

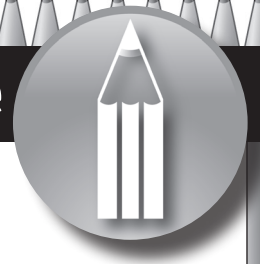


# **Grade 5 Informational Writing Guide**

## **Student Pages for Print or Projection**

### **SECTION 4: Research**

**[www.empoweringwriters.com](http://www.empoweringwriters.com)  
1-866-285-3516**



## KEY VOCABULARY: FINDING INFORMATION WITHIN TEXT

**Table of Contents:** Found at the front of the book, the table of contents lists the parts or chapters of a book.

**Glossary:** Usually found at the end of the book, a glossary defines words you will need to know to understand the text. In some books, short glossaries appear at the beginning of each chapter.

**Index:** Found at the end of the book, the index is a listing of the topics in ABC order that are covered in the book and the pages on which you can read about these topics.

**Chapter Title:** This tells you what the chapter or section of the book will be about.

**Headings:** Usually appearing in **bold-faced type** like this, headings sum up the main ideas within a section of text.

**Keywords:** Often in **bold-faced** or *italicized* type, these words are often defined in the glossary or within the text itself. To understand the text, you need to know the keywords.

**Diagrams:** Simple labeled drawings that can help you understand the text. **Charts** and **graphs** are other visual ways to present information within text.

**Illustrations and Photographs:** These are another tool to help you understand keywords or concepts. Unlike the diagram, the photograph or illustration is realistic and provides lots of specific detail. **Captions** appear underneath photographs or illustrations often in *italics*. They tell you about the picture.

**Copyright Page:** Opposite the title page, the copyright page includes the copyright symbol ©, the owner of the copyright, publication date, and publisher. This is important in a bibliography.



# Student Page

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

## THE BOOK DETECTIVE

1. What is the **title** of your book? \_\_\_\_\_
2. List the **copyright holder**, **publication date** and **publisher**. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Turn to the **Table of Contents**. What are the titles of the first two chapters?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Look in the first chapter or section. Can you find any **keywords** that are defined within the text? If so, what are they? (Hint: look for words in **bold-face** or *italic* type.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Turn to the **glossary**. Locate the unfamiliar term and read the definition. List both here. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Are there **headings** that tell you the **main ideas** within the first chapter or section? If so, what are they? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Can you find an **illustration** or **photograph** in your book? If so, what is this illustration or photograph helping to explain? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**BONUS:** Turn to the back of the book. Look at the **index** and fill in the blanks on the following sentence:

The index tells me that if I turned to page \_\_\_\_\_, I would learn about \_\_\_\_\_.



## RESEARCH! USING SEARCH ENGINES

Have you ever looked for information on the Web? Interested in finding the perfect puppy, looking for information on the best vacations for kids? That is where search engines come in. The problem with doing research on the web is that you find way too much information!

Some of the more popular search engines are [Google](#), [bing](#) and [yahoo](#). Understanding how to use search engines will help you narrow your search, so you can find exactly what you're looking for. These are just a few techniques to help you get started.



### 1. Be Specific

The more specific you are, the more information you'll find. Use *key words* that tell the search engine exactly what you're looking for. For example, if you want to learn about bats, enter bats, but if you know that you want information on the various types of bats enter types of bats instead. If you want to learn about a specific type of bat enter that name, for example, mega-bats. Each time you revise the entry and focus your *key word*, you narrow your search.

### 2. The + Symbol

To ensure the search finds pages with all the words you're looking for, put the + symbol in front of each word. For example, if you want information on two types of bats such as golden fruit bats and spectacled flying foxes, put the "plus" sign in front of their names. +golden fruit bats+spectacled flying foxes. Only documents that have both their names will be found in the search.

### 3. Using Quotation Marks

When you put your search terms in quotation marks, it's called a "phrase search." The search engine will give you pages that have the terms in the exact order of the words in quotations. For example, if you're looking specifically for information on "vampire bats biting people" enter it just like that and you will only get the documents that have those words in that order.

### 4. Notice the Results!

Finally, notice that when you narrow the search, the number of results or "hits" changes. This information is usually found at the top of the page and indicates how many documents were found containing the key words you searched. For example, when *bats* was entered, 73,100,000 documents were found, but when "vampire bats biting people" was entered, 616,000 documents were found.



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

## DETAILS FROM IMAGES

You found images of \_\_\_\_\_ at images.Google.com.

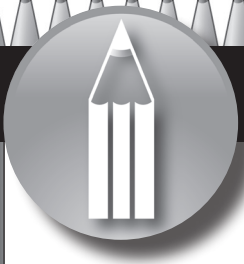
List some of the details you see in the images.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

Now think of some questions you have about the images. What are you wondering?

7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

The answers to these questions can provide the “Why is that important?” part of your elaboration!



# Annotated Page

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

## DETAILS FROM IMAGES - SAMPLE (Informational)

You found images of Arabian and Bactrian camels  
at images.Google.com.

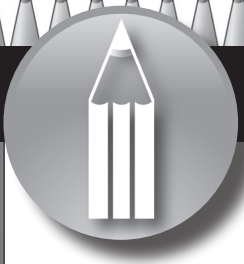
List some of the details you see in the images.

1. Arabian camels have one hump.
2. Bactrian camels have two humps.
3. Camels have long legs and knobby knees.
4. They have long curved necks.
5. These creatures have small dark eyes with long lashes.
6. Bactrian camels have thicker shaggier coats than Arabian camels.

Now think of some questions you have about the images. What are you wondering?

7. Why do some camels have one hump and others have two?
8. Why are their lashes so long?
9. Why do they have humps in the first place?
10. Why are their nostrils so big and why do they seem to open and close?

The answers to these questions can provide the “Why is that important?” part of your elaboration!



## CITING SENTENCE STARTERS

- In this article the reader discovers \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The text explains how \_\_\_\_\_ .
- This informational piece outlines \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The author discusses \_\_\_\_\_ .
- In paragraph \_\_\_\_, we learn that \_\_\_\_\_ .
- An interesting point the author makes is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- According to this article \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Based on this text \_\_\_\_\_ .



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

## RESEARCHING A TOPIC OF INTEREST (1)

### Purchasing the Right Bike for You

Imagine that your parents have agreed to buy you a new bike – the only catch is that you’ll need to contribute  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the cost. Think about the size and style of the bike that is best suited to your age and ability, and the ways in which you will use the bike (around your neighborhood, on trails and bike paths, in the city, etc.). Of course, you must also consider the cost.

