



Grade 7 Informational Writing Guide

Student Pages for Print or Projection

SECTION 2: Broad Yet Distinct Main Ideas/Reasons

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OVERLY GENERAL “BLURBS” TO AVOID

NICE

FUN

GREAT

COOL

AWESOME

INTERESTING

GOOD

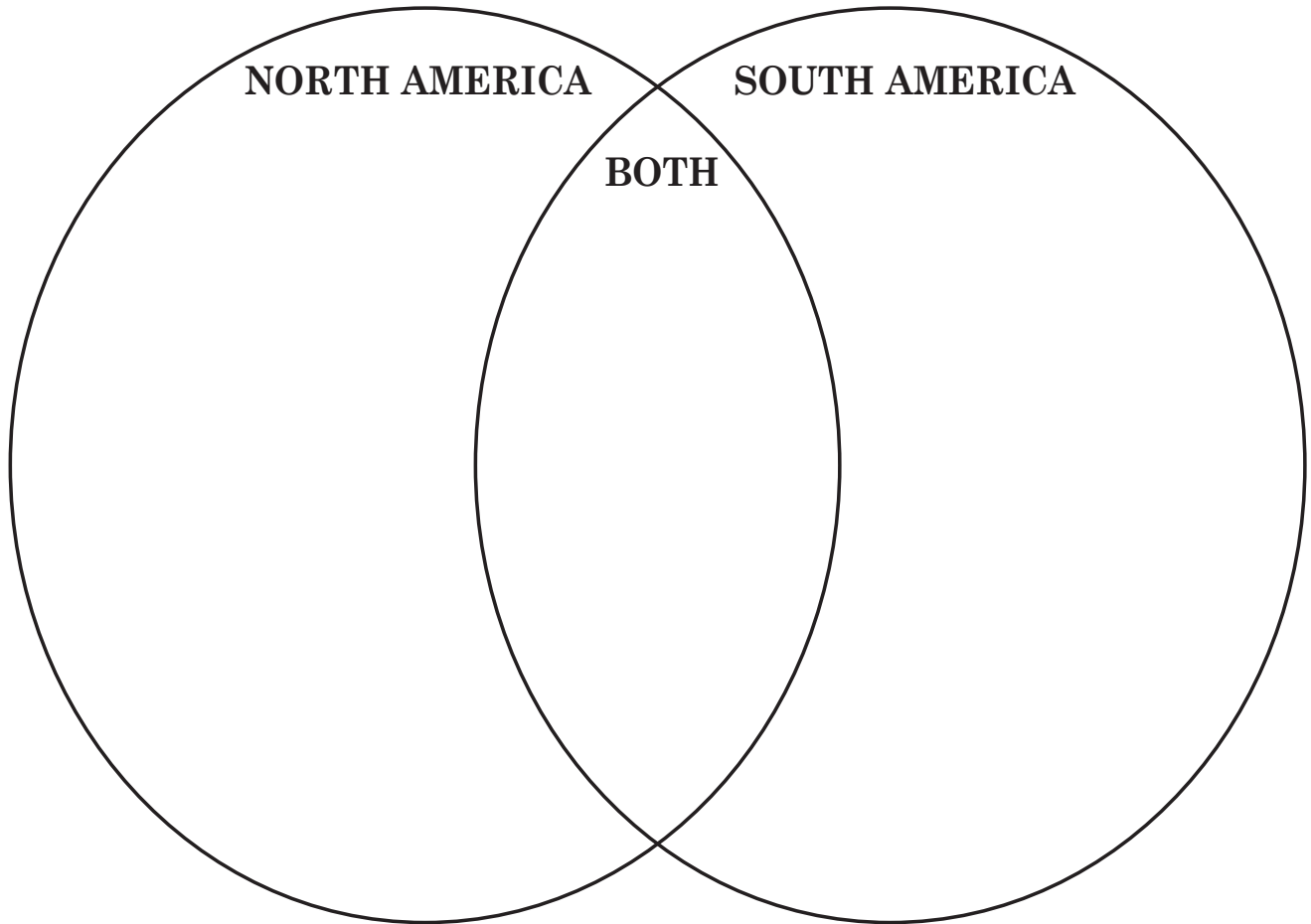
BAD

CUTE

Name _____

SORT & CATEGORIZE

Read the list of details below and decide which main ideas they apply to. Write the details in the circle. Any details that apply to both main ideas should be sorted into the area where the circles intersect.



Details:

Atlantic Ocean

Patagonia

Mexico

Mississippi River

Western hemisphere

Galapagos Islands

Rocky Mountains

Alaska

Inca Trail

Pacific Ocean

Amazon River

Andes Mountains

Hawaiian Islands

BONUS: *Can you think of any other details that might fit into either or both of the main idea/reason categories? If so, write them into the appropriate circle.*

Name _____

NEWFOUNDLAND (1)

Do you dream of visiting the island of Newfoundland one day? Schools of delicious codfish brought fishermen to this island. It is rugged and scenic.

Newfoundland was settled by fishermen. They had to be tough and strong too. The waters of the North Atlantic were often treacherous and it was cold, but there were huge schools of codfish. They came to Newfoundland from all over the world to catch codfish and they also hunted seals, which was very dangerous. Today there is still a seal hunt in Newfoundland but there are rules about how many seals can be taken.

In Newfoundland, codfish was the catch of the day. Fishermen were attracted to Newfoundland because its waters teemed with cod. They came from all over the world to catch this delicious fish and they preserved it with salt. Fishing for cod was hard work and many fishermen were lost at sea. The codfish can grow very large. It has a mild flavor and flaky white meat.

Newfoundland is an interesting place. It has miles of deserted coastline and remote wilderness, where aggressive moose and lynx roam. There is only one city on the island. It is built around a harbor with winding roads and steep hillsides where buildings perch. The harbor is narrow and surrounded by sharp, jagged rocks. Many boats have been destroyed as they tried to navigate through this harbor. There have been many other shipwrecks around the island too. A tsunami and many hurricanes have hit the island. Only the strongest, most hard-working people could survive there.

Newfoundland is a unique and interesting place. Let's hope we all get the chance to visit this one-of-a-kind island someday.



Name _____

NEWFOUNDLAND (2)

Imagine a place of “wooden ships and iron men.” That is how Winston Churchill described the rugged island of Newfoundland. A province of Canada, Newfoundland has a rich seafaring history, a wealth of wildlife and a thriving capital city.

