

***In Common: Effective Writing for All Students***  
**Collection of All Informative/Explanatory Samples, K-12**

---

by The Vermont Writing Collaborative, with Student Achievement Partners, and CCSSO



## Contents

Document Overview .....	3
Brief User Guide for On-Demand Informative/Explanatory Writing .....	4
K-5 On-Demand Informative/Explanatory Samples .....	6
6-12 On-Demand Informative/Explanatory Samples .....	76
Brief User Guide for Range of Writing Informative/Explanatory Writing .....	129
K-5 Range of Writing Informative/Explanatory Samples.....	131
6-12 Range of Writing Informative/Explanatory Samples .....	202

# Document Overview

## **Common Core State Writing Standard 2: Informative/Explanatory Writing**

The second Common Core State Writing Standard calls for students to "write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content." The following collection of student work offers a series of samples illustrating what effective informative/explanatory writing might look like at each grade level.

The first section of the document is comprised of "On Demand" writing. This section contains pieces written in response to a uniform text-based prompt. The second section is made up of "Range of Writing" samples. These pieces provide examples of student writing for "a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences" over both extended and shorter time frames.

Each piece in the collection is annotated using the language of the Common Core State Standards for a particular grade level and writing type.

**Brief User Guide for On-  
Demand  
Informative/Explanatory  
Writing**

## Brief User Guide for On-Demand Informative/Explanatory Writing

The pieces in this On-Demand section represent one of the three types of writing named in the Common Core State Standards for Writing: informative/explanatory writing. Students at all grade levels were given a set of texts (or a short video and a text at younger grades) and a writing prompt that asked them about that set of texts. Students at kindergarten through grade five were given the focusing question, “What can you do to save water?” At grades six through twelve, students were given the focusing question, “What effect did the Great Depression have on people who lived through it?”

Because students needed time to build content knowledge from the texts in order to be able to write, the process took anywhere from two to three days for most students. Teachers read the text aloud to students at all grade levels, to ensure that all students could access the text when they needed to re-read the text(s) to gather evidence to develop their writing. All writing was done on their own, without input from peers or teachers.

The prompts and the individual pieces based on them are arranged in grade order. Each piece has a file number for easy identification. Every piece of writing includes two versions that have been transcribed exactly as written by the student – one annotated with the language of the Common Core Standards, and one un-annotated for a variety of uses. In addition, pieces in the K-5 collection have a third version as well; this version has been revised and edited for major errors in conventions and can be used as a model for students. Kindergarten pieces also include PDF’s of original student work, including student writing and drawing. This is because kindergarten students may use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to satisfy the Standards.

Suggestions on how to use these pieces are available at the end of the introductory document, “Using the *In Common* Resource.”

# **K-5 On-Demand Informative/Explanatory Samples**

## Grade K, Prompt for Informative/Explanatory Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Task directions

### Water Conservation

#### **What can you do to save water?**

Optional Introduction:

- Watch the short video on water conservation on YouTube:  
*The Adventures of EcoRilla Episode 1 - EcoWater Canada*  
[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_ex1ZuKFW64](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ex1ZuKFW64)
- Discuss this question briefly with your class: Why is it important to save water?

The Prompt:

- Use puppets or recruit some older students to perform the Reader's Theatre: *Water Wise - All About Water Conservation*.
- After listening to the Reader's Theatre, lead a short class discussion on the question: "What can you do to save water?" Use the discussion to build a basic understanding of at least a few of the ways the students could save water.
- Pose the focusing question again and give the following directions:
  1. "What can you do to save water? Turn and talk to a partner about what you could do." *Allow about 3 minutes for students to discuss their choices.*

2. "Now use this paper to draw a picture of some things you could do to save water. I will help you write words under your picture to tell more about your choices."



### **Additional Instructions/Clarifications**

- Paper may be lined or unlined. Use your typical classroom writing process to support students in completing the writing prompt. The piece should represent first draft writing (done in a single sitting).
- The response should include a picture and whatever sentences, words, or letters the child can add. An adult may assist with sounding out or spelling words and/or transcribe the child's words if desired. Dictation is permitted.
- Please distinguish the child's independent production from words or letters produced with adult help by **underlining any part of the writing done with teacher support**. The writing sample will be most useful to other teachers if it is easy to tell where help was given.
- We understand that, especially in the fall, most Kindergartners have had limited experience with writing.

**Water Wise**  
*All About Water Conservation*  
A Super Science Script  
Written and Developed by Lisa Blau

Water Expert #1 - Good morning! We are here to tell you all about the earth's most precious resource...

All - WATER!

Water Expert #2 - Every form of life needs water in order to live.

Water Expert #4 - A tiny fish needs water...

Water Expert #5 - A tall tree needs water...

Water Expert #3 - Everyone needs...

All - WATER!

Water Expert #2 - People need water to drink because our bodies need water to stay healthy.

Water Expert #3 - We also need water to make the crops grow so that we have food to eat.

Water Expert #4 - People use water for taking baths, brushing their teeth, and washing their clothes.

Water Expert #1 - Yes, everyone needs water.

Water Expert #2 - We know that water is precious so we must find ways to save all the water that we can.

Water Expert #3 - Now, you might be thinking...

Water Expert #5 - But, I'm just a kid. What can I do to save water?

Water Expert #4 - Well, we're here to tell you...

All - PLENTY!

Water Expert #1 - If you turn off the running water when you brush your teeth...

All - You can save 35 gallons of water in one week!

Water Expert #3 - If you take a shorter shower...

All - You can save 75 gallons of water in one week!

Water Expert #3 - You can help Mom or Dad fix leaky faucets and put water savers in your toilets.

Water Expert #5 - A plastic bottle filled with pebbles will do the job!

Water Expert #4 - Never play in sprinklers if your town is having a water shortage.

Water Expert #1 - Sure, it's tons of fun...

Water Expert #2 - You will use over 10 gallons of water in only one minute!

Water Expert #3 - By trying some of these tricks, you and your family can help save lots of water.

Water Expert #4 - Water is precious. What can you do to help save water?

Water Expert #1 - Make sure that the faucet is turned off all the way. Don't leave it dripping...

Water Expert #2 - Every drop counts you know!

Water Expert #3 - Don't use more water than you really need. You really don't need to fill your bathtub up all the way when you take a bath.

Water Expert #4 - You should use a broom...not the hose, to clean a driveway or sidewalk.

Water Expert #5 - And how many of you like to help out by washing the car? Well, be sure to save water when you wash the car.

Water Expert #2 - It's easy...just use a bucket to wash the car, and only use the hose to rinse it off.

All - We hope that you will be water wise and save lots of water. We know you can do it!

Water Expert #1 - The End.

From Super Science, by Lisa Blau  
Publisher: Bellevue, WA: **One from the Heart Educational Resources**, c1994  
Used by permission of Lisa Blau

**File Name: IKFP Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten, Fall**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

**Water**

I WOT US AS WODR MUC WODR

**Names what he/she is  
writing about**

In this Kindergarten piece, written in the fall, the student uses a combination of drawing and writing to inform the reader about a topic explored through a Reader's Theatre presentation and a short video. The topic of the student piece (*"I WOT US AS WODR MUC WODR"*) is stated in writing. The repeated word (*"WODR"*) is not an unusual error at this grade level and could be revised if the piece went through the full writing process. **The drawing** that accompanies the original text **supplies** detailed **information** on how to save water. The illustrations show the student saving water in many ways, such as taking shorter showers and saving excess water for pets and plants. Kindergarteners may use phonetic spelling, drawing, and dictation to express their thoughts in writing. This student's piece clearly draws on the sources provided to inform the reader about the topic. This developmentally appropriate "combination writing" provides a valuable foundation for the thought process that underlies this text type and can be built upon in later years.

**File Name: IKFP Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten, Fall**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

**Water**

I won't use as much water.

**File Name: IKFP Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten, Fall**

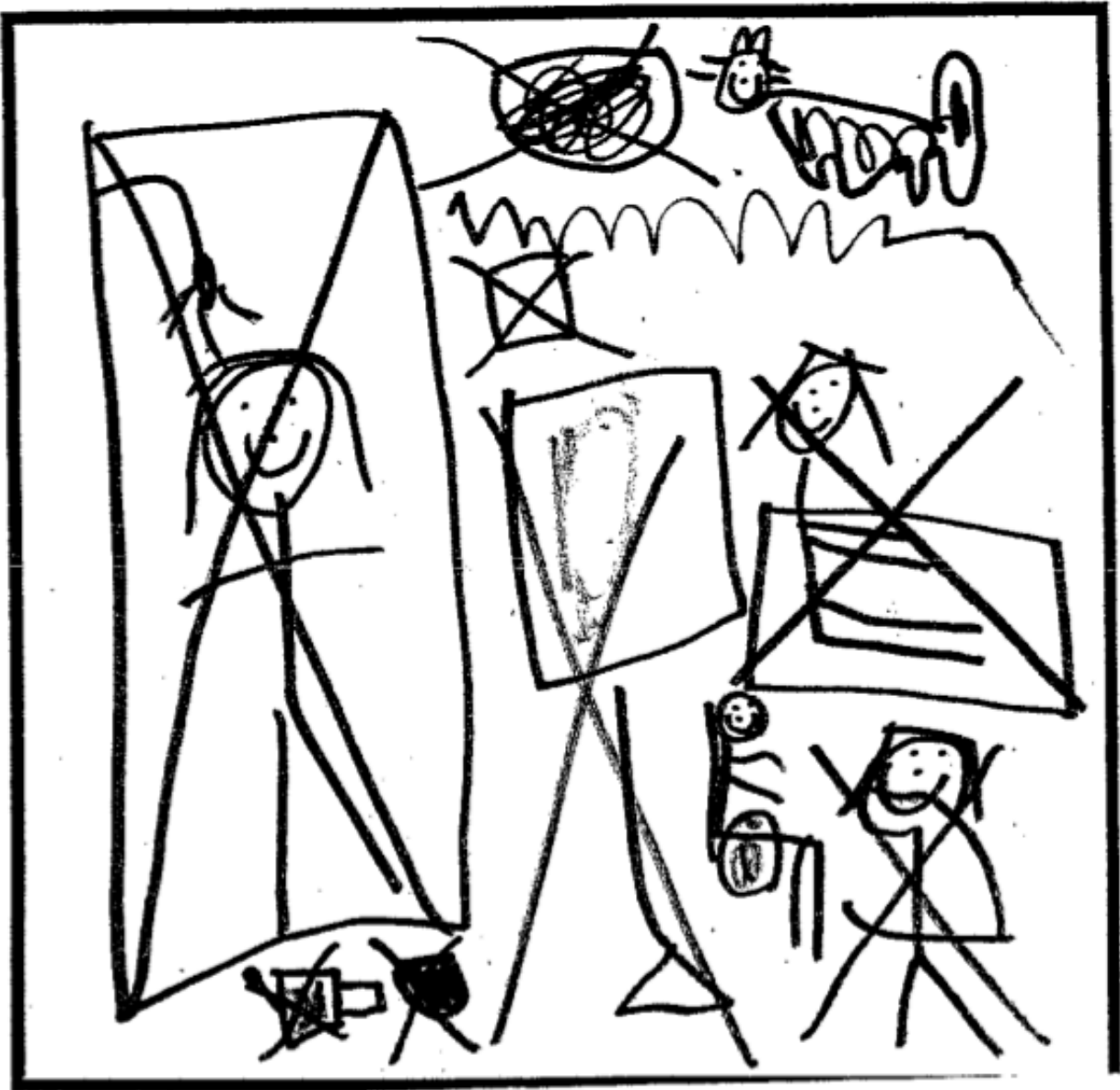
**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

**Water**

I WOT US AS WODR MUC WODR



WOT US AS WODR MUC  
WODR



**File Name: IKSP Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten, Spring**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

**Saving Water**

*What can you do to save water?*

I am taking a baf Not all faLL.

I amshuting off the wotr

I am filing the bucit up Not too Hiy

Although this piece would have been stronger had the student named the topic herself, the question posed clearly introduces the topic.

**Supplies some information  
about the topic**

In this Kindergarten piece, written in the spring, the topic (*What can you do to save water?*) is made clear by the question the teacher has posed, and the student uses words and pictures to supply some information about the topic. Although the information is personalized (“*I am...*”), the student has clearly drawn three specific details from the sources provided to inform the reader about how she will save water. Both words and illustrations show a solid understanding of the content

**File Name: IKSP Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten, Spring**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Saving Water**

*What can you do to save water?*

I am taking a bath. It is not all full.

I am shutting off the water.

I am filling the bucket up, not too high.

**File Name: IKSP Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten, Spring**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

**Saving Water**

*What can you do to save water?*

I am taking a baf Not all faLL.

I amsHuting off the wotr

I am filing the bucit up Not too Hiy

What can you do to save water?

I am taking a  
bath not all full.



I am taking a  
bat not all full.



I am shutting off the water.

I am shutting off the water

I am filling the  
bucket up not too  
high.



I am filling the b  
ucket up not too  
High

## Grade 1, Prompt for Informative/Explanatory Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher

### Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 1

Today, you are going to get ready to write an informative piece to answer this question:

**What can you do to save water?**

#### **Day 1**     *Get ready to write.*

- Watch the video, *The Adventures of EcoRilla*.
- Discuss this question briefly with your classmates: Why is it important to save water?
- Listen to the Reader's Theatre: *Water Wise-All About Water Conservation* carefully.
- What can you do to save water? Turn and talk to a partner about what you could do.
- Fold a piece of paper into quarters. Pick at least four things that you could do to save water. Draw a picture of each to show what you chose.





## Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 2

Today, you are going to use what you have learned to write an informative piece to answer this question: **What can you do to save water?**

### Day 2 *Write!*

- Listen to *Water Wise* again. Read along if you can.
  - What can you do to save water? Use the pictures you drew yesterday. Turn to a partner, point to a picture. Tell what you might do and **why** that would be a good choice.
- When you have finished, write a piece explaining what you can do to save water.
  - **What can you do to save water?**
  - Be sure to give lots of examples and explain how each would save water. Look back at *Water Wise* for ideas. Write as much as you can.

**A good informative piece will:**

1. **Clearly answer the question.**
2. **Give lots of examples.**
3. **"Wrap up" the piece with a concluding sentence.**

#### **4. Use capitals, periods and question marks, and spell words correctly.**

When you have finished, be sure to check your work and fix any mistakes. If you like, you may add pictures to show what you wrote.

Have fun!

### **Grade 1 - Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt**

#### **Teacher Directions**

- Use the student prompt as directions for each session. The short video can be found on YouTube: Help the Environment - The Adventures of EcoRilla Episode 1 - EcoWater Canada [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_ex1ZuKfw64](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ex1ZuKfw64). The video is recommended, but is optional.
- Provide each student with a copy of the prompt and the Reader's Theatre. The Reader's Theatre can be read aloud by the teacher or "performed" by older students or very competent readers. The teacher should feel comfortable re-reading, explaining or clarifying directions as needed.
- The Reader's Theatre provides information that may be used to address the prompt and should be read aloud at least twice before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing. The teacher may provide help with reading words or phrases as needed.
- The prompt should be given two sessions. Allow approximately 30 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given the time needed to write and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, word walls, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics

that they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. Unlined paper may be provided for drawing.

This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

## **Water Wise**

*All About Water Conservation*

A Super Science Script

Written and Developed by Lisa Blau

Water Expert #1 - Good morning! We are here to tell you all about the earth's most precious resource...

All - WATER!

Water Expert #2 - Every form of life needs water in order to live.

Water Expert #4 - A tiny fish needs water...

Water Expert #5 - A tall tree needs water...

Water Expert #3 - Everyone needs...

All - WATER!

Water Expert #2 - People need water to drink because our bodies need water to stay healthy.

Water Expert #3 - We also need water to make the crops grow so that we have food to eat.

Water Expert #4 - People use water for taking baths, brushing their teeth, and washing their clothes.

Water Expert #1 - Yes, everyone needs water.

Water Expert #2 - We know that water is precious so we must find ways to save all the water that we can.

Water Expert #3 - Now, you might be thinking...

Water Expert #5 - But, I'm just a kid. What can I do to save water?

Water Expert #4 - Well, we're here to tell you...

All - PLENTY!

Water Expert #1 - If you turn off the running water when you brush your teeth...

All - You can save 35 gallons of water in one week!

Water Expert #3 - If you take a shorter shower...

All - You can save 75 gallons of water in one week!

Water Expert #3 - You can help Mom or Dad fix leaky faucets and put water savers in your toilets.

Water Expert #5 - A plastic bottle filled with pebbles will do the job!

Water Expert #4 - Never play in sprinklers if your town is having a water shortage.

Water Expert #1 - Sure, it's tons of fun...

Water Expert #2 - You will use over 10 gallons of water in only one minute!

Water Expert #3 - By trying some of these tricks, you and your family can help save lots of water.

Water Expert #4 - Water is precious. What can you do to help save water?

Water Expert #1 - Make sure that the faucet is turned off all the way. Don't leave it dripping...

Water Expert #2 - Every drop counts you know!

Water Expert #3 - Don't use more water than you really need. You really don't need to fill your bathtub up all the way when you take a bath.

Water Expert #4 - You should use a broom...not the hose, to clean a driveway or sidewalk.

Water Expert #5 - And how many of you like to help out by washing the car? Well, be sure to save water when you wash the car.

Water Expert #2 - It's easy...just use a bucket to wash the car, and only use the hose to rinse it off.

All - We hope that you will be water wise and save lots of water. We know you can do it!

Water Expert #1 - The End.

Publisher: Bellevue, WA: **One from the Heart Educational Resources**, c1994.  
Used by permission of Lisa Blau



**File Name: I1P Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Saving Water**

**What can you do to save water?**

we need to save water! To save water do not fill up the tub all the way. if your

fawsit is leking turn it of. if we didnt save water we woldent have any.

**Names a  
topic**

**Provides some  
sense of closure**

**Supplies some facts  
about the topic**

In this first-grade on-demand informative/explanatory piece, the student clearly states a topic (*"we need to save water!"*) and supplies two facts about the topic drawn from the Reader's Theatre on water conservation that the students read together. The piece ends with a reflective concluding sentence about why it is important to save water, information given in the short video that accompanies the prompt.

**File Name: I1P Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Saving Water**

**What can you do to save water?**

We need to save water! To save water, do not fill up the tub all the way. If your faucet is leaking, turn it off. If we didn't save water, we wouldn't have any.

**File Name: I1P Saving Water**

**Informational/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Saving Water**

**What can you do to save water?**

we need to save water! To save water do not fill up the tub all the way. if your fawsit is leaking turn it of. if we didnt save water we woldent have any.

## Grade 2, Prompt for Informative/Explanatory Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher

### Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 1

Today, you are going to get ready to write an informative piece to answer this question:

**What can you do to save water?**

#### **Day 1**     *Get ready to write.*

- Watch the video, *The Adventures of EcoRilla*.
- Discuss this question briefly with your classmates: Why is it important to save water?
- Listen to the Reader's Theatre: *Water Wise-All About Water Conservation* carefully.
- What can you do to save water? Turn and talk to a partner about what you could do.

- Fold a piece of paper into quarters. Pick at least four things that you could do to save water. Draw a picture of each to show what you chose.

## Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 2

Today, you are going to use what you have learned to write an informative piece to answer this question: **What can you do to save water?**

### Day 2 *Write!*

- Listen to *Water Wise* again. Read along if you can.
  - What can you do to save water? Use the pictures you drew yesterday. Turn to a partner, point to a picture. Tell what you might do and **why** that would be a good choice.
- When you have finished, write a piece explaining what you can do to save water.
  - **What can you do to save water?**
  - Be sure to give lots of examples and explain how each would save water. Look back at *Water Wise* for ideas. Write as much as you can.

**A good informative piece will:**

- 5. Introduce the topic you are writing about**
- 6. Clearly answer the question.**
- 7. Give lots of examples.**
- 8. "Wrap up" the piece with a concluding sentence.**

**9. Use capitals, periods and question marks, and spell words correctly.**

When you have finished, be sure to check your work and fix any mistakes.

If you like, you may add pictures to show what you wrote. Have fun!

**Grade 2 - Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt**

**Teacher Directions**

- Use the student prompt as directions for each session. The short video can be found on YouTube: Help the Environment -The Adventures of EcoRilla Episode 1 - EcoWater Canada [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_ex1ZuKfw64](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ex1ZuKfw64). The video is recommended, but is optional.
- Provide each student with a copy of the prompt and the Reader's Theatre. The Reader's Theatre can be read aloud by the teacher or "performed" by older students or very competent readers. The teacher should feel comfortable rereading, explaining or clarifying directions as needed.
- The Reader's Theatre provides information that may be used to address the prompt and should be read aloud at least twice before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing. The teacher may provide help with reading words or phrases as needed.
- The prompt should be given two sessions. Allow approximately 30 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given the time needed to write and proofread.

- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, word walls or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. Unlined paper may be provided for drawing.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

## **Water Wise**

*All About Water Conservation*

*A Super Science Script*

Written and Developed by Lisa Blau

Water Expert #1 - Good morning! We are here to tell you all about the earth's most precious resource...

All - WATER!

Water Expert #2 - Every form of life needs water in order to live.

Water Expert #4 - A tiny fish needs water...

Water Expert #5 - A tall tree needs water...



Water Expert #3 - Everyone needs...

All - WATER!

Water Expert #2 - People need water to drink because our bodies need water to stay healthy.

Water Expert #3 - We also need water to make the crops grow so that we have food to eat.

Water Expert #4 - People use water for taking baths, brushing their teeth, and washing their clothes.

Water Expert #1 - Yes, everyone needs water.

Water Expert #2 - We know that water is precious so we must find ways to save all the water that we can.

Water Expert #3 - Now, you might be thinking...

Water Expert #5 - But, I'm just a kid. What can I do to save water?

Water Expert #4 - Well, we're here to tell you...

All - PLENTY!

Water Expert #1 - If you turn off the running water when you brush your teeth...

All - You can save 35 gallons of water in one week!

Water Expert #3 - If you take a shorter shower...

All - You can save 75 gallons of water in one week!

Water Expert #3 - You can help Mom or Dad fix leaky faucets and put water savers in your toilets.

Water Expert #5 - A plastic bottle filled with pebbles will do the job!

Water Expert #4 - Never play in sprinklers if your town is having a water shortage.

Water Expert #1 - Sure, it's tons of fun...

Water Expert #2 - You will use over 10 gallons of water in only one minute!

Water Expert #3 - By trying some of these tricks, you and your family can help save lots of water.

Water Expert #4 - Water is precious. What can you do to help save water?

Water Expert #1 - Make sure that the faucet is turned off all the way. Don't leave it dripping...

Water Expert #2 - Every drop counts you know!

Water Expert #3 - Don't use more water than you really need. You really don't need to fill your bathtub up all the way when you take a bath.

Water Expert #4 - You should use a broom...not the hose, to clean a driveway or sidewalk.

Water Expert #5 - And how many of you like to help out by washing the car? Well, be sure to save water when you wash the car.

Water Expert #2 - It's easy...just use a bucket to wash the car, and only use the hose to rinse it off.

All - We hope that you will be water wise and save lots of water. We know you can do it!

Water Expert #1 - The End.

From Super Science, by Lisa Blau  
Publisher: Bellevue, WA: **One from the Heart Educational Resources**, c1994  
Used by permission of Lisa Blau

**File Name: I2P Water is Important**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Water is Important**

Water is important You should help save water. And I am going to tell you how. 1 way is TuRN OFF The SINK AFTER YOu BRuSH Your TEETH! Another way is ONLY FILL YOuR BATHTuB UP HALF WAY! Also water is important so you should TAKE A SHORT SHOWer. Also WHEN YOU WASH YOUR HANDS DON'T LEAVE THE WATER RUNNING! These are the ways why you should help save water

**Introduces the topic and states a focus for the piece**

**Uses facts to develop points**

**Uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas**

**Provides a concluding statement that restates the focus**

This second-grade informative/explanatory paragraph begins with an introductory sentence and then states the focus of the piece (*"You should help save water. And I am going to tell you how."*). Four facts, from provided sources, develop the piece and are linked to each other and to the main idea by transitional words and phrases (*"1 way", "Another way", "also"*). The piece concludes by restating the focus (*"These are the ways why you should help save water"*). At this grade level, sentences may be a bit "clunky," particularly as students experiment with unfamiliar academic constructions. If this were an instructional piece, *"These are the ways why..."* could be revised during the writing process.

**File Name: I2P Water is Important**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Water is Important**

Water is important. You should help save water, and I am going to tell you how. One way is to turn off the sink after you brush your teeth! Another way is to only fill your bathtub up halfway! Also, water is important, so you should take a short shower. Also, when you wash your hands, don't leave the water running! These are the ways you can help save water.

**File Name: I2P Water is Important**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Water is Important**

Water is important You should help save water. And I am going to tell you how. 1 way is TuRN OFF The SINK AFTER YOu BRuSH Your TEETH! Another way is ONLY FILL YOuR BATHTuB UP HALF WAY! Also water is important so you should TAKE A SHORT SHOWer. Also WHEN YOU WASH YOUR HANDS DON'T LEAVE THE WATER RUNNING! These are the ways why you should help save water

## Grade 3, Prompt for Informative/Explanatory Writing

### Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher

#### Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 1

Today, you are going to get ready to write an informative essay to answer this question:

**What can you do to save water?**

#### **Day 1** *Get ready to write.*

- Watch the video, *The Adventures of EcoRilla*.
- Discuss this question briefly with your class: Why is it important to save water?
- Listen to the article: *Save Our Water!* carefully.
- What can you do to save water? Turn and talk to a partner about what you could do.
- Fold a piece of paper into quarters. Pick at least four things that you could do to save water. Use words and pictures to show what you chose.
- On a piece of lined paper, write your name and grade, the date, the name of your school and your state, and your teacher's name. You will use this paper tomorrow for writing.

## Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 2

Today, you are going to use what you have learned to write an informative essay to answer this question: **What can you do to save water?**

### Day 2 *Write!*

Listen to *Water Wise* again. Read along as you listen.

- What can you do to save water? Use the notes you created yesterday. Turn to a partner, point to a box on your note sheet. Explain what you might do and how it would save water.
- When you have finished, write an informative essay explaining what you can do to save water.

Your focusing question for this assignment is: **What can you do to save water?**

Be sure to use facts and examples from the article.

Explain how doing these things will save water.

### Remember, a good informative essay:

- **Has an introduction**
- **Has a clear focus/thesis statement**
- **Uses specific facts and examples from the text (s) to support the focus and explains your thinking**
- **Has a conclusion**
- **Uses precise language and linking words to connect ideas**
- **Has correct spelling, capitalization and punctuation**

When you have finished, be sure to check your work and fix any mistakes you find.

We look forward to reading your good writing and thinking!



## Grade 3 - Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt

### Teacher Directions

- Use the student prompt as directions for each session. The short video can be found on YouTube: Help the Environment - *The Adventures of EcoRilla Episode 1* - EcoWater Canada <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ex1ZuKFW64>. The video is recommended, but is optional.
- Provide each student with a copy of the prompt and the article. The teacher should feel comfortable re-reading, explaining or clarifying directions as needed. The article should be read aloud while students read along silently.
- The article provides information needed to address the prompt and should be read aloud at least twice before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the article while writing.
- The prompt should be given in two sessions. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given the time needed to write and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, word walls, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. Unlined paper may be provided for drawing and note taking.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

Name:

### **Save Our Water!**

Did you know that kids can make a very important difference in saving the earth's water? They can! But first off, why do we even need to save water?

Water is a natural resource that we get from the Earth. Without it, we would not be able to live! Imagine a world with no water at all. You wouldn't be able to drink it, bathe, or swim! Without clean water, plants, animals, birds and ocean life would also be unable to live. Kids can help protect this resource. You make a huge difference simply by starting at home. To get an idea of how much water we could save if we all made a small effort, think about this. What if every person across the nation flushed their toilets one time less every day? Together they could save enough water to fill a lake as large as a mile wide and long and four feet in depth!

Now you know how important it is to help save water. Try some of the ideas below. Start doing your part to change our world!

#### **Some Ways Kids Can Help to Save Water:**

- When you wash your hands, don't leave the water running. Wet your hands and turn the water off. Use soap and lather your hands well. Then turn the water on to rinse. Turn off the water and make sure it is off completely. Then dry your hands.
- Do the same when you brush your teeth. Turn the faucet on to get your toothbrush and toothpaste wet. Turn it on again to rinse your mouth and toothbrush. Don't leave the water running while you're brushing.
- Baths use a lot of water (about 37 gallons on average). Take short showers and use only about 20 gallons of water, instead.
- Do you have plants in your house? When vegetables or other fresh produce are washed, collect that water and use it to water the plants.
- Do you like a drink of cold water now and then? Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator. That way you don't have to run the water to get it cold.
- Put a barrel outdoors to catch rain water. Then use that water for things like watering plants or flushing toilets. You can save hundreds of gallons of water a year!
- In the summertime, it's fun to play under the lawn sprinkler. When you do, make sure it's only when the lawn is being watered.
- Remind the others in your home, and your friends, not to leave any faucet running. Only use what is truly needed!
- Is there a leaky faucet or toilet in the bathroom at school? Be sure to let someone know so that it can be repaired.

Even if you do just one thing each day to contribute to your home's water conservation, you're doing the right thing!

Adapted from *Water Conservation for Kids*

TheWaterPage.com

<http://www.thewaterpage.com/water-conservation-kids.htm>

© 1996 - 2012 Water Policy International Ltd

Used by permission of Water Policy International Ltd

**File Name: I3P Water Use**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Water Use**

What can I do to save water? Lots of people waste gallons of water a day. Some people don't even have 5-2 gallons of water a day. We need water to drink, wash clothes, bath, and much more so we need to save water. One good way to save water is leave buckets outside to fill up with rain. Take quick showers. bathe for at least 37 gallons of water. Remind people to turn off the water when not in use. Lots of people wait for the water from their sink to get hot and cold. If you put a bucket in your sink when the bucket is full you can use that water for lots of things. When it's winter take buckets of snow and melt it then you have buckets of water to use. When it's summer if you have a squirt gun use water from a toy that has water in it. If there's anything leaking water make sure to get it fixed right away. Don't buy water in a plastic container because plastic pollutes the earth.

Please Save Water.

**Introduces the topic** with a question and some context about why it might be important to save water

**Develops the topic with facts and details**

**Uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas**

into paragraphs, **related information is grouped together** and organized into an introduction, body, and conclusion.

**Provides a concluding statement**

This third-grade piece introduces the topic with a question and some context, explaining why we need to save water. Although still a bit “list-y,” the piece uses facts from the source (“*bathes take at least 37 gallons of water*”) and conveys ideas and information clearly, sometimes adding context or elaboration to clarify or to develop points. For example, rather than just instructing the reader to put a bucket in the sink, the writer explains that people often waste water waiting for it to get hot or cold and that, if saved, this water could be used “*for lots of things.*” Linking words and phrases (“*so*”, “*one good way*”, “*if*”, “*when*”) connect ideas within the piece. The conclusion, in the form of a request for action, is appropriate to purpose and audience. The slight digression toward the end (“*Don't buy water in a plastic container*”) could be addressed through revision if this piece were taken to a final draft.

Although both the introduction and conclusion urge us to save water, this is an informative/explanatory piece. The purpose of the writing is to explain how we can save water, not to try to convince us to do so. This topic is developed with facts and details about things we can do to save water, rather than with the reasons why we should do so. Effective pieces often combine elements from more than one genre.

**File Name: I3P Water Use**

**Informational/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Water Use**

What can I do to save water? Lots of people waste gallons of water a day. Some people don't even have 5–2 gallons of water a day. We need water to drink, wash clothes, bathe, and much more, so we need to save water. One good way to save water is to leave buckets outside to fill up with rain. Take quick showers. Baths take at least 37 gallons of water. Remind people to turn off the water when not in use. Lots of people wait for the water from their sinks to get hot and cold. Put a bucket in your sink. When the bucket is full, you can use that water for lots of things. When it's winter, take buckets of snow and melt it. Then you have buckets of water to use. When it's summer, if you have a squirt gun, use water from a toy that has water in it. If there's anything leaking water, make sure to get it fixed right away. Don't buy water in a plastic container because plastic pollutes the Earth. Please save water.

**File Name: I3P Water Use**

**Informational/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Water Use**

What can I do to save water? Lots of people waste gallons of water a day. Some people don't even have 5-2 gallons of water a day. We need water to drink, wash clothes, bath, and much more so we need to save water. One good way to save water is leave buckets outside to fill up with rain. Take quick showers. Bathes take at least 37 gallons of water. Remind people to turn off the water when not in use. Lots of people wait for the water from their sink to get hot and cold. If you put a bucket in your sink when the bucket is full you can use that water for lots of things. When it's winter take buckets of snow and melt it then you have buckets of water to use. When it's summer if you have a squirt gun use water from a toy that has water in it. If there's anything leaking water make sure to get it fixed right away. Don't buy water in a plastic container because plastic pollutes the earth. Please Save Water.

## Grade 4, Prompt for Informative/Explanatory Writing

### Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher

#### Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 1

Today, you are going to get ready to write an informative essay to answer this question:

**What can you do to save water?**

#### **Day 1** *Get ready to write.*

- Watch the video, *Water Conservation Tips*.
- Discuss this question briefly with your class: Why is it important to save water?
- Listen to the article: *Save our Water!* carefully. You may want to take notes for your essay on the article as you read.
- What can you do to save water? Turn and talk to a partner about what you could do. You each have three minutes to explain what you would do and why.
- On a piece of lined paper, write your name and grade, the date, the name of your school and your state, and your teacher's name. You will use this paper tomorrow for writing.



## Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 2

Today, you are going to use what you have learned to write an informative essay to answer this question: **What can you do to save water?**

### Day 2 *Write!*

- Listen to *Save our Water!* again. Read along as you listen.
- When you have finished, write an informative essay explaining what you can do to save water.
- Your focusing question for this assignment is
  - **What can you do to save water?**
  - Be sure to use facts and examples from the article. Explain how doing these things will save water.

### **Remember, a good informative essay:**

- *Has an introduction*
- *Has a clear focus/topic*
- *Uses specific facts and examples from the text(s) to support the focus and explain your thinking*
- *Groups ideas in paragraphs*
- *Has a conclusion*
- *Uses precise language and linking words to connect ideas*
- *Has correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation*

When you have finished, be sure to check your work and fix any mistakes you find.

We look forward to reading your good writing and thinking!

## Grade 4 - Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt

### Teacher Directions

- Use the student prompt as directions for each session. The short video can be found on YouTube: Water conservation tips-How to conserve water at home <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MDLpVHY8LE>. The video is recommended, but is optional.
- Provide each student with a copy of the prompt and the article. The article should be read aloud while students read along silently. The teacher should feel comfortable rereading, explaining or clarifying as needed.
- The article provides information needed to address the prompt and should be read aloud at least twice before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the article while writing and to take notes.
- The prompt should be given in two sessions. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given the time needed to write and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

Name:

### **Save Our Water!**

Did you know that kids can make a very important difference in saving the earth's water? They can! But first off, why do we even need to save water?

Water is a natural resource that we get from the Earth. Without it, we would not be able to live! Imagine a world with no water at all. You wouldn't be able to drink it, bathe, or swim! Without clean water, plants, animals, birds and ocean life would also be unable to live. Kids can help protect this resource. You make a huge difference simply by starting at home. To get an idea of how much water we could save if we all made a small effort, think about this. What if every person across the nation flushed their toilets one time less every day? Together they could save enough water to fill a lake as large as a mile wide and long and four feet in depth!

Now you know how important it is to help save water. Try some of the ideas below. Start doing your part to change our world!

#### **Some Ways Kids Can Help to Save Water:**

- When you wash your hands, don't leave the water running. Wet your hands and turn the water off. Use soap and lather your hands well. Then turn the water on to rinse. Turn off the water and make sure it is off completely. Then dry your hands.
- Do the same when you brush your teeth. Turn the faucet on to get your toothbrush and toothpaste wet. Turn it on again to rinse your mouth and toothbrush. Don't leave the water running while you're brushing.
- Baths use a lot of water (about 37 gallons on average). Take short showers, and use only about 20 gallons of water, instead.
- Do you have plants in your house? When vegetables or other fresh produce are washed, collect that water and use it to water the plants.
- Do you like a drink of cold water now and then? Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator. That way you don't have to run the water to get it cold.
- Put a barrel outdoors to catch rain water. Then use that water for things like watering plants or flushing toilets. You can save hundreds of gallons of water a year!
- In the summertime, it's fun to play under the lawn sprinkler. When you do, make sure it's only when the lawn is being watered.
- Remind the others in your home, and your friends, not to leave any faucet running. Only use what is truly needed!

- Is there a leaky faucet or toilet in the bathroom at school? Be sure to let someone know so that it can be repaired.

Even if you do just one thing each day to contribute to your home's water conservation, you're doing the right thing!

Adapted from *Water Conservation for Kids*

TheWaterPage.com

<http://www.thewaterpage.com/water-conservation-kids.htm>

© 1996 - 2012 Water Policy International Ltd

Used by permission of Water Policy International Ltd

**File Name: I4P Conserving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Conserving Water**

Conserving water is a great way to help the earth. Without our water, plants, humans, and animals, would not be able to live. We need to save water because we will eventually run out of it. Then we will have to use and drink saltwater. It is extremely expensive to filter salt water. This why we need save water. What can you do to save water?

One way you can save water is by getting a rain barrel. Rain barrels collect water so that you can water your plants with recycled water. Recycled water is better for plants because it is more natural. Recycled water also have good nutrients.

Another way you can save water is by getting an airrating facet and shower head. These items use less water but make it feels the same because of more pressure. One more way you can save water is when you go in the sprinklers in the summer, make sure it is in a spot where it is watering the lawn.

One ways my family saves water is by turning off the water when you brush your teeth. Water is the most important natural resorce of all with out water, we would die. If we ran out of water, as I said, we would die. So if you think dieing is bad, try to conserve water as best you can.

**Introduces the top  
by clearly explainin**

the importance of  
water and posing a  
focusina auestion

**Links ideas within  
categories of  
information using  
words and phrases**

**Develops the topic  
with facts,  
definitions,  
concrete details,  
and examples  
related to the topic**

**Uses precise language  
and domain-specific  
vocabulary to explain  
the topic**

**Provides a concluding section related to the explanation presented**

This fourth-grade piece begins with an introduction that provides important context by explaining the importance of water to living things and the danger of running out. The focus of the piece is clearly established with a question: *"What can you do to save water?"*

Related information is organized into well-developed paragraphs. The second paragraph, for example, is about the benefits of collecting water in rain barrels. This idea is elaborated upon with concrete details from the source (*"you can water your plants"*) and explanation (*"recycled water is better for plants because it is more natural"*). Linking words and phrases (*"one way"*, *"so"*, *"because"*, *"also"*) knit together the related ideas in this paragraph.

Throughout the piece, precise words (*"eventually"*, *"extremely"*, *"pressure"*) and domain-specific vocabulary (*"nutrients"*, *"airrating"*, *"conserve"*, *"natural resource"*) convey ideas effectively. Although worded a bit clumsily, the conclusion presents a logical and connected sequence of thought that leads the reader back to the focus of the piece (water is important; without it we would die; therefore, you should *"try to conserve water as best you can"*).

**File Name: I4P Conserving Water**

**Informational/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Conserving Water**

Conserving water is a great way to help the Earth. Plants, humans, and animals would not be able to live without our water. We need to save water because we will eventually run out of it. Then we will have to use and drink salt water. It is extremely expensive to filter salt water. This is why we need save water. What can you do to save water?

One way you can save water is by getting a rain barrel. Rain barrels collect water so that you can water your plants with recycled water. Recycled water is better for plants because it is more natural. Recycled water also has good nutrients.

Another way you can save water is by getting an aerating faucet and showerhead. These items use less water but make it feel the same because they have more pressure. One more way you can save water is to make sure sprinklers are placed where they are watering the lawn in the summer.

One way my family saves water is by turning off the water when we brush our teeth. Water is the most important natural resource of all. Without water, we would die. If we ran out of water, as I said, we would die. So if you think dying is bad, try to conserve water as best you can.

**File Name: I4P Conserving Water**

**Informational/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Conserving Water**

Conserving water is a great way to help the earth. Without our water, plants, humans, and animals, would not be able to live. We need to save water because we will eventually run out of it. Then we will have to use and drink saltwater. It is extremely expensive to filter salt water. This why we need save water. What can you do to save water?

One way you can save water is by getting a rain barrel. Rain barrels collect water so that you can water your plants with recycled water. Recycled water is better for plants because it is more natural. Recycled water also have good nutrients.

Another way you can save water is by getting an airrating facet and shower head. These items use less water but make it feels the same because of more pressure. One more way you can save water is when you go in the sprinklers in the summer, make sure it is in a spot where it is watering the lawn.

One ways my family saves water is by turning off the water when you brush your teeth. Water is the most important natural resorce of all with out water, we would die. If we ran out of water, as I said, we would die. So if you think dieing is bad, try to conserve water as best you can.



## Grade 5, Prompt for Informative/Explanatory Writing

### Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Directions should be read aloud and clarified by the teacher

### Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 1

Today, you are going to get ready to write an informative essay to answer this question:

**What can you do to save water?**

#### **Day 1** *Get ready to write.*

- Watch the video: *Water Conservation Tips*.
- Discuss this question briefly with your class: Why is it important to save water?
- Listen to the article: *Save our Water!* carefully. You may want to take notes for your essay as you read.
- What can you do to save water? Turn and talk to a partner about what you could do. You each have three minutes to explain what you would do and why.
- On a piece of lined paper, write your name and grade, the date, the name of your school and your state, and your teacher's name. You will use this paper tomorrow for writing.

## Water Conservation

Student Directions Day 2

Today, you are going to use what you have learned to write an informative essay to answer this question: **What can you do to save water?**

### Day 2 *Write!*

- Listen to *Save our Water!* again. Read along as you listen.
- When you have finished, write an informative essay explaining what you can do to save water.
- Your focusing question for this assignment is
  - **What can you do to save water?**
  - Be sure to use facts and examples from the article. Explain how doing these things will save water.

### Remember, a good informative essay:

- *Has an effective introduction*
- *Has a clear focus/topic*
- *Uses specific facts, statistics, and examples from the text(s) to support the focus and explain your thinking*
- *Groups ideas in paragraphs*
- *Has a satisfying conclusion*
- *Uses precise language and linking words to connect ideas*
- *Has correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation*

When you have finished, be sure to check your work and fix any mistakes you find.

We look forward to reading your good writing and thinking!

## Grade 5 - Informative/Explanatory Writing Prompt

### Teacher Directions

- Use the student prompt as directions for each session. The short video can be found on YouTube: Water conservation tips-*How to Conserve Water at Home* <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MDLpVHY8LE>. The video is recommended, but is optional.
- Provide each student with a copy of the prompt and the article. The article should be read aloud while students read along silently.
- The article provides the information needed to address the prompt and should be read aloud at least twice before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing and to take notes.
- The prompt should be given in two sessions. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given the time needed to write and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing. Provide lined paper from your classroom for writing.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

Name:

### **Save Our Water!**

Did you know that kids can make a very important difference in saving the earth's water? They can! But first off, why do we even need to save water?

Water is a natural resource that we get from the Earth. Without it, we would not be able to live! Imagine a world with no water at all. You wouldn't be able to drink it, bathe, or swim! Without clean water, plants, animals, birds and ocean life would also be unable to live. Kids can help protect this resource. You make a huge difference simply by starting at home. To get an idea of how much water we could save if we all made a small effort, think about this. What if every person across the nation flushed their toilets one time less every day? Together they could save enough water to fill a lake as large as a mile wide and long and four feet in depth!

Now you know how important it is to help save water. Try some of the ideas below. Start doing your part to change our world!

#### **Some Ways Kids Can Help to Save Water:**

- When you wash your hands, don't leave the water running. Wet your hands and turn the water off. Use soap and lather your hands well. Then turn the water on to rinse. Turn off the water and make sure it is off completely. Then dry your hands.
- Do the same when you brush your teeth. Turn the faucet on to get your toothbrush and toothpaste wet. Turn it on again to rinse your mouth and toothbrush. Don't leave the water running while you're brushing.
- Baths use a lot of water (about 37 gallons on average). Take short showers, and use only about 20 gallons of water, instead.
- Do you have plants in your house? When vegetables or other fresh produce are washed, collect that water and use it to water the plants.
- Do you like a drink of cold water now and then? Keep a pitcher of water in the refrigerator. That way you don't have to run the water to get it cold.
- Put a barrel outdoors to catch rain water. Then use that water for things like watering plants or flushing toilets. You can save hundreds of gallons of water a year!
- In the summertime, it's fun to play under the lawn sprinkler. When you do, make sure it's only when the lawn is being watered.
- Remind the others in your home, and your friends, not to leave any faucet running. Only use what is truly needed!
- Is there a leaky faucet or toilet in the bathroom at school? Be sure to let someone know so that it can be repaired.

Even if you do just one thing each day to contribute to your home's water conservation, you're doing the right thing!

Adapted from *Water Conservation for Kids*

TheWaterPage.com

<http://www.thewaterpage.com/water-conservation-kids.htm>

© 1996 - 2012 Water Policy International Ltd

Used by permission of Water Policy International Ltd

**File Name: ISP Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 5**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Saving Water**

Did you know that you can save your homes water by just by doing things each day? You can put a bucket outside to cath rainwater or use wipes to wash tables instead of water. There are many ways to save water, you can do things outside and inside to help save water. Here are some ideas.

**Introduces the top clearly**

**Provides a general observation and focus**

There are many things to do inside your house to help save water. You can change your toilet, facet, and shower head to low flow. Also, you can take small, short showers instead of baths. you can turn off the facet when brushing your teeth and when lathering soap in your hands. When waiting for water to warm up save the water and reuse. over all there are alot of things you can do inside to save your homes water.

**Uses precise languag and domain-specific vocabulary to explc the topic**

**Develops the topic with facts, concrete details, and other**

There are many things to do outside your house to help save water. First you can go to an automated carwash or use a waterless car wash. When you do a car wash at home you waste more water. Also you can dump out your water bottle on plants and grass insted of dumping it down the drain. Reuse water outside as much as possible. You can also put a bucket of water outside to catch rainwater and use for watering plants or grass. Over all there are alot of ways to save water outside of your house.

**information and examples related t the topic**

**Links ideas within categories of information using words and phrases**

There are many ways to save your homes water outside and inside. Kids and adults can make a big difference to save water. Imagine if everyone in the cantry turned of the facet when brushing thier teeth, we could save enogh water to refill a lake! Over all it is important to save water inside and outside your house.

**Provides a concludi  
section related  
to the explanation  
presented**

This fifth-grade piece introduces the topic clearly by providing a general observation and focus. The writer shows a developing awareness of purpose and audience, beginning with a question (*"Did you know...?"*) and concluding with a precise and striking image (*"we could save enogh water to refill a lake!"*) that serves to encourage the reader to take action. The clear sentence structure and familiar vocabulary is appropriate for a general audience.

The piece is well-organized. Facts and concrete details from the source have been regrouped logically into two broad categories: things you can do inside to save water and things you can do outside. Linking words and phrases (*"also", "instead of", "when", "first", "overall"*) show the relationship between ideas and allow the writer to smoothly elaborate using examples and concrete details. The structure of the essay (introduction, body, conclusion), as well as the structure within each paragraph (topic sentence, details, concluding sentence), create cohesion and make the thinking in the piece easy to follow.

**File Name: ISP Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 5**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Saving Water**

Did you know that you can save your home's water just by doing things each day? You can put a bucket outside to catch rainwater or use wipes to wash tables instead of water. There are many ways to save water. You can do things outside and inside to help save water. Here are some ideas.

There are many things to do inside your house to help save water. You can change your toilet, faucet, and showerhead to low flow. Also, you can take small, short showers instead of baths. You can turn off the faucet when brushing your teeth and when lathering soap in your hands. When waiting for water to warm up, save the water and reuse. Over all, there are a lot of things you can do inside to save your home's water.

There are many things to do outside your house to help save water. First you can go to an automated carwash or use a waterless car wash. When you do a car wash at home, you waste more water. Also you can dump out your water bottle on plants and grass instead of dumping it down the drain. Reuse water outside as much as possible. You can also put a bucket of water outside to catch rainwater and use for watering plants or grass. Overall, there are a lot of ways to save water outside of your house.



There are many ways to save your home's water outside and inside. Kids and adults can make a big difference in saving water. Imagine if everyone in the country turned off the faucet when brushing their teeth. We could save enough water to refill a lake! Overall, it is important to save water inside and outside your house.

**File Name: ISP Saving Water**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 5**

**On Demand Writing- Uniform Prompt**

### **Saving Water**

Did you know that you can save your homes water by just by doing things each day? You can put a bucket outside to catch rainwater or use wipes to wash tables instead of water. There are many ways to save water, you can do things outside and inside to help save water. Here are some ideas.

There are many things to do inside your house to help save water. You can change your toilet, facet, and shower head to low flow. Also, you can take small, short showers instead of baths. you can turn off the facet when brushing your teeth and when lathering soap in your hands. When waiting for water to warm up save the water and reuse. over all there are alot of things you can do inside to save your homes water.

There are many things to do outside your house to help save water. First you can go to an automated carwash or use a waterless car wash. When you do a car wash at home you waste more water. Also you can dump out your water bottle on plants and grass insted of dumping it down the drain. Reuse water outside as much as possible. You can also put a bucket of water outside to catch rainwater and use for watering plants or grass. Over all there are alot of ways to save water outside of your house.

There are many ways to save your homes water outside and inside. Kids and adults can make a big difference to save water. Imagine if everyone in the cantry turned of the facet when brushing thier teeth, we could save enogh water to refill a lake! Over all it is important to save water inside and outside your house.

# **6-12 On-Demand Informative/Explanatory Samples**

## Grades 6-8, Prompt for Informative / Explanatory Writing

### Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Great historical events often have deep effects upon the people who live through them. Depending on the person and the situation, those effects can be very different – or not.

The Great Depression of the 1930s, in the United States, was one of these events. Lasting for nearly ten years, the Great Depression closed thousands of banks, put millions of people out of work, and seared itself into the memory of those who lived through it.

The President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, responded by creating new government programs to help Americans, known as the New Deal.

You are going to read three texts about the Great Depression: a memoir called *Digging In* by Robert Hastings, a poem, “Debts” by Karen Hesse, and a short text about the programs of the New Deal of President Roosevelt. As you read and re-read these texts, think about what the texts show you about how the Great Depression seems to have affected the individual people who lived through it.

Finally, using these texts, you will write an essay, explaining your thinking.

For the essay, your Focusing Question is:

**According to these texts, what effect did the Great Depression have on people who lived through it? Be sure to use evidence from the texts to support and develop your thinking.**

Remember, a good informative essay:

- *Has a clear introduction*
- *States a focus/topic clearly, precisely, and thoughtfully*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support and develop the topic and explains that evidence*

- *Concludes effectively*
- *Uses precise language*
- *Shows control over conventions*

You will have three class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. The essay will have a single draft, and you may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. When you have finished, be sure to proofread.