1. List your **research questions**:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

2. What **search terms** might you use to begin your research?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What search terms yielded the best results? \_\_\_\_\_

4. Based on the sites you discovered, decide the type of bike you’d want, and enter the name of that particular bike as a search term. Add the word “images” and see what this reveals.

5. Cite your best sources here: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Based on style, function, and cost, which bike would you select, and why?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

7. How did this research help you in finding the perfect bike? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





# Student Page

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

## RESEARCHING A TOPIC OF INTEREST (2)

Read the following passage. Does it spark any additional questions you'd like to have answered?

### U.S. National Parks

The United States is a country of “firsts.” It was first to institute the mass production of automobiles, first to establish a commercial airline, first to put a man on the moon. But did you know that the United States was also the first country in the world to establish National Parks? The idea of preserving wilderness spaces, and the plants and animals that live there so that people would forever be able to enjoy them became a reality in the U.S. in 1872. Today there are 401 National Parks in the U.S. that cover over 84 million acres of undeveloped land, where guests can view wildlife, engage in outdoor activities, and see historical sites.

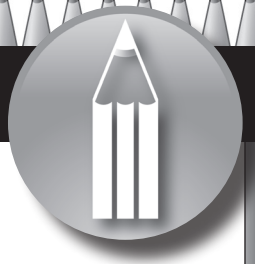
If you want to learn about native species, visit a National Park. You can see everything from towering Sequoia Trees to delicate wildflowers, grizzly bears to seals, geysers to craters, mountains to caverns. The National Park Service employs rangers and guides who assist visitors to get the most out of their visit as well as providing advice on how to catch a glimpse of the wildlife without disturbing it. National Parks also boast many trained volunteers who are experts in answering wildlife questions of all kinds.

These amazing parks offer opportunities for all types of outdoor adventures. Hiking is probably the most popular park activity, and there are trails for all levels of experience. More adventurous types might enjoy *spelunking* amongst stalagmites and stalactites. Others might find a steep face of rock or canyon for *rappelling*. Biking, horse-back riding, mule-packing, kayaking, white water rafting and camping are other ways to get in some physical activity while appreciating the park environment.

Visiting a National Park is a terrific way to learn about the history of an area. See the red rock apartment style pueblo communities of ancient residents of the Mesa Verde National Park. Many National Parks are home to famous battlefields of the Civil War, such as Devil's Den in Gettysburg. A trip to Petroglyph National Monument allows guests to see ancient *petroglyphs* of animals, geometric symbols, and people that were painstakingly chipped into the rock surface thousands of years ago.

From smallest to largest, our U.S. National Parks are truly national treasures. Offering opportunities for wildlife appreciation, outdoor activity, and historical learning, there is something to appeal to everyone!

(continued)



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

## RESEARCHING A TOPIC OF INTEREST (2)

A fifth grade student read the text titled U.S. National Parks. He wanted to learn more about the keywords in the article. List key words below and research questions.

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

Now conduct your search. Circle the phrase that yielded the best results.

*Remember, if you place the + symbol in front of each key word, only documents or sites that include all of those words will come up. Another option is to put your question or search phrase in quotation marks. Doing so will yield only sites that include the words in quotes in that precise order.*

Write a short paragraph that answers your search questions. Be sure to use good sentence variety, and check your spelling and punctuation.

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# Student Page

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

## RESEARCHING A TOPIC OF INTEREST (2)

Finally, you need to cite your source, revealing where you discovered this information. Authors cite online sources by including author's name, last name first, (if there is one), title of the work, date, and full http address.

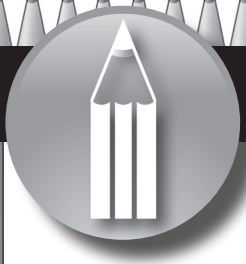
Author's or website name \_\_\_\_\_

Title of article \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Full *http* address \_\_\_\_\_

Draw a drawing in the box that illustrates your topic.

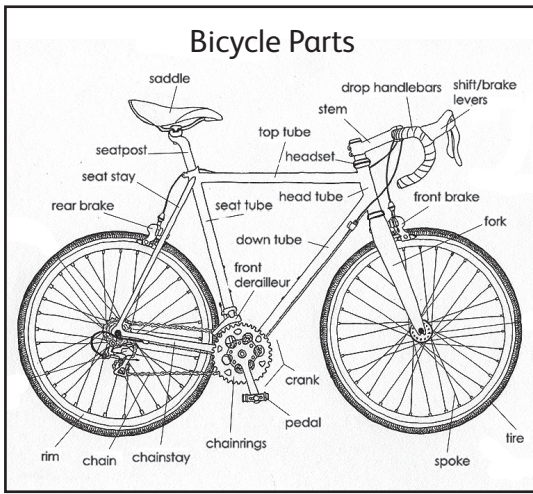


# Student Page

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

## GLEANNING INFORMATION FROM DIAGRAMS, CHARTS, GRAPHS, MAPS (1)

While researching, authors often come across valuable information communicated through diagrams, charts, graphs, timelines, and maps. Information presented graphically can be incorporated into an essay, report, or research paper. Examine and discuss each example, below, and write two detail sentences about information provided in each.