Set in the blustery North Atlantic, Newfoundland rose to prominence as a major fishing port just after the European discovery of the new world in the late 15th century. Fisherman from France, Portugal, Spain and England descended upon the island to harvest the bounty of codfish found in its waters. Their catch was salted, dried and transported back across the ocean for sale in the markets of Europe. Newfoundland fisherman also caught haddock, and salmon and the island developed a profitable sealing industry in the 1700 -1800s. Seals were hunted for their lush fur and oil, which was highly valued for its use in cooking and lanterns as well as soap. Seal hunting continues to this day in Newfoundland, but it is strictly regulated to assure that the population, currently estimated at 5.5 million animals, holds steady.

Wildlife abounds on land and at sea in Newfoundland. Rare everywhere else on earth, the woodland caribou is found in healthy numbers on the island. While not a native species, slow-moving but quick-tempered moose are numerous enough to pose a hazard to drivers on the rural roads of Newfoundland. The beautiful lynx, with its long shaggy coat and large paws is native to the snowy wilds of Newfoundland. Its primary prey, the snowshoe hare, is found in abundance, too. A whale watcher’s paradise, Newfoundland is visited by orcas and the world’s largest pod of humpback whales during the summer months. Sperm, minke and blue whales also come to feed on krill and squid in these cold, clear waters. During the season, these mighty mammals can even be spotted from the shore!

While Newfoundland has miles of pristine coastline and unspoiled wilderness, most of its people live in the capital city of St. Johns. With its narrow, winding streets and colorful buildings, this charming city is built around a landlocked harbor on the southeastern coast of the island. North America’s oldest city, St. John’s history dates back to 1497 when Italian explorer Giovanni Cabato landed on the island. The city has two quite impressive claims to fame. The final battle of the French and Indian war was fought here in 1762 and in 1901, the first transcontinental radio transmission from Europe was received on what is now known as “Signal Hill,” located right in the heart of St. John’s. In terms of economics, the unique capital has a long history of economic ups and downs. Today, with a population just over 200,000 it is enjoying a period of growth and prosperity with the offshore oil industry providing jobs and tourism on the rise.

It is no wonder that Newfoundland is a favorite port for many major cruise lines. Considering its rich history, abundance of wildlife, and captivating capital city, a visit to this rustic, captivating island would surely be fascinating.

PLANNING AN INFORMATIONAL PIECE

1. **PICK** your *TOPIC*.
2. **LIST** what you know about your topic.
3. **CHOOSE** at least 3 *BROAD* yet *DISTINCT* ideas from your list. Be sure you can come up with at least 4 details to support the *MAIN IDEAS* you've chosen.

Name _____

PICK, LIST, CHOOSE, ASK, & FIND

1. **PICK** a topic _____

2. **LIST** what you already know about this topic (bullet points, not sentences):

3. **CHOOSE** main ideas (between 2 and 4):

Main Idea #1: _____

Main Idea #2: _____

Main Idea #3: _____

Main Idea #4: _____

4. **ASK:** What do you still need to know?

5. **FIND:** Where might you find answers to these questions?

Name _____

SUMMARY

Look at your PICK, LIST, CHOOSE, ASK, FIND worksheet to complete this summary of our upcoming unit.

Our class will be studying _____ .

We will read about _____

and discuss _____ .

We'll also study _____

and examine _____ .

We will use books and computers to learn about _____ .

_____, including

_____ .

Name _____

REVISED SUMMARY

Look over the summary you wrote when we were just beginning to study _____ . Now that we've completed the unit, re-write your summary to include what you have learned.

Our class just finished studying _____ .

We read about _____

and discussed _____ .

We found answers to our questions about _____

and _____ .

I was surprised to learn that _____

Now I understand why _____

The only question I still have about this topic is _____

INFORMATIONAL VERBS

Recognize	Understand
Learn about	Become aware of
Discover	Report upon
Uncover	Reveal
Study	Examine
Observe	Analyze
Investigate	Find out
Focus on	Emphasize
Research	Know
Delve into	Consider
Determine	Remember
Explore	Become familiar with
Chronicle	Become acquainted with
Discussed	Be on the lookout for
Debated	Heard about

Name _____

Timeless Toys

Just admit it: you find it difficult to believe that your parents were ever your age and even harder to imagine them playing with the same toys that you loved. But it is definitely possible! Some toys like the Spirograph, Mr. Potato Head, and Lincoln Logs never seem to go out of style.



Spirograph

Since the 1960s, the Spirograph has inspired young artists. This ingenious drawing toy comes with a collection of gears and wheels of different sizes and a variety of colored pens. By placing small wheels inside large wheels, children create beautiful, intricate designs with mathematical precision.

Invented by an engineer, it is not only fun but the Spirograph helps kids learn how to recognize patterns, a skill that will help them better understand mathematical principles throughout the school years. Named the toy of the year in 1967, it was taken off the market in North America in the 1990s, but reintroduced in 2009 to the delight of children and parents who remember playing with it themselves.

Mr. Potato Head never gets old!

Inducted into the Toy Hall of Fame in the year 2000, this timeless toy was first invented in 1949 and the earliest versions used real potatoes! When Mr. Potato Head was put into production in 1952, he consisted of a plastic potato head with holes into which plastic shapes represent-



Mr. Potato Head

ing his nose, ears, eyes, glasses, hat and arms could be snapped. The fun of Mr. Potato Head was mixing up the features, for example, putting a nose where an eye should be, an arm where a hat would ordinarily be found.

An instant hit, over one million Mr. Potato Heads were sold the first year it hit the market. Of course, the fact that he was the first toy to be advertised on TV helped boost sales considerably. Mr. Potato Head's unforgettable performance, alongside his beloved Mrs., in the classic Toy Story movies keeps him in the spotlight to this day.

Kids built their own frontier town with Lincoln Logs. For almost 100 years, these brilliantly simple playthings have inspired kids to construct their own rustic log cabins and forts. The original kit includes redwood logs of three different sizes, each with a notch so

that it fits together easily with another, plus windows and doors. Today, the logs are made of plastic and the kits come with human and animal figures presumably meant to inhabit the log

cabins. Lincoln Logs was the brainchild of John Lloyd Wright, son of the famous architect Frank Lloyd, and first sold with the advertising slogan "Interesting playthings typifying the spirit of America." To date, more than 100 million sets have been sold around the world.



Lincoln Logs

Do you remember making colorful

pictures with a Spirograph or playing for hours with Mr. Potato Head as a child? Can you recall constructing something spectacular with your Lincoln Logs on a rainy Saturday afternoon? For sure, these simple timeless toys have entertained children for decades and chances are, they'll continue to do so far into the future.