## Informative / Explanatory Writing

### Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

#### 6-8

#### *Teacher Directions*

- The texts provide the information needed to address the prompt, and students should independently read the texts carefully before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing and to take notes, and to mark up the text as much as is helpful to them.
- Students should be given three sessions for the prompt. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given as much time as needed to plan, write, and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing.
  - Be sure students have paper to take notes or do whatever pre-planning they might choose to do.
  - If students are writing by hand, provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. If they are using a word processor, make sure they save their work so it can be accessed the next day.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.





## Digging In

By Robert J. Hastings

The closing of Old West Side Mine meant the end of anything resembling a steady job for the next eight years. From 1930 on, it was a day's work here and a day's work there, a coal order from the welfare office, a few days on WPA, a garden in the back yard, and a few chickens and eggs.

We weathered the storm because of Dad's willingness to take any job and Mom's ability to stretch every available dollar. It was not so much a matter of finding a job as of filling in with odd jobs wherever and whenever you could, and most of the "jobs" were those you made for yourself.

My diary shows that Dad sold iron cords door to door, "worked a day in the hay," bought a horse to break gardens, rented an extra lot for a garden on the shares, picked peaches, raised sweet potato slips, traded an occasional dozen of eggs at the grocery, hung wallpaper, "painted Don Albright's house for \$5," picked up a day or two's work at the strip mines, guarded the fence at the county fairgrounds, cut hair for boys in the neighborhood, sold coal orders, and when he had to and could, worked intermittently on WPA.

With no dependable income, we cut back on everything possible. We stopped the evening paper, turned off the city water and cleaned out our well, sold our four-door Model T touring car with the snap-on side curtains and isinglass, stopped ice and milk delivery, and disconnected our gas range for all but the three hot summer months. There was no telephone to disconnect, as we didn't have one to start with!

We did keep up regular payments on two Metropolitan Life Insurance policies. Page after page of old receipt books show entries of 10 cents per week on one policy and 69 cents a month on another. As long as we could, we made house payments to the Marion Building and Loan, but a day came when we had to let those go, too.

Fortunately, we were able to save our house from foreclosure. When so many borrowers defaulted, the Marion Building and Loan went bankrupt. Creditors were allowed to pay just about any amount to satisfy the receivers. But that was the catch – who had "just about any amount" to pay? A house behind ours sold for \$25. Many good houses in Marion sold for \$5 to \$100 and were torn down and moved to nearby towns. We settled with the loan company for \$125, or ten cents on the dollar for our \$1250 mortgage. I'll never forget the day

Dad cleared it all up, making two or three trips to town to bring papers home for Mom to sign. He was able to borrow the \$125 from his aunt, Dialtha James, who as the widow of a Spanish-American war veteran had a small pension.

Looking back, I find it amazing what we did without. A partial list would include toothpaste (we used soda), toilet paper (we used the catalog), newspaper or magazine subscriptions, soft drinks, potato chips and snacks, bakery goods except bread and an occasional dozen of doughnuts, paper clips, rubber bands and restaurant meals. We had no water bill, sewer bill, telephone bill, no car expenses – gasoline, tires, batteries, licenses, insurance, repairs – no laundry service, no dry cleaning (we pressed woolens up with a hot iron and wet cloth), no bank service charge (no bank account), no sales or income tax. We sent no greeting cards except maybe half a dozen at Christmas...

Typical of the simple economies Mom practiced was keeping the electric bill to \$1 a month and the gas bill to \$1 a month in June, July, and August....Since our only appliance was an electric iron, the chief use of electricity was for lighting. With only a single bulb suspended by a cord from the ceiling of each room, there weren't many lights to burn...On winter evenings, Mom would turn on the kitchen light while she cooked supper. If I had lessons I brought them to the kitchen table or sprawled on the floor between the kitchen and dining room.

After supper we "turned off the light in the kitchen" and moved to the dining-sitting room, where another light was switched on. If we wanted to read on winter afternoons, we sat as near a window as possible, with the curtains pinned back, to save the lights until it was nearly dark...

Dad had some old-fashioned shoe lasts, and he would buy stick-'em-on soles at the dime store to patch our shoes in winter. With simple barber tools he cut my hair and that of other kids in the neighborhood, for maybe ten cents a head. In cold, wet weather, when he worked outdoors on WPA, he often cut strips of cardboard to stuff in the soles of his shoes and keep his feet warm.

We took care of what we had. Every cotton cloth was used over as a dish cloth, wash cloth, dust cloth, shoe-shining cloth, window-washing cloth, to scrub and wax floors, make bandages, make quilt pieces, make kite tails, or to tie boxes and papers together. The cotton bags from flour, salt, and cracked chicken feed were washed, bleached, and cut into dish cloths and towels. Some neighbors made curtains or even dresses from feed sacks. Every paper bag was saved for lunches or cut and used for wrapping paper. String was wound into balls for later use.

Each August Mom would find someone who was a year ahead of me in school, and buy his used books. One exception was a spelling book used in all eight grades. Since it was to be used for eight years, we decided it would be a wise investment to buy a new one when I started first grade. In the seventh grade, I dropped that speller in the snow. I thought Mom was unfair when she sent me all the way back to school, retracing my steps to look for the book...

Before the Depression, we hung a four-cornered black-and-white cardboard sign in the front window each morning. The figures in the corners told the iceman how many pounds to bring – 25, 50, 75, or 100. But ice was one of the casualties of the Depression, although we managed a small piece two or three times a week for iced tea. About eleven in the morning I would pull a little wagon, filled with a gunny sack and assorted old quilts and tarpaulins, down to the neighborhood ice house to buy a “nickel’s worth of ice,” which was half of a 25-pound chunk. By wrapping it carefully and storing it in a cool, damp spot under the house, we could stretch that piece of ice for two or three days. In rainy, cool weather, maybe four days! It was our glistening prize, and any left over from tea was emptied back into a pitcher of ice water, or used for lemonade that afternoon. So as not to waste any, we chipped only what was needed, with much of the same care used by a diamond cutter.

Whatever was free was our recreation. This may have included playing records on our wind-up victrola or listening to the radio. You might watch a parachute jump at the airport or a free ball game at the city park, with perhaps a free band concert afterwards...the band concerts survived only the first two years of the Depression...

We liked music, and one of my earliest memories is of Dad singing to me:

Two arms that hold me tight,

Two lips that kiss goodnight;

To me he’ll always be,

That little boy of mine.

No one can ever know,

Just what his coming has meant:

He’s something heaven has sent,

That little boy of mine.

At one point in the Depression, the cupboard was literally bare of money. We weren't hungry, but we were penniless. Then Dad went back in the pantry and came out with a jar in which he had saved a few nickels and dimes for such an emergency.

Later, Mom said to me, "I've learned that whatever happens, your Daddy always has a little dab of money put back somewhere..."

Excerpted from "Digging In", 1986. Found in *Dark Days*, Perfection Learning, 2006

Used by permission of Dark Days, Perfection Learning, 2006

## Debts

By Karen Hesse

Daddy is thinking  
of taking a loan from Mr. Roosevelt and his men,  
to get some new wheat planted  
where the winter crop has spindled out and died.  
Mr. Roosevelt promises  
Daddy won't have to pay a dime  
till the crop comes in.

Daddy says,  
"I can turn the fields over,  
start again.  
It's sure to rain soon.  
Wheat's sure to grow."

Ma says, "What if it doesn't?"

Daddy takes off his hat,

roughs up his hair,

puts the hat back on.

“Course it’ll rain,” he says.

Ma says, “Bay,

it hasn’t rained enough to grow wheat in

three years.”

Daddy looks like a fight brewing.

He takes that red face of his out to the barn,

To keep from feuding with my pregnant ma.

I ask Ma

how, after all this time,

Daddy still believes in rain.

“Well, it rains enough,” Ma says,

“now and again,

to keep a person hoping.

But even if it didn’t

your daddy would have to believe.

It's coming on spring,

and he's a farmer."

March 1934

## The New Deal

In 1932 [Franklin Delano Roosevelt](#) was elected overwhelmingly on a campaign promising a New Deal for the American people. Roosevelt worked quickly upon his election to deliver the New Deal, an unprecedented number of reforms addressing the catastrophic effects of the Great Depression. Unlike his predecessor, [Herbert Hoover](#), who felt that the public should support the government and not the other way around, Roosevelt felt it was the federal government's duty to help the American people weather these bad times.

Together with his "brain trust," a group of university scholars and liberal theorists, Roosevelt sought the best course of action for the struggling nation. A desperate Congress gave him carte blanche and rubber-stamped his proposals in order to expedite the reforms. During the first 100 days of his presidency, a never-ending stream of bills was passed, to relieve poverty, reduce unemployment, and speed economic recovery.

His first act as president was to declare a four-day bank holiday, during which time Congress drafted the Emergency Banking Bill of 1933, which stabilized the banking system and restored the public's faith in the banking industry by putting the federal government behind it. Three months later, he signed the Glass-Steagall Act which created the FDIC, federally insuring deposits

The [Civil Conservation Corps](#) was one of the New Deal's most successful programs. It addressed the pressing problem of unemployment by sending 3 million single men from age 17 to 23 to the nation's forests to work. Living in camps in the forests, the men dug ditches, built reservoirs

and planted trees. The men, all volunteers, were paid \$30 a month, with two thirds being sent home. The [Works Progress Administration](#), Roosevelt's major work relief program, would employ more than 8.5 million people to build bridges, roads, public buildings, parks and airports.

The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) and the National Recovery Administration (NRA) were designed to address unemployment by regulating the number of hours worked per week and banning child labor. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), created in 1933, gave \$3 billion to states for work relief programs. The Agricultural Adjustment Act subsidized farmers for reducing crops and provided loans for farmers facing bankruptcy. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) helped people save their homes from foreclosure.

While they did not end the Depression, the New Deal's experimental programs helped the American people immeasurably by taking care of their basic needs and giving them the dignity of work and hope.

from Public Broadcasting Service [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)

Used by permission of PBS



**File Name: I6P Effects of The Great Depression**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grade 6**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Effects of The Great Depression**

The Great Depression affected the people that lived through it in many ways. The things at I am going to explain are some of the things that affected the people who lived through the Great Depression. Having barely any money was one of the things that affected them. Also having less supplies affected them too. Having to take care of kids too also might have affected the people during the Great Depression.

First, I am going to talk about how having almost no money affected the people. It affected them because they were getting their money by working. Then their jobs were shutting down so their amount of money was shrinking and shrinking. They would do neighborhood favors and jobs but the amount of money they would get was five dollors. They also had to pay a bill for electricity every month. They had to pay for gas if you had a car and their house. That is why having almost no money affected them a lot.

Focus / **topic** of the piece is clearly stated

**Introduces the topic clearly:** The writer gives no context, but does lay out the ideas she will discuss in the essay to follow

**Organizes ideas, concepts, and information** by category, within an overall cause-effect structure.

Here, writer discusses the effect of no money. **Develops the topic with relevant, accurate facts and concrete details using domain-specific vocabulary to explain** the effects of a lack of money during the *Great Depression*.

**Uses appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts**

Another reason the Great Depression affected the people was they were having less of the supplies they had. Like some of the people stopped delivery for several things such as milk and ice. They were also using less electricity and selling their cars. Those are some of supplies they had a shortage or had to not use as much.

**Develops the topic with relevant, facts and concrete details about the effect of the Great Depression on childcare**

Also if they had kids they would need to do extra work and be able to care for them. They also had to pay more money if they had kids because they have to feed them too. They also had to take care of them. The parents have to care for them. If they are sick they can not just leave them at home they have to take care of them. They also might worry about them. If you had kids during the Great Depression not only would you worry about your kids and family.

**Analyzes evidence**

That is why if you had kids during the Great Depression it might be more difficult.

**Establishes and maintains a reasonably formal style**

Now you can see how living through the Great Depression was very difficult and affected many people who lived through it. It affected people in many ways like having no money or having a very little amount of it. Also if you had kids it might have been a little more difficult. They also had to live with less supplies. That is why I think the Great Depression affected the people who lived through it.

**Provides a concluding section that restates and follows from the explanation presented**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to explain the effects of the Great Depression on people who lived through it. This writer gives no background about the Great Depression in the introduction (a weakness), but does state her topic / focus that the Great Depression affected people who lived through it in many ways and lays out what she will discuss in the writing to follow.

The writer organizes the evidence clearly by category (various effects of the Great Depression) to support the topic, and uses basic but appropriate transitions to clarify relationships between ideas and concepts. Within each chunk of text, the writer uses some domain-specific vocabulary (*"neighborhood favors and jobs"*, *"stopped delivery for...milk and ice"*) to name and explain / analyze the evidence about the effects, which she has taken from the texts she has read. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

While the language is sometimes basic and informal (*"I am going to tell you"*), the bulk of the essay has an appropriately formal style for this grade level. The conclusion, while a bit repetitious, follows from the information presented.

**File Name: I7P Living Through The Great Depression**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grade 7**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Living Through The Great Depression**

The Great Depression affected many people especially those who lived through it. With that said the main point of this essay is how people who lived through the Depression were affected during it.

During The Great Depression people had things to deal with that made them struggle. Some people didn't have an abundant amount of money not a decent amount. Instead they had little or none at all. It was a struggle to earn money with the lack of jobs, people ended up doing side jobs to earn money. In "Digging In" the family of four had to find ways to obtain money. They ended up cutting back on a lot of things like the water system and starting using their well. The father did his best to get some type of income by doing side jobs, like cutting the boys hair for \_\_\_\_\_. People also looked to

Roosevelt for help or farming for a decent or better income. For instance in the

poem "Debts The family owned land that they used for farming. The father

**Introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow:** The writer gives little context but does state a main idea/focus

**Organizes ideas and information** using categories: The writer organizes text-by-text within an overall cause-effect structure

**Develops topic with appropriate, relevant facts and concrete details, uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary in evidence** from the text to inform about the topic  
**Continues to develop topic with appropriate accurate, facts and concrete details, uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary in evidence** from the text

**Uses appropriate, varied transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts**

**Develops topic with appropriate accurate, facts and concrete details, uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary in evidence** from the text

**Analyzes  
evidence**

grew wheat three years ago and hasn't been able to since. With scarce rain no wheat grew, without wheat to harvest no money would flow in. Bay, the father, even thought about getting a loan from Mr. Roosevelt, and he promised he didn't have to pay a dime 'till the crop came in. All he could do was hope things got better.

Not only did people have things to worry about the President did too. In the article "The New Deal" Roosevelt wanted to find a way to help the people suffering from the Great Depression. He created several ways to help with some of the issues. He made the NIRA and NRA, these systems banned child labor and address unemployment by regulating the number of hours worked per week. The FERA gave \$3 billion to states for work relief programs. In the end these systems only helped people take care of their basic needs.

The people who lived through the Great Depression had to find ways to obtain income, work and help. The Government did their best to support the people through this time but have you ever thought that this might happen again.

**Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information presented**

**Establishes and maintains a reasonably formal style**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to explain the effects of the Great Depression on people who lived through it. This writer gives no context about the Great Depression in the introduction but does state the main point (the Great Depression affected people who lived through it in many ways), which serves to preview the essay that follows.

The writer organizes ideas, concepts, and information clearly using the texts as categories, and supplies textual evidence to support the main point. She uses appropriate transitions. For example, she writes, *“Not only did people have things to worry about, the President did too.”* (Note: this would be easier to see if the writer had started a new paragraph with each transition.) Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to name and explain the effects, which she has identified from the texts she has read. This makes the writer’s thinking and understanding easy to follow.

The essay has an appropriately formal style. The conclusion follows from and supports the information presented.

**File Name: I7P Living Through The Great Depression**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grade 7**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Living Through The Great Depression**

The Great Depression affected many people especially those who lived through it. With that said the main point of this essay is how people who lived through the Depression were affected during it.

During The Great Depression people had things to deal with that made them struggle. Some people didn't have an abundant amount of money not a decent amount. Instead they had little or none at all. It was a struggle to earn money with the lack of jobs, people ended up doing side jobs to earn money. In "Digging In" the family of four had to find ways to obtain money. They ended up cutting back on a lot of things like the water system and starting using their well. The father did his best to get some type of income by doing side jobs, like cutting the boys hair for \_\_\_\_\_. People also looked to Roosevelt for help or farming for a decent or better income. For instance in the poem "Debts The family owned land that they used for farming. The father grew wheat three years ago and hasn't been able to since. With scarce rain no wheat grew, without wheat to harvest no money would flow in. Bay, the father, even thought about getting a loan from Mr. Roosevelt, and he promised he didn't have to pay a dime 'till the crop came in. All

he could do was hope things got better. Not only did people have things to worry about the President did too. In the artical "The New Deal" Rosevelt wanted to find a way to help the people suffering from the Great Depression. He created several ways to help with some of the issues. He made the NIRA and NRA, these systems banned child labor and adress unemployment by regulating the number of hours worked per week. The FERA gave \$3 billion to states for work relief programs. In the end these systems only helped people take care of their basic needs.

The people who lived through the Great Depression had to find ways to obtain income, work and help. The Government did their best to support the people through this time but have you ever thought that this might happen again.



**File Name: I8P Dignity and Hope**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grade 8**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Dignity and Hope**

The Great Depression. This notorious event put Americas hope to the test. Leaving Americans economically and metally drained. The Great Depression devistated America and will never be forgotten. If not for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his beneficial "New Deal" who knows what horride ruins would remain as a result of The Great Depression.

"With no dependable income, we cut back on everything possible." This excerpt from the story "Digging in" by Robert J. Hastings shows the situation that each and every American faced. In the story, it is said that the family substituted toothpaste and toilet paper, for soda and catalog pages. Even common nessecities had to be sacrificed during The Great Depression.

Along with their wallets, Americans spirits were also crushed. In the poem "Debts" by Karen Hesse, the father of the family is facing a serious drought but still believes in rain. When reality sets in that rain is not likely to come, he is filled with rage and leaves to \*\*\* to the farm to avoid feuding with his pregnant wife. This man was a farmer, and had to rely on the most unreliable thing for a source of income, mother nature. This man, and every other Americans spirits were tested during The Great Depression, and the number of those who still had

**Introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow:** The writer gives a bit of context and indicates the focus /main ideas that will be developed

**Organizes ideas and information using categories:** The writer organizes text-by-text within an overall cause-effect structure

**Develops the topic with relevant, well-chosen, accurate facts and concrete details**

**Uses appropriate, varied transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts**

**Develops the topic with relevant, well-chosen, accurate facts and concrete details**

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary in well-chosen evidence from the poem to explain the topic**

**Analyzes evidence**

hope was diminishing. With America facing an economic doom, Americans turned to one man, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. With the promise of a New Deal to help end The Great Depression Roosevelt won the election by a landslide. He created jobs for three-million single men between seventeen and twenty-three years of age. Roosevelt's work relief program put 8.5 million Americans to work building roads, bridges, airports and more. Although Roosevelt did not end The Great Depression, he provided Americans with work and hope.

**Establishes and maintains a formal style**

The Great Depression left Americans mentally as well as economically depleted. This event tested the will of the American people, and left some citizens without any hope. With the help of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, America was able to get through The Great Depression with dignity and hope.

**Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information presented**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to explain the effects of the Great Depression on people who lived through it. This writer gives a bit of context about the Great Depression in the introduction and then states his main points (the Great Depression devastated people who lived through it; Roosevelt's intervention was critical), which serve to preview what follows.

The writer organizes ideas, concepts, and information clearly by category, building his essay text-by-text and using textual evidence to support the main points. He uses appropriate, varied, and strong transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas. For example, he writes, *"Along with their wallets, Americans spirits were also crushed."* Within each chunk of the essay, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to name and explain the effects, which he has identified from the texts he has read. While he does not give a great deal of evidence, what he does include is precise and well-chosen, with some analysis (*"When reality sets in..."*) This makes the writer's thinking easy to follow.

The essay has an appropriately formal style. The conclusion follows from and supports the information presented.

**File Name: I8P Dignity and Hope**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grade 8**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Dignity and Hope**

The Great Depression. This notorious event put Americas hope to the test. Leaving Americans economically and metally drained. The Great Depression devistated America and will never be forgotten. If not for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his beneficial "New Deal" who knows what horride ruins would remain as a result of The Great Depression.

"With no dependable income, we cut back on everything possible." This excerpt from the story "Digging in" by Robert J. Hastings shows the situation that each and every American faced. In the story, it is said that the family substituted toothpaste and toilet paper, for soda and catalog pages. Even common nessecities had to be sacrificed during The Great Depression.

Along with their wallets, Americans spirits were also crushed. In the poem "Debts" by Karen Hesse, the father of the family is facing a serious drought but still believes in rain. When reality sets in that rain is not likely to come, he is filled with rage and leaves to \*\*\* to the farm to avoid feuding with his pregnant wife. This man was a farmer, and had to rely on the most unreliable thing for a source of income, mother nature. This man, and every other Americans spirits were tested during The Great Depression, and the number of those who still had

hope was diminishing. With America facing an economic doom, Americans turned to one man, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. With the promise of a New Deal to help end The Great Depression Roosevelt won the election by a landslide. He created jobs for three-million single men between seventeen and twenty-three years of age. Roosevelt's work relief program put 8.5 million Americans to work building roads, bridges, airports and more. Although Roosevelt did not end The Great Depression, he provided Americans with work and hope.

The Great Depression left Americans mentally as well as economically depleted. This event tested the will of the American people, and left some citizens without any hope. With the help of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, America was able to get through The Great Depression with dignity and hope.

## Grades 9-12, Prompt for Informative / Explanatory Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Great historical events often have deep effects upon the people who live through them. Depending on the person and the situation, those effects can be very different – or not.

The Great Depression of the 1930s, in the United States, was one of these events. Lasting for nearly ten years, the Great Depression closed thousands of banks, put millions of people out of work, and seared itself into the memory of those who lived through it.

The President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, responded by creating new government programs to help Americans, known as the New Deal.

You are going to read four texts about the Great Depression: a memoir called *Digging In* by Robert Hastings, a poem “Debt” by Karen Hesse, a short text about the programs of the New Deal of President Roosevelt, and President Roosevelt’s second inaugural address to the nation in 1937. As you read and re-read these texts, think about what the texts show you about how the Great Depression seems to have affected the individual people who lived through it.

Finally, using these texts, you will write an essay, explaining your thinking.

For the essay, your Focusing Question is:

**According to these texts, what effect did the Great Depression have on people who lived through it? Be sure to use evidence from the texts to support and develop your thinking.**

Remember, a good informational essay:

- *Has a clear introduction*
- *States a focus/topic clearly, precisely, and thoughtfully*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support and develop the topic and explains that evidence*
- *Concludes effectively*
- *Uses precise language*
- *Shows control over conventions*

You will have three class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. The essay will have a single draft, and you may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. When you have finished, be sure to proofread.



**Informative / Explanatory Writing**  
**Common Core Standard W.CCR.2**  
**9-12**

*Teacher Directions*

- The texts provide the information needed to address the prompt, and students should independently read the texts carefully before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing and to take notes, and to mark up the text as much as is helpful to them.
- Students should be given three sessions for the prompt. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given as much time as needed to plan, write, and proofread.
- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing.
  - Be sure students have paper to take notes or do whatever pre-planning they might choose to do.
  - If students are writing by hand, provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. If they are using a word processor, make sure they save their work so it can be accessed the next day.
- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

## Digging In

By Robert J. Hastings

The closing of Old West Side Mine meant the end of anything resembling a steady job for the next eight years. From 1930 on, it was a day's work here and a day's work there, a coal order from the welfare office, a few days on WPA, a garden in the back yard, and a few chickens and eggs.

We weathered the storm because of Dad's willingness to take any job and Mom's ability to stretch every available dollar. It was not so much a matter of finding a job as of filling in with odd jobs wherever and whenever you could, and most of the "jobs" were those you made for yourself.

My diary shows that Dad sold iron cords door to door, "worked a day in the hay," bought a horse to break gardens, rented an extra lot for a garden on the shares, picked peaches, raised sweet potato slips, traded an occasional dozen of eggs at the grocery, hung wallpaper, "painted Don Albright's house for \$5," picked up a day or two's work at the strip mines, guarded the fence at the county fairgrounds, cut hair for boys in the neighborhood, sold coal orders, and when he had to and could, worked intermittently on WPA.

With no dependable income, we cut back on everything possible. We stopped the evening paper, turned off the city water and cleaned out our well, sold our four-door Model T touring car with the snap-on side curtains and isinglass, stopped ice and milk delivery, and disconnected our gas range for all but the three hot summer months. There was no telephone to disconnect, as we didn't have one to start with!

We did keep up regular payments on two Metropolitan Life Insurance policies. Page after page of old receipt books show entries of 10 cents per week on one policy and 69 cents a month on another. As long as we could, we made house payments to the Marion Building and Loan, but a day came when we had to let those go, too.

Fortunately, we were able to save our house from foreclosure. When so many borrowers defaulted, the Marion Building and Loan went bankrupt. Creditors were allowed to pay just about any amount to satisfy the receivers. But that was the catch – who had "just about any amount" to pay? A house behind ours sold for \$25. Many good houses in Marion sold for \$5 to \$100 and were torn down and moved to nearby towns. We settled with the loan company for \$125, or ten cents on the dollar for our \$1250 mortgage. I'll never forget the day Dad cleared it all up, making two or three trips to town to bring papers home for Mom to sign. He was able to borrow the \$125 from his aunt, Dialtha James, who as the widow of a Spanish-American war veteran had a small pension.