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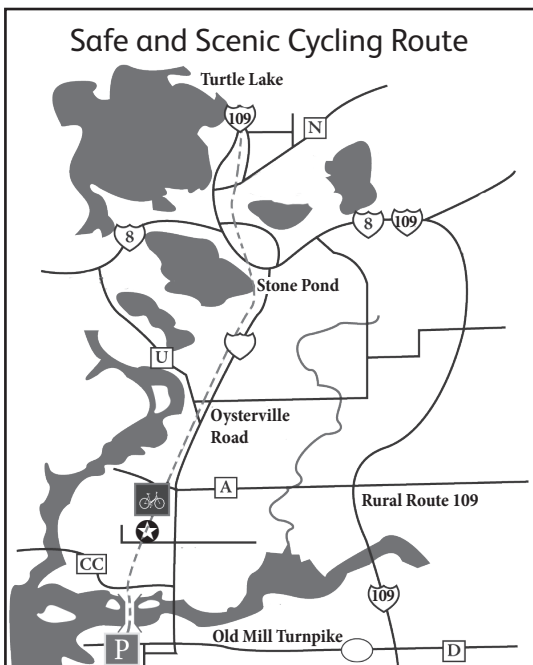
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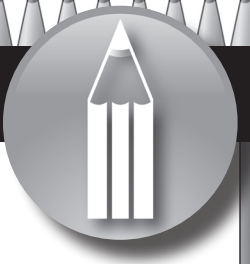
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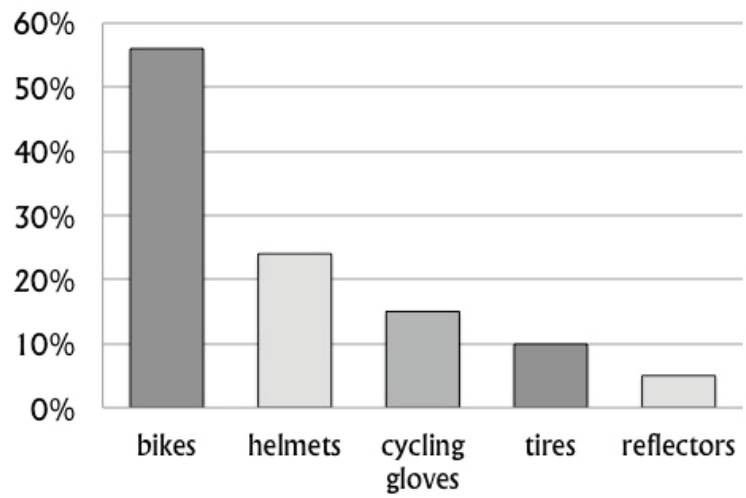
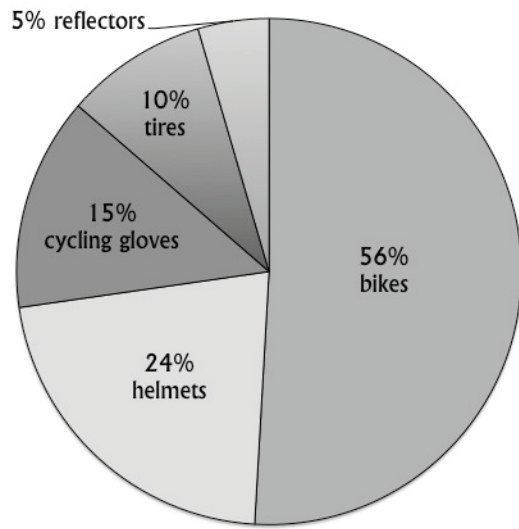
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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## GLEANNING INFORMATION FROM DIAGRAMS, CHARTS, GRAPHS, MAPS (1)

MOST POPULAR ITEMS SOLD AT MIKE'S BIKES



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# Student Page

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

## GLEANNING INFORMATION FROM TIMELINES (2)

While researching, authors often come across valuable information communicated through diagrams, charts, graphs, and maps. Certain kinds of information about events and when they happened can also be presented graphically in a **timeline**. Examine and discuss the timeline, below, and write three detail sentences about the information provided there.

### STUDYING AND SAVING MOUNTAIN GORILLAS

**1959**  
George Shaller goes to Africa to study

**1967**  
Dian Fossey studies in Rwanda

**1978**  
Poachers kill one of Fossey's study groups

**1984**  
Fossey is murdered in her cabin



**1963**  
Shaller publishes "The Mountain Gorilla"

**1972**  
Fossey uses gorilla "nose prints" to identify individuals

**1981**  
Mountain Gorilla Conservation Project is born

**1991**  
International Gorilla Conservation Program is formed

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

## TAKE SOME NOTES!

Read or listen to each information sentence below and take notes. Write just enough to trigger a memory of what you learned so that you can recall it later. Focus on keywords. (Use the **dash** ( – ) as a quick way to define or explain something. Use a slash ( / ) as a way to say “and, or”.)

1. Oceanographers also study marine plants.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

2. The formal scientific study of oceans began in 1872 with the Challenger Expedition.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

3. The earth’s oceans are all interconnected with landforms emerging like islands.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Marine biologists study plant and animal life in our oceans.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Modern technology offers today’s oceanographers more opportunities to learn about oceans than in the past.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Some oceanographers use scuba diving equipment and deep sea diving gear to explore the depths.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Others travel in underwater crafts called submersibles.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

8. A famous submersible called “Alvin” was used to locate and explore the Titanic.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_



## UNDERSTANDING AND USING NOTES - EXEMPLAR

This student took some good notes during class discussions and from some nonfiction books. Later she went back and read over her notes. The notes triggered the student's memory and she was able to write full sentences about each note. Read through her bulleted notes. (Remember a dash (–) often indicates a definition or explanation and a slash (/) often indicates and, or.) See how this student expanded on her notes.

### Topic: Characteristics of Living Things

- motion/movement on own All living things move on their own in some way.
- have cells/building blocks of life Living things are made up of cells that are thought of as the building blocks of life.
- food/energy/waste Another way to identify a living thing is to observe whether or not it takes in food. Food produces energy so living things can move. Living things also produce waste.
- animal waste - carbon dioxide/plant waste - oxygen Animals give off waste we call carbon dioxide while plants give off oxygen.
- growth/reproduction You can tell something's alive if it grows and reproduces younger versions of itself.
- sensory responses/awareness All living things are aware of the world around them and respond to the world through their senses.
- adaptations - change to survive Living things will adapt and change in their environments in order to survive.

**CHALLENGE:** Go back to some science notes you took and translate them into complete sentences!





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

## RESEARCH/NOTES/COMPOSITION/CITING SOURCES

Imagine you want to write a paragraph about fisher cats. Read the following passage from a nonfiction book and take some bulleted notes below.

**Excerpt:** p. 12, *Fisher Cats* by Louise Saunders, South County Publications, © 2013

The fisher cat is a carnivorous predator found across North America. Despite the name these creatures are not cats and they don't fish! Fisher cats measure about three feet, nose to tail, and weigh about twelve pounds. Related to weasels and badgers, the fisher cat is a vicious adversary. These slender-bodied, sleek furry hunters are mostly solitary, nocturnal creatures that hunt and eat rodents, rabbits, birds, and even porcupines. You may hear their screaming calls in the dense wooded areas where they prey. They are fast and agile, and are excellent climbers. For centuries they have been trapped for their pelts, and they are also known to raid chicken coops and pose threats to domestic cats and smaller dogs.

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

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### Could you Spot a Fisher Cat if You Saw One?

- small brown mammals
- thick bushy tail
- pointy snout
- long, sleek body, short legs
- five toes with retractable claws





# Student Reference Page

## **THE GOLDEN BRICKS**

Five Powerful Building Blocks That Give Your Pillar Strength

### **QUOTE:**

The words of an *authority* or an *expert* on the subject you're writing about. Be sure to tell the reader who the expert is and what his/her qualifications are.

EX. Ms. Kathy Jones, executive producer, says, "This movie will be a hit!"

NOT just: Ms. Kathy Jones says....

### **STATISTIC:**

Information presented as a number, ratio, or percentage.

EX. On average 100,000 people use this product daily.

or

It has been proven that 9 out of 10 people own.....

or

Studies show that 85 % of people visit.....