Name _____

MAIN IDEAS – DON'T OVERLAP THEM! (1)

Read accompanying text Timeless Toys and related main idea sentences below. Then, write a one word “blurb” that sums up what the main idea sentence says. Next, see if you can figure out which detail sentence belongs to which main idea. Some may seem like they fit into more than one main idea. That means they overlap; they are not distinct enough. Remember, the main ideas should be different from each other. If your main ideas are distinct enough, it will be clear which paragraph the detail belongs in. Write the number of the paragraph the detail sentence belongs in.

TOPIC: Timeless Toys

MAIN IDEA SENTENCES:

MAIN IDEA #1:

Since the 1960s, the Spirograph has inspired young artists.

MAIN IDEA #2:

Mr. Potato Head never gets old!

MAIN IDEA #3:

Kids built their own frontier town with Lincoln Logs.

BLURB:

DETAIL SENTENCES:

1. Before the Spirograph, the Etch-A-Sketch was the premier drawing toy.
2. Legos are another popular building toy.
3. Released in 1967, the Lite-Brite was another great hit among fledgling artists.
4. The starchy family grew throughout the 1950s with the introduction of Mrs. Potato Head, Brother Spud and Sister Yam.

MAIN IDEA(S):

Are the main ideas distinct enough? *(Check one)*

Yes. Choose yes if it was clear that each detail belonged with one of the main ideas.

No. Choose no if the details could fit in more than one main idea.

Name _____

MAIN IDEAS – DON'T OVERLAP THEM! (2)

Read the TOPIC and related main idea sentences below. Then, write a one word “Blurb” that sums up what the main idea sentence says. Next, use the internet or the library to find details that support each of these main ideas.

TOPIC: Great Inventions

MAIN IDEA SENTENCES:

BLURB:

MAIN IDEA #1:

New ideas spread quickly after the invention of the printing press in 1450.

MAIN IDEA #2:

With the invention of the Morse Code in 1836, we could send messages from greater distances than ever before.

MAIN IDEA #3:

In 1982, the internet put a world of information at our fingertips.

Detail Sentence for Main Idea #1: _____

Detail Sentence for Main Idea #2: _____

Detail Sentence for Main Idea #3: _____

CHALLENGE: Continue to research Great Inventions via the internet or the library and see if you can come up with some additional main ideas for an informational piece about Great Inventions as well as details to support them. On another sheet of paper, write main idea and detail sentences based on your research.



Name _____

MAIN IDEAS - BROAD ENOUGH OR TOO NARROW? (1)

Read this group of main ideas for an informational piece about music. If any one of the three is too narrow to be properly elaborated or overlaps with another, cross it out and replace it with a broad yet distinct main idea. (Remember, they may be okay as is!) Then write a main idea sentence for each main idea. You may use the sentence starters on the bottom of the page to help you.

TOPIC: Music

MAIN IDEA #1: Rock and Roll

MAIN IDEA #2: Hip Hop

MAIN IDEA #3: Classical

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #1

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #2

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #3

SENTENCE STARTERS:

- Listen to the _____
- You might wonder, _____
- These catchy tunes _____
- Turn up the volume for _____
- Imagine the sound of _____

Name _____

MAIN IDEAS - BROAD ENOUGH OR TOO NARROW? (2)

Read this group of main ideas for an informational piece about photography. If any one of the three is too narrow to be properly elaborated or overlaps with another, cross it out and replace it with a broad yet distinct main idea. (Remember, they may be okay as is!) Then, use the internet or the library to gather the information you need to write a main idea sentence for each main idea. You may use the sentence starters on the bottom of the page to help you.

TOPIC: Photography
MAIN IDEA #1: Fine Art Photography
MAIN IDEA #2: Photojournalism
MAIN IDEA #3: Cell phone cameras

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #1

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #2

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #3

SENTENCE STARTERS:

- The work of _____
- One of the best known _____
- Crisp color images bring _____
- Art collectors value _____

Name _____

IDENTIFYING MAIN IDEAS WITHIN A PROMPT

Read this prompt/assignment. Circle the topic.

Write an informational essay describing the signs of climate change and their consequences today and in the future.

Fill in the blanks in the prewriting plan below by generating main ideas and writing main idea sentences for them. Gather the information you need from the internet or the library.

YOUR TOPIC:

MAIN IDEA #1:

MAIN IDEA #2:

MAIN IDEA #3:

Name _____

GENERATING BROAD YET DISTINCT MAIN IDEAS

Think about the TOPIC listed in the box below. Ask yourself what you know about this topic. Then, write distinct main idea “blurbs” about the topic on the lines below. Be sure that each main idea is distinct from the others. Then select one of the main idea blurbs and expand it into a sentence. Use the example as a guide.

Example:

TOPIC: Vegetables

MAIN IDEA #1: Nutritional value

MAIN IDEA #2: Salads

MAIN IDEA #3: Juices

MAIN IDEA SENTENCE #2: Raw spinach and crisp lettuce make a great foundation for endless varieties of salads.

TOPIC: The Performing Arts

MAIN IDEA #1:

MAIN IDEA #2:

MAIN IDEA #3:

Select one of your main idea “blurbs” and develop it into a main idea sentence. Use the sentence starters at the bottom of the page if needed.

SENTENCE STARTERS:

- Tap into your creativity by _____ .
- A good way to _____ .
- Get together with _____ .
- It’s exciting when _____ .
- Control your stage fright by _____ .

THESAURUS OF GENERAL ADJECTIVES

interesting

appealing
fascinating
enthraling
intriguing
curious

nice

charming
delightful
enchancing
captivating
pleasant

pretty

(as in a person)

beautiful
lovely
attractive
handsome
elegant
adorable
gorgeous
regal

great

terrific
incredible
fantastic
awesome
grand
magnificent
splendid
marvelous
excellent

big

enormous
gigantic
huge
immense
colossal
giant
massive

fun

enjoyable
entertaining
amusing
delightful
pleasant
satisfying

strange

bewildering
bizarre
curious
extraordinary
mysterious
odd
peculiar
unusual
weird

exciting

exhilarating
thrilling
sensational
electrifying
rousing
stimulating
death-defying
daring

dangerous

harmful
hazardous
perilous
risky
challenging

smart

clever
skillful
bright
intelligent
shrewd
brilliant

beautiful

(as in a place)
charming
captivating
lovely
lush
majestic
splendid
breathtaking

scary

frightening
terrifying
alarming
shocking
horrifying
spooky
eerie

small

tiny
petite
puny
microscopic
miniature
little

hot

blazing
burning
flaming
scalding
scorching
searing
sweltering

cold

arctic
chilly
cool
freezing

difficult

grueling
hard
challenging
complex
demanding
perplexing
troublesome

easy

effortless
simple
uncomplicated
comfortable
a cinch

special

unique
exceptional
distinctive
extraordinary
meaningful

(animal - although a noun, students often benefit by having word referents to use: creature, beast, monster, critter, feathered/furry/four-legged friend, varmint, carnivore, herbivore, predator, hunter.)