Looking back, I find it amazing what we did without. A partial list would include toothpaste (we used soda), toilet paper (we used the catalog), newspaper or magazine



subscriptions, soft drinks, potato chips and snacks, bakery goods except bread and an occasional dozen of doughnuts, paper clips, rubber bands and restaurant meals. We had no water bill, sewer bill, telephone bill, no car expenses – gasoline, tires, batteries, licenses, insurance, repairs – no laundry service, no dry cleaning (we pressed woolens up with a hot iron and wet cloth), no bank service charge (no bank account), no sales or income tax. We sent no greeting cards except maybe half a dozen at Christmas...

Typical of the simple economies Mom practiced was keeping the electric bill to \$1 a month and the gas bill to \$1 a month in June, July, and August....Since our only appliance was an electric iron, the chief use of electricity was for lighting. With only a single bulb suspended by a cord from the ceiling of each room, there weren't many lights to burn...On winter evenings, Mom would turn on the kitchen light while she cooked supper. If I had lessons I brought them to the kitchen table or sprawled on the floor between the kitchen and dining room.

After supper we "turned off the light in the kitchen" and moved to the dining-sitting room, where another light was switched on. If we wanted to read on winter afternoons, we sat as near a window as possible, with the curtains pinned back, to save the lights until it was nearly dark...

Dad had some old-fashioned shoe lasts, and he would buy stick-'em-on soles at the dime store to patch our shoes in winter. With simple barber tools he cut my hair and that of other kids in the neighborhood, for maybe ten cents a head. In cold, wet weather, when he worked outdoors on WPA, he often cut strips of cardboard to stuff in the soles of his shoes and keep his feet warm.

We took care of what we had. Every cotton cloth was used over as a dish cloth, wash cloth, dust cloth, shoe-shining cloth, window-washing cloth, to scrub and wax floors, make bandages, make quilt pieces, make kite tails, or to tie boxes and papers together. The cotton bags from flour, salt, and cracked chicken feed were washed, bleached, and cut into dish cloths and towels. Some neighbors made curtains or even dresses from feed sacks. Every paper bag was saved for lunches or cut and used for wrapping paper. String was wound into balls for later use.

Each August Mom would find someone who was a year ahead of me in school, and buy his used books. One exception was a spelling book used in all eight grades. Since it was to be used for eight years, we decided it would be a wise investment to buy a new one when I started first grade. In the seventh grade, I dropped that speller in the snow. I thought Mom was unfair when she sent me all the way back to school, retracing my steps to look for the book...

Before the Depression, we hung a four-cornered black-and-white cardboard sign in the front window each morning. The figures in the corners told the iceman how many pounds to bring – 25, 50, 75, or 100. But ice was one of the casualties of the Depression, although we managed a small piece two or three times a week for iced tea. About eleven in the morning I

would pull a little wagon, filled with a gunny sack and assorted old quilts and tarpaulins, down to the neighborhood ice house to buy a “nickel’s worth of ice,” which was half of a 25-pound chunk. By wrapping it carefully and storing it in a cool, damp spot under the house, we could stretch that piece of ice for two or three days. In rainy, cool weather, maybe four days! It was our glistening prize, and any left over from tea was emptied back into a pitcher of ice water, or used for lemonade that afternoon. So as not to waste any, we chipped only what was needed, with much of the same care used by a diamond cutter.

Whatever was free was our recreation. This may have included playing records on our wind-up victrola or listening to the radio. You might watch a parachute jump at the airport or a free ball game at the city park, with perhaps a free band concert afterwards...the band concerts survived only the first two years of the Depression...

We liked music, and one of my earliest memories is of Dad singing to me:

Two arms that hold me tight,  
Two lips that kiss goodnight;  
To me he’ll always be,  
That little boy of mine.

No one can ever know,  
Just what his coming has meant:  
He’s something heaven has sent,  
That little boy of mine.

At one point in the Depression, the cupboard was literally bare of money. We weren’t hungry, but we were penniless. Then Dad went back in the pantry and came out with a jar in which he had saved a few nickels and dimes for such an emergency.

Later, Mom said to me, “I’ve learned that whatever happens, your Daddy always has a little dab of money put back somewhere...”

Excerpted from “Digging In”, 1986. Found in *Dark Days*, Perfection Learning, 2006  
Used by permission of Dark Days, Perfection Learning, 2006

## Debts

By Karen Hesse

Daddy is thinking  
of taking a loan from Mr. Roosevelt and his men,  
to get some new wheat planted  
where the winter crop has spindled out and died.  
Mr. Roosevelt promises  
Daddy won't have to pay a dime  
till the crop comes in.

Daddy says,  
"I can turn the fields over,  
start again.  
It's sure to rain soon.  
Wheat's sure to grow."

Ma says, "What if it doesn't?"

Daddy takes off his hat,  
roughs up his hair,  
puts the hat back on.  
"Course it'll rain," he says.

Ma says, "Bay,  
it hasn't rained enough to grow wheat in  
three years."

Daddy looks like a fight brewing.

He takes that red face of his out to the barn,  
To keep from feuding with my pregnant ma.

I ask Ma

how, after all this time,

Daddy still believes in rain.

“Well, it rains enough,” Ma says,

“now and again,

to keep a person hoping.

But even if it didn’t

your daddy would have to believe.

It’s coming on spring,

and he’s a farmer.”

March 1934

## The New Deal

In 1932 [Franklin Delano Roosevelt](#) was elected overwhelmingly on a campaign promising a New Deal for the American people. Roosevelt worked quickly upon his election to deliver the New Deal, an unprecedented number of reforms addressing the catastrophic effects of the Great Depression. Unlike his predecessor, [Herbert Hoover](#), who felt that the public should support the government and not the other way around, Roosevelt felt it was the federal government's duty to help the American people weather these bad times.

Together with his "brain trust," a group of university scholars and liberal theorists, Roosevelt sought the best course of action for the struggling nation. A desperate Congress gave him carte blanche and rubber-stamped his proposals in order to expedite the reforms. During the first 100 days of his presidency, a never-ending stream of bills was passed, to relieve poverty, reduce unemployment, and speed economic recovery.

His first act as president was to declare a four-day bank holiday, during which time Congress drafted the Emergency Banking Bill of 1933, which stabilized the banking system and restored the public's faith in the banking industry by putting the federal government behind it. Three months later, he signed the Glass-Steagall Act which created the FDIC, federally insuring deposits

The [Civil Conservation Corps](#) was one of the New Deal's most successful programs. It addressed the pressing problem of unemployment by sending 3 million single men from age 17 to 23 to the nation's forests to work. Living in camps in the forests, the men dug ditches, built reservoirs and planted trees. The men, all volunteers, were paid \$30 a month, with two thirds being sent home. The [Works Progress Administration](#), Roosevelt's major work relief program, would employ more than 8.5 million people to build bridges, roads, public buildings, parks and airports.

The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) and the National Recovery Administration (NRA) were designed to address unemployment by regulating the number of hours worked per week and banning child labor. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), created in 1933, gave \$3 billion to states for work relief programs. The Agricultural Adjustment Act subsidized farmers for reducing crops and provided loans for farmers facing bankruptcy. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) helped people save their homes from foreclosure.

While they did not end the Depression, the New Deal's experimental programs helped the American people immeasurably by taking care of their basic needs and giving them the dignity of work and hope.

from Public Broadcasting Service [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org)

Used by permission of PBS

*President Franklin Roosevelt took office in 1932, during the worst depression American had ever known. The stock market had crashed in 1929, thousands of banks had failed, millions of people were unemployed. Until 1932, there was no safety net for the country, with no government help, so people were on their own.*

*During his first term of office, Roosevelt created a program called the New Deal, in which government took a huge role in putting people back to work, creating Social Security, and creating many types of government assistance for people.*

*Roosevelt was overwhelmingly re-elected in 1936. What follows is the speech he made at the inauguration for his second term.*

## **Second Inaugural Address, President Franklin D. Roosevelt January 20, 1937**

My fellow countrymen. When four years ago we met to inaugurate a President, the Republic, single-minded in anxiety, stood in spirit here. We dedicated ourselves to the fulfillment of a vision—to speed the time when there would be for all the people that security and peace essential to the pursuit of happiness. We of the Republic pledged ourselves to drive from the temple of our ancient faith those who had profaned it; to end by action, tireless and unafraid, the stagnation and despair of that day. We did those first things first.

Our covenant with ourselves did not stop there. Instinctively we recognized a deeper need—the need to find through government the instrument of our united purpose to solve for the individual the ever-rising problems of a complex civilization. Repeated attempts at their solution without the aid of government had left us baffled and bewildered...

We of the Republic sensed the truth that democratic government has innate capacity to protect its people against disasters once considered inevitable, to solve problems once considered unsolvable. We would not admit that we could not find a way to master economic epidemics just as, after centuries of fatalistic suffering, we had found a way to master epidemics of disease. We refused to leave the problems of our common welfare to be solved by the winds of chance and the hurricanes of disaster.

In this we Americans were discovering no wholly new truth; we were writing a new chapter in our book of self-government.

This year marks the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Constitutional Convention which made us a nation. At that Convention our forefathers found the way out of the chaos which followed the Revolutionary War; they created a strong government with powers of united action sufficient then and now to solve problems utterly beyond individual or local solution. A century and a half ago they established the Federal Government in order to promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to the American people.

Today we invoke those same powers of government to achieve the same objectives. Four years of new experience have not belied our historic instinct. They hold out the clear hope that government within communities, government within the separate States, and government of the United States can do the things the times require, without yielding its democracy. Our tasks in the last four years did not force democracy to take a holiday.

Nearly all of us recognize that as intricacies of human relationships increase, so power to govern them also must increase—power to stop evil; power to do good. The essential democracy of our nation and the safety of our people depend not upon the absence of power, but upon lodging it with those whom the people can change or continue at stated intervals through an honest and free system of elections. The Constitution of 1787 did not make our democracy impotent.

Our progress out of the depression is obvious. But that is not all that you and I mean by the new order of things. Our pledge was not merely to do a patchwork job with secondhand materials. By using the new materials of social justice we have undertaken to erect on the old foundations a more enduring structure for the better use of future generations...

In this process evil things formerly accepted will not be so easily condoned. Hard-headedness will not so easily excuse hardheartedness. We are moving toward an era of good feeling. But we realize that there can be no era of good feeling save among men of good will.

For these reasons I am justified in believing that the greatest change we have witnessed has been the change in the moral climate of America.

Among men of good will, science and democracy together offer an ever-richer life and ever-larger satisfaction to the individual. With this change in our moral climate and our rediscovered ability to improve our economic order, we have set our feet upon the road of enduring progress.



Shall we pause now and turn our back upon the road that lies ahead? Shall we call this the promised land? Or, shall we continue on our way? For “each age is a dream that is dying, or one that is coming to birth.”

I see a great nation, upon a great continent, blessed with a great wealth of natural resources. Its hundred and thirty million people are at peace among themselves; they are making their country a good neighbor among the nations. I see a United States which can demonstrate that, under democratic methods of government, national wealth can be translated into a spreading volume of human comforts hitherto unknown, and the lowest standard of living can be raised far above the level of mere subsistence.

But here is the challenge to our democracy: In this nation I see tens of millions of its citizens—a substantial part of its whole population—who at this very moment are denied the greater part of what the very lowest standards of today call the necessities of life.

I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day.

I see millions whose daily lives in city and on farm continue under conditions labeled indecent by a so-called polite society half a century ago.

I see millions denied education, recreation, and the opportunity to better their lot and the lot of their children.

I see millions lacking the means to buy the products of farm and factory and by their poverty denying work and productiveness to many other millions.

I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.

But it is not in despair that I paint you that picture. I paint it for you in hope—because the nation, seeing and understanding the injustice in it, proposes to paint it out. We are determined to make every American citizen the subject of his country’s interest and concern; and we will never regard any faithful law-abiding group within our borders as superfluous. The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

Government is competent when all who compose it work as trustees for the whole people. It can make constant progress when it keeps abreast of all the facts. It can obtain justified support and legitimate criticism when the people receive true information of all that government does.

If I know aught of the will of our people, they will demand that these conditions of effective government shall be created and maintained. They will demand a nation uncorrupted by cancers of injustice and, therefore, strong among the nations in its example of the will to peace.

Today we reconsecrate our country to long-cherished ideals in a suddenly changed civilization. In every land there are always at work forces that drive men apart and forces that draw men together. In our personal ambitions we are individualists. But in our seeking for economic and political progress as a nation, we all go up, or else we all go down, as one people.

In taking again the oath of office as President of the United States, I assume the solemn obligation of leading the American people forward along the road over which they have chosen to advance.

*[www.historymatters.gmu.edu](http://www.historymatters.gmu.edu)*

**File Name: I9-10P Gains of the Great Depression**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grade 9-10**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Gains of the Great Depression**

During the Great Depression, millions of people lost jobs, and families struggled to find financial footholds. It lasted for ten years,

leaving very strong memories of dramatically dark times. Throughout those years, people found new ways to cope with the struggles, and

interestingly enough, new emotions and belief in the ideals of America.

Everybody learned the importance of being resourceful, while also keeping hope for the future and growing more unified and patriotic as a country.

One important effect of the Great Depression was how it made people and families resourceful. That quality is largely a part of the memoir Digging In, where a man who lived during the Depression talked about his family's frugality, and how they had to "cut back on everything possible" in order to save money. Some of the things they had to cut back on included city water, selling their car, and discontinuing purchases of toothpaste, toilet paper, and snacks, just to name a few. They also "took care of what [they]

had", and listed all the ways they used a cotton cloth, which included

**Introduces the topic:**

The writer gives strong context that sets the stage for the essay; includes **topic / focus of the piece**, which previews what is to follow

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic**

**Analyzes ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections**

**Organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions:**

The writer cites several texts but organizes the essay mainly by abstract **concept** (e.g., resourcefulness, patriotism), not text.

**Develops the topic with well-chosen, relevant, sufficient, accurate facts and concrete details**

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the**

Integrates **quotations** effectively into **analysis**

using it as a dish cloth, bandage, quilt piece and more. These qualities of being frugal and resourceful weren't bad; they taught people to not be wasteful and to not spend money on things that aren't necessary. Being resourceful became a part of life during the Depression as a way to help families stay financially afloat.

**Establishes and maintains a formal style, objective tone while attending to norms and conventions of discipline in which the student is writing**

More significantly the Great Depression, in a broad sense, brought a sense of patriotism and more unity as a country. Former President Franklin D. Roosevelt enriched his second inaugural address with these ideals. He said that the greatest change he had witnessed was the "change in the moral climate of America" and that they were on the road of progress. Another quote of his was "in seeking for economic and political progress as a nation, we all go up, or else we all go down, as one people." What Roosevelt was implying was if the people wanted their country to go in the right direction, they all had to work together. Working together wouldn't be hard, due to the entire country's new sense of belief in their country, also known as patriotism. The United States' stronger sense of unity that came about during the depression helped citizens work through the hard times.

**Uses appropriate, varied transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts and create cohesion**

**Analyzes evidence**

Most importantly, the Depression oddly enough brought a sense of hope. In some cases, farmers had to keep hope for the future and that it would bring rain for their crops so they could get money, as a farmer had in a poem called "Debts". In an article about "The New Deal", an explanation was given about how Roosevelt gave the country hope by creating many reforms that were aimed to "relieve poverty, reduce unemployment, and speed economic

**Develops topic with well-chosen, relevant, sufficient, accurate facts and concrete details** from New Deal text

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic**

recovery". This hope for the future gave people something worth living for during times when suicide didn't seem like a bad idea. Indeed, this sense of hope was a very important effect that the Great Depression had on the people who lived through it.

Reminds audience of the focus / topic / main point of the essay.

Even though the Depression devastatingly affected tens of millions of people, the way it changed people's outlooks was inspiring. Instead of tossing a cotton bag in the garbage, people learned to be resourceful and used them as towels and dish cloths. A stronger sense of pride in their country helped them work through the hardships together, with patriotism and unity. Above all else, without hope for the future, people would've given up on trying to fix their severely wounded economy. These enhanced senses of resourcefulness, unity, along with patriotism and hope were all ways that the Great Depression affected Americans.

**Makes an important distinction, demonstrating understanding of the complexity of the topic**

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and supports the information presented by articulating implications and the significance of the topic**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to explain the effects of the Great Depression on people who lived through it. This writer provides some context about the severity of the Great Depression in the introduction and then states his main points (the Great Depression taught people to be resourceful as well as inspired unity), which serves to preview what follows.

The writer organizes ideas, concepts, and information clearly by concept, using textual evidence to support the main points. While he uses the texts extensively, they are not the organizing principle; rather, the concepts of resourcefulness and unity are. The writer uses appropriate, varied, and strong transitions to clarify relationships and create cohesion (for example, "*Indeed, this sense of hope...*"). Within each chunk of the essay, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to name and explain the effects, which he has identified from the texts he has read. The writer analyzes evidence thoughtfully throughout so that the reader grasps the complexity of the topic.

While the essay is compelling and even dramatic, it has an appropriately formal style. The conclusion follows from and supports the information presented, and in it the writer analyzes the implications and significance of the topic.

**File Name: N9-10P Gains of the Great Depression**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grade 9-10**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Gains of the Great Depression**

During the Great Depression, millions of people lost jobs, and families struggled to find financial footholds. It lasted for ten years, leaving very strong memories of dramatically dark times. Throughout those years, people found new ways to cope with the struggles, and interestingly enough, new emotions and belief in the ideals of America. Everybody learned the importance of being resourceful, while also keeping hope for the future and growing more unified and patriotic as a country.

One important effect of the Great Depression was how it made people and families resourceful. That quality is largely a part of the memoir Digging In, where a man who lived during the Depression talked about his family's frugality, and how they had to "cut back on everything possible" in order to save money. Some of the things they had to cut back on included city water, selling their car, and discontinuing purchases of toothpaste, toilet paper, and snacks, just to name a few. They also "took care of what [they] had", and listed all the ways they used a cotton cloth, which included using it as a dish cloth, bandage, quilt piece and more. These qualities of being frugal and resourceful weren't bad; they taught people to not be wasteful and to not spend money on things that aren't

necessary. Being resourceful became a part of life during the Depression as a way to help families stay financially afloat.

More significantly the Great Depression, in a broad sense, brought a sense of patriotism and more unity as a country. Former President Franklin D. Roosevelt enriched his second inaugural address with these ideals. He said that the greatest change he had witnessed was the "change in the moral climate of America" and that they were on the road of progress. Another quote of his was "in seeking for economic and political progress as a nation, we all go up, or else we all go down, as one people." What Roosevelt was implying was if the people wanted their country to go in the right direction, they all had to work together. Working together wouldn't be hard, due to the entire country's new sense of belief in their country, also known as patriotism. The United States' stronger sense of unity that came about during the depression helped citizens work through the hard times.

Most importantly, the Depression oddly enough brought a sense of hope. In some cases, farmers had to keep hope for the future and that it would bring rain for their crops so they could get money, as a farmer had in a poem called "Debts". In an article about "The New Deal", an explanation was given about how Roosevelt gave the country hope by creating many reforms that were aimed to "relieve poverty, reduce unemployment, and speed economic recovery". This hope for the future gave people something worth living for during times when suicide didn't seem like a bad idea. Indeed, this sense of hope was a very important effect that the Great Depression had on the people who lived through it.

Even though the Depression devastatingly affected tens of millions of people, the way it changed people's outlooks was inspiring. Instead of tossing a cotton bag in the garbage, people learned to be resourceful and used them as towels and dish cloths. A stronger sense of pride in their country helped them work through the hardships together, with patriotism and unity. Above all else, without hope for the future, people would've given up on trying to fix their severely wounded economy. These enhanced senses of resourcefulness, unity, along with patriotism and hope were all ways that the Great Depression affected Americans.

**File Name: I 11-12P Hope During the Great Depression**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grades 11-12**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Hope During The Great Depression**

Life is difficult. Sometimes, it is devastatingly so. Yet the human race can be defined by the dual characteristics of perseverance and hope.

We, the human race, are the infamous turtle of Steinbeck's *Grapes of*

*Wrath*, we take each obstacle in stride and keep on going on. The Great

Depression is one of the best examples of humankind's tendency towards

both perseverance and hope. The fact that so many people managed to live

**Introduces the topic:** The writer provides context, acknowledging the **complexity** of the **concept** of life's difficulty.

**Uses the domain-specific technique of metaphor** (the turtle in *Grapes of Wrath*) **to manage the complexity of the topic**

**Develops topic with appropriate, accurate, facts and concrete details; uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary in well-chosen evidence** from the text (here, the Second Inaugural)



through the terrible poverty of the Great Depression is a testament to the tenacity of hope and optimism in humans, and Americans in particular.

The texts provided for this analysis all discuss the Great Depression and its effects on the people who lived through it. On the whole, the theme translated from the texts is that the people who survived the Great Depression developed, as a direct result of the Depression, a curiously strong sense of optimism. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his Second Inaugural Address, attributes this sense of optimism to democracy, and its "...innate capacity to protect its people against disasters once considered inevitable, to solve problems once considered unsolvable." Roosevelt is, of course, making a blunt reference to his popular and effective programs under the New Deal. It is true that the New Deal had come at just the right moment, and that millions of people were helped through the New Deal, particularly the WPA, or Works Progress Administration, which was, as put in the fourth source from PBS, a "major work relief program...[employing] more than 8.5 million people to build bridges, roads, public buildings, parks and airports." 8.5 million people is a lot of people to employ, and based upon these facts alone it would seem that the New Deal was indeed reason to hope.

Yet the other sources, and indeed even later on in Roosevelt's speech, indicate that such hope was perhaps misplaced, at least in the extent that the

**Develops the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant, relevant, accurate facts and concrete details from the text**

**Organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information:** Beginning with a discussion of Roosevelt's optimism in his Second Inaugural, the writer **creates a unified whole** in which **each new element builds on that which precedes it**

**Analyzes** Roosevelt's speech in terms of author's craft (anaphora); connects the use of this rhetorical device to the essay's topic of perseverance and hope, to **manage the complexity of the topic**

**Uses appropriate, varied transitions and syntax to clarify relationships among complex ideas and concepts and create cohesion.** This section of the essay **builds from the section which precedes it and connects to the next ("Digging In") to create a unified whole**

**Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which the writer is working**

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary and techniques to manage the complexity of the topic**

States focus

Integrates quotations effectively into analysis

hope was placed upon Roosevelt. In "Digging In", the second source written by Robert J. Hastings, the narrator reflects on her father's efforts to get money: "it was a day's work here and a day's work there...a few days on the WPA..." Thus, it seems that although the WPA may have employed 8.5 million people, it was not by any means a source of income, if people were only able to work for a few days at a time. However, the focus of "Digging In" is not to evaluate federal programs, but to evaluate the effectiveness of one's own efforts to help oneself. More than anything, the lengths to which the narrator's family went in order to save money exemplifies, once again, an incredible amount of perseverance. From the selling of the car, to the renouncement of milk and ice, the family maintains their perseverance and their hope. Towards the end of the passage, the narrator's mother speaks of this imperative hope: "I've learned that whatever happens, your Daddy always has a little dab of money put back somewhere..." Whether or not this was true, it certainly seems to be a sentiment that enabled the family to maintain their sanity

In Roosevelt's speech, there is a section in which he employs anaphora to give emphasis to the negative effects of the Depression by repeating, for several lines, "I see..." followed by a sad image, thought, or idea. He finishes the anaphora with "I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished."

While this rhetorical emphasis is used mainly to lead into his positive images to follow, in order to be more convincing towards his audience, the negative scenes which he describes were not only rhetorical, but quite real. People were homeless and clotheless and foodless during the Great Depression, millions of them. That is

**Uses the most  
significant and relevant  
evidence to develop  
topic**

why it is so incredible that the primary effect of such a tragedy was to create a generation of hopeful people. Such hope is characterized in the first source, a poem by Karen Hesse entitled "Debts". In this poem, the narrator describes that "Daddy is thinking/ of taking a loan from Mr. Roosevelt and his men..." This connection to the New Deal emphasizes that the government, through President Roosevelt, helped instigate the massive flood of hope in the American people. The dad in the poem wants to buy wheat even though such an idea is completely impractical; the dad is a naively hopeful character.

As the "Ma" says in the last phrase of the poem, "well, it rains enough...to keep a person hoping./But even if it didn't/your daddy would have to believe."

This quote defines succinctly the mind-set amongst Americans living in the Depression that hope will lead to greatness. Perhaps this was because Americans could do nothing else but hope, and work, and trust in the leaders of their country. It is human nature, after all, to do everything one can to keep oneself going. Thus, the Depression imprinted a sense of hope on the people that lived through it. It is a sense of hope that has not been witnessed to the same extent in our time, yet hope continues to persevere in humans.

**Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information presented and reflects on the significance of topic**

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to explain the effects of the Great Depression on people who lived through it. This writer provides context about the deep difficulty of living during the Depression in the introduction. She analyzes the metaphor of Steinbeck's turtle to help manage the complexity of the topic. In the second paragraph, she offers her main point/focus: the Great Depression created a "*curiously strong sense of optimism*" in people.

The writer organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly to support the main point using textual evidence, doing so in such a way that each section builds on the one that precedes it. While she draws on texts extensively, they are not the organizing principle; rather, the concepts of hope, optimism, and perseverance are. The writer uses appropriate, varied, and strong transitions to connect concepts and create coherence. (For example, "*However, the focus of "Digging In" is not to evaluate federal programs, but to evaluate the effectiveness of one's own efforts to help oneself.*") Within each chunk of the essay, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary and techniques to name and explain the effects, which she has identified from the texts she has read. The writer analyzes evidence thoughtfully throughout so that the reader grasps the complexity of the topic.

