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| Development Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations or other information, or examples related to the topic. | |
| Conventions of Standard English Conform to the conventions of standard written English. | Precise Language/Domain-Specific Vocabulary Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. |
| Transitions Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. | Organization Group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. |
| Conclusion Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented. | Introduction Introduce a topic clearly, providing a general observation and focus. |

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

Common Core Informative/Explanatory Writing Protocol

Common Core Standards

**Protocol for Analysis
of
Informative/Explanatory Writing**

Grades Kindergarten to Five

Macomb Intermediate School District

Informational/Explanatory Writing

Informational/explanatory writing conveys information accurately. This kind of writing serves one or more closely related purposes:

- to increase readers’ knowledge of a subject,
- to help readers better understand a procedure or process, or
- to provide readers with an enhanced comprehension of a concept.

Informational/explanatory writing addresses matters such as types and components; size, function, or behavior; how things work; and why things happen.

To produce this kind of writing, students draw from what they already know and from primary and secondary sources. With practice, students become better able to develop a controlling idea and a coherent focus on a topic and more skilled at selecting and incorporating relevant examples, facts, and details into their writing.

Common Core Writing Conventions of Standard English Continuum 3-5

| Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences. b. Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns. c. Use abstract nouns (e.g., <i>childhood</i>). d. Form and use regular and irregular verbs. e. Form and use the simple (e.g., <i>I walked</i>; <i>I walk</i>; <i>I will walk</i>) verb tenses. f. Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.* g. Form and use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified. h. Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. i. Produce simple, compound, and complex sentences. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use relative pronouns (<i>who, whose, whom, which, that</i>) and relative adverbs (<i>where, when, why</i>). b. Form and use the progressive (e.g., <i>I was walking</i>; <i>I am walking</i>; <i>I will be walking</i>) verb tenses. c. Use modal auxiliaries (e.g., <i>can, may, must</i>) to convey various conditions. d. Order adjectives within sentences according to conventional patterns (e.g., <i>a small red bag</i> rather than <i>a red small bag</i>). e. Form and use prepositional phrases. f. Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons.* g. Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., <i>to, too, two; there, their</i>).* | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explain the function of conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections in general and their function in particular sentences. b. Form and use the perfect (e.g., <i>I had walked</i>; <i>I have walked</i>; <i>I will have walked</i>) verb tenses. c. Use verb tense to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions. d. Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.* e. Use correlative conjunctions (e.g., <i>either/or, neither/nor</i>). |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Capitalize appropriate words in titles. b. Use commas in addresses. c. Use commas and quotation marks in dialogue. d. Form and use possessives. e. Use conventional spelling for high-frequency and other studied words and for adding suffixes to base words (e.g., <i>sitting, smiled, cries, happiness</i>). f. Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g., word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts) in writing words. g. Consult reference materials, including beginning dictionaries, as needed to check and correct spellings. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use correct capitalization. b. Use commas and quotation marks to mark direct speech and quotations from a text. c. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence. d. Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, e. consulting references as needed. <p>*Skills that require continued attention in higher grades</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use punctuation to separate items in a series.* b. Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence. c. Use a comma to set off the words <i>yes</i> and <i>no</i> (e.g., <i>Yes, thank you</i>), to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence (e.g., <i>It’s true, isn’t it?</i>), and to indicate direct address (e.g., <i>Is that you, Steve?</i>). d. Use underlining, quotation marks, or italics to indicate titles of works. e. Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed. |