Name _____

BORING! REVISE!

Read this author’s prewriting plan and main idea sentences. Notice the boring, redundant sentences and lack of variety. Each sentence begins the same way.

TOPIC: Famous Landmarks

MAIN IDEA #1: The Leaning Tower of Pisa One of the world’s most famous landmarks is the leaning tower of Pisa.

MAIN IDEA #2: The Great Wall of China Another of the world’s most famous landmarks is the Great Wall of China.

MAIN IDEA #3: The Statue of Liberty Another of the world’s most famous landmarks is the Statue of Liberty.

This kind of writing does not spark the reader’s interest or make them want to read on. Using the sentence starters below, see if you can rewrite these sentences to make them more interesting.

THE LEANING TOWER OF PISA

THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA

THE STATUE OF LIBERTY

SENTENCE STARTERS:

- Visible from _____ .
- Visited by _____ .
- The history of _____ .
- Wow! The sight of _____ .
- You can’t help but wonder _____ .

STANDARD EDITING/PROOFREADING MARKS

<u>Mark</u>	<u>Meaning</u>	<u>Example</u>
¶	Start a new paragraph	It took a long time, but we finally finished. ¶ At that point, we moved onto...
# ^	Add a space	What ^{# ^} do you think happened next?
≡	Capitalize	During the month of <u>≡</u> may, we have one three-day weekend.
/lc	Lower case	That ^{lc} B oy certainly plays to win.
Ⓢ	Spelling mistake	Let's travel to the <u>Ⓢ</u> Caribbean and enjoy the weather.
^	Add a word or punctuation	Amazingly, our [^] ^{determined} team evened the score in the second half.
⸮	Close space	Cheerleading ⸮ tryouts take place after school on Tuesday.
⸮	Transpose	The carnival is to ^{tr} town coming.
⦿	Add a period	The end is near⦿
X	Delete	Do not overlap any many of your main ideas.

The carnival is coming to town! This exciting event has Ⓢfamily^s from all over the region flocking to the fairgrounds to enjoy the thrilling rides and exciting games of chance. There is so much to do as this annual celebration gets underway. Get a bird's eye view of the whole Ⓢtown from the top of the ^{lc}Ferris ^{lc}Wheel. Win yourself a big, bright ^{lc}Stuffed ^{lc}Animal! Of course for the younger children, there's an enchanting carousel with intricately carved horses to ride.

Name _____

EDITING & REVISING

Read the paragraph below. Revise the text by using the thesaurus feature on your computer to replace redundant words. Use the standard Editing/Proofreading Marks to indicate where the replacement words should be inserted as well as any typographical errors you may spot.

Baleen Whales vs. Toothed Whales

The most significant difference between baleen whales and toothed whales lies in the way each species feeds. Baleen whales open their mouths wide and take a huge gulp of seawater and krill. Then, they filter the saltwater out through their baleen plates, which fold down from the roof of their mouths. baleen plates are made of shredded keratin, the same protein that our finger nails are made of. These baleen plates allow the animal to filter Seawater out of its mouth while it swallows the krill. Blue whales and Humpback whales are examples of baleen whales. Orcas and sperm whales are examples of toothed whales. This type of whale hunts prey and swallows it whole. Dophins and Porpoises feed the same way. Their blunt teeth are made for grabbing prey rather than chewing or biting. Toothed whales can eat a wide variety of sealife, including sharks, seals and squid. As a general rule, toothed whales are smaller than baleen whales, although both are colossal.

Name _____

MAIN IDEA BLURBS INTO SENTENCES (1)

Look at the Informational Pillar Framework below. Translate each of the main idea blurbs into a complete MAIN IDEA sentence.

TOPIC:
Felines
Introduction: Lead/Topic Sentence

MAIN IDEA #1:
Domestic house cats

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

MAIN IDEA #2:
Tigers

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

MAIN IDEA #3:
Cheetahs

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

CONCLUSION

(#1) _____

(#2) _____

(#3) _____

SENTENCE STARTERS:

- Meow! A cat might _____ .
- Felines of all sizes have _____ .
- In the wild, _____ .
- The speed of a _____ .
- Keep your distance when _____ .
- Easily recognizable by their _____ .

BONUS: Using the internet or the library, research one of the three main ideas. Identify at least two appropriate supporting details and compose complete sentences focusing on each. Write your answer on the back of this page.

Name _____

MAIN IDEA BLURBS INTO SENTENCES (2)

Look at the Informational Pillar Framework below. Translate each of the main idea blurbs into a complete MAIN IDEA sentence.

TOPIC:
The Rodeo
Introduction: Lead/Topic Sentence

MAIN IDEA #1:
History of the rodeo in North America

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

MAIN IDEA #2:
Events at a rodeo

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

MAIN IDEA #3:
Famous rodeo performers

Detail	Detail
Detail	Detail

CONCLUSION

(#1) _____

(#2) _____

(#3) _____

SENTENCE STARTERS:

- In the days of the wild west _____ .
- The fun begins when _____ .
- Today, rodeos _____ .
- Who hasn't heard of _____ ?
- The competition continues as _____ .
- It is entertaining to see _____ .

BONUS: Using the internet or the library, research one of the three main ideas. Identify at least two appropriate supporting details and compose complete sentences focusing on each. Write your answer on the back of this page.

Name _____

TURNING QUESTIONS/PROMPTS INTO RESPONSES (1)

DIRECTIONS: Read each question/prompt below and underline the key phrase. Then, on the lines beneath the question/prompt, use this key phrase to create an effective **TOPIC SENTENCE**.

REMEMBER: When writing a response to text, you will be given a question or prompt to consider. Within the question or prompt you'll find a *key phrase* that you'll need to address. One effective way of getting started is to use this key phrase in the first line of your response. This key phrase becomes your *TOPIC SENTENCE*. Keep in mind also that you can revise this topic sentence later in the writing process.