**File Name: I 11/12P Hope During The Great Depression**

**Informative / Explanatory**

**Grades 11-12**

**On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt**

### **Hope During The Great Depression**

Life is difficult. Sometimes, it is devastatingly so. Yet the human race can be defined by the dual characteristics of perseverance and hope. We, the human race, are the infamous turtle of Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, we take each obstacle in stride and keep on going on. The Great Depression is one of the best examples of humankind's tendency towards both perseverance and hope. The fact that so many people managed to live through the terrible poverty of the Great Depression is a testament to the tenacity of hope and optimism in humans, and Americans in particular.

The texts provided for this analysis all discuss the Great Depression and its effects on the people who lived through it. On the whole, the theme translated from the texts is that the people who survived the Great Depression developed, as a direct result of the Depression, a curiously strong sense of optimism. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his Second Inaugural Address, attributes this sense of optimism to democracy, and its "...innate capacity to protect its people against disasters once considered inevitable, to solve problems once considered unsolvable." Roosevelt is, of course, making a blunt reference to his popular and effective programs under the New Deal. It is true that the New Deal had come at

just the right moment, and that millions of people were helped through the New Deal, particularly the WPA, or Works Progress Administration, which was, as put in the fourth source from PBS, a "major work relief program...[employing] more than 8.5 million people to build bridges, roads, public buildings, parks and airports." 8.5 million people is a lot of people to employ, and based upon these facts alone it would seem that the New Deal was indeed reason to hope.

Yet the other sources, and indeed even later on in Roosevelt's speech, indicate that such hope was perhaps misplaced, at least in the extent that the hope was placed upon Roosevelt. In "Digging In", the second source written by Robert J. Hastings, the narrator reflects on her father's efforts to get money: "it was a day's work here and a day's work there...a few days on the WPA..." Thus, it seems that although the WPA may have employed 8.5 million people, it was not by any means a source of income, if people were only able to work for a few days at a time. However, the focus of "Digging In" is not to evaluate federal programs, but to evaluate the effectiveness of one's own efforts to help oneself. More than anything, the lengths to which the narrator's family went in order to save money exemplifies, once again, an incredible amount of perseverance. From the selling of the car, to the renouncement of milk and ice, the family maintains their perseverance and their hope. Towards the end of the passage, the narrator's mother speaks of this imperative hope: "I've learned that whatever happens, your Daddy always has a little dab of money put back somewhere..." Whether or not this was true, it certainly seems to be a sentiment that enabled the family to maintain their sanity

In Roosevelt's speech, there is a section in which he employs anaphora to give emphasis to the negative effects of the Depression by repeating, for several lines, "I see..." followed by a sad image, thought, or idea. He finishes the anaphora with "I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished." While this rhetorical emphasis is used mainly to lead into his positive images to follow, in order to be more convincing towards his audience, the negative scenes which he describes were not only rhetorical, but quite real. People were homeless and clotheless and foodless during the Great Depression, millions of them. That is why it is so incredible that the primary effect of such a tragedy was to create a generation of hopeful people. Such hope is characterized in the first source, a poem by Karen Hesse entitled "Debts". In this poem, the narrator describes that "Daddy is thinking/ of taking a loan from Mr. Roosevelt and his men..." This connection to the New Deal emphasizes that the government, through President Roosevelt, helped instigate the massive flood of hope in the American people. The dad in the poem wants to buy wheat even though such an idea is completely impractical; the dad is a naively hopeful character.

As the "Ma" says in the last phrase of the poem, "well, it rains enough...to keep a person hoping./But even if it didn't/your daddy would have to believe." This quote defines succinctly the mind-set amongst Americans living in the Depression that hope will lead to greatness. Perhaps this was because Americans could do nothing else but hope, and work, and trust in the leaders of their country. It is human nature, after all, to do everything one can to keep oneself going. Thus, the Depression imprinted a sense of hope on the people that lived through it. It is

a sense of hope that has not been witnessed to the same extent in our time, yet hope continues to persevere in humans.



**Brief User Guide for Range of  
Writing  
Informative/Explanatory  
Writing**

### **Brief User Guide for Range of Writing, Informative/Explanatory Writing**

The pieces in this Range of Writing section represent one of the three types of writing named in the Common Core State Standards for Writing: informative/explanatory writing. However, unlike the on-demand pieces, these pieces were not done in response to a particular focusing question or under specific conditions. Rather, these pieces represent a wide variety of content areas, curriculum units, conditions for writing, and purposes – exactly what one would expect to find in a range of classrooms. They reflect Common Core State Writing Standard 10, which specifies that students “[w]rite routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.”

Like the on-demand pieces, these pieces are arranged in grade order. Each piece has a file number for easy identification. Every piece of writing includes two versions that have been transcribed exactly as written by the student – one annotated with the language of the Common Core Standards, and one un-annotated for a variety of uses. In addition, pieces in the K-5 collection have a third version as well; this version has been revised and edited for major errors in conventions and can be used as a model for students. Kindergarten pieces also include PDF’s of original student work, including student writing and drawing. This is because kindergarten students may use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to satisfy the Standards.

Suggestions on how to use these pieces are available at the end of the introductory document, “Using the *In Common* Resource.”

# **K-5 Range of Writing Informative/Explanatory Samples**

**File name: IKR Boats**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten**

**Range of Writing**

**bots bui**

Boats by

*Bob*

**Names the topic he is  
writing about**

bots Flot n wdrt

sbmurens Go ndr wdrt

**Supplies some  
information about  
the topic**

In this Kindergarten informative/explanatory piece, the writer names a general topic (boats) and supplies two pieces of information about the topic. Kindergarteners may use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing in their pieces. In the original version of this student's text, a drawing accompanies each piece of information and adds additional detail to the writing.

**File name: IKR Boats**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

Boats

by Bob

Boats float in water. Submarines go underwater.

**File name: IKR Boats**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten**

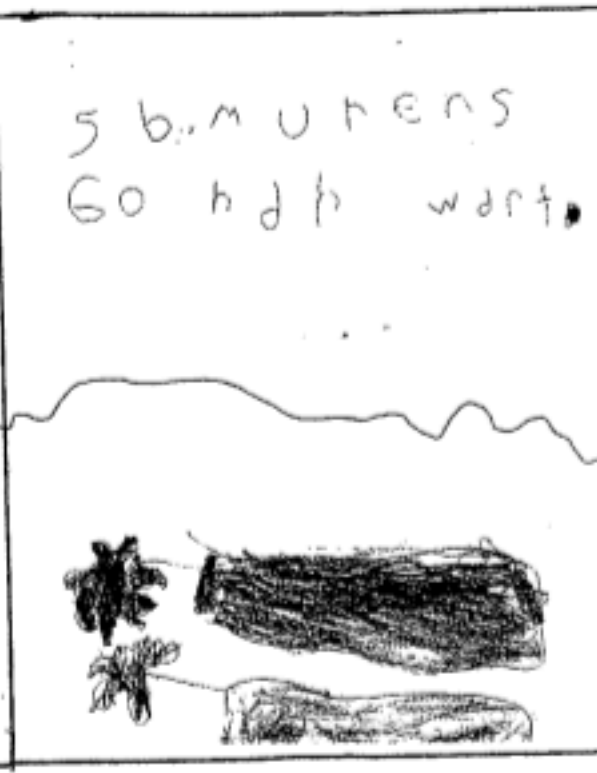
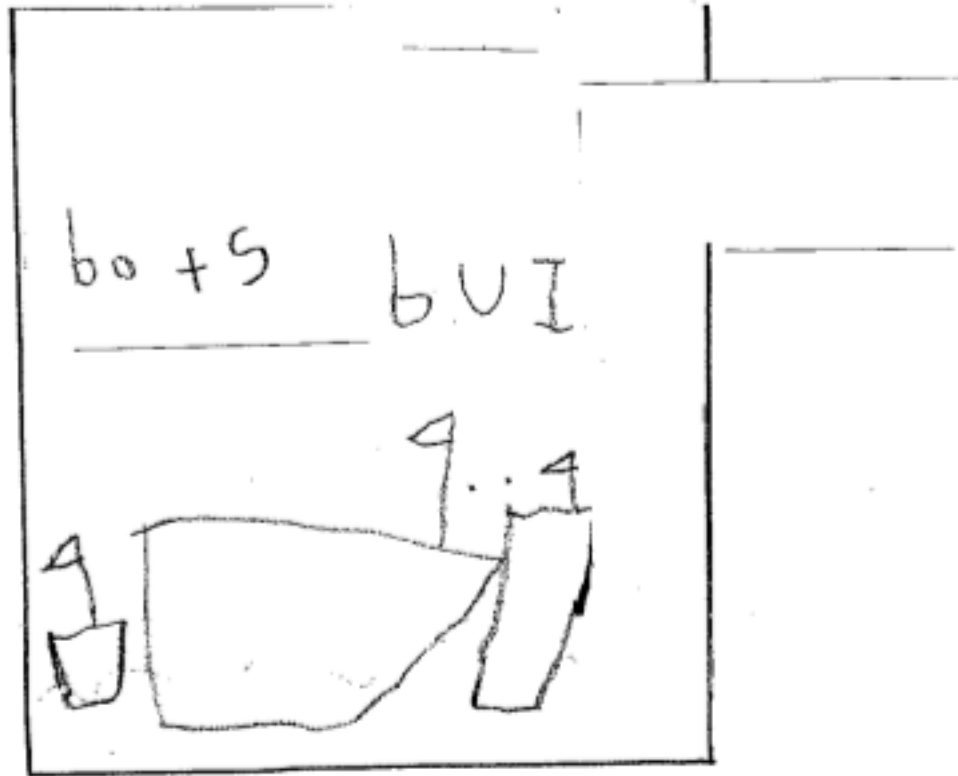
**Range of Writing**

bots bui

*Bob*

bots Flot n wdrt

sbmurens Go ndr wdrt



**File name: IKR Plants**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten**

**Range of Writing**

Plants

*What do plants need to sprout and grow healthy?\**

**Names what he/she is writing about**

Plas need wotr To gou

Plas need sun To gou

**Supplies some information about the topic**

*\*question provided by the teacher*

In this Kindergarten informative/explanatory piece, the student uses a combination of drawing and writing to answer a question that focused the class' science unit on plants: *What do plants need to sprout and grow healthy?* The student provides two pieces of information learned in class ("*Plas need wotr To gou*" and "*Plas need sun To gou*"), adding detail in the picture that accompanies the text.



**File name: IKR Plants**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Kindergarten**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

Plants

*What do plants need to sprout and grow healthy?\**

Plants need water to grow.

Plants need sun to grow.

\* provided by teacher

**File name: IKR Plants**  
**Informative/Explanatory**  
**Kindergarten**  
**Range of Writing**

Plants

*What do plants need to sprout and grow healthy?\**

Plas need wotr To gou

Plas need sun To gou

\* provided by teacher

What do plants need to sprout and grow healthy?



Plants need water to grow  
Plants need sun to grow.

Plants need water  
to grow

Plants need sun  
to grow.

**File name: I1R Chester's Way**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

Chester's Way

**Names a topic**

Chester's Way by Kevin Henkes is a storey about two mice named Chester and Wilson. They were best friends. They played with echether. They remgndid echether to wear sunscreen. They rode bikes with echother. They drest the same way for Halloween. Chester and Wilson were probelby best friends forever. I have a best friend his name is Chris we like to takeing trns paying at ou

**Supplies some fact about the topic**

Informative/Explanatory writing includes many subtypes, including summaries and literary analysis. This first-grade piece gives information about a literary text read in class. The writer establishes a topic (Chester and Wilson “*were best friends.*”) and uses evidence from the text to supply facts about the topic (“*They played with echether. They remgndid echether to wear sunscreen. They rode bikes with echother. They drest the same way for Halloween.*”). The piece ends with a relevant personal connection (“*I have a best friend his name is Chris...*”), providing a sense of closure.

**File name: I1R Chester's Way**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### Chester's Way

Chester's Way by Kevin Henkes is a story about two mice named Chester and Wilson. They were best friends. They played with each other. They reminded each other to wear sunscreen. They rode bikes with each other. They dressed the same way for Halloween. Chester and Wilson were probably best friends forever. I have a best friend his name is Chris we like to taking turns paying at our house.

**File name: I1R Chester's Way**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

### Chester's Way

Chester's Way by Kevin Henkes is a story about two mice named Chester and Wilson. They were best friends. They played with each other. They reminded each other to wear sunscreen. They rode bikes with each other. They dressed the same way for Halloween. Chester and Wilson were probably best friends forever. I have a best friend his name is Chris we like to takeing trips paying at our house.

**File name: I1R how do cheetah run fast**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

how do cheetah run fast **Names a topic**

Cheetahs run fast because they have a strong body. They use their feet to run 70 mph. Their tail helps them balance.

If cheetahs do not run fast then they will be eaten.

**Supplies some facts  
about the topic**

**Provides some  
sense of closure**

In this first-grade informative/explanatory piece, the writer establishes and maintains a clear focus on how cheetahs run fast and supplies some facts to answer the question posed in the title. Although the piece is short, the thinking expressed is quite sophisticated for a first grader. The writer has chosen to explain why the cheetah runs fast (strong body, good feet, a tail for balance) rather than just list loosely related information about the animal. The piece provides a sense of closure by adding a bit of reflection about why it might be important for a cheetah to run fast (*“If cheetahs do not run fast then they will be eaten.”*).

**File name: I1R how do cheetah run fast**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### How Do Cheetahs Run Fast?

Cheetahs can run fast because they have strong bodies. They use their feet to run up to 70 mph. Their tails help them balance. If cheetahs do not run fast, then they will be eaten.



**File name: I1R how do cheetah run fast**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

how do cheetah run fast?

Cheetahs run fast because they have a strong body. They use their feet to run 70 mph. Their tail helps them bales.

If cheetahs do not run fast then they will be eaten.

**File name: I1R The Dentist**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

**Names a topic**

We should visit the dentist twice a year. He will help keep our teeth healthy and strong. If my tooth broc my dentist can repair my tooth. My dentist takes a x-ray to see in my tooth. My dentist teaches me to brush my teeth. The dentist makes sure our teeth are healthy and

**Supplies some facts about the topic**

**Provides some sense of closure** by restating the topic of the piece.

This first-grade piece was written at the end of a unit on dental health. The writer begins with a brief introduction (“*We should visit the dentist twice a year.*”), and then states a topic (“*He will help keep our teeth healthy and strong.*”). He then develops the topic with three specific facts (“*...my dentist can repair my tooth*”; “*My dentist takes a x-ray to see in my tooth*”; “*My dentist teaches me to brush...*”) that explain how the dentist will help us keep our teeth healthy and strong. The ending sentence restates the topic (“*The dentist makes sure our teeth are healthy and strong.*”) and provides a sense of closure.

**File name: I1R The Dentist**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

We should visit the dentist twice a year. He will help keep our teeth healthy and strong. If my tooth breaks, my dentist can repair my tooth. My dentist takes an x-ray to see inside my tooth. My dentist teaches me to brush my teeth. The dentist makes sure our teeth are healthy and strong.

**File name: I1R The Dentist**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 1**

**Range of Writing**

We should visit the dentist twice a year. He will help keep our teeth healthy and strong. If my tooth broc my dentist can repair my tooth. My dentist takes a x-ray to see in my tooth. My dentist teaches me to brush my teeth. The dentist makes sure our teeth are healthy and strong.

**File name: I2R Training a Snow Search Dog**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

### **Training a Snow Search Dog**

It's hard to train a snow search dog. First, you have to get a pup. They have to love hunting things so they can find people. They have to have a thick coat to stay warm. They have to be strong to climb mountains. It's hard to know which pup is right for you. Next, you need to train the pup. First, you need to play hide and go seek with the dog. The handler goes and hides under the snow and the other person lets go of the leash. The person that is hiding has dog treats, if the dog finds him the dog gets a treat. Hide and seek gets harder when the handler goes farther and he buries him self. The dog goes to find him. Dogs train for two years! Training a snow search dog is rough, but it is important to train them. If we didn't people who are buried in avalanches would die.

**Introduces the topic**

**Uses facts to develop points**

**Provides a concluding section**

This second-grade informative/ explanatory piece was written after reading a non-fiction text on snow search dogs. The writer introduces the topic (*"It's hard to train a snow search dog."*) and then develops this idea using facts and details from the text (*"Dogs train for two years!"*). A concluding section repeats the main idea of the piece (*"Training a snow search dog is rough"*) and then reflects on its importance (*"If we didn't people who are buried in avalanches would die."*)

**File name: I2R Training a Snow Search Dog**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Training a Snow Search Dog**

It's hard to train a snow search dog. First, you have to get a pup. They have to love hunting things so they can find people. They have to have a thick coat to stay warm. They have to be strong to climb mountains. It's hard to know which pup is right for you.

Next, you need to train the pup. First, you need to play hide and go seek with the dog. The handler goes and hides under the snow and the other person lets go of the leash. The person that is hiding has dog treats. If the dog finds him, the dog gets a treat. Hide and seek gets harder when the handler goes farther and he buries himself and the dog goes to find him. Dogs train for two years! Training a snow search dog is rough, but it is important to train them. If we didn't, people who are buried in avalanches would die.

**File name: I2R Training a Snow Search Dog**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

### **Training a Snow Search Dog**

It's hard to train a snow search dog. First, you have to get a pup. They have to love hunting things so they can find people. They have to have a thick coat to stay warm. They have to be strong to climb mountains. It's hard to know which pup is right for you. Next, you need to train the pup. First, you need to play hide and go seek with the dog. The handler goes and hides under the snow and the other person lets go of the leash. The person that is hiding has dog treats, if the dog finds him the dog gets a treat. Hide and seek gets harder when the handler goes farther and he buries him self. The dog goes to find him. Dogs train for two years! Training a snow search dog is rough, but it is important to train them. If we didn't people who are buried in avalanches would die.

**File name: I2R The Lorax**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

**The Lorax**

The Lorax said he cares for the earth. The Lorax spoke for the fish. He said stop putting your left over gunk in the water because the humming fish can't hum with gunk in their gills. The Lorax spoke for the trees. He said stop cutting the trees because they give us air. The Lorax spoke for the Brown Barbaloos. He said stop cutting trees because the Brown Barbaloos eat the fruit on the trees. The Lorax cares for the earth.

**Introduces the topic**

**Uses details from the story to develop the point**

In this second-grade piece, the writer uses details from a story to develop the idea that the main character, the Lorax, cares for the earth. Specific evidence from the text ("*He said...*"), shows that the Lorax cares for the fish, the trees, and the Brown Barbaloos. These details work together to support the idea that the Lorax cares for the earth. In this piece, parts of the text are paraphrased, laying the groundwork for quoting the text in later grades. A concluding statement reminds the reader of the focus of the piece.



**File name: I2R The Lorax**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **The Lorax**

The Lorax said he cares for the earth. The Lorax spoke for the fish. He said, stop putting your left over gunk in the water, because the humming fish can't hum with gunk in their gills. The Lorax spoke for the trees. He said, stop cutting the trees, because they give us air. The Lorax spoke for the Brown Barbaloots. He said, stop cutting trees, because the Brown Barbaloots eat the fruit on the trees. The Lorax cares for the earth.

**File name: I2R The Lorax**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

**The Lorax**

The Lorax said he cares for the earth. The Lorax spoke for the fish. He said stop putting your left over gunk in the water because the humming fish can't hum with gunk in their gills. The Lorax spoke for the trees. He said stop cutting the trees because they give us air. The Lorax spoke for the Brown Barbaloos. He said stop cutting trees because the Brown Barbaloos eat the fruit on the trees. The Lorax cares for the earth.

**File name: I2R Parts of a plant**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

**Parts of a plant**

How are the parts of a plant important? Here are some ways the parts of a plant are important. One way is that the roots suck nutrients from the soil so the plants can grow, roots also secure the plant in the ground, so it doesn't blow away. Another way is flowers, seeds are kept in flowers, and the flower keeps the seeds safe. Stems are also important they carry nutrients through the plant. Also leaves, leaves collect sunlight for food for the plant. And last but not least, seeds, when seed gets in the ground the plants life begins. Those are some things That show how the parts of a plant are important.

**Introduces the topic**

**Uses facts and definitions to develop each point**, explaining what each part of the plant does and why it is important.

Transition words and phrases help organize facts

**Provides a concluding statement** that restates the focus

In this second-grade science piece, the writer introduces the topic and develops each point rather than just creating a list. The writer describes the function of each part of the plant (“*the roots suck nutrients from the soil*”) and then explains how this function helps the plant (“*so the plants can grow*”). All of the facts and explanations in the piece help the reader construct the larger understanding that every part of the plant is important.

**File name: I2R Parts of a plant**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Parts of a Plant**

How are the parts of a plant important? Here are some ways the parts of a plant are important. One way is that the roots suck nutrients from the soil so the plants can grow. Roots also secure the plant in the ground so it doesn't blow away. Another important part is the flowers. Seeds are kept in flowers, and the flower keeps the seeds safe. Stems are also important. They carry nutrients through the plant. Leaves are also important. Leaves collect sunlight for food for the plant. And, last but not least, are the seeds. When a seed gets in the ground, the plant's life begins. Those are some things that show how the parts of a plant are important.

**File name: I2R Parts of a plant**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 2**

**Range of Writing**

### **Parts of a plant**

How are the parts of a plant important? Here are some ways the parts of a plant are important. One way is that the roots suck nutrients from the soil so the plants can grow, roots also secure the plant in the ground, so it doesn't blow away. Another way is flowers, seeds are kept in flowers, and the flower keeps the seeds safe. Stems are also important they carry nutrients through the plant. Also leaves, leaves collect sunlight for food for the plant. And last but not least, seeds, when seed gets in the ground the plants life begins. Those are some things That show how the parts of a plant are important.

**File Name: I3R Beatrice's Goat****Informative/Explanatory****Grade 3****Range of Writing**

**Introduces** the topic by providing the title, author, and a brief summary of the text being discussed

## Beatrice's Goat

Beatrice's Goat by Page McBrier is about a girl named Beatrice who got a very special gift. Beatrice lived in Africa in a poor village. Beatrice wanted to go to school but her family did not have the money to send her. Her family needed a roof that didn't leak, healthy food for the children and money.

An organization called Heifer International gave Beatrice's family a goat named Mugisa and she got everything she needed.

Before Mugisa came Beatrice's family did not have healthy food Mugisa gave her milk to drink so the family was much healthier. Before Mugisa came Beatrice had to work and still had little money. Mugisa gave them milk to sell. Now her family has money to buy the things they need.

She even got money to buy a uniform and a slate. Now she can get an education!

Beatrice's Life changed when she got a goat. I always thought a goat could not do much. Now I now it c

**Provides a concluding section** that reflects on the information provided

**Uses linking words and phrase to connect ideas within categories of information.**

**Develops** the topic with facts and details from the text to show the change Muaisa b

In this third-grade piece, the writer explains the main idea of a picture book using specific evidence from the text. The writer provides needed context in the introduction: the title of the book, the author's name, and a short summary. The main idea, both of this writing piece and of the book being discussed, is clearly stated ("*An organization called Heifer International gave Beatrice's family a goat named Mugisa and she got everything she needed.*"). The writer then develops this idea with examples from the story that explain how the goat helped Beatrice to get "*everything she needed*". Linking words (*before...now*) connect related parts of the text, and the conclusion reflects on the significance of the information provided ("*Beatrice's Life changed when she got a goat.*") Although this writer does not yet consistently indent paragraphs, information is well organized; Information is grouped into an introduction, body, and conclusion.

**File Name: I3R Beatrice's Goat**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### Beatrice's Goat

Beatrice's Goat, by Page McBrier, is about a girl named Beatrice who got a very special gift. Beatrice lived in Africa in a poor village. Beatrice wanted to go to school, but her family did not have the money to send her. Her family needed a roof that didn't leak, healthy food for the children and money. An organization called "Heifer International" gave Beatrice's family a goat named Mugisa and she got everything she needed.

Before Mugisa came, Beatrice's family did not have healthy food. Mugisa gave her milk to drink, so the family was much healthier. Before Mugisa came, Beatrice had to work and still had little money. Mugisa gave them milk to sell. Now her family has money to buy the things they need. She even got money to buy a uniform and a slate. Now she can get an education!

Beatrice's life changed when she got a goat. I always thought a goat could not do much. Now I know it can!

**File Name: I3R Beatrice's Goat**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

### Beatrice's Goat

Beatrice's Goat by Page McBrier is about a girl named Beatrice who got a very special gift. Beatrice lived in Africa in a poor village. Beatrice wanted to go to school but her family did not have the money to send her. Her family needed a roof that didn't leak, healthy food for the children and money.

An organization called Heifer International gave Beatrice's family a goat named Mugisa and she got everything she needed.

Before Mugisa came Beatrice's family did not have healthy food Mugisa gave her milk to drink so the family was much healthier. Before Mugisa came Beatrice had to work and still had little money. Mugisa gave them milk to sell. Now her family has money to buy the things they need. She even got money to buy a uniform and a slate. Now she can get an education! Beatrice's Life changed when she got a goat. I always thought a goat could not do much. Now I now it can!



**File Name: I3R Squids**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

### Squids

There are many kinds of Squids. The giant deep-sea Squid can be longer than a city bus and they are cousins of the octopus. Squid have a long body and ten arms. They live in the Caribbean. The Squid protects it self by hiding.

**Introduces a topic and states a focus**

A Squid can squirt out a blob of inky stuff. The inky blob may confuse hungry creatures. Its eggs come in handy because it surrounds itself with eggs and protects itself that way. Isn't this amazing that it can be camouflaged in one second? They hide by moving in jet propulsion. If a shark tries to attack a Squid it will shoot out ink so it confuses the shark and zips away. Remember about the eggs? This is something like it. They swim together to protect themselves. They squirt out dark liquid to hide themselves from enemies. They change their color and patterns to blend in with their surroundings.