### **AMAZING FACT:**

An unusual, amazing, little-known fact that will surprise your readers.

EX. It is hard to believe, but when a sea star loses an arm, it will grow another in its place.

### **ANECDOTE:**

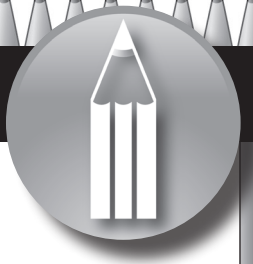
A SHORT explicit story used to illustrate a main idea.

EX. That reminds me of the time when I wore my clogs and slipped on the icy path. This is just another example of why it is important to dress appropriately for the weather.

### **DESCRIPTIVE SEGMENT:**

A vivid 2 or 3 sentence description that uses the five senses to illustrate an example of some kind.

EX. Cars and buses rush past in a blur. Taxi horns blare. The air is filled with the smells of exhaust. Pedestrians crowd the sidewalks. Skyscrapers tower overhead. The city is a bustling place.



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

## IDENTIFY/ANALYZE THOSE DETAILS! (1)

Read the paragraph below. Identify the MAIN IDEA of the paragraph and write a “blurb” in the margin. Notice the underlined detail. Tell which kind of detail it is:

- Quote
- Statistic
- Descriptive Segment
- Anecdote
- Amazing Fact

Baby-sitting is a challenging job, especially when the baby is a toddler. It is important to keep your eyes on these little balls of energy every minute. They like to climb, open cabinets and remove whatever is inside. You have to watch carefully because the under three set loves to put things in their mouths. It seems they never stop moving. **In fact, scientists tell us that in an hour toddlers have been known to expend more energy than a professional basketball player on the court!**

The boldfaced, underlined detail is an example of a/an \_\_\_\_\_.

**BRAINSTORM:** Underline each “WORD REFERENT” the author uses in place of the word “toddler”.

Read this paragraph. Identify the MAIN IDEA of the paragraph and write a “blurb” in the margin. Underline the quote when you find it.

When you ski, you need to dress warm. Waterproof ski pants help keep you dry if you fall while hurtling down the mountain. When you’re speeding along through the wind it’s important to keep your head covered with a thermal hat. This keeps heat from escaping. Wool socks, gloves, and a scarf are a must for this winter sport. I will never forget the time I left my hat and scarf at the lodge and the lift broke down--I nearly froze! So always take the time to be sure you’re well dressed for a day on the slopes.

**BRAINSTORM:** Underline each “WORD REFERENT” the author uses in place of “skiing”.

**BONUS:** See if you can write a descriptive segment to this paragraph, describing the winter weather.



# Student Page

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

## IDENTIFY/ANALYZE THOSE DETAILS! (2)

Read the paragraph below. Identify the main reason sentence and write a “blurb” in the margin representing that main reason. Following the main reason sentence the author presents a number of details but illustrates one of them more powerfully by using one of the following kinds of supporting details:

- Quote
- Statistic
- Descriptive Segment
- Anecdote
- Amazing Fact

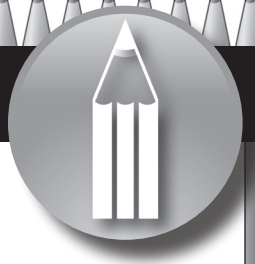
Underline this powerful supporting detail and, on the blank line beneath the paragraph, indicate which type of detail the author used.

Going to the movies is my favorite American pastime. My family files into the theater, tickets in hand. The smell of buttery popcorn fills the air. After our eyes adjust to the dark, we find cozy seats and tear into a box of chocolaty Raisinettes, or tasty pink and white Good and Plenty. I think there is something comforting and pleasant about sitting side by side with my family and friends, anticipating two hours of entertainment and escape. If I had my way I’d make going to the movies a weekly treat.

Type of detail \_\_\_\_\_.

**BRAINSTORM:** How might you revise this opinion paragraph into an informational paragraph? \_\_\_\_\_

**BONUS:** Undertake a research project. Call your local theater and ask them, on average, how many people purchase tickets to family movies on a Friday evening. Add this statistic within this paragraph.



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

## IDENTIFY/ANALYZE THOSE DETAILS! (3)

Read the paragraph below. Identify the main idea sentence and write a “blurb” in the margin representing that main idea. Following the main idea sentence the author presents a number of details but illustrates one of them more powerfully by using one of the following kinds of supporting details (golden bricks):

- Quote
- Statistic
- Descriptive Segment
- Anecdote
- Amazing Fact

Underline this powerful supporting detail and, on the blank line beneath the paragraph, indicate which type of detail the author used.

Amusement parks offer a variety of rides and attractions. Roller coasters full of screaming passengers thunder past. There are rides of every imaginable type - and for every personality. Thrill seekers usually gravitate toward fast moving, exhilarating twisting, falling, and gravity-defying rides such as the Whip or the Tornado. More cautious guests will choose the Ferris wheel or the merry-go-round. There is often a swimming facility and other water attractions. I'll never forget the time my family went in the haunted house at a huge amusement park in Texas. My sister and I screamed until we were hoarse and our parents were nearly deaf. We all thought it was worth it, though.

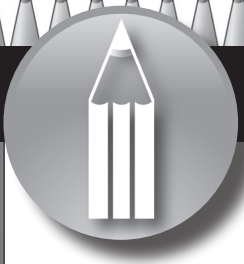
Type of detail \_\_\_\_\_.

**BRAINSTORM:** This paragraph was excerpted from an informational essay.

What might the topic of the entire essay be? \_\_\_\_\_

### **BONUS:**

1. Identify all of the ways the author refers to “people” in this paragraph.
2. Search the internet for at least 3 statistics about Amusement parks. Express each in a complete sentence.



# Student Page

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

## IDENTIFY/ANALYZE THOSE DETAILS! (4)

Read the paragraph below. Identify the main reason sentence and write a “blurb” in the margin representing that main reason. Following the main reason sentence, the author presents a number of details, but illustrates one of them more powerfully by using one of the following kinds of supporting details (golden bricks):

- Quote
- Statistic
- Descriptive Segment
- Anecdote
- Amazing Fact

Underline this powerful supporting detail and, on the blank line beneath the paragraph, indicate which type of detail the author used.

Cities have always been the best places to live. In fact, even in ancient times people gravitated toward cosmopolitan locations such as Pompeii, Athens, and Rome where even then, the cities never slept. What I love about these bustling areas is that there is always transportation available. I think there are more job opportunities in cities. Not only that, but there are more opportunities to meet new people in urban centers where the population is larger and more diverse. Cities are fun because they offer more entertainment, art, music, and sports than suburbs or rural communities.

Type of detail \_\_\_\_\_.