1. Write an informational piece about erosion and the ways in which it affects coastal communities.

2. Write an essay recounting the series of disturbing events that led to the end of Jen and Maya's friendship.

3. Based on the text, describe the ways in which tools made life easier for Cro-Magnon people during the first Stone Age.

4. Explain how plants provide nutrition for themselves through the process of photosynthesis.

Name _____

TURNING QUESTIONS/PROMPTS INTO RESPONSES (2)

DIRECTIONS: Read each question/prompt below and underline the key phrase. Then, on the lines beneath the question/prompt, use this key phrase to create an effective **TOPIC SENTENCE**.

REMEMBER: When writing a response to text, you will be given a question or prompt to consider. Within the question or prompt you'll find a *key phrase* that you'll need to address. One effective way of getting started is to use this key phrase in the first line of your response. This key phrase becomes your *TOPIC SENTENCE*. Keep in mind also that you can revise this topic sentence later in the writing process.

1. Based on your reading, compose an informational essay about many ways in which the United Nations helps promote world peace.

2. Explain several reasons why it is important to protect historic landmarks for future generations.

3. After reading the text, write an informational piece about Benjamin Franklin's many contributions to science.

4. Describe the many hardships Brian faces during his first night in the wilderness.

Name _____

TURNING QUESTIONS/PROMPTS INTO RESPONSES (3)

DIRECTIONS: Read each question/prompt below and underline the key phrase. Then, on the lines beneath the question/prompt, use this key phrase to create an effective **TOPIC SENTENCE**.

REMEMBER: When writing a response to text, you will be given a question or prompt to consider. Within the question or prompt you'll find a *key phrase* that you'll need to address. One effective way of getting started is to use this key phrase in the first line of your response. This key phrase becomes your *TOPIC SENTENCE*. Keep in mind also that you can revise this topic sentence later in the writing process.

1. Write an essay detailing the differences between amphibians and reptiles.

2. Refer to the article about Susan B. Anthony to describe her most significant contributions to the women's rights movement.

3. Describe the events that left Peter and Timothy feeling defeated at the end of Chapter 6.

4. You have read two articles about the ancient civilizations of Greece and Turkey. Cite examples from both to compose an essay about the similarities between the two.

Name _____

TURNING QUESTIONS/PROMPTS INTO RESPONSES (4)

DIRECTIONS: Read each question/prompt below and underline the key phrase. Then, on the lines beneath the question/prompt, use this key phrase to create an effective **TOPIC SENTENCE**.

REMEMBER: When writing a response to text, you will be given a question or prompt to consider. Within the question or prompt you'll find a *key phrase* that you'll need to address. One effective way of getting started is to use this key phrase in the first line of your response. This key phrase becomes your *TOPIC SENTENCE*. Keep in mind also that you can revise this topic sentence later in the writing process.

1. You have read two stories based on the theme of responsibility. Using specific examples from both stories, write an essay describing how Stella and Adam learned to take responsibility for their own actions.

2. The article about volcanoes includes a timeline. Using this information, write an article about some of the most destructive eruptions in the 20th century.

3. You've read a poem containing vivid images of solitude. Cite as many as you can in an essay illuminating the author's view of aloneness.

4. You have read two biographical articles about the inventors Henry Ford and Thomas Edison. Write an informational essay about the valuable contributions of each to the world today.

Name _____

THE MISSING MAIN IDEA

Read each paragraph. Think about the specific details in each sentence. Ask yourself what the paragraph is all about and write a main idea sentence on the lines provided that tells you what the entire paragraph is about.

China is the world's top garlic producer and roasted cloves of the tasty bulb are often blended with tangy hints of ginger to produce uniquely Asian flavors. While the unmistakable aroma of garlic is often associated with Italian foods, it is equally essential to many traditional Spanish dishes, such as huevos rotos, a dish made with potatoes, eggs and vast amounts of chopped garlic. The delicious taste of garlic can also be detected in traditional dishes of Central and Latin America as well as the Caribbean.

Main Idea: _____

In the early days of Greece, soldiers would consume garlic before going into battle, believing it would give them strength and keep them safe. Greek athletes did the same before critical competitions. Long ago, those who had to travel after dark believed that eating garlic before the journey would drive away any evil spirits they might meet along the way. During the middle-ages in Europe, it was widely believed that garlic could ward off vampires, werewolves and the curse of the "Evil Eye."

Main Idea: _____

Before the invention of penicillin, garlic was the antibiotic of choice. For centuries, children in the Italian countryside have worn cloves of garlic on strings around their necks to ward off colds and many scientific studies suggest that this may well be effective. Herbalists today use garlic to treat high cholesterol, coughs and digestive problems. Some believe it could be an important component in the battle against cancer. For maximum healing power, garlic should be taken raw.

Main Idea: _____

What is the topic of this piece? _____

Summarize the main ideas into blurbs to complete the organizational framework for this informational piece:

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1 _____

MAIN IDEA #2 _____

MAIN IDEA #3 _____

Name _____

SENTENCE VARIETY AND WORD CHOICE

Read the dull main idea sentences below. Revise each by varying the sentence structure and replacing overly general adjectives with specific, vivid descriptive words to create more exciting main idea sentences for your readers. Also, try to create word referents to replace the underlined topic word in each sentence.

Ex: Conflicts between nations can culminate in war.

Revision:

Sadly, conflicts between uncompromising nations can culminate in violent battles that cost many lives.

1. **Art museums can be inspiring.**

Revision:

2. **Recycling can help keep our oceans clean.**

Revision:

3. **Going to a concert is always a treat.**

Revision:

Name _____

PREPARING TO WRITE A RESPONSE TO TEXT

You've read the text titled Wild Canines of the World, pp. 181-183. In response to this text, write an essay discussing at least two of the challenges wild canines face in the wilderness today. Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your response.

1. Underline the **given elements** in this writing assignment.
2. What are the **variable elements** in this writing assignment - in other words, what decision do you need to make as the author?
3. Skim and scan the text and **write a summarizing framework** for this piece.

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

MAIN IDEA #4: _____

MAIN IDEA #5: _____

4. What **text conventions** can help guide your response?
5. Circle the sidebar and highlight any information contained there that you want to include in your response.
6. After you've decided upon your main ideas, highlight related examples within the text. Highlight your examples in the text. Highlight the first in yellow, and the second in pink.
7. Write a topic sentence using the given elements that you underlined as your "topic."
8. Write a main idea sentence for each of the main ideas that you have selected.
9. Use citing sentence starters to reference evidence in the text:
 - The author warns _____ .
 - In the text titled Wild Canines of the World, _____ .
 - Additionally, the text describes _____ .
 - Another issue the author notes is _____ .
 - The information provided explains how _____ .
 - In the fourth paragraph, we learn _____ .
 - The information provided explains how _____ .
 - The author also details _____ .