**Develops the topic with facts and details about how the squid hides from predators**

Therefore you can see that the squid have many ways of hiding.

**Provides a concluding statement that repeats the focus of the piece**

**Uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas**

This third-grade piece synthesizes information from an individual research project on the squid. The piece focuses on how the squid protects itself. The writer develops the topic well, pairing each fact (“*A Squid can squirt out a blob of inky stuff.*”) with some elaboration that explains how the fact relates to the focus of the piece (“*The inky blob may confuse hungry creatures.*”). Linking words (“*therefore*”) and transition sentences (“*Remember about the eggs? This is something like it.*”) connect the ideas within the piece. Ideas are grouped into paragraphs (introduction, body, and conclusion), and a concluding sentence reminds the reader of the focus of the piece. Although short, this piece shows that the student has made sense of the information gathered. Rather than listing loosely related facts about the squid, the writer selects and connects facts to develop an important idea (“*The Squid protects it self by hiding*”) discovered in the research.

**File Name: I3R Squids**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

## Squids

There are many kinds of squids. The giant deep-sea squid can be longer than a city bus, and they are cousins of the octopus. A squid has a long body and ten arms. They live in the Caribbean. The Squid protects itself by hiding.

A Squid can squirt out a blob of inky stuff. The inky blob may confuse hungry creatures. Its eggs come in handy because it surrounds itself with eggs and protects itself that way. Isn't this amazing that it can be camouflaged in one second? They hide by moving with jet propulsion. If a shark tries to attack a squid, it will shoot out ink so it confuses the shark and zips away. Remember about the eggs? This is something like it. They swim together to protect themselves. They squirt out dark liquid to hide themselves from enemies. They change their colors and patterns to blend in with their surroundings.

Therefore you can see that the squid have many ways of hiding.

**File Name: I3 Squids418**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

### Squids

There are many kinds of Squids. The giant deep-sea Squid can be longer than a city bus and they are cousins of the octopus. Squid have a long body and ten arms. They live in the Caribbean. The Squid protects it self by hiding.

A Squid can squirt out a blob of inky stuff. The inky blob may confuse hungry creatures. Its eggs come in handy because it surrounds itself with eggs and protects itself that way. Isn't this amazing that it can be camouflaged in one second? They hide by moving in jet propulsion. If a shark tries to attack a Squid it will shoot out ink so it confuses the shark and zips away. Remember about the eggs? This is something like it. They swim together to protect themselves. They squirt out dark liquid to hide themselves from enemies. They change their color and patterns to blend in with their surroundings.

Therefore you can see that the squid have many ways of hiding.

**File Name: I3R the Abenaki**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

the Abenaki

The Abenaki lived in Vermont in the early 1600. The Abenaki are a group of native people. They lived here much before you and me they learned how to dell with the land. There were no houses no electricity not even heating the land had hills moutain lots of trees rivers. Vermont's land affected the early Abenaki's housing and their food.

Vermont's land affected the Abenaki's housing. The Abenaki used young trees to build their houses. They cut it down and then bent it into a round roof. This kept the Abenaki warm in the winter because the roof kept the warmth in. Vermont's land also had lots of animals. They skinned the animals and took their sinews the sinews held the saplings together. This helped the Abenaki people keep their houses stable. Vermont's land also had lots of trees. They used the bark from the trees to tie on the frame like singles. That helped the Abenaki the rain out so they staid dire all the time. The Abanaki's housing was greatly affected by the land.

**Introduces a topic**  
by providing some  
context and stating  
a focus

**Groups related  
information together**  
in paragraphs to  
organize each major  
part of the essay  
(housing, food)

**Develops the  
topic with facts  
and details**

**Uses linking words and  
phrases to connect  
ideas within categories  
of information**

Not only dose the land affect the Abenaki’s housing but it also affected the Abenaki’s food to. The Abenaki women picketed seeds in the forest. Then they planted them in some fresh soil. This helped the Abenaki because they had their own gardens and they planted seeds and soon they had food. Vermont’s land also had alot of fish. They killed the fish and the dead fish helped fertilize the soil. That gave the Abenaki extra food. Vermont’s land also had abundant wild life. The Abenaki fished and hunted game. All of the fresh meat was shard among the whole village to keep everybody strong. The Abenaki’s food supply was affected by the land.

Vermont’s land affected the early Abenaki’s housing and their food. The land seems to be a tough place to live but the Abenaki respited the land and only took what they needed and the land gave them what they needed.

**Provides a concluding section** that restates the main point and reflects on the significance of the information provided

This third-grade informative/explanatory social studies piece reflects a depth of understanding developed through close reading and classroom activities. The writer introduces the topic with context and then clearly states a focus (*“Vermont’s land affected the early Abenaki’s housing and their food.”*). Information is grouped into two body paragraphs, one on housing and the other on food. The writer develops each paragraph with numerous details about the land and how the Abenaki used it. Linking words and phrases (*“not only”, “but also”, “then”, “because”, “also”*) connect ideas smoothly within the piece. A concluding section reminds the reader of the main point and adds some reflection.

The writer could have corrected the numerous and distracting errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics in this piece with help from the teacher on a final draft. This piece helps demonstrate that the ability to convey information and ideas clearly in writing sometimes develops on a different timetable from the ability to use conventions correctly, and that both abilities are needed to communicate effectively.

**File Name: I3R the Abenaki**

**Informative/ Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### The Abenaki

The Abenaki lived in Vermont in the early 1600s. The Abenaki are a group of native people. They lived here much before you and me. They learned how to deal with the land. There were no houses, no electricity, not even heating. The land had hills, mountains, lots of trees, and rivers. Vermont's land affected the early Abenaki's housing and their food.

Vermont's land affected the Abenaki's housing. The Abenaki used young trees to build their houses. They cut them down and then bent them into a round roof. This kept the Abenaki warm in the winter because the roof kept the warmth in. Vermont's land also had lots of animals. They skinned the animals and took their sinews. The sinews held the saplings together. This helped the Abenaki people keep their houses stable. Vermont's land also had lots of trees. They used the bark from the trees to tie on the frame like shingles. That helped the Abenaki keep the rain out, so they stayed dry all the time. The Abenaki's housing was greatly affected by the land.

Not only does the land affect the Abenaki's housing, but it also affected the Abenaki's food, too. The Abenaki women picked seeds in the forest. Then they planted them in some fresh soil. This helped the Abenaki because they had their own gardens, and they planted seeds, and soon they had food. Vermont's land also had a lot of fish. They killed the fish, and the dead fish helped fertilize the soil. That gave the Abenaki extra food. Vermont's land also had abundant

wildlife. The Abenaki fished and hunted game. All of the fresh meat was shared among the whole village to keep everybody strong. The Abenaki's food supply was affected by the land.

Vermont's land affected the early Abenaki's housing and their food. The land seems to be a tough place to live, but the Abenaki respected the land and only took what they needed, and the land gave them what they needed.



**File Name: I3R the Abenaki**

**Informative/ Explanatory**

**Grade 3**

**Range of Writing**

### the Abenaki

The Abenaki lived in Vermont in the early 1600. The Abenaki are a group of native people. They lived here much before you and me they learned how to dell with the land. There were no houses no electricity not even heating the land had hills moutain lots of trees rivers. Vermont's land affected the early Abenaki's housing and their food.

Vermont's land affected the Abenaki's housing. The Abenaki used young trees to build their houses. They cut it down and then bent it into a round roof. This kept the Abenaki warm in the winter because the roof kept the warmth in. Vermont's land also had lots of animals. They skinned the animals and took their sinews the sinews held held the saplings together. This helped the Abenaki people keep their houses stable. Vermont's land also had lots of trees. They used the bark from the trees to tie on the frame like singles. That helped the Abenaki the rain out so they staid dire all the time. The Abanaki's housing was greatly affected by the land.

Not only dose the land affect the Abenaki's housing but it also affected the Abenaki's food to. The Abenaki women picketed seeds in the forest. Then they planted them in some fresh soil. This helped the Abenaki because they had their own gardens and they planted seeds and soon they had food. Vermont's land also had alot of fish. They killed the fish and the dead fish helped fertilize the soil. That gave the Abenaki extra food. Vermont's land also had abundant

wild life. The Abenaki fished and hunted game. All of the fresh meat was shared among the whole village to keep everybody strong. The Abenaki's food supply was affected by the land.

Vermont's land affected the early Abenaki's housing and their food. The land seems to be a tough place to live but the Abenaki respected the land and only took what they needed and the land gave them what they needed.

**File Name: I4R Best Friends**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**Range of Writing**

### **Best Friends**

*“It’s not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both.”*

Charlotte’s Web (p. 184)

The book Charlotte’s Web by E. B. White is a story about an endearing pig named Wilbur. He is desperately trying not to die. He meets a nice friend named Charlotte. She is a spider that weaves words into her web to save Wilbur from dying. She keeps weaving to make the Zuckermans believe that Wilbur is “Some Pig”, “Terrific”, “Radiant”, and “Humble”.

Charlotte the spider proves to be both a good writer and a true friend to Wilbur.

The focus of the piece is made clear both here and in the opening quotation.

**Introduces the topic clearly:** includes the title and author of the book and provides a brief introduction to its main characters and central problem.

**Groups related information in paragraphs**

When Charlotte writes she focuses day and night to make it right. For example, on Fair night down in the barn cellar all the animals were asleep except Charlotte. She was busy writing the word “Humble” in her web

because it described Wilbur perfectly. Wilbur is low to the ground and not proud of himself.

Charlotte was a good writer, no doubt about it but she was also a true friend to the little pig. Charlotte was one of the most caring friends you could have for a long time. One way she was caring was when Wilbur was tired of being terrific all day. Charlotte sang him a lullaby. Another example is that she calmed Wilbur down when he was scared. Wilbur was devastated when he found out he was going to die and Charlotte said, “You shall not die I shall save you”. She was so caring to Wilbur forever.

**Uses precise language to inform about the topic**

Charlotte was also a true friend, helping Wilbur when he was in trouble. For example in her web, “She neatly wrote the word Terrific.” She doubled the letters so that they would have the best effect. Another example of how Charlotte helped Wilbur is that “Charlotte wrote the word Radiant”. She knew it would make people think that Wilbur was radiant. One day “Neatly woven in block letters was the word “Some Pig”. Charlotte had woven it into her web. This was Charlotte’s plan to convince the Zuckermans that they did not want to kill Wilbur. Charlotte helped Wilbur alot when he was in trouble.

**Links ideas within categories of information using words and phrases**

**Develops the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic**

Charlotte was the best friend Wilbur ever had. Charlotte was both a true friend to Wilbur and a good writer. She made Wilbur the best known pig

**Provides a concluding section related to the information presented, restating the focus and reflecting on its significance.**

In this assignment, students were asked to explain the quotation repeated at the top of the essay. This student used the quotation to introduce the writing and clarify the focus of the piece. The introduction does not assume that the reader knows the assignment or has read the book; it provides some background information to help orient the reader and establish the purpose for the piece. The writer thereby shows a high level of audience awareness.

The essay is well-organized into an introduction, body, and conclusion, with related information grouped into paragraphs. Linking words and phrases (*“also”*, *“for example”*, *“another”*) connect ideas within each paragraph, and precise words (*“devastated”*, *“desperately”*) help the reader better understand the information and ideas presented.

The focus is well-maintained, and points are developed with evidence from the text. Specific examples of things Charlotte does to show she is a true friend and a good writer are provided throughout the piece. These examples are not just listed: the examples are elaborated on and clarified with explanations, quotations, and definitions. The writer overuses quotations a bit and sometimes awkwardly integrates them into the essay, but this is typical of students experimenting with a new skill.

This fourth-grade informative/explanatory piece is a good example of how students can both build and communicate a deep understanding of a text through writing.

**File Name: I4 Best Friends**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Best Friends**

“It’s not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both.”

*Charlotte’s Web* (p. 184)

The book Charlotte’s Web, by E. B. White, is a story about an endearing pig named Wilbur. He is desperately trying not to die. He meets a nice friend named Charlotte. She is a spider that weaves words into her web to save Wilbur from dying. She keeps weaving to make the Zuckermans believe that Wilbur is “Some Pig,” “Terrific,” “Radiant,” and “Humble.” Charlotte the spider proves to be both a good writer and a true friend to Wilbur.

When Charlotte writes, she focuses day and night to make it right. For example, on fair night, down in the barn cellar, all the animals were asleep except Charlotte. She was busy writing the word “Humble” in her web because it described Wilbur perfectly. Wilbur is low to the ground and not proud of himself.

Charlotte was a good writer, no doubt about it, but she was also a true friend to the little pig. Charlotte was one of the most caring friends you could have for a long time. One way she was caring was when Wilbur was tired of being terrific all day. Charlotte sang him a lullaby. Another example is that she calmed Wilbur down when he was scared. Wilbur was devastated when he found out he was going to die and Charlotte said, "You shall not die. I shall save you." She was so caring to Wilbur forever.

Charlotte was also a true friend, helping Wilbur when he was in trouble. For example, in her web, "she neatly wrote the word Terrific." She doubled the letters so that they would have the best effect. Another example of how Charlotte helped Wilbur is that "Charlotte wrote the word Radiant." She knew it would make people think that Wilbur was radiant. One day, "Neatly woven in block letters was the word 'Some Pig.'" Charlotte had woven it into her web. This was Charlotte's plan to convince the Zuckermans that they did not want to kill Wilbur. Charlotte helped Wilbur a lot when he was in trouble.

Charlotte was the best friend Wilbur ever had. Charlotte was both a true friend to Wilbur and a good writer. She made Wilbur the best-known pig in the state!



**File Name: I4R Best Friends**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**Range of Writing**

### **Best Friends**

*“It’s not often that someone comes along who is a true friend and a good writer. Charlotte was both.”* Charlotte’s Web (p. 184)

The book Charlotte’s Web by E. B. White is a story about an endearing pig named Wilbur. He is desperately trying not to die. He meets a nice friend named Charlotte. She is a spider that weaves words into her web to save Wilbur from dying. She keeps weaving to make the Zuckermans believe that Wilbur is “Some Pig”, “Terrific”, “Radiant”, and “Humble”. Charlotte the spider proves to be both a good writer and a true friend to Wilbur.

When Charlotte writes she focuses day and night to make it right. For example, on Fair night down in the barn cellar all the animals were asleep except Charlotte. She was busy writing the word “Humble” in her web because it described Wilbur perfectly. Wilbur is low to the ground and not proud of himself.

Charlotte was a good writer, no doubt about it but she was also a true friend to the little pig.

Charlotte was one of the most caring friends you could have for a long time. One way she was caring was when Wilbur was tired of being terrific all day. Charlotte sang him a lullaby.

Another example is that she calmed Wilbur down when he was scared. Wilbur was devastated when he found out he was going to die and Charlotte said, "You shall not die I shall save you". She was so caring to Wilbur forever.

Charlotte was also a true friend, helping Wilbur when he was in trouble. For example in her web, "She neatly wrote the word Terrific." She doubled the letters so that they would have the best effect. Another example of how Charlotte helped Wilbur is that "Charlotte wrote the word Radiant". She knew it would make people think that Wilbur was radiant. One day "Neatly woven in block letters was the word "Some Pig". Charlotte had woven it into her web. This was Charlotte's plan to convince the Zuckermans that they did not want to kill Wilbur. Charlotte helped Wilbur alot when he was in trouble.

Charlotte was the best friend Wilbur ever had. Charlotte was both a true friend to Wilbur and a good writer. She made Wilbur the best known pig in the state!

**File Name: I4R Ecotourism**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**Range of Writing**

*It's vacation time!!! Rey and his family are working as ecotourist. Their job is looking after turtle eggs. Rey and his family are working with biologists. When Rey and a biologist were on "turtle patrol" Rey found a nest and brought the eggs that were in it back to camp.*

Ecotourism can have bad and good effects. In keeping the balance ecotourism is described as something more complicated than it actually is. Ecotourism is really when tourists go to a country to see its wildlife. Ecotourism can help people understand wildlife but it can also harm it. This is a serious problem but there are some solutions.

Ecotourism can really ruin things. If ecotourists disturb wildlife they might wreck the ecosystem. Ecotourism can destroy plants and natural habitats. For example ecotourists might trample plants and/or scare animals and/or leave garbage everywhere. Ecotourist need lodging (Hotels and resorts) and bathrooms. These harm the environment by polluting water and destroying forests which the ecotourists would otherwise be looking at. Generally ecotourism is supposed to focus on personal growth and environmental responsibility, but mostly it doesn't.

But there is some hope. If everybody puts their heads together we can think up some ways to improve ecotourism, environmentally. All we really need is a few ideas to "spark" the brain storm, so here they are.

One thing we could do is just prevent ecotourism altogether. But then people might forget how to value and treat nature respectfully. Another thing we could do is set some lower limits than there are at the moment for ecotourism. Something else we could do is decrease the number of ecotourists to a small average.

**Introduces the topic clearly** with a short narrative lead and a **definition** to help the reader understand what ecotourism is.

States a clear focus

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to explain the topic.**

**Groups related information in paragraphs**

**Links ideas within categories of information using words and phrases**

Another good solution is to make pathways and trams and things to keep ecotourists at a distance from wildlife. One more thing we can do to improve ecotourism is to have a class on how to treat the flora and fauna. Those are just 4 things we could do improve ecotourism.

**Develops the topic with concrete details and examples related to the topic.**

I think those are all the "sparks" we need. I hope these "sparks" light up peoples understanding of ecotourism.

**Provides a concluding statement related to the information presented.**

This focused, informative piece explores the issue of ecotourism. The writer introduces the topic with a short narrative lead that helps the reader to understand ecotourism, and follows with a definition of ecotourism and a clear focus statement (*"This is a serious problem but there are some solutions."*). Although the focus statement establishes the problem-solution structure of the piece, formatting would have been helpful. Italicizing the narrative lead and adding subheads to clearly delineate the problem and solution parts of the essay would have supported the reader in understanding both its purpose and structure.

Throughout the piece, precise language (*"respectfully"*, *"lower limits"*) and domain-specific vocabulary (*"ecosystem"*, *"habitats"*, *"flora and fauna"*) convey information clearly. Linking words and phrases (*"if"*, *"one thing"*, *"another thing"*, *"but"*) connect information within and between categories of information.

Ideas are broadly organized by, first, discussing the problem and then proposing some solutions. Within these broader categories, related information is grouped in paragraphs. The topic is well-developed with concrete details (*"Another good solution is to make pathways and trams"*) and examples (*"For example ecotourists might trample plants"*). The concluding statement in this piece is a short, but effective play on words (*"I hope these 'sparks' light up peoples understanding of ecotourism."*)

**File Name: I4R Ecotourism**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

*It's vacation time!!! Rey and his family are working as ecotourists. Their job is looking after turtle eggs. Rey and his family are working with biologists. When Rey and a biologist were on "turtle patrol", Rey found a nest and brought the eggs that were in it back to camp.*

Ecotourism can have bad and good effects. In Keeping the Balance, ecotourism is described as something more complicated than it actually is. Ecotourism is really when tourists go to a country to see its wildlife. Ecotourism can help people understand wildlife but it can also harm it. This is a serious problem, but there are some solutions.

Ecotourism can really ruin things. If ecotourists disturb wildlife, they might wreck the ecosystem. Ecotourism can destroy plants and natural habitats. For example, ecotourists might trample plants and/or scare animals and/or leave garbage everywhere. Ecotourist need lodging (hotels and resorts) and bathrooms. These harm the environment by polluting water and destroying forests which the ecotourists would otherwise be looking at. Generally, ecotourism is supposed to focus on personal growth and environmental responsibility, but mostly it doesn't.

But there is some hope. If everybody puts their heads together we can think up some ways to improve ecotourism environmentally. All we really need is a few ideas to "spark" the brainstorm, so here they are. One thing we could do is just prevent ecotourism altogether. But then people might forget how to value and treat nature respectfully. Another thing we could do is set some lower limits than there are at the moment for ecotourism. Something else we could do is decrease the number of ecotourists to a small average.

Another good solution is to make pathways and trams and things to keep ecotourists at a distance from wildlife. One more thing we can do to improve ecotourism is to have a class on how to treat the flora and fauna. Those are just 4 things we could do improve ecotourism.

I think those are all the "sparks" we need. I hope these "sparks" light up people's understanding of ecotourism.

**File Name: I4R Ecotourism**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 4**

**Range of Writing**

*It's vacation time!!! Rey and his family are working as ecotourist. Their job is looking after turtle eggs. Rey and his family are working with biologists. When Rey and a biologist were on "turtle patrol" Rey found a nest and brought the eggs that were in it back to camp.*

Ecotourism can have bad and good effects. In keeping the balance ecotourism is described as something more complicated than it actually is. Ecotourism is really when tourists go to a country to see its wildlife. Ecotourism can help people understand wildlife but it can also harm it. This is a serious problem but there are some solutions.

Ecotourism can really ruin things. If ecotourists disturb wildlife they might wreck the ecosystem. Ecotourism can destroy plants and natural habitats. For example ecotourists might trample plants and/or scare animals and/or leave garbage everywhere. Ecotourists need lodging (Hotels and resorts) and bathrooms. These harm the environment by polluting water and destroying forests which the ecotourists would otherwise be looking at. Generally ecotourism is supposed to focus on personal growth and environmental responsibility, but mostly it doesn't.

But there is some hope. If everybody puts their heads together we can think up some ways to improve ecotourism, environmentally. All we really need is a few ideas to "spark" the brain storm, so here they are. One thing we could do is just prevent ecotourism altogether. But then people might forget how to value and treat nature respectfully. Another thing we could do is set some lower limits than there are at the moment for ecotourism.

Something else we could do is decrease the number of ecotourists to a small average.

Another good solution is to make pathways and trams and things to keep ecotourists at a distance from wildlife. One more thing we can do to improve ecotourism is to have a class on how to treat the flora and fauna. Those are just 4 things we could do to improve ecotourism.

I think those are all the "sparks" we need. I hope these "sparks" light up peoples understanding of ecotourism.



**File Name: I5R Claudette**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

### **What Claudette Colvin Did**

*Learn about how Claudette Colvin helped the Civil Rights Movement*

Though most people don't know it, Rosa Parks was not the first black person to refuse to give up her seat. Claudette Colvin refused nine months before Rosa, in 1955. It was during segregation and you would get arrested if you didn't let a white person sit down on a crowded bus while you stood. Segregation happened in lunch counters, schools, almost everywhere down south... Claudette Colvin was important because she stood up for what she knew was right and she motivated others.

#### **Who was Claudette?**

She was a fifteen year old black girl. She went to Booker T. Washington high in Montgomery, Alabama. Her family was very poor and her parents tried not to be noticed by white people because they didn't want to be arrested- the almost opposite of Martin Luther King Jr. She was a smart girl and hated **segregation**, especially the bus laws because her family had no car and she had to sit in the back. She really wanted to be able to sit in the front- or anywhere- of the bus. You can tell that Claudette wanted to do something about the bus laws.

**Introduces the topic clearly by providing historical**  
**Provides a general observation and focus**

**Groups related information logically in sections**

**Includes formatting (headings)**

**Includes formatting (captions) and illustrations**

Whites sat in the front of the bus while blacks sat squashed in the other seats.

Whites seats      Blacks seats



.....

**What did she do?**

One thing she did was she refused to give up her seat. The law in Montgomery was that you had to give your seat up to a white person if there was no space for them. Claudette was still fifteen. One day, she was tired of having to get up, so she just stayed in her seat. The bus driver yelled at her and soon police came and arrested her kicking and screaming. She was very brave to stand up to a police. An NAACP lawyer named Fred Grey decided to go to the city's federal court to say that **segregation** laws were **unconstitutional**. He tried to find people who would go and talk about how the bus laws were unfair. Most people who had been mistreated were too scared of what might happen to their families. Only four blacks came to the hearing; Claudette and three older women. She was very brave to go to court even though she knew the consequences.

**Word box:**

**Segregation:**  
the act of  
separation.

**Uses precise language and domain-specific**

**vocabulary to inform about**

**Who did she motivate?**

Nine months after Claudette's arrest Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat as well. On Monday, December fifth, Martin Luther king and other black leaders had black elementary and high schools pass out thirty– five thousand fliers saying stay off the buses. That was the beginning of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Though Claudette was not the reason for the bus boycott, she made black leaders realize that they needed to do the same thing only using someone more experienced.

**Develops the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and**

**anticipates the reader's question and provides a section to address the reader's needs**

**Why didn't black leaders use her?**

Though Claudette did refuse before Mrs. Parks, black leaders didn't want to start a bus boycott just because of a teenager. Also, she was hard to deal with because she swore a lot when the police took her off the bus, so they didn't want that to happen in court or anything. Being poor didn't help either, and Claudette thought they didn't use her because she and her parents weren't part of the inner circle, a group of more wealthy. The court case she went to is not very well known so she is not recognized that way. Big history books don't even have a caption about her. While she is not well known, she was still important to the civil rights movement.

**Links ideas within and across categories of information using words**

In conclusion, Claudette Colvin did what was right and motivated people. She was a big help to the civil rights movement because she motivated Rosa Parks and the black leaders to start the bus boycott. She helped when she went to the hearing because it ended segregation on buses. As Claudette said, "Enough is enough" and at the time that was very true.

**Provides a concluding section related to the information presented that restates the focus and reflects on the significance**

**Sources**

## Information:

We Were There Too!: Philip Hoose: Melanie Kroupa books Farrar  
Straus Giroux- New York.