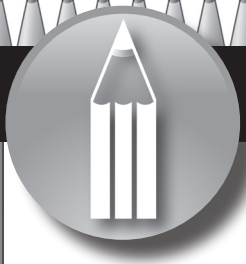
**BRAINSTORM:** This paragraph was excerpted from an opinion essay.

What is the author’s position? \_\_\_\_\_

Circle all of the subjective “Opinion language” in this paragraph.

### BONUS:

1. Identify all of the ways the author refers to “cities” in the paragraph, above.
2. Research to identify the world’s 3 most populated cities. Present this information in sentences and then in the bargraph.



# Student Page

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

## SPECIFIC SUPPORTING DETAILS - YOUR "GOLDEN BRICKS" (1)

Read this broad main idea sentence. It needs some powerful supporting details to convince your readers.

**Sharing a room with a sibling can be difficult.**

Convince your reader with a statistic\*: \_\_\_\_\_

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

*(Ask your classmates how many share a room. Use this as the basis for your statistic.)*

Convince your reader with an anecdote\*\*: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**\* Sentence Starters for a Statistic:**

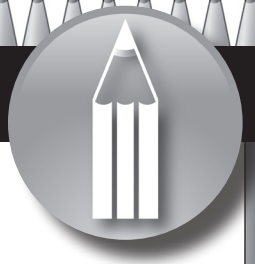
Of \_\_\_\_\_ kids polled \_\_\_\_\_.  
The majority of kids polled report that \_\_\_\_\_.  
\_\_\_\_\_% of kids say that if given a choice \_\_\_\_\_.  
Statistics show that \_\_\_\_\_.

**\*\* Sentence Starters for an Anecdote:**

You may find this hard to believe, but \_\_\_\_\_.  
I'll never forget the time when \_\_\_\_\_.  
That reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_.  
For example, \_\_\_\_\_.

**BONUS:** On a separate piece of paper, write an entire paragraph that supports the main idea sentence. Include a number of basic details that include "What does it look like? Why is it important?" along with your two "golden bricks". Be sure to use good sentence variety and specific, vivid words.





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

## SPECIFIC SUPPORTING DETAILS - YOUR “GOLDEN BRICKS” (2)

Read this main idea sentence. It needs some powerful supporting details to convince your readers.

**Butterflies begin their life cycles without wings.**

Convince your reader with an amazing fact\*: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

*(Research the life cycles of a butterfly in order to generate an amazing fact.)*

Convince your reader with a quote\*\*: \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

### \*Sentence Starters for an Amazing Fact:

It's hard to believe but, \_\_\_\_\_.

Can you imagine \_\_\_\_\_?

Incredibly, \_\_\_\_\_.

It is amazing to think that \_\_\_\_\_.

### \*\*Sentence Starters for a Quote:

\_\_\_\_\_ reports, “\_\_\_\_\_.”

Viewing this process, \_\_\_\_\_ says, “\_\_\_\_\_”.

Many an observer comments, “\_\_\_\_\_.”

Seeing this, \_\_\_\_\_ remarked, “\_\_\_\_\_.”

**BONUS:** On a separate piece of paper, write an entire paragraph that supports the main idea sentence. Include a number of basic details that include “What does it look like? Why is it important?” along with your two “golden bricks”. This may require some research. Be sure to use good sentence variety and specific, vivid words.



# Student Page

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

## SPECIFIC SUPPORTING DETAILS - YOUR "GOLDEN BRICKS" (3)

Read this main reason sentence. It needs some powerful supporting details to convince your readers.

**There are many reasons to grow your own vegetables.**

Convince your reader with an anecdote\*: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Convince your reader with a quote\*\*: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**\*Sentence Starters for an Anecdote:**

Out in my garden, \_\_\_\_\_.

That makes me think of \_\_\_\_\_.

In my own experience, I can tell you that\_\_\_\_\_.

I know I've spent many a summer  
afternoon \_\_\_\_\_.

**\*\*Sentence Starters for a Quote:**

Longtime gardener\_\_\_\_\_ explains, "\_\_\_\_\_."

"\_\_\_\_\_, " says \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ reports that, "\_\_\_\_\_."

\_\_\_\_\_,who loves home grown vegetables  
says,"\_\_\_\_\_."

**BONUS:** On a separate piece of paper, write an entire paragraph that supports the main reason sentence. Include a number of basic details that include "What does it look like? Why is it important?" along with your two "golden bricks". Be sure to use good sentence variety and specific, vivid words.



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

## TRANSITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES

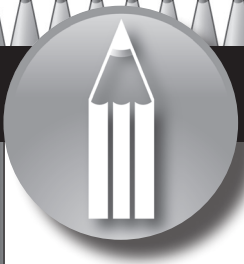
Read each sentence. Discuss each underlined transitional phrase. Use numbers to indicate which kind of transitional phrase it is.

- DOES IT:**
1. link similar ideas?
  2. present an example?
  3. express alternate/contrasting ideas?
  4. illustrate cause and effect?

- #\_\_\_\_\_ Despite this, many tadpoles survive and grow into frogs.
- #\_\_\_\_\_ On account of this, the air quality is very poor.
- #\_\_\_\_\_ For instance, you could make and send your own card to express gratitude.
- #\_\_\_\_\_ Not only that, but pit bulls are good watchdogs.
- #\_\_\_\_\_ On the other hand, many people are afraid that a pet pit bull might bite.
- #\_\_\_\_\_ Consequently, the flowers she planted dried up.
- #\_\_\_\_\_ For example, you could offer to shovel a neighbor's walk.
- #\_\_\_\_\_ Regardless, people still buy tickets to professional sporting events.
- #\_\_\_\_\_ Besides that, carrots are crunchy and tasty.

Notice that if you eliminate the transitional phrase from each sentence, the sentence still makes sense. The reason the author begins with the transitional phrase is to achieve sentence variety and to clue the reader by linking details in terms of their relationship to one another.

**BONUS:** Write a sentence that would logically precede each of the given sentences that begin with a transitional phrase.