Name _____

Wild Canines of the World

Large and shaggy or small and sleek, domestic dogs are one of the most popular pets around. Whether herding sheep in a meadow or frolicking in city parks, they are a familiar sight. So familiar, in fact, it's easy to forget that every breed of dog is an ancestor of the wild carnivores found in every corner of the world. Let's meet some of our furry friend's cousins from around the globe, including the Dingo, the African Wild Dog, the Maned Wolf, the Gray Wolf, and the Arctic Fox.

The Dingo of Australia

Travel to the land down under and explore the habitat of the dingo. Found primarily in Australia, this wild canine is believed to have originated from the domesticated dogs brought to the continent by Asian seafarers over 3,500 years ago.



Dingo

These medium-sized dogs adapted and thrived in the outback of Australia. Very lean with bushy tails, these scrappy survivors can be found in desert habitats as well as in mountainous regions and forests. Those inhabiting desert regions have very short, golden fur that not only helps them tolerate high temperatures but provides camouflage as these carnivores hunt. They can't sweat, but release excess body heat through their large, triangular-shaped ears. Dingoes who live in mountain regions tend to have heavier coats. Hunted extensively by ranchers and interbred with domes-

tic dogs, pure dingoes are a threatened species. Preserving large, isolated tracts of the Australian outback for dingoes is probably the best way to assure their survival.

The Endangered African Wild Dog

Just south of the Sahara Desert lies the rugged terrain of the African Wild Dog. These endangered animals have multi-colored coats, similar to those of tabby cats, and each individual canine has its own distinctive markings. Additionally, they are easily recognized by their large, rounded ears and long, white-tipped tails. Protecting

this unique carnivore in its native habitat is challenging. Since each pack of 6-20 dogs requires a huge home range, habitat loss is a definite concern as human populations grow. African Wild Dogs sometimes prey on livestock, so they stray onto agricultural lands, and are often shot by farmers. Diseases spread by domestic animals further reduce their numbers each year. Wildlife biologists estimate

its ears to its upper back. Unlike most canines, it doesn't live or hunt in packs. Instead, females and males live in monogamous pairs, sharing territory but only interacting during breeding season. Like foxes, they hunt alone in South America's grasslands and supplement their diets with fish, and fruit when it's available. While the Maned Wolf has protected status, its future is threatened

and northern Rocky Mountain regions of the United States as well as Canada and Alaska. Despite the fact that healthy wild wolves rarely prey on domestic animals, this powerful canine was hunted almost to extinction because it was seen as a threat to livestock. Conservation efforts have been successful in restoring some wolf populations. Thus, the animals have lost their status as a threatened species and its accompanying protection. This is very controversial. Many conservationists believe the newly established populations will quickly decline if a hunting season on wolves is established. Further, human intrusion into wolf habitat is another area of concern. Not only is their territory diminishing in size, but it is becoming fragmented. Habitat fragmentation means that animals are forced to cross highways and travel through developed areas in order to hunt successfully. This increases the likelihood of encounters



Gray Wolf

that there are fewer than 5,500 of these intelligent animals left in the wild. However, captive breeding programs in Zimbabwe have successfully doubled the population in recent years.

The Unique Maned Wolf

South America is home to one of the most unusual canine species in the world, the Maned Wolf. Growing to a height of four feet, this reddish-brown carnivore is named for the tuft of black fur that runs from between

by habitat destruction as wilderness areas are converted to farm lands. Their lives are also cut short by domestic dog diseases and car collisions.

Since its eyes are considered good luck charms in Brazil, this long-legged predator is also poached from the wild. While these distinctive canines have raided a chicken coop or two, they have never been known to prey on sheep or cattle.

A Top Predator of North America

The majestic Gray Wolf was once common throughout North America. Today, its range has been reduced to the Great Lakes



Arctic Fox

between wolves and cars, livestock, or humans. Like many wolf species, the gray wolf lives in packs with a complex social order. They have their very own language of barks, growls, whines, and howls that wildlife biologists are working hard to decode.

The Adaptable Arctic Fox

Up in the arctic tundra, the Arctic Fox is a master of camouflage. In the winter, it sports a thick coat of white fur that allows it to easily blend into a snowy backdrop and stay warm when the temperature dips to 50 degrees below zero. When the seasons change, the resilient carnivore grows a brown coat

that matches the spring and summer landscape. Historically, this small canine has been hunted extensively for its lush coat. Today, however, only small numbers are taken by native people of the Arctic and the greatest threat to this omnivorous canine is a diminishing food supply. While it is not considered a threatened species, a research study published in *The Journal of Polar Biology* suggests that the species, like polar bears, will have a hard time hunting and scavenging for food as sea ice continues to melt. Like many wild canines, it is also vulnerable to the diseases of domestic dogs.

From the dingoes of the Australian outback to the howling hunters of the Americas, the canine family is richly diverse. This essay has examined only five of the dozens of fascinating wild canine species in the world. There are many others, including the extremely rare Ethiopian Wolf and the Dhole of Southeast Asia that whistles rather than

DISEASES OF DOMESTIC AND WILD CANINES

Canine distemper is a viral infection that attacks the respiratory systems of both domestic and wild dogs. According to the American Veterinary Association, the symptoms of distemper in wild animals resemble those of rabies and the virus is often fatal. Domestic dogs can be vaccinated against it, but it is one of the most common diseases seen in wild mammals – not only dogs, but raccoons and skunks. Mange is another. Caused by parasites, this miserable malady causes intense itching and skin infections. Like distemper, it can be treated effectively by veterinarians. However, it is usually fatal to wildlife. Additionally, since both diseases are contagious, an outbreak can endanger a large number of canines.

barks, which are definitely worth learning more about. Without a doubt, it's important to protect these intriguing animals and their habitats so that wild canines can thrive for many decades to come.

Name _____

PREPARING TO WRITE A RESPONSE TO TEXT

You've read the text titled Carnivorous Plants, pp. 190-191. In response to this text, write an essay describing at least two types of carnivorous plants.