Claudette Colvin: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/claurette\\_Colvin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/claurette_Colvin)

Montgomery Bus Boycott:

[http://www.Montgomeryboycott.com/profile\\_colvin.htm](http://www.Montgomeryboycott.com/profile_colvin.htm)

[http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/bio\\_colvin.htm](http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/bio_colvin.htm)

## Images:

[http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/bio\\_colvin.htm](http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/bio_colvin.htm)

[http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/profile\\_colvin.htm](http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/profile_colvin.htm)

<http://www.africanaonline.com>

This fifth-grade informative/explanatory social studies research paper was originally created in a publishing application; only a sample of the illustrations, formatting, and other text features the writer used are included here. This piece contains a wealth of information selected to support the main point: Claudette Colvin was important to the civil rights movement. The writer supports this focus with two specific subsidiary points: Claudette stood up for what she knew was right, and she motivated others to organize against segregation. Each of these points are well-developed with facts, definitions, concrete details, and examples. Domain-specific (*“segregation”, “civil rights”, “unconstitutional”*) and general academic vocabulary (*“recognized”, “federal”, “consequences”*) express ideas clearly. Linking words (*“so”, “though”*) clarify the relationship between and among ideas within the piece.

The report is well-organized, with an introduction, body paragraphs formatted in separate sections, and a conclusion. Subheadings posed as questions clarify the focus and purpose of each section. The last paragraph reestablishes the focus, summarizes the report’s main points,

**File Name: ISR Claudette Report**  
**Informative/Explanatory**  
**Grade 5**  
**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **What Claudette Colvin Did**

*Learn about how Claudette Colvin helped the civil rights movement.*

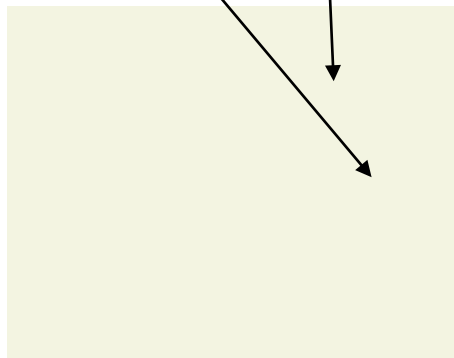
Though most people don't know it, Rosa Parks was not the first black person to refuse to give up her seat. Claudette Colvin refused nine months before Rosa, in 1955. It was during segregation, and you would get arrested if you didn't let a white person sit down on a crowded bus while you stood. Segregation happened at lunch counters, in schools—almost everywhere down south... Claudette Colvin was important because she stood up for what she knew was right, and she motivated others.

### **Who was Claudette?**

She was a fifteen-year-old black girl. She went to Booker T. Washington High in Montgomery, Alabama. Her family was very poor, and her parents tried not to be noticed by white people because they didn't want to be arrested—the almost opposite of Martin Luther King Jr. She was a smart girl and hated **segregation**, especially the bus laws, because her family had no car and she had to sit in the back. She really wanted to be able to sit in the front of—or anywhere in—the bus. You can tell that Claudette wanted to do something about the bus laws.

Whites sat in the front of the bus while blacks sat squashed in the other seats.

Whites' seats      Blacks' seats



**What did she do?**

One thing she did was she refused to give up her seat. The law in Montgomery was that you had to give your seat up to a white person if there was no space for him or her. Claudette was still fifteen. One day, she was tired of having to get up, so she just stayed in her seat. The bus driver yelled at her, and soon police came and arrested her as she was kicking and screaming. She was very brave to stand up to the police. An NAACP lawyer named Fred Grey decided to go to the city's federal court to say that segregation laws were **unconstitutional**. He tried to find people who would go and talk about how the bus laws were unfair. Most people who had been mistreated were too scared of what might happen to their families. Only four blacks came to the hearing: Claudette and three older women. Claudette was very brave to go to court even though she knew the consequences.

**Word box:**

**Segregation:**  
*the act of  
separation*

**Whom did she motivate?**

Nine months after Claudette's arrest, Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat as well. On Monday, December fifth, Martin Luther King and other black leaders had black elementary and high schools pass out thirty-five thousand fliers saying "Stay off the buses!" That was the beginning of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Though Claudette was not the reason for the bus boycott, she made black leaders realize that they needed to do the same thing, only using someone more experienced.

**Why didn't black leaders use her?**

Though Claudette did refuse before Mrs. Parks, black leaders didn't want to start a bus boycott just because of a teenager. Also, she was hard to deal with because she swore a lot when the police took her off the bus, and black leaders didn't want that to happen in court or anything. The fact that she was poor didn't help either, and Claudette thought they didn't use her because she and her parents weren't part of the inner circle, a group of more wealthy black people. The court case she went to is not very well known, so she is not recognized that way. Big history books don't even have a footnote about her. While she is not well known, she was still important to the civil rights movement.

In conclusion, Claudette Colvin did what was right and motivated people. She was a big help to the civil rights movement because she motivated Rosa Parks and the black leaders to start the bus boycott. She helped when she went to the hearing because it ended segregation on buses. As Claudette said, "Enough is enough!" and at the time that was very true.

**Sources****Information:**

We Were There Too!: Philip Hoose: Melanie Kroupa books Farrar  
Straus Giroux- New York.

Claudette Colvin: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/claudette\\_Colvin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/claudette_Colvin)

Montgomery Bus Boycott:

[http://www.Montgomeryboycott.com/profile\\_colvin.htm](http://www.Montgomeryboycott.com/profile_colvin.htm)

[http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/bio\\_colvin.htm](http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/bio_colvin.htm)

**Images:**

[http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/bio\\_colvin.htm](http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/bio_colvin.htm)

[http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/profile\\_colvin.htm](http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/profile_colvin.htm)

<http://www.africanaonline.com>

**File Name: ISR Claudette Report**  
**Informative/Explanatory**  
**Grade 5**  
**Range of Writing**

*Note: The student's original report was done using a publishing application. This version does not include all of the illustrations and text features in the original.*

### **What Claudette Colvin Did**

*Learn about how Claudette Colvin helped the Civil Rights Movement*

Though most people don't know it, Rosa Parks was not the first black person to refuse to give up her seat. Claudette Colvin refused nine months before Rosa, in 1955. It was during segregation, and you would get arrested if you didn't let a white person sit down on a crowded bus while you stood. Segregation happened in lunch counters, schools, almost everywhere down south ... Claudette Colvin was important because she stood up for what she knew was right and she motivated others.

### **Who was Claudette?**

She was a fifteen year old black girl. She went to Booker T. Washington high in Montgomery, Alabama. Her family was very poor and her parents tried not to be noticed by white people because they didn't want to be arrested- the almost opposite of Martin Luther King Jr. She was a smart girl and hated **segregation**, especially the bus laws because her family had no car and she had to sit in the back. She really wanted to be able to sit in the front- or anywhere- of the bus. You can tell that Claudette wanted to do something about the bus laws.

Whites sat in the front of the bus while blacks sat squashed in the other seats.

Whites seats      Blacks seats





### What did she do?

One thing she did was she refused to give up her seat. The law in Montgomery was that you had to give your seat up to a white person if there was no space for them. Claudette was still fifteen. One day, she was tired of having to get up, so she just stayed in her seat. The bus driver yelled at her and soon police came and arrested her kicking and screaming. She was very brave to stand up to a police. An NAACP lawyer named Fred Grey decided to go to the city's federal court to say that segregation laws were **unconstitutional**. He tried to find people who would go and talk about how the bus laws were unfair. Most people who had been mistreated were too scared of what might happen to their families. Only four blacks came to the hearing; Claudette and three older women. She was very brave to go to court even though she knew the consequences.

#### ***Word box:***

***Segregation:***  
*the act of separation.*

### Who did she motivate?

Nine months after Claudette's arrest Mrs. Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat as well. On Monday, December fifth, Martin Luther king and other black leaders had black elementary and high schools pass out thirty– five thousand fliers saying stay off the buses. That was the beginning of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Though Claudette was not the reason for the bus boycott, she made black leaders realize that they needed to do the same thing only using someone more experienced.

### Why didn't black leaders use her?

Though Claudette did refuse before Mrs. Parks, black leaders didn't want to start a bus boycott just because of a teenager. Also, she was hard to deal with because she swore a lot when the police took her off the bus, so they didn't want that to happen in court or anything. Being poor didn't help either, and Claudette thought they didn't use her because she and her parents weren't part of the inner circle, a group of more wealthy. The court case she went to is not very well known so she is not recognized that way. Big history books don't even have a caption about her. While she is not well known, she was still important to the civil rights movement.

In conclusion, Claudette Colvin did what was right and motivated people. She was a big help to the civil rights movement because she motivated Rosa Parks and the black leaders to start the bus boycott. She helped when she went to the hearing because it ended segregation on buses. As Claudette said, “Enough is enough” and at the time that was very true.

**Sources**

## Information:

We Were There Too!: Philip Hoose: Melanie Kroupa books  
Farrar Straus Giroux- New York.

## Claudette Colvin:

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/claudette\\_Colvin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/claudette_Colvin)

## Montgomery Bus Boycott:

[http://www.Montgomeryboycott.com/profile\\_colvin.htm](http://www.Montgomeryboycott.com/profile_colvin.htm)

[http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/bio\\_colvin.htm](http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/bio_colvin.htm)

## Images:

[http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/bio\\_colvin.htm](http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/bio_colvin.htm)

[http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/profile\\_colvin.htm](http://www.montgomeryboycott.com/profile_colvin.htm)

<http://www.africanaonline.com>

**File Name: ISR Letters From Rifka**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

### **Letters From Rifka**

Have you ever been determined to do something? In the book, Letters From Rifka, the main character was determined to leave Ukraine to get to America. Rifka, a 12 year old girl, is forced to leave Russia because if she doesn't she will be killed. Along the way she is determined and that determination helps her to get to America. Rifka never gave up hope. In other words she had indomitable spirit. **Uses precise language**

**Introduces the topic clearly** by providing relevant information about the text

**Provides a general observation and focus**

In the beginning, at the Polish border when Rifka got off the train, the guards force her and her family to take off their clothes for the Doctor. They did this because the Doctor wanted to see if she had a disease. Her determination enabled her to stand there naked, even though it was an uncomfortable, humiliating situation.

**Develops the topic with concrete details, relevant information, and examples**

Another time was when she was on the ship to America. She nearly drowned and lost a friend when a tempest hit. She goes into the hold which really smells. After the storm ends she looks for her friend, Peter, and learns that he has been lost at sea during the storm. Rifka returns to her cabin in tears. A few hours later, when she hears people ooing and ahing up on deck as the statue of Liberty comes into sight she realizes she still wants to go to America. Her determination gave her the power to endure the emotions she

**Links ideas within and across categories of information using words and phrases**

had and then gave her strength to carry on without her friend.

Another example is when Rifka is in the hospital wing at Ellis Island. A Doctor asks Rifka to take off her kerchief so he can check her for ringworm. Rifka realizes that if he finds something wrong with her she can be sent back to Ukraine. She was so determined to get to America that she stood up to an American doctor. Other people that didn't have as much determination might not have done that because they would be too frightened to stand up to someone who could send them back to their old country.

So as you can see, determination can get you anywhere. It got Rifka to America. How? It gave her the strength to carry on even though the obstacles were hard to overcome. Determination can help you achieve your goals too.

**Provides a concluding section related to the information presented.**

**Groups related information logically, discussing each example in a single paragraph.**

This well-crafted, fifth-grade informative/explanatory piece uses evidence from the text to develop the stated focus—that Rifka’s determination helps her get to America. The writer provides three examples of this determination; each is explained in a well-elaborated paragraph grounded in the text. The essay is clearly organized with an introduction that briefly introduces the story, body paragraphs that provide evidence from the story, and a conclusion that reflects on the significance of the information presented (“*Determination can help you to achieve your goals, too*”). The body paragraphs are also well-constructed. Each begins with an appropriate transition (“*In the beginning*”, “*Another time*”, “*Another example*”), explains the example given using concrete details (“*A Doctor asks Rifka to take off her kerchief...*”), and concludes by connecting the example to the focus (“*She was so determined to get America that she stood up to an American doctor.*”). Linking words and phrases (“*Another example*”, “*So as you can see*”, “*How?*”) smoothly connect ideas within the piece. The ideas and examples given in this piece are clear and easily understood, even by a reader who is not familiar with the text. This writer shows a well-developed awareness of purpose and audience for a fifth grader.

**File Name: I5R Letters From Rifka**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 5**

**Revised and Edited for Student Use**

### **Letters From Rifka**

Have you ever been determined to do something? In the book, Letters From Rifka, the main character was determined to leave the Ukraine to get to America. Rifka, a 12 year old girl, is forced to leave Russia because, if she doesn't, she will be killed. Along the way she is determined, and that determination helps her to get to America. Rifka never gave up hope. In other words she had indomitable spirit.

In the beginning, at the Polish border when Rifka got off the train, the guards force her and her family to take off their clothes for the Doctor. They did this because the Doctor wanted to see if she had a disease. Her determination enabled her to stand there naked, even though it was an uncomfortable, humiliating situation.

Another time was when she was on the ship to America, she nearly drowns and loses a friend when a tempest hit. She goes into the hold which really smells. After the storm ends she looks for her friend, Peter, and learns that he has been lost at sea during the storm. Rifka returns to her cabin in tears. A few hours later, when she hears people "ooing" and "ahhing" up on deck as the Statue of Liberty comes into sight she realizes she still wants to go to America. Her determination gave her the power to endure the emotions she had, and then gave her strength to carry on without her friend.

Another example is when Rifka is in the hospital wing at Ellis Island. A doctor asks Rifka to take off her kerchief so he can check her for ringworm. Rifka realizes that if he finds something wrong with her she can be sent back to Ukraine. She was so determined to get to America that she stood up to an American doctor. Other people that didn't have as much determination might not have done that because they would be too frightened to stand up to someone who could send them back to their old country.

So as you can see, determination can get you anywhere. It got Rifka to America. How? It gave her the strength to carry on even though the obstacles were hard to overcome. Determination can help you achieve your goals too.

**File Name: I5R Letters From Rifka**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 5**

**Range of Writing**

### **Letters From Rifka**

Have you ever been determined to do something? In the book, Letters From Rifka, the main character was determined to leave Ukraine to get to America. Rifka, a 12 year old girl, is forced to leave Russia because if she doesn't she will be killed. Along the way she is determined and that determination helps her to get to America. Rifka never gave up hope. In other words she had indomitable spirit.

In the beginning, at the Polish border when Rifka got off the train, the guards force her and her family to take off their clothes for the Doctor. They did this because the Doctor wanted to see if she had a disease. Her determination enabled her to stand there naked, even though it was an uncomfortable, humiliating situation.

Another time was when she was on the ship to America. She nearly drowned and lost a friend when a tempest hit. She goes into the hold which really smells. After the storm ends she looks for her friend, Peter, and learns that he has been lost at sea during the storm. Rifka returns to her cabin in tears. A few hours later, when she hears people ooing and ahing up on deck as the statue of Liberty comes into sight she realizes she still wants to go to America. Her determination gave her the power to endure the emotions she had and then gave her strength to carry on without her friend.



Another example is when Rifka is in the hospital wing at Ellis Island. A Doctor asks Rifka to take off her kerchief so he can check her for ringworm. Rifka realizes that if he finds something wrong with her she can be sent back to Ukraine. She was so determined to get to America that she stood up to an American doctor. Other people that didn't have as much determination might not have done that because they would be too frightened to stand up to someone who could send them back to their old country.

So as you can see, determination can get you anywhere. It got Rifka to America. How? It gave her the strength to carry on even though the obstacles were hard to overcome. Determination can help you achieve your goals too.

# **6-12 Range of Writing Informative/Explanatory Samples**

**File Name: I6R Center of Life**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 6**

**Range of Writing**

### **Center of Life**

The saguaro cactus is a huge cactus that lives in deserts. It can live up to 150 years old! Even though it grows very very slowly, it grows up to be one of the tallest plants in the desert! The saguaro cactus is very adapted to desert life and this makes it a good home and food for many animals.

The saguaro cactus is adapted to survive in the deserts in many different ways. Because of the heat in the desert, saguaro cacti have waxy skin to prevent moisture loss. Many more adaptations help the saguaro keep water, though. It holds water in its stem, that's pleated like an accordion so that it can expand and hold more water. The roots also help it get more water. They spread out very far, almost as wide as the cactus is tall so that helps. The roots are also very close the surface, as little as 3 inches below ground. Because of this, if it rains, the cactus can get lots of water before the ground sucks too much up.

The cactus is also a home and food for lots of animals that live in the desert. Snakes can find a home, and many birds can perch on the big cactus. Many small flying creatures eat the nectar from the flowers. The cactus also bears fruit. After a while in the sun, the fruit splits in half and birds and insects eat the oozing sweet stuff from inside the fruit. Other fruit falls to the ground, where lots of animals eat them. Other animals eat the seeds. But after a long time, the cactus dies and falls down. Still, it is a place for small ground dwelling animals. Scorpions can take shelter from the sun. Jackrabbits can make a home there.

The saguaro cactus is really and amazing plant. It's also a good place for animals to live and find food. If one day I could go to see one, I totally would. If I was stuck in a desert, I think I would go to the nearest saguaro cactus to wait for help.

**Introduces the topic:**

The writer provides context in the form of background information on the saguaro cactus and then states the main point / focus

Focus / **topic** of the piece is clearly stated

**Organizes ideas, concepts, and information:** the writer describes the adaptation of the cactus to desert life using various categories

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary within evidence to develop and support topic** of saguaro adaptation

**Uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts**

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to develop and**

**Provides a concluding section that follows from the information presented** by restating the main point and reflecting on the topic

In this assignment from a science unit, students were asked to explain how the saguaro, a desert plant, has adapted to desert life and provides a home and food for desert creatures. The writer gives some background about the saguaro in general in the introduction and then states his main point (the saguaro is well-adapted to desert life and provides a home and food for desert creatures).

The writer organizes information and ideas clearly by category to support the main point. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to convey information about the saguaro. He uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

While the language is sometimes a bit informal (*"If one day I could go to see one, I totally would"*), the bulk of the essay has a formal style. The conclusion follows from main point and, although not required by the Standards, provides some reflection on the topic.

**File Name: I6R Center of Life**

**Informative/ Explanatory**

**Grade 6**

**Range of Writing**

### **Center of Life**

The saguaro cactus is a huge cactus that lives in deserts. It can live up to 150 years old! Even though it grows very very slowly, it grows up to be one of the tallest plants in the desert! The saguaro cactus is very adapted to desert life and this makes it a good home and food for many animals.

The saguaro cactus is adapted to survive in the deserts in many different ways. Because of the heat in the desert, saguaro cacti have waxy skin to prevent moisture loss. Many more adaptations help the saguaro keep water, though. It holds water in its stem, that's pleated like an accordion so that it can expand and hold more water. The roots also help it get more water. They spread out very far, almost as wide as the cactus is tall so that helps. The roots are also very close the surface, as little as 3 inches below ground. Because of this, if it rains, the cactus can get lots of water before the ground sucks too much up.

The cactus is also a home and food for lots of animals that live in the desert. Snakes can find a home, and many birds can perch on the big cactus. Many small flying creatures eat the nectar from the flowers. The cactus also bears fruit. After a while in the sun, the fruit splits in half and birds and insects eat the oozing sweet stuff from inside the fruit. Other fruit falls to the ground, where lots of animals eat them. Other animals eat the seeds. But after a long time, the cactus dies and falls down. Still, it is a place for small ground dwelling animals. Scorpions can take shelter from the sun. Jackrabbits can make a home there.

The saguaro cactus is really and amazing plant. It's also a good place for animals to live and find food. If one day I could go to see one, I totally would. If I was stuck in a desert, I think I would go to the nearest saguaro cactus to wait for help.

**File Name: I6R Lyddie's Choices**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 6**

**Range of Writing**

### **Lyddie's Choices**

Lyddie Worthen is the main character in Katherine Patterson's *Lyddie*. Lyddie is a young girl living on a Vermont farm in the 1840's. This is the time of the Industrial Revolution. Lyddie's father has abandoned the family and Lyddie's mother leaves her and her brother behind thinking that the world is coming to an end. The only thing Lyddie has left is her farm which she desperately wants to hold on to. In order to keep her farm Lyddie has to work off the debts on her farm, but the job she has isn't paying enough, so she leaves to begin a new life as a factory girl at the newly developed textile mills in Lowell Massachusetts. Because of working in the Lowell mills Lyddie gets a broader sense of herself. She is able to make some choices about who she wants to be in her life.

Lyddie is working at a place called Cutlers Tavern for very low wages. If she keeps working like this she will never be able to pay off her debts, so she decides to go to Lowell and work in the mills so that she can make more money.

She is told by a customer who works in the mills "you'd do well in the mill you know. You'd clear at least two dollars a week. And' she paused 'you'd be independent.'" (p. 25)

Lyddie then makes the choice to go to the mill. She realizes that at the mill she will be able to pay off the farm debts faster. This is a hard choice for Lyddie, if she stays at the tavern she knows that she will continue to make money and eventually pay off the debt. If she goes to the mill she has a chance of not getting the job at all but if she does get the job she will be able to pay off the farm debts much faster. This is when Lyddie begins to take her life into her own hands and makes the choice to take a chance at the mill.

When Lyddie begins working at the mill, she starts making much more and with that money she is able to buy a book. Lyddie does not have a good

**Introduces the topic clearly**, including naming the title and author of the novel; provides context of for the story, including naming identifying characters and main central ideas of the novel

States focus / **topic** of the piece

**Develops the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, and quotations, or other information and examples from the text.** The writer explains the meaning of the quotation he has chosen, with details about context (what was going on here). He also explains details that **clarify the relationship among the ideas / topic** he is working with in the piece.

**Develops the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples:** the writer explains the meaning of the quotation he has chosen

education and people at the mills by her roommate Betsy she becomes passionate about reading so she goes to buy a book.

“I-I come to purchase at book...” “what book do you have in mind...” “uh-uh *Oliver Twist* if you please sir” (p.83-84) she then pays with two silver dollars.

By making the choice to purchase that book she opens the doors to education and becomes a smarter person who loves to learn. She also changes from a thrifty penny pincher to someone who realizes that money isn't always the most important thing in life.

Because of Lyddie's love for reading she makes the choice to leave the farm that she has just returned to, and leave Luke, the man who loves her to go to Oberlin College in Ohio.

**Establishes and maintains a reasonably formal style**

“I'm off” she said ‘to Ohio, there's a college there that will that will take a women just like a man’”. (p.181)

By making the choice to go to college Lyddie is showing that she won't give up on her education and won't give up on an adventurous life. Even though things haven't been great for her she is still ready to start another chapter in her life.

**Uses appropriate, varied transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts**

What does the author want us to understand about the power of the Industrial Revolution? I think that in Lyddie it is showing that the Industrial Revolution gave people many opportunities in their lives. The Industrial Revolution also had lots of hard moments where people would get sick, break a bone, or even die. The Industrial Revolution seemed to rule a lot of people's lives and ruin their families. Lyddie took advantage of the Industrial Revolution well and through the choices she made was able to pull past just being a factory girl and take different paths in life.

**Uses precise word choice, and domain-specific vocabulary about the Industrial Revolution**

**Provides a concluding section that follows from the explanation presented by restating the main point and reflecting on the topic**

In this assignment, students were asked to reflect on the question “How did the work in the Lowell mills change Lyddie’s life?” after they had read the book *Lyddie* by Katherine Paterson. Class 208 discussion helped students to arrive at the focus statement that this writer uses. He provides enough context about the book in the introduction that even people who have not read the text can follow the writer’s thinking in the piece that follows.

The writer clearly organizes his evidence using three quotations from the text. In each case, he gives some context for the quotation he uses and follows the quote with a well-elaborated explanation that makes the relationship between the quote (evidence) and the topic / focus clear. He uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. Throughout the piece, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to make his thinking clear.

The writer uses a formal, academic tone as he explains his thinking. The conclusion follows from the main point and, although not required by the Standards, provides some thoughtful reflection on the topic.



**File Name: I6R Lyddie's Choices****Informative/Explanatory****Grade 6****Range of Writing****Lyddie's Choices**

Lyddie Worthen is the main character in Katherine Patterson's *Lyddie*. Lyddie is a young girl living on a Vermont farm in the 1840's. This is the time of the Industrial Revolution.

Lyddie's father has abandoned the family and Lyddie's mother leaves her and her brother behind thinking that the world is coming to an end. The only thing Lyddie has left is her farm which she desperately wants to hold on to. In order to keep her farm Lyddie has to work off the debts on her farm, but the job she has isn't paying enough, so she leaves to begin a new life as a factory girl at the newly developed textile mills in Lowell Massachusetts. Because of working in the Lowell mills Lyddie gets a broader sense of herself. She is able to make some choices about who she wants to be in her life.

Lyddie is working at a place called Cutlers Tavern for very low wages. If she keeps working like this she will never be able to pay off her debts, so she decides to go to Lowell and work in the mills so that she can make more money.

She is told by a customer who works in the mills "you'd do well in the mill you know. You'd clear at least two dollars a week. And' she paused 'you'd be independent.'" (p. 25)

Lyddie then makes the choice to go to the mill. She realizes that at the mill she will be able to pay off the farm debts faster. This is a hard choice for Lyddie, if she stays at the tavern she knows that she will continue to make money and eventually pay off the debt. If she goes to the mill she has a chance of not getting the job at all but if she does get the job she will be able to pay off the farm debts much faster. This is when Lyddie begins to take her life into her own hand and makes the choice to take a chance at the mill.

When Lyddie begins working at the mill, she starts making much more and with that money she is able to buy a book. Lyddie does not have a good education and people at the mills by her roommate Betsy she becomes passionate about reading so she goes to buy a book.

"I-I come to purchase at book..." "what book do you have in mind..." "uh-uh *Oliver Twist* if you please sir" (p.83-84) she then pays with two silver dollars.