# Student Reference Page

## MENU OF TRANSITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES

### Transitional Words/Phrases to express additional similar ideas:

- |                                    |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Also, _____.                       | Not only that, but _____.  |
| In addition to this, _____.        | It's also true that _____. |
| Another example of this is, _____. | Plus, _____.               |
| Furthermore, _____.                | Besides that, _____.       |
| Likewise, _____.                   | Incidentally, _____.       |
| Similarly, _____.                  | In the same way, _____.    |

### Transitional Words/Phrases to show an example:

- |                                    |                                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| For example, _____.                | An example of this is _____.    |
| Here's what I mean by that- _____. | For instance, _____.            |
| An illustration of this is _____.  | I remember the time that _____. |

### Transitional Words/Phrases to express alternate ideas:

- |                         |                           |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| However, _____.         | On the other hand, _____. |
| But, _____.             | Still, _____.             |
| Despite this, _____.    | Nevertheless, _____.      |
| Nonetheless, _____.     | Regardless, _____.        |
| In spite of this _____. | Yet, _____.               |

### Transitional Words/Phrases to express cause and effect:

- |                           |                        |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Because of this _____.    | Therefore _____.       |
| For this reason _____.    | As a result, _____.    |
| Due to this, _____.       | Consequently, _____.   |
| Then, _____.              | In view of this _____. |
| On account of this _____. |                        |



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

## RECOGNIZING AND ANALYZING TRANSITIONAL PHRASES

Read the two paragraphs below. Each contains two transitional phrases. Find and circle each transitional phrase. (Use the “menu” to help you.) Then discuss the type of phrase in each paragraph and why the author used it.

1. As pets, wild animals cannot be trusted. Our local newspaper recently reported a man who was mauled by his illegally kept pet tiger. Some days the tiger was as mild as a kitty cat. Yet, on other days the tiger seemed every bit the wild animal he was. It was on a day like this that the man was attacked. Another unfortunate story involves the case of a woman who owned a wolf. The wolf usually behaved just like the family dog. Nevertheless, one day the wolf became agitated and attacked the family’s five year old child, causing serious injuries.

2. As far as taste and variety, Mexican food can’t be beat! Mouth watering tacos and enchiladas are my personal favorites. Not only that, but the very thought of chimichangas or sizzling fajitas, served up with a side of rice and beans is enough to get my stomach growling! Besides all that, most Mexican restaurants can whip up burritos, jalapeño poppers, and of course, the ever popular heaping platter of nachos!

**BONUS:** Circle the opinion paragraph on this page.



# Student Page

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

## USING TRANSITIONAL PHRASES

Transitional phrases are used to link similar ideas, to present an example, express contrasting ideas, or to illustrate cause and effect. Think of a topic you know a lot about. Write at least 4 sentences about this topic, using transitional phrases correctly. Try to include each kind of transitional phrase and circle each one that you selected. Be ready to explain the function of each transitional word or phrase you used. Notice the transitional phrases in the detail sentences, and the way they relate to the sentence that precedes it, below:

Ex. TOPIC: Staying cool in summer

Swimming is an affective way to cool off during the summer months. **For instance**, a trip to the seashore, lake, or local pool are all opportunities for a refreshing dip. **It's also true that** air conditioning can provide a refuge from sweltering summer temperatures. **On the other hand**, some folks dislike frigid air being blown at them when the air conditioner is cranking. **On account of this** you might see some people bundled in sweaters during the hottest months of the year.

Your Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Main Idea Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

Sentences using Transitional Phrases:

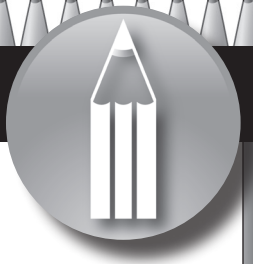
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## HOW TO GENERATE A FULLY ELABORATED, WELL-SUPPORTED INFORMATIONAL PARAGRAPH

### AUTHORS INCLUDE:

- A BROAD YET DISTINCT MAIN IDEA SENTENCE
- A number of details related to your main idea
- The **DETAIL-GENERATING QUESTIONS**  
“What Does it Look Like?” “Why is it Important?”  
“Did you give a specific example?” “Is each detail in a separate sentence?”
- GOOD WORD CHOICE
- SENTENCE VARIETY
- AT LEAST ONE POWERFUL GOLDEN BRICK DETAIL IN EACH PARAGRAPH  
Quote • Statistic • Descriptive Segment • Anecdote • Amazing Fact

### AUTHORS AVOID:

- Overly vague words and phrases such as: *nice, fun, good, pretty, cool, awesome, great, big, interesting, stuff, things, and much more*
- The “**Grocery List**”: (Do not list your details in a single sentence. Put each detail in a separate sentence. **ex.** *Frogs eat beetles, moths, mosquitoes, small fish, and smaller frogs.*)
- The “**Broken Record**”: (Do not begin each sentence with the same words: **ex.** *There are.....There are.... There are.....*)
- Too Much “**Telling**”: (Instead of saying that something is terrific, **SHOW** your reader what terrific looks like through the use of an example or two.)



# Student Reference Page

## HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO TEXT PARAGRAPH

### AUTHORS INCLUDE:

- A **BROAD YET DISTINCT MAIN IDEA SENTENCE**
- A number of **PARAPHRASED DETAILS** from the source text that support the main idea
- Direct **QUOTES** or **CITATIONS** from the source text that support the main idea
- **WORD REFERENTS**
- **CITING SENTENCE STARTERS**
- **INFORMATIONAL VERBS**
- Powerful **WORD CHOICE**
- **TRANSITIONAL WORDS, PHRASES**

### AUTHORS AVOID:

- Copying evidence word for word from the source text (**PLAGIARIZING**)
- The “**Grocery List**”: (Do not list your details in a single sentence. Put each detail in a separate sentence.)
- The “**Broken Record**”: (Do not begin each sentence with the same words.)
- Paraphrasing without a reference to where the information was found in the source text





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

## REVISE THIS PARAGRAPH (1)

In the boxed paragraph below, the author included too many general, vague details. It is clear the author did not apply the **detail-generating questions**:

• **What Does it Look Like?** • **Why is it Important?**

**Did you give a specific example?** • **Is each detail in a separate sentence?**

The author did not use any **Golden Bricks** (Quotes, Statistics, Amazing Facts, Anecdotes, Descriptive Segments) and did not pay attention to **good sentence variety**. Read the paragraph below and REVISE it on another sheet of paper, using all of the techniques you've learned. You may also use the sentence starters at the bottom of this page.

*The backyard is my favorite place on the property. There are nice plants and trees. You can relax there in the yard and have fun not doing much of anything. You can enjoy nature and stuff like that. You can have fun playing in the yard too. I love my backyard.*

The following sentence starters may help you achieve good sentence variety:

**Sentence Starters:**

Unlike other people's yards, mine is ____.	I love the way _____ .
You'd be amazed at _____.	Not only that, but _____ .
Another thing I love is _____.	I'm always impressed at _____ .
Did I mention the _____ ?	Don't let me forget to tell you about ____ .

**BONUS:** Is this paragraph informational or does it express an opinion?



# Student Page

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

## REVISE THIS PARAGRAPH (2)

In the boxed paragraph below, the author included too many general, vague details. It is clear the author did not apply the **detail-generating questions**:

- What Does it Look Like? • Why is it Important?