Conventions

Common Core Writing Conventions of Standard English Continuum K-2

| Kindergarten | Grade 1 | Grade 2 |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Print many upper- and lowercase letters. b. Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs. c. Form regular plural nouns orally by adding /s/ or /es/ (e.g., <i>dog, dogs; wish, wishes</i>). d. Understand and use question words (interrogatives) (e.g., <i>who, what, where, when, why, how</i>). e. Use the most frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., <i>to, from, in, out, on, off, for, of, by, with</i>). f. Produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Print all upper- and lowercase letters. b. Use common, proper, and possessive nouns. c. Use singular and plural nouns with matching verbs in basic sentences (e.g., <i>He hops; We hop</i>). d. Use personal, possessive, and indefinite pronouns (e.g., <i>I, me, my; they, them, their, anyone, everything</i>). e. Use verbs to convey a sense of past, present, and future (e.g., <i>Yesterday I walked home; Today I walk home; Tomorrow I will walk home</i>). f. Use frequently occurring adjectives. g. Use frequently occurring conjunctions (e.g., <i>and, but, or, so, because</i>). h. Use determiners (e.g., articles, demonstratives). i. Use frequently occurring prepositions (e.g., <i>during, beyond, toward</i>). j. Produce and expand complete simple and compound declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences in response to prompts. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use collective nouns (e.g., <i>group</i>). b. Form and use frequently occurring irregular plural nouns (e.g., <i>feet, children, teeth, mice, fish</i>). c. Use reflexive pronouns (e.g., <i>myself, ourselves</i>). d. Form and use the past tense of frequently occurring irregular verbs (e.g., <i>sat, hid, told</i>). e. Use adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified. f. Produce, expand, and rearrange complete simple and compound sentences (e.g., <i>The boy watched the movie; The little boy watched the movie; The action movie was watched by the little boy</i>). |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun I. b. Recognize and name end punctuation. c. Write a letter or letters for most consonant and short-vowel sounds (phonemes). d. Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Capitalize dates and names of people. b. Use end punctuation for sentences. c. Use commas in dates and to separate single words in a series. d. Use conventional spelling for words with common spelling patterns and for frequently occurring irregular words. e. Spell untaught words phonetically, drawing on phonemic awareness and spelling conventions. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Capitalize holidays, product names, and geographic names. b. Use commas in greetings and closings of letters. c. Use an apostrophe to form contractions and frequently occurring possessives. d. Generalize learned spelling patterns when writing words (e.g., <i>cage ? badge; boy ? boil</i>). e. Consult reference materials, including beginning dictionaries, as needed to check and correct spellings. |

They [students] are also able to use a variety of techniques to convey information, such as naming, defining, describing, or differentiating different types or parts; comparing or contrasting ideas or concepts; and citing an anecdote or a scenario to illustrate a point. Informational/explanatory writing includes a wide array of genres, including academic genres such as literary analyses, scientific and historical reports, summaries, and précis writing as well as forms of workplace and functional writing such as instructions, manuals, memos, reports, applications, and resumes. As students advance through the grades, they expand their repertoire of informational/explanatory genres and use them effectively in a variety of disciplines and domains.

- **Common Core Standards, Appendix A**

The Protocol

This protocol focuses on the key elements of informative/explanatory writing: **introduction** (identifies the topic and provides a focus), **organization** (definition, classification, comparison/contrast, etc.), **development** (with facts, concrete details, quotations, other information), **transitions** (linking ideas), **precise language and domain-specific vocabulary**, **conclusion** (closure) and conventions of **standard English**. The analysis uses non-judgmental language and specific examples. The Common Core Standards provide guidance for the kind and range of writing expected in each of these areas.

Precise Language and Domain-Specific Vocabulary

Grades 4 and 5: Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

- *Common Core Standards*

1. Domain-specific Words and Phrases—vocabulary specific to a particular field of study (domain).
 - English: *narrative, informational, plot, character, setting, text features, simile, metaphor*
 - Mathematics: *addition, subtraction, multiplication table, angle, formula*
 - Social Studies: *state, country, region, government, community, laws, politics*
 - Science: *scientific method, cell, digestion, photosynthesis, chlorophyll*
2. Precise Language:
 - **Limit use of adjectives and adverbs.**
It is better to use one strong verb or noun than two or three adjectives or adverbs and one weak noun or verb: instead of *He very quickly left the gate*, use *He shot out of the gate*.
 - **Use specific nouns.** Instead of *great big tree*, say *giant redwood*.