1. Underline the **given elements** in this writing assignment.
2. What are the **variable elements** in this writing assignment - in other words, what decision do you need to make as the author?
3. **Skim and scan** the text and **write a summarizing framework** for this piece.
 TOPIC: _____
 MAIN IDEA #1: _____
 MAIN IDEA #2: _____
 MAIN IDEA #3: _____
4. What **text conventions** can help guide your response? _____

5. Circle the sidebar and highlight any information contained there that you want to include in your response.
6. After you've decided upon your main ideas, highlight related examples within the text. Highlight the first in yellow and the second in pink. Highlight any additional examples in blue.
7. Write a topic sentence using the given elements that you underlined as your "topic."
8. Write a main idea sentence for each of the main ideas you have selected.
9. Use citing sentence starters to reference evidence in the text:
 - The author describes _____ .
 - Carnivorous Plants teaches us _____ .
 - Additionally, the text explains _____ .
 - The author also notes is _____ .
 - The information provided explains how _____ .
 - In the second paragraph, we learn _____ .
 - The information provided explains how _____ .
 - Further, the author also details _____ .

Name _____

Carnivorous Plants

Carnivorous plants? Should I be scared? Not unless you're an insect. While they may seem like alien life forms, carnivorous plants really do exist here on planet earth, but they're nothing like the creepy, menacing botanicals you may have seen in movies. There are a great variety of these fascinating, protein-cravers and many are delicate and lovely. Let's take a closer look at the famous Venus Flytrap as well as other types of predatory plants, and learn how we can cultivate our own garden of carnivorous beauty.

The Famous Venus Flytrap

While there are an estimated 650 different plant species classified as carnivorous, the best known is probably the **Venus Flytrap**. This small, shallow-rooted plant has glossy leaves that open and shut like a clamshell

in order to capture passing insects inside. Like most carnivorous plants, Venus Flytraps live in moist, humid swamps. Interestingly, they are native to only one place in the entire



world – the state of North Carolina in the southeastern United States. A subspecies of the Venus Flytrap is the **Water Wheel**, the rarest of all carnivorous plants. These aquatic wonders grow a circle of leaves, each tipped with a tiny trap of hinged leaves that open and shut when they sense the presence of a tasty insect. If you're very lucky, you may someday see a Water Wheel floating on the surface of a still freshwater pond.

Other Types of Carnivorous Plants

With glossy red and green leaves, the **Sundew** is one of the most beautiful types of carnivorous plants. It secretes a glistening, sticky substance called **mucilage** in which passing insects are trapped. Then, the leaves roll up around the prey and the digestive process begins. **Butterworts** trap insects the same way. These petite beauties have silky smooth greenish-yellow leaves and bloom in the spring with tiny flowers in a rainbow of colors. Like the Sundew and the Butterwort, **Pitcher Plants** are found on every continent on earth, except Antarctica, but never in great numbers. These brightly colored meat-eaters grow leaves shaped like hollow tubes with a cover on top that opens and closes. They produce a sweet nectar that lures unsuspecting

Name _____

insects toward the top of the leaf. Then, of course, the cover snaps shut. Pitchers are the largest of all carnivorous plants and can grow big enough to consume mice and frogs. Some types can tolerate cold temperatures and grow at high altitudes, usually on wet, seeping rocky cliffs, but most live in rainforest environments and bogs.

Can I Grow My Own?

Growing a garden of carnivorous plants is a great project. It's not difficult, but these extraordinary sprouts have some very specific needs, including constant humidity and moisture. You must water and mist them regularly using only distilled, mineral-free water. They cannot tolerate regular potting soil. Instead, plant them in a mixture of peat moss and silica sand. Never use play sand because of its high salt content. If you are growing your garden indoors, keep it on a

windowsill where it will get plenty of sunlight and remember to feed it bloodworms or crickets (usually available at pet stores) as often as is recommended for the individual species. Beware of overfeeding; it can be deadly. Finally, be patient. Your plant will grow slowly, but with proper care, it can live for decades.

Which kinds of carnivorous plants do you want in your garden? These fascinating organisms are not only lovely to look at, but provide natural pest control. Consider cultivating the renowned Venus Flytrap or another type of carnivorous plant. Whichever variety you opt for,

WHEN AND WHY DID CARNIVOROUS PLANTS EVOLVE?

There are very few fossil records available to trace the evolution of carnivorous plants, but it is believed that they emerged about 35-47 million years ago. In order to survive in places where the soil lacks nutrients, they developed the ability to capture insects and produce digestive enzymes. Many scientists, including Charles Darwin, consider it the most amazing adaptation in the plant kingdom.

your carnivorous garden will certainly showcase one of the most awesome adaptations on earth.



Meal Worm in venus fly trap

Name _____

Rejected/Accepted Science

Have you ever had a great idea that others mocked? If so, you'll probably find it inspiring to know that some of history's greatest innovators have had the same frustrating experience. Barry J. Marshall, Alfred Wegener, and Louis Pasteur are three scientists whose ideas were rejected at first, but ultimately proven valuable.

In 2005 Barry J. Marshall, along with his partner J. Robin Warren, were awarded the Nobel Prize for their discovery that bacteria is responsible for stomach ulcers. However, 20 years earlier their ideas were mocked and dismissed by the scientific community, who were convinced that the strong digestive enzymes found in the human stomach would surely kill any bacteria that made its way into the organ. The prevailing thought was that stomach ulcers were caused by stress or a bad diet, and as a result, this painful affliction was often left untreated. It wasn't until Marshall proved his theory by swallowing a petri dish filled with dangerous bacteria that his idea was taken seriously. Because of Marshall's pioneering efforts, stomach ulcers are successfully treated today with antibiotics that kill the bacteria.

German scientist Alfred Wegener came up with the revolutionary idea of "continental displacement" in 1910. Today Wegener's pioneering work has evolved into the widely accepted continental drift theory, which offers an explanation of how continents shift position over time. Today this is fundamental to the science of *plate tectonics*, the study of plates found deep in the earth. Once these plates repositioned themselves with enough force to rip continents apart; today they continue moving and colliding with one another to form volcanoes and cause earthquakes. It is a gross understatement to say that other leading scientists of the time did not respect Wegener's ideas back in the early days of the 20th century. One British geologist went so far as to say that anyone who "valued his reputation for scientific sanity" would never support Wegener's theory.

