizza topped with just a sprinkling of cheese but piled high with salad greens and chopped, raw vegetables. But I prefer my salad on the side!

On the other hand, when I'm absolutely famished, I adore a pizza topped with salty, spicy meats! Piled high with pepperoni, sausage and meatballs, this belt-buster comes with a thick, chewy crust. My mouth waters as I sprinkle on grated cheese, a handful of crunchy bacon bits

(continued)



and red pepper flakes. This indulgent pie is guaranteed to fill you up in no time! If you're watching your calories I say, save it for special occasions only because it is really high in fat, salt and calories. But it's definitely worth it!

Some have unusual toppings. The Hawaiian Pizza, with the sweet and salty flavors of pineapple and ham, is my personal favorite. The barbecue chicken pizza is a close second. Topped with green peppers and shredded chicken soaked in a smoky barbecue sauce, this specialty pie is always a treat. If you like seafood, you'll surely give the clam pizza a rave review too.

There is really no doubt about it: pizza is the world's best food because there are so many different ways to enjoy it. You can eat hot and fresh pizza for dinner or cold, leftover pizza for breakfast. Whether you choose a light Margarita pizza, an indulgent Meat-Lovers pizza or a unique specialty pie, you will surely be delighted with your meal. Friday night is pizza night at my house and you're invited! Bring your appetite.



BE A TEXT DETECTIVE!

FIND THE EVIDENCE

Festivals of the World

- Some of the coldest weather can be found in China.
- Cosmetics made with mud are said to enhance the skin.
- Tomatoes are an acidic food.
- South Korea is a coastal country.
- China, Canada, Japan, and Norway have at least one thing in common.
- La Tomatina has been going on for over 70 years.
- Many tomatoes are needed during the La Tomatina festival.

REMEMBER: YOU DON'T NEED TO READ THE TEXT BEGINNING TO END! USE MAIN IDEAS TO DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION AND THEN SKIM AND SCAN. POST YOUR EVIDENCE BESIDE EACH STATEMENT.



BE A TEXT DETECTIVE!

FIND THE EVIDENCE

Shut Down Your Screen

- Watching too much TV can be linked to obesity.
- It's not a good idea to have a TV in your bedroom.
- Excessive TV watching can decrease your attention span.
- Playing solitary video games can detract from relationships.
- Shut Down Your Screen Week is a national event.

REMEMBER: YOU DON'T NEED TO READ THE TEXT BEGINNING TO END! USE MAIN IDEAS TO DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION AND THEN SKIM AND SCAN. POST YOUR EVIDENCE BESIDE EACH STATEMENT.