**Did you give a specific example? • Is each detail in a separate sentence?**

You be the editor! What weaknesses do you see in the paragraph below? Read the paragraph and think about all of the skills you've worked on to date. REVISE this paragraph on another sheet of paper, using all of the techniques you've learned. You may also use the sentence starters at the bottom of this page.

*Gym class provides many ways to stay fit. We play many strenuous games. There is a variety of equipment we get to use. When we are at gym we are moving instead of sitting. The gym teacher thinks of challenging activities that are enjoyable to most kids. We get to exercise and be fit.*

The following sentence starters may help you achieve good sentence variety:

### Sentence Starters:

- I am always challenged by \_\_\_\_\_ .      I always feel healthier when \_\_\_\_\_ .
- You'd be surprised at \_\_\_\_\_ .      Another thing to mention is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- During gym class we \_\_\_\_\_ .      I'm always impressed by \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Did I mention the \_\_\_\_\_ ?      Don't let me forget to tell you about \_\_\_\_\_ .
- One thing that gets my heart pumping \_\_\_\_\_ .

**BONUS:** Is this paragraph informational or does it express an opinion?



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

## REVISE THIS PARAGRAPH (3)

In the boxed paragraph below, the author included too many general, vague details. It is clear the author did not apply the **detail-generating questions**:

- **What Does it Look Like?**
- **Why is it Important?**

**Did you give a specific example?** • **Is each detail in a separate sentence?**

You be the editor! What weaknesses do you see in the paragraph below? Read the paragraph and think about all of the skills you've worked on to date. REVISE this paragraph on another sheet of paper, using all of the techniques you've learned. You may also use the sentence starters at the bottom of this page.

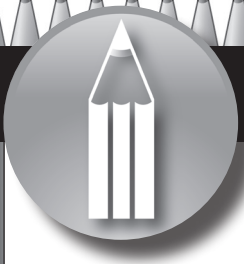
*Ever wonder how to make a sandcastle? You need sand. It should be sort of wet. You need a pail or something like that to put the sand in. That's real important. That's how you make all kinds of shapes. After you make the castle shapes you decorate it with all sorts of stuff you find on the beach. Then you hope it won't get wrecked.*

The following sentence starters may help you achieve good sentence variety:

### Sentence Starters:

I am always challenged by _____.	Be careful when _____.
It's critical that _____.	Of course, the most important thing is _____.
And don't forget _____.	The equipment you'll need includes _____.
When I make a castle _____.	The next thing you do is _____.
Sometimes you can even _____.	If you're lucky _____.

**BONUS:** Is this paragraph informational or does it express an opinion?



# Student Page

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

## REVISE THIS PARAGRAPH (4)

In the boxed paragraph below, the author included too many general, vague details. It is clear the author did not apply the **detail-generating questions**:

- What Does it Look Like? • Why is it Important?

**Did you give a specific example? • Is each detail in a separate sentence?**

You be the editor! What weaknesses do you see in the paragraph below? Read the paragraph and think about all of the skills you've worked on to date. REVISE this paragraph on another sheet of paper, using all of the techniques you've learned. You may also use the sentence starters at the bottom of this page.

*A make-your-own sundae party is my favorite. Everybody likes ice cream. There's all kinds of flavors and toppings. You get to fix it any way you want, piling on all sorts of good stuff on top. You can eat a lot and then go back for more. That is always fun.*

The following sentence starters may help you achieve good sentence variety:

### Sentence Starters:

- |                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| One thing I love is _____ .    | What I relish most is _____ .                  |
| Of course, you can _____ .     | It's fun to be able to _____ .                 |
| What I love best is _____ .    | And don't forget _____ .                       |
| Some people adore _____ .      | The next thing you do is _____ .               |
| Sometimes you can even _____ . | Doesn't your mouth water thinking about ____ ? |
| Always _____ .                 | Be sure to remember _____ .                    |

**BONUS:** Is this paragraph informational or does it express an opinion?



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

## WRITING A PARAGRAPH USING SUPPORTING DETAILS (1)

Look at this author's prewriting plan for a paragraph within an informational piece:

**MAIN IDEA:**

The pyramids of Egypt are remarkable structures.

**DETAILS:**

look like pointed peaks in the desert	hold mummy's treasures
underground chambers	took 1,000 workers 200 years to build

Write a paragraph that includes all of these details. Remember to use good sentence variety and include some vivid, interesting words. Highlight an amazing fact in a way that will capture the reader's attention.

**The pyramids of Egypt are remarkable structures.**

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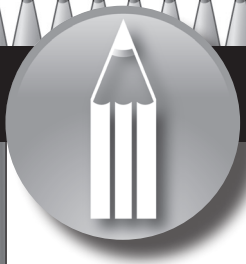
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# Student Page

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

## WRITING A PARAGRAPH USING SUPPORTING DETAILS (2)

Look at this author’s prewriting plan for a paragraph within an informational piece:

**MAIN IDEA:**

There are many ways that a computer is useful.

**DETAILS:**

play games	use encyclopedia
spell check	word processing

Write a paragraph that includes all of these details. Remember to use good sentence variety and include some vivid, interesting words. Include an anecdote and a statistic.

**There are many ways that a computer is useful.**

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# Student Reference Page

## SENTENCE STARTERS FOR USE IN A “HOW TO” PIECE

- The next step involves \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Play close attention to \_\_\_\_\_ .
- After that \_\_\_\_\_ .
- It’s important to remember to \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Next, \_\_\_\_\_ .
- It is critical that you \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Be sure to \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Continue by \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Once this is accomplished, go on to \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Now you can start to \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Always keep in mind that \_\_\_\_\_ .
- As you continue, be sure to \_\_\_\_\_ .

## SENTENCE STARTERS FOR USE IN A “CRITICAL STANCE RESPONSE”

- In my experience. \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Have you considered that \_\_\_\_\_ ?
- I am convinced that \_\_\_\_\_ .
- This calls to mind \_\_\_\_\_ .
- An example of this is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- For example, \_\_\_\_\_ .
- I have come to see that \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Think about this \_\_\_\_\_ .
- It seems to me that \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Certainly, \_\_\_\_\_ .
- I believe that \_\_\_\_\_ .
- I have seen others who \_\_\_\_\_ .
- I know in my own life \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Life has shown me that \_\_\_\_\_ .