Development

Kindergarten: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they . . . supply some information about the topic.

Grade 1: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they . . . supply some **facts** about the topic.

Grade 2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they . . . **use facts and definitions to develop points.**

Grade 3: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and **details.**

Grades 4 and 5: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, **concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.**

- *Common Core Standards*

In an informational piece on horses from Appendix C (pp. 18-21) of the Common Core, the writer uses the following:

- **Fact:** *Hocaidos are from Japan, Sambas are from Indonesia, and Pintos are from America.*
- **Definition:** *A star is a little white diamond on the forelock.*
- **Detail:** *A horse can walk, trot, canter, and gallop.*
- **Example:** *The most dangerous horse is the Percheron.*

Transitions

Grade 3: Use linking words and phrases (e.g., *also, another, and, more, but*) to connect ideas within categories of information.

Grade 4: Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., *another, for example, also, because*).

Grade 5: Link ideas within and **across** categories of information using words, phrases, and **clauses** (e.g., *in contrast, especially*).

- *Common Core Standards*

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| Words and phrases that link ideas within categories | <i>also, another, and, more, but, another, for example, also, because</i> |
| Words and phrases that indicate example | <i>for example, for instance, specifically, to illustrate, and, also, furthermore, likewise, in addition, besides, again, what's more, further, moreover</i> |
| Words and phrases that indicate cause/effect | <i>because, then, as a result, for this reason, the result, therefore, what followed, in response, thus, because of this, consequently, so, the reaction...</i> |
| Words and phrases that indicate comparison | <i>like, in the same way, similar, in a similar way, similarly, likewise, also, in similar fashion, the same is true with</i> |
| Words and phrases that indicate contrast | <i>but, however, in contrast, instead, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, still, yet, different from, in spite of</i> |

Organization

Grade 3: Group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.

Grade 4: Group related information **in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings)**, illustrations, and **multimedia** when useful to aiding comprehension.

Grade 5: Group related information **logically**; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

- *Common Core Standards*

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|---|
| Introduction |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the topic. |
| Body |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support with facts, details, definitions, quotations, examples. |
| Conclusion |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return full circle to the topic summary. |

Organizational Patterns

Description: Description is used to define the characteristic features and events of a specific subject or a general category.

Comparison/Contrast: Comparison and contrast structure is used to explain how two or more objects, events, or positions are similar or different.

Cause/Effect: Cause and effect writing is concerned with why things happen (causes) and what happens as a result (effects).

Introduction

Kindergarten: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about. . . .

Grade 1: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they **name a topic**. . . .

Grade 2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they **introduce** a topic. . . .

Grade 3: Introduce a topic.

Grade 4: Introduce a topic **clearly**.

Grade 5: Introduce a topic clearly, **provide a general observation and focus**. . . .

- *Common Core Standards*

An introduction is the best chance for a writer to make a good impression on the reader. The introductory paragraph:

1. Grabs the reader's attention with one of the following that leads to the writer's topic:

- A surprising statement/statistic.
- A direct or rhetorical question.
- A relevant quote.
- Historical background.
- An anecdote.

2. Narrows the subject.

3. States the topic.

Conclusion

Grade 1: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they. . . provide some sense of closure.

Grade 2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they. . . provide a **concluding statement or section**.

Grade 3: Provide a concluding statement or section.

Grades 4 and 5: Provide a concluding statement or section **related to the information or explanation presented**

- *Common Core Standards*

A conclusion should...

- Stress the importance of the topic.
- Give the writing a sense of completeness.
- Leave a final impression on the reader.

A writer may use a number of strategies for a conclusion:

- Include the strongest facts, definitions, details, and/or examples.
- Create a new meaning.
- Echo the introduction.
- Challenge the reader.

<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/conclude.html>