Today known as the "father of microbiology" and credited with saving untold lives, Louis Pasteur theorized that microscopic organisms such as bacteria and viruses, known collectively as "germs" caused disease. But back in the 1850s, when most believed that illness was caused by bad air or weak blood, the French scientist's ideas were met with resistance and ridicule. It wasn't until the late 1860s that Pasteur's theory began to gain acceptance within the medical community. Later, Pasteur used his research into germs to create the process of pasteurization, which removes germs from milk. Additionally, his understanding of germs led him to create the first effective vaccination for rabies and a ground-breaking new treatment for diphtheria, a deadly disease at the time.

It is easy to admire the perseverance of these three great scientists who believed in their own ideas when no one else did. For sure, Louis Pasteur, Alfred Wegener and Barry J. Marshall made extraordinary contributions to science.

Name _____

The Last Laugh

I grabbed my lunch bucket and started off for school. The sun wasn't quite up yet, but I considered myself lucky. I loved having this quiet time to gaze at the moon and the stars in the sky overhead. As I made my way along the well-worn path through the pine-scented woods toward the schoolhouse, I imagined myself sprouting wings and flying up, up, up, all the way up to the moon. Someday it would happen. Someday, people would walk on the moon.

"No, they won't," my sister said. "That's just foolish. People will never walk on the moon."

"How do you know?" I asked. Sara was ten, two years younger than me and a big know-it-all.

"I just know," she said. "Like Mother says, you've got more imagination than common sense, Joe."

Like just about everybody else living on the planet Earth in the year 1895, Mother and Sara couldn't imagine that a person would ever walk on the moon. Father was more open-minded.

"Joe, I had thoughts like that when I was a young'un," he'd told me. "But then I got busy with a farm and a family. It's been years since I had time to wonder about the stars and the sun and the moon.

When Father said things like that, it made me think that I should be taking some of the burden off his shoulders. Some nights at dinner, he looked tired enough to drop chin-first into his venison stew and I thought I should be home helping him around the homestead, giving him time once again to stargaze and wonder about the mysteries of the universe. Maybe I'd had enough schooling. My spelling wasn't the best, but I knew how to read and I was good at arithmetic. So what more was there that I actually needed to know? Besides, as the oldest student at our schoolhouse, I really didn't feel I fit in any longer. It wasn't always that way. For many years, I loved school, not only for the learning but for the time with my best friend Edmund. Edmund hadn't been to school since last spring. Instead he was spending his days working alongside his father, our village's blacksmith. When I saw him last, Edmund was getting really good at blacksmithing himself. I was happy for him, but I sure missed him at school.

"What a foolish notion!" That was Father's reaction when I mentioned that maybe I should call it quits with my schooling. "You've got much more smarts in your head than I ever did. Learn everything you can," he said.

So there I was, trudging off for another day of school with Sara trotting along beside me. We arrived in time for Sara to enjoy game of jump-rope with her friends in the meadow of wildflowers beside the schoolhouse. Lost in my thoughts, I sat alone on the steps in front of the one-room log cabin that served as our classroom.

“Hello.”

A girl I'd never seen before seated herself beside me. She had blond hair curling out of her bonnet and a wide, friendly smile.

“Hello yourself,” I said. “I'm Joe.”

“I'm Anna,” she said. “Are we the only people over 10 at this school?”

“We are,” I said. “Is today your first day?”

“Yes,” she said. “We just moved in down the road a piece.”

“Well, I hope you'll be happy here,” I said. “It's a nice town. Quiet, but nice.”

Over the next week, Anna and I became the best of friends and I started to enjoy coming to school again, especially when our teacher Miss O'Brien gave Anna and I a special assignment: to write stories and read them to the class.

“I'm going to write about big-eyed moon men who come to earth,” I told Anna.

“That sounds exciting to me,” Anna said. “But it'll scare the little children.”

I guessed she was right so I wrote a story about a grown-up scientist who invents a flying machine and soars off to the moon in it.

I was proud of my finished story and sure that it wouldn't scare the little children. It didn't. Not at all.

I felt my face grow hot as I listened to them laugh at every word of my story. Even Sara looked like she was holding back a flood of giggles.

“Hey, listen to the story,” I told them, shaking with anger. “It's not supposed to be funny.”

But that just made them laugh more and I felt like a complete knucklehead.

The next day it was Anna's turn to read her story. She'd written about a magical machine that was able to transmit moving pictures around the world as easily as the wireless sent messages. Again, the class laughed. Even Miss O'Brien seemed amused.

“Anna, you and Joe are two of a kind,” she said, with a smile. “You both come up with the craziest ideas!”

Needless to say, we were both pretty insulted to have our ideas ridiculed, but the experience made us closer friends and, in our hearts, we both knew that someday we would have the last laugh.

Side bar: *Anna and Joe weren't around to see it, but someday was June 20, 1969 when their children and grandchildren gathered around a magical machine that transmitted pictures to watch as a spacecraft touched down on the moon and an astronaut stepped into the lunar landscape for the very first time.*

Name _____

PREPARING TO WRITE A RESPONSE TO TEXT

You've read two very different texts about people whose ideas were not readily accepted, Accepted/Rejected Science and The Last Laugh. Write an essay comparing these two texts. Be sure to address the differences in genre, organization and author's purpose. Also, describe at least one key characteristic in each text that is unique to the genre.

1. Underline the **given elements** in this writing assignment.
2. What are the **variable elements** in this writing assignment - in other words, what decision do you need to make as the author?
3. Skim and scan the text Accepted/Rejected Science and **write a summarizing framework** for this piece.

TOPIC: _____

MAIN IDEA #1: _____

MAIN IDEA #2: _____

MAIN IDEA #3: _____

What is the genre of this piece? _____

What is the author's purpose? _____

How do you know? _____

What prewriting tool did the author use to shape this text? _____

4. Fill in the summarizing framework below for The Last Laugh.
 - This story is about _____
 - The problem was that _____
 - His problem was solved when _____
 - What is the genre of this piece? _____
 - What is the author's purpose? _____
 - How do you know? _____
 - What prewriting tool did the author use to shape this text? _____

5. Name one characteristic you'll describe in the narrative story. Highlight this in yellow.

6. Name one characteristic you'll describe in the informational text. Highlight this in pink.

7. Write a topic sentence based on what the prompt is asking.

8. Write two main idea sentences, one for your description of the key characteristics in the informational text and another for the narrative text.

9. Use **citing sentence starters** to reference evidence in the text:

- In the narrative text, the author _____ .
- A clear similarity between the two texts is _____ .
- An obvious difference between the two text is _____ .
- Another major difference is _____ .
- The informational piece is organized _____ .
- The author's purpose was to _____ .
- The narrative story includes _____ .
- The informational text is supported by _____ .