## SENTENCE STARTERS FOR USE IN A “RESPONSE TO TEXT”

- This is clear when \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Specifically \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The reader sees \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The author shows us that \_\_\_\_\_ .
- When \_\_\_\_\_ .
- For example, \_\_\_\_\_ .
- An illustration of this is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The author proves this when \_\_\_\_\_ .
- In the text we see how \_\_\_\_\_ .
- This is evidenced by \_\_\_\_\_ .
- This is demonstrated by the fact that \_\_\_\_\_ .
- We see an example of this when \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The proof is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- The main character demonstrates this when \_\_\_\_\_ .
- We understand this clearly when \_\_\_\_\_ .
- We observe this when \_\_\_\_\_ .

## SENTENCE STARTERS FOR USE IN A “COMPARE/CONTRAST” PIECE

- Similarly, \_\_\_\_\_ .
- On the other hand \_\_\_\_\_ .
- They differ in that \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Conversely, \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Another difference is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- A like characteristic is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- These creatures share \_\_\_\_\_ .
- In contrast, \_\_\_\_\_ .
- However, have \_\_\_\_\_ .
- In the same way \_\_\_\_\_ .
- One trait they share is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Another similarity is \_\_\_\_\_ .
- Likewise, \_\_\_\_\_ .
- They deviate in that \_\_\_\_\_ .
- In the same way \_\_\_\_\_ .



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

## USING INFORMATION TO CREATE WELL-DEVELOPED PARAGRAPHS (1)

The author is writing a paragraph around the following main idea:

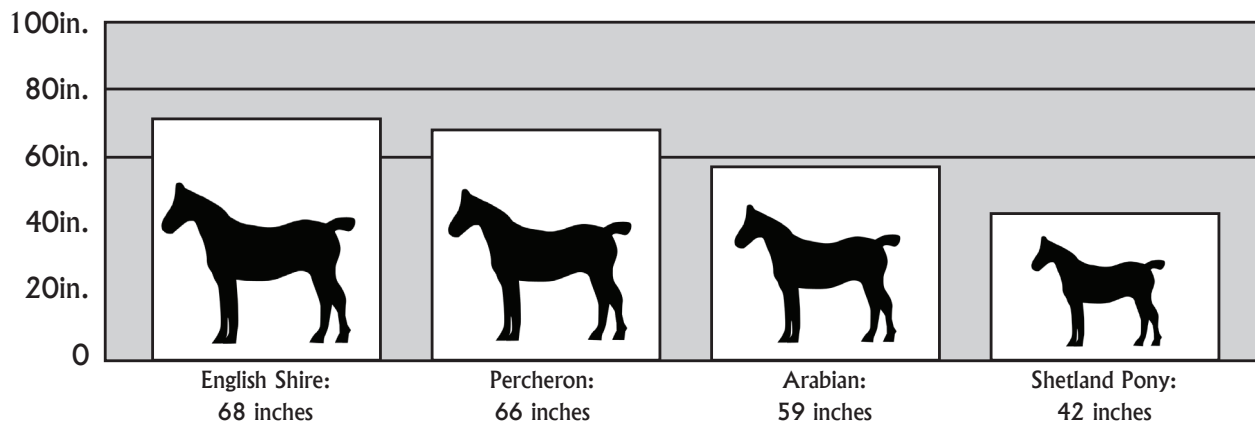
**There are many breeds of modern day horses used for different purposes.**

Read the following fact sheet on the topic: HORSES. Some of the information will be useful in supporting this main idea, and some details will not. Use the information provided in order to write a fully elaborated paragraph about the main idea cited above. Be sure to use the detail-generating questions (What does it look like? Why is it important?) as well as some Golden Bricks. Be certain that each detail supports the main idea.

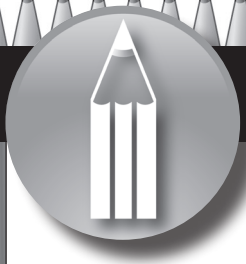
### FACT SHEET

horses are mammals • evolved from the Eohippus, a prehistoric leaf eating creature • gestation period for horses: 11 months • Arabians are sleek, beautiful horses bred for speed • domesticated in the Middle East 2000 BC • horses must be trained to be ridden • ponies make wonderful pets/safe riding for children • herbivores • heavyset European horses are called “draft horses” • draft horses pull plows or wagons • wild horses in North America are ancestors of Arabians left by Spanish conquistadors • horses’ height at the shoulder is measured in “hands” or hand lengths • Powerful draft breeds include the Belgian and the Clydesdale • related to zebras • Great Britain is famous for its small horses known as ponies • horses have 44 teeth • The American standard-bred is used for riding - trotting and pacing races • All racehorses are descendants of English and Arabian stallions

### HORSE SIZES (IN INCHES)







# Student Page

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

## USING INFORMATION TO CREATE WELL-DEVELOPED PARAGRAPHS (2)

The author is writing a paragraph around the following main idea:

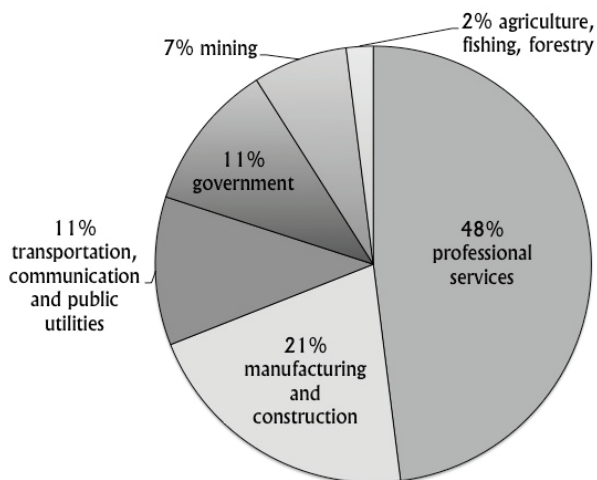
**For the business professional as well as for families, Texas offers many opportunities.**

Read the following fact sheet on the topic: TEXAS. Some of the information will be useful in supporting this main idea, and some details will not. Use the information provided in order to write a fully elaborated paragraph about the main idea cited above. Be sure to use the detail-generating questions (What does it look like? Why is it important?) as well as some Golden Bricks. Be certain that each detail supports the main idea.

### FACT SHEET

nicknamed the “Lone Star State” • Capital: Austin • second largest state • almost 400 miles of coast • 268,601 square miles of area • 4,000 kinds of wild flowers • Geography: plains, coastland, mountains, canyons • numerous museums and historical sites • offers many outdoor activities: boating, hiking, fishing, camping • Home of Houston Rockets/Dallas Cowboys • comprehensive system of colleges/universities • wild animals: jack rabbits, armadillos, deer, mountain lions, bobcats, coyote • largest oil producing state • more cattle, sheep, and horses than any other state • excellent transportation system - roads, airports, railways, waterways

THE TEXAS WORKFORCE



TEXAS CROPS (IN METRIC TONS)