By making the choice to purchase that book she opens the doors to education and becomes a smarter person who loves to learn. She also changes from a thrifty penny pincher to someone who realizes that money isn't always the most important thing in life.

Because of Lyddie's love for reading she makes the choice to leave the farm that she has just returned to, and leave Luke, the man who loves her to go to Oberlin College in Ohio.

"I'm off" she said "to Ohio, there's a college there that will take a women just like a man". (p.181)

By making the choice to go to college Lyddie is showing that she won't give up on her education and won't give up on an adventurous life. Even though things haven't been great for her she is still ready to start another chapter in her life.

What does the author want us to understand about the power of the Industrial Revolution? I think that in Lyddie it is showing that the Industrial Revolution gave people many opportunities in their lives. The Industrial Revolution also had lots of hard moments where people would get sick, break a bone, or even die. The Industrial Revolution seemed to rule a lot of people's lives and ruin their families. Lyddie took advantage of the Industrial Revolution well and through the choices she made was able to pull past just being a factory girl and take different paths in life.

**File Name: I7R To Build a Fire**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 7**

**Range of Writing**

### **To Build a Fire**

One of the most important things in life is to know how to build a successful fire. For ages fire has been a critical part of our lives. Fire provides heat, and this is what it is mainly used for. Heat cooks food. This is also critical because some uncooked foods can cause some very nasty, unmentionable diseases. And, of course, there is aesthetics. Could one be more cheerful than roasting chesnuts over an open fire?

So, now that you're all convinced that fire is the greatest thing in the world, you probably should know how to make a successful fire. Well, I agree wholeheartedly to teaching you. So, let us go through the steps one by one.

First you need to decide where you are going to build the fire, whether it be in a woodstove, in a fireplace, or out in the open. They are all relatively the same in terms of process, but materials used can differ. The basic process is as follows.

First you need to find some newspaper, or other easily burnt materials such as birch bark, office papers, old report cards, etc. Crumple up enough of the paper to cover the bottom of your fire area (if you are using birch bark just lay a few strips down). Next you need kindling. Kindling usually is best in the form of split boards, but split wood is also fine as long as the wood is dry and not green (not in color but if wood has been cut recently it is usually referred to as "green"). About four to eight pieces should be laid on top of the paper in a criss-cross design in order to allow the fire air. See Figure 1. Note: Fire will not burn without oxygen! Do not smother it!

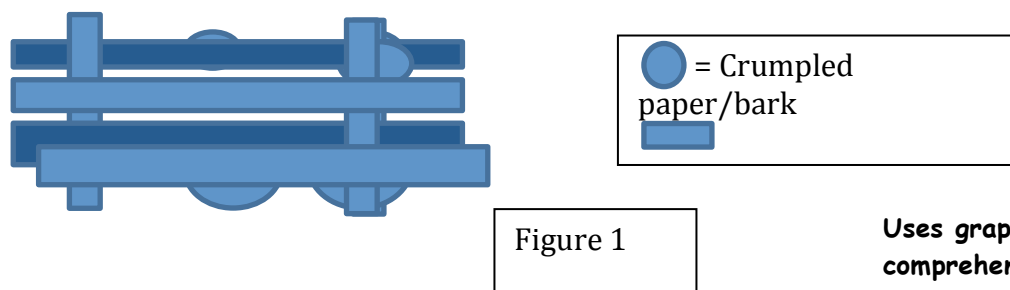
**Introduces the topic / focus clearly, previewing what is to follow:** The writer provides background information about the importance of fire, leading into an explanation of how to build a fire.

**Organizes ideas, concepts, and information using sequence:** The writer explains the process of building a fire in a step-by-step fashion

**Develops the topic with appropriate accurate, facts and concrete details** about the materials and steps needed to build a fire.

**Uses precise, domain-specific vocabulary to explain and analyze.**

**Establishes and maintains a formal style.**



**Uses graphic to aid comprehension**

Then you need a small piece of firewood, preferably not green. This should be laid diagonally across the top of the kindling.

Well, that's the hard part. Now you just need a match. Light the paper (or bark) in a few places and watch the fire blaze. Note: The wood will need to be replenished now and then. Just lay a piece of firewood across the top of the currently burning log and it will soon start blazing. Enjoy your wonderful fire wherever you are!

**Uses appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify relationships among ideas and concepts**

I hope that if you survive your first fire you will continue to use this wonderful power of nature safely so that all can enjoy it. And remember, 'only YOU can prevent forest fires!'

**Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the explanation presented**

In this assignment, from a language arts class, students were asked to explain a concrete procedure. This writer gives some background information about fire in the introduction and then states his purpose (to explain how to build a fire), thereby previewing the sequential steps to follow.

The writer organizes the essay sequentially, explaining each step carefully. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to name and accurately explain the steps in building a fire. He uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts, and to create cohesion. To make the steps easier for a reader to follow, he includes a graphic. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

Except for a few lapses ("*only you can prevent forest fires*"), the tone of the essay is objective and the style formal—both appropriate for procedural writing. The conclusion follows from and supports the information given.

**File Name: I7R To Build a Fire****Informational/Explanatory****Grade 7****Range of Writing****To Build a Fire**

One of the most important things in life is to know how to build a successful fire. For ages fire has been a critical part of our lives. Fire provides heat, and this is what it is mainly used for. Heat cooks food. This is also critical because some uncooked foods can cause some very nasty, unmentionable diseases. And, of course, there is aesthetics. Could one be more cheerful than roasting chesnuts over an open fire?

So, now that you're all convinced that fire is the greatest thing in the world, you probably should know how to make a successful fire. Well, I agree wholeheartedly to teaching you. So, let us go through the steps one by one.

First you need to decide where you are going to build the fire, whether it be in a woodstove, in a fireplace, or out in the open. They are all relatively the same in terms of process, but materials used can differ. The basic process is as follows.

First you need to find some newspaper, or other easily burnt materials such as birch bark, office papers, old report cards, etc. Crumple up enough of the paper to cover the bottom of your fire area (if you are using birch bark just lay a few strips down). Next you need kindling. Kindling usually is best in the form of split boards, but split wood is also fine as long as the wood is dry and not green (not in color but if wood has been cut recently it is usually referred to as "green"). About four to eight pieces should be laid on top of the paper in a criss-cross design in order to allow the fire air. See Figure 1. Note: Fire will not burn without oxygen! Do not smother it!



Figure 1

Then you need a small piece of firewood, preferably not green. This should be laid diagonally across the top of the kindling.

Well, that's the hard part. Now you just need a match. Light the paper (or bark) in a few places and watch the fire blaze. Note: The wood will need to be replenished now and then. Just lay a piece of firewood across the top of the currently burning log and it will soon start blazing Enjoy your wonderful fire wherever you are!

I hope that if you survive your first fire you will continue to use this wonderful power of nature safely so that all can enjoy it. And remember, 'only YOU can prevent forest fires!'

**File Name: I7R Question 1****Informative/Explanatory****Grade 7****Range of Writing****Question 1**

Jean Baptiste de Lamarck and Charles Darwin were both naturalists that had theories about organisms getting helpful variations. Lamarck's theory was called the theory of acquired characteristics and Darwin's was called the theory of evolution by natural selection. Lamarck and Darwin's theories are the same and different in some ways.

Darwin and Lamarck's theories were very different. Darwin theory said that organisms get helpful variation before changes in the environment. He thought they got the variation by chance at birth. He explained that the reason giraffes had long necks was because some giraffes had a variation which was a longer neck. The giraffes with short necks could only get food on the ground so they had to compete for it so they died. The giraffes with the long necks did not have to compete because they could get the food up high and they survived and passed the long necks onto their young. Lamarck theory said that organisms got helpful variation after a change in the environment. He said that giraffes got long necks when the food on the ground ran out. The giraffes needed to eat food and there was food up high so they stretched out their necks. They then passed it on to their young. Their theories are different because Lamarck thought that organisms changed out of need and after a change in the environment and Darwin thought organisms changed by chance when they were born and before there was a change in the environment.

Darwin and Lamarck's theories were very different but they were also very similar. They both thought that organisms changed. They thought these changes could be very useful and could help them survive. The changes could then get passed down to the young. That is how Lamarck and Darwin's theories are similar.

Lamarck and Darwin's theories are both the same and different in some ways.

**Introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow:** The writer gives provides general context, background information about the theories of evolution of Lamarck and Darwin, states the main point, and signals that similarities and differences in the theories will be the essay's focus.

**Organizes ideas, concepts, and information using comparison/contrast.** This paragraph discusses differences between the two theories, first describing Darwin's theory and then Lamarck's.

**Develops topic with appropriate, accurate facts and concrete details** about theories of evolution; **provides analysis of content**

**Uses precise and domain-specific vocabulary and a formal style.**

**Uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts**

**Provides a concluding statement, which follows from the information provided**

For this summative assessment from a seventh-grade science unit, students were asked to explain the differences and similarities in Lamarck's and Darwin's theories of evolution, respectively. This writer provides some background information about Lamarck's and Darwin's theories in the introduction and then establishes his focus on similarities and differences in Darwin's and Lamarck's theories, which serves also to preview his compare/contrast organizational structure.

The writer organizes his essay by first discussing differences between the two theories and then the similarities. He uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to characterize the theories and analyze them. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

The tone of the essay is objective and the style formal—both appropriate for science writing. The conclusion follows from the information given. Though it is a simple restatement, this is appropriate for a content assessment.



**File Name: I7R Question 1****Informative/Explanatory****Grade 7****Range of Writing****Question 1**

Jean Baptiste de Lamarck and Charles Darwin were both naturalists that had theories about organisms getting helpful variations. Lamarck's theory was called the theory of acquired characteristics and Darwin's was called the theory of evolution by natural selection. Lamarck and Darwin's theories are the same and different in some ways.

Darwin and Lamarck's theories were very different. Darwin theory said that organisms get helpful variation before changes in the environment. He thought they got the variation by chance at birth. He explained that the reason giraffes had long necks was because some giraffes had a variation which was a longer neck. The giraffes with short necks could only get food on the ground so they had to compete for it so they died. The giraffes with the long necks did not have to compete because they could get the food up high and they survived and passed the long necks onto their young. Lamarck theory said that organisms got helpful variation after a change in the environment. He said that giraffes got long necks when the food on the ground ran out. The giraffes needed to eat food and there was food up high so they stretched out their necks. They then passed it on to their young. Their theories are different because Lamarck thought that organisms changed out of need and after a change in the environment and Darwin thought organisms changed by chance when they were born and before there was a change in the environment.

Darwin and Lamarck's theories were very different but they were also very similar. They both thought that organisms changed. They thought these changes could be very useful and could help them survive. The changes could then get passed down to the young. That is how Lamarck and Darwin's theories are similar.

Lamarck and Darwin's theories are both the same and different in some ways.

**File Name: I8R How Mount Olympus is Like a Cell****Informative/Explanatory****Grade 8****Range of Writing****How Mount Olympus is Like a Cell**

Have you ever looked at your own cells? No, of course not. You're a mortal and you don't have the power or technology to do that. Maybe some day in the future we shall grant humans the power of microscopic vision. Who knows? That's up to Zeus. Cells are amazing things. Each one is individually different. When I first looked at my own cells I thought, "*WOW there is nothing like this in the whole world.*" I was wrong. Recently, I came to the realization that my own dear Mount Olympus is very much like a cell itself. There are many components in a cells that can also, in a way, be found on Mount Olympus. The structure of a cell and the components within are very like Mount Olympus. What? You don't believe me? Well fine! Come on. I'll show you. Oh, and by the way my name is Eos and I'm the Greek goddess of dawn. I'm responsible for the rising of the sun. Be careful and follow me. Don't let anyone else see you. Mortals aren't allowed up her. Let's go.

In an animal cell, the cell membrane controls what enters and leaves the cell. There are small pores that allow things of different sizes through. Up her, on Olympus what keeps the mortals from entering. or leaving (if they are to be kept here) is an instilled fear of us. Mortals dare not enter unless told to by one of the gods or goddesses. They dare not leave either.

Now, all of you stand still. No, it's okay. This is just a powder that will make you invisible. Nobody move or make a sound. Got it? If you do, it will be your life wasted. I just have to check to make sure that neither Zeus or Hera are in their throne room...Okay, we can go in. Just go silently and quickly! This is

Zeus and Hera's throne room, which is very similar to the nucleus of a cell.

In a cell, the nucleus is the control center of activity on a cellular level It's from here that Zeus and Hera control the happenings of immortals and mortals alike. It's like the control center for the world.

**Introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow:** The writer orients the reader to the narrative setting through which information and ideas will be conveyed, introduces a narrator (the goddess Eos), and establishes the essay's explanatory focus on a comparison between the structure of cells and Mount Olympus.

**Organizes ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories:** The writer uses a narrative structure (a tour through Mount Olympus) as the frame for conveying specific comparisons between the structure of cells and Mount Olympus

**Uses precise and domain-specific vocabulary** within accurate evidence to develop topic

**Uses appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.** Here, the writer is using a chronological narrative structure in addition to the cell structures to aid comprehension.

Holy Zeus! Someone's coming in. It's Zeus himself! Quick into here. No noise, no movement, no nothing! Those of you who can peer through the window, do so. You'll be able to see the head god himself! Zeus and his wife, Hera, control the gods, goddesses, and mortals. They are like the chromosomes in a cell. In a cell, the chromosomes determine what kind of cell it will be and how it acts. That is what Zeus and Hera do in the world.

In a cell, the ribosomes turn amino acids into proteins. On Mount Olympus we make many things like laws, rules, and the weather. However, the most material thing that we make are lightning bolts. Of course, only Zeus can actually make them. Although others can use them if they have his permission. See how Zeus only uses his left hand for tasks? That is because his right hand is used to make lightening. Like the ribosomes, his hand takes raw materials (the abundant plasma and energy up here) and creates a whole new product (lightning.) His hand is like the ribosomes in a cell.

**Uses precise and domain-specific vocabulary to explain topic**

Continues to **analyze** comparison between cell structure / function and Mount Olympus (develops topic, makes meaning clear)

Good, Zeus is leaving. This closet is starting to get stuffy. We should go quickly out into the hall. Now take a right, then a left into here. This is the courtyard. Immortals don't have to eat, but we do it for the pleasure of it. Also, eating helps keep us healthy and happy. The fountains flow with sweet juices and wines. The trees have the best fruits possible. That table over there is always supplied with the most delectable food imaginable. Those chests that are spread around are filled with gold and jewels for our taking. Wearing these helps enhance our godly image. This courtyard represents the vacuoles in a cell. In the vacuoles, large amounts of what the cell needs are stored. Here large amounts of what immortals thrive on is stored.

**Uses precise and domain-specific vocabulary to explain topic**

Don't be alarmed. Those are our mortal slaves. They won't tell on us because I have ordered them not to. In an animal cell, mitochondria store energy and release it when necessary. They power the cell. Here on Mount Olympus, we could not get by with out thee slaves. They perform almost every task that can even slight be considered laborious. The energy they get from food is stored in their bodies and released in order to do tasks.

In a cell, the ER, or endoplasmic reticulum, help to move substances around the cell. The halls and paths we've been following are very similar to the ER, they are like the roads that contain all movement.

**Uses precise and domain-specific vocabulary within evidence to develop topic**

Quick, into this room here. That was Hermes the messenger god. Now that I think of it, he is very much like the golgi bodies in a cell. The golgi bodies package and ship substances from

place to place in a cell. Hermes, similarly wraps items up in goat skin and takes them from one person, immortal, or Titan to another.

Now, let's go back to the entrance. You should go. Soon every god, goddess, demi-god, and demi-goddess will be coming. There is a big meeting tonight. So they were all summoned here. By now, I'm sure you can see how Mount Olympus is structured like a cell Just follow that path down there until you get home. Wait, the day is almost over and it'll get dark. Each of you swallow some of this powder. There, this enables you to fly, which is much faster than walking. If you promise not to tell anyone about this and you can go. You swear? Okay, good bye

**Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the explanation presented:** The writer restates the main point but also provides a sense of closure to the narrative frame

For this piece of blended writing (informational and narrative) from an eighth-grade science class, students were asked to address the question: "How is a cell like a familiar building or city?" This writer responds by comparing cell structure to the structure of Mount Olympus and writes from the perspective of one of the gods. She begins by orienting the reader to the narrative conceit, providing some context about cells and Mount Olympus, and then stating her main point (Mount Olympus is structured like a cell), thereby previewing what follows in the essay.

The writer organizes the essay clearly by using both a narrative story line (for both reader interest and analogical purposes) and a compare/contrast informative/explanatory structure. She uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to name and accurately explain elements of the comparison. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

The tone is conversational and the style relatively informal, both appropriate for this type of blended writing. The conclusion follows from and supports the main point, as well as providing a sense of closure for the narrative.

**File Name: I8R How Mount Olympus is Like a Cell****Informative/Explanatory****Grade 8****Range of Writing****How Mount Olympus is Like a Cell**

Have you ever looked at your own cells? No, of course not. You're a mortal and you don't have the power or technology to do that. Maybe some day in the future we shall grant humans the power of microscopic vision. Who knows? That's up to Zeus. Cells are amazing things. Each one is individually different. When I first looked at my own cells I thought, "*WOW there is nothing like this in the whole world.*" I was wrong. Recently, I came to the realization that my own dear Mount Olympus is very much like a cell itself. There are many components in a cells that can also, in a way, be found on Mount Olympus. The structure of a cell and the components within are very like Mount Olympus. What? You don't believe me? Well fine! Come on. I'll show you. Oh, and by the way my name is Eos and I'm the Greek goddess of dawn. I'm responsible for the rising of the sun. Be careful and follow me. Don't let anyone else see you. Mortals aren't allowed up her. Let's go.

In an animal cell, the cell membrane controls what enters and leaves the cell. There are small pores that allow things of different sizes through. Up her, on Olympus what keeps the mortals from entering. or leaving (if they are to be kept here) is an instilled fear of us. Mortals dare not enter unless told to by one of the gods or goddesses. They dare not leave either.

Now, all of you stand still. No, it's okay. This is just a powder that will make you invisible. Nobody move or make a sound. Got it? If you do, it will be your life wasted. I just have to check to make sure that neither Zeus or Hera are in their throne room...Okay, we can go in. Just go silently and quickly! This is Zeus and Hera's throne room, which is very similar to the nucleus of a cell. In a cell, the nucleus is the control center of activity on a cellular level. It's from here that Zeus and Hera control the happenings of immortals and mortals alike. It's like the control center for the world.

Holy Zeus! Someone's coming in. It's Zeus himself! Quick into here. No noise, no movement, no nothing! Those of you who can peer through the window, do so. You'll be able to see the head god himself! Zeus and his wife, Hera, control the gods, goddesses, and mortals. They are like the chromosomes in a cell. In a cell, the chromosomes determine what kind of cell it will be and how it acts. That is what Zeus and Hera do in the world.

In a cell, the ribosomes turn amino acids into proteins. On Mount Olympus we make many things like laws, rules, and the weather. However, the most material thing that we make are lightning bolts. Of course, only Zeus can actually make them. Although others can use them if they have his permission. See how Zeus only uses his left hand for tasks? That is because his right hand is used to make lightning. Like the ribosomes, his hand takes raw materials (the abundant plasma and energy up here) and creates a whole new product (lightning.) His hand is like a the ribosomes in a cell.

Good, Zeus is leaving. This closet is starting to get stuffy. We should go quickly out into the hall. Now take a right, then a left into here. This is the courtyard. Immortals don't have to eat, but we do it for the pleasure of it. Also, eating helps keep us healthy and happy. The fountains flow with sweet juices and wines. The trees have the best fruits possible. That table over there is always supplied with the most delectable food imaginable. Those chests that are spread around are filled with gold and jewels for our taking. Wearing these helps enhance our godly image. This courtyard represents the vacuoles in a cell. In the vacuoles, large amounts of what the cell needs are stored. Here large amounts of what immortals thrive on is stored.

Don't be alarmed. Those are our mortal slaves. They won't tell on us because I have ordered them not to. In an animal cell, mitochondria store energy and release it when necessary. They power the cell. Here on Mount Olympus, we could not get by with out thee slaves. They perform almost every task that can even slight be considered laborious. The energy they get from food is stored in their bodies and released in order to do tasks.

In a cell, the ER, or endoplasmic reticulum, help to move substances around the cell. The halls and paths we've been following are very similar to the ER, they are like the roads that contain all movement.

Quick, into this room here. That was Hermes the messenger god. Now that I think of it, he is very much like the golgi bodies in a cell. The golgi bodies package and ship substances from place to place in a cell. Hermes, similarly wraps items up in goat skin and takes them from one person, immortal, or Titan to another.

Now, let's go back to the entrance. You should go. Soon every god, goddess, demi-god, and demi-goddess will be coming. There is a big meeting tonight. So they were all summoned here. By now, I'm sure you can see how Mount Olympus is structured like a cell Just follow that path down there until you get home. Wait, the day is almost over and it'll get dark. Each of you swallow some of this powder. There, this enables you to fly, which is much faster than walking. If you promise not to tell anyone about this and you can go. You swear? Okay, good bye.

**File Name: I8R Frosty and Friends**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 8**

**Range of Writing**

### **Frosty and Friends**

I need to find out how much Frosty will weigh after 12 days, and how many days it will take until he completely melts away.

#### How I Derived My Answer

First, I divided 38 by 1.3 to find out how many days it would take for him to completely melt away. I noticed that the answer was 29 days. I also observed that there was a remainder of .3, so it would take the 30<sup>th</sup> day for him to melt.

**Introduces the topic /focus clearly, previewing what is to follow:** The writer succinctly lays out the mathematics problem to be addressed, although the introduction assumes that the reader understands the premise

**Organizes ideas, information, and concepts into broader categories, using headings and graphics to aid comprehension**

1)

Frosty - 38 lbs	
Loses 1.3 lbs. / day	
1.3	3.8
<hr/>	
-	26     20
<hr/>	
	12
<hr/>	
-	6.5     5
	5.5

$$Y = 38 - (1.3x)$$

Y = weight after certain number of days

X = number of days

38 = initial weight

1.3 = pounds lost / day

**Uses tables and charts to aid comprehension**

After 29 days, Frosty will have .3 pounds of snow left. Thus, he will completely melt on the 30<sup>th</sup> day.

**Establishes and maintains a formal style**

2)

1.3	38	
-	1.3	10
	25	
-	2.6	2
	22.4	12 days

Frosty will weigh 22.4 lbs. after 12 days.

= 35.7 after 17 days

22.1

$$+ \underline{13.6}$$

35.7

3)

To accommodate with the children's helping Frosty, the new equation will be:  $Y = 38 - (1.3X) + 0.8$

The 0.8 stands for the weight of snow the children add to Frosty.

$$1.3 * 17 = 22.1$$

$$+ (0.8 * 17) = 13.6$$

Frosty

Uses precise and domain-specific language and vocabulary to explain and

Develops the topic with relevant, well-chosen, accurate facts, definitions, and mathematical reasoning.

I divided 38 by 1.3 to find the number of days it would take for him to melt completely.

Then I used my equation to calculate his weight after 12 days. After I divided, I made a new

equation for the third question:  $Y = 38 - (1.3X) - 0.8$ . I knew that if I did this then I would be

able to figure out the third question. Finally, I figured out that if the children added 0.8 pounds of snow to him everyday, he would weigh 35.7 pounds after 17 days.

Uses appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts

### My Solution

Knowing that he will lose 1.3 pounds per day, it will take 30 days before Frosty completely melts away. Using the equation I made, Frosty would weigh 22.4 pounds after 12 days. Finally, if the schoolyard children pack 0.8 pounds onto him everyday, then he would weigh 35.7 pounds after 17 days.

Provides a concluding section that follows from the information and explanation given



In this informative/explanatory text from an eighth-grade mathematics class, the writer begins by setting out the mathematical problem of how much Frosty will weigh after twelve days and how long it will take him to melt away completely. While this introduction would be clear enough to those already familiar with this assignment (such as the teacher), other readers might have some questions, such as who built Frosty in the first place or how much he initially weighed.

The writer organizes the explanation by category (problem, approach, solution) and includes subheadings and graphics to aid comprehension. He uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to accurately describe the problem and explain his reasoning. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

The tone of the explanation is objective and the style formal—both appropriate for describing mathematical thinking. The conclusion follows from and supports the main point of the piece.

**File Name: I8R Frosty and Friends**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 8**

**Range of Writing**

### **Frosty and Friends**

I need to find out how much Frosty will weigh after 12 days, and how many days it will take until he completely melts away.

#### **How I Derived My Answer**

First, I divided 38 by 1.3 to find out how many days it would take for him to completely melt away. I noticed that the answer was 29 days. I also observed that there was a remainder of .3, so it would take the 30<sup>th</sup> day for him to melt.

1)

Frosty - 38 lbs	
Loses 1.3 lbs. / day	
	□
1.3	3.8
-	26    20
	12
-	6.5    5
	5.5

$$Y = 38 - (1.3x)$$

Y = weight after certain number of days

X = number of days

38 = initial weight

1.3 = pounds lost / day

After 29 days, Frosty will have .3 pounds of snow left. Thus, he will completely melt on the 30<sup>th</sup> day.

2)

1.3	38	
-	1.3	10
-	25	
-	2.6	2

Frosty will weigh 22.4 lbs. after 12 days.

= 35.7 after 17 days

22.1	+	13.6
35.7		

3)

To accommodate with the children's helping Frosty, the new equation will be:  $Y = 38 - (1.3X) + 0.8$

The 0.8 stands for the weight of snow the children add to Frosty.

Frosty

$$1.3 * 17 = 22.1$$

$$+ (0.8 * 17) = 13.6$$

I divided 38 by 1.3 to find the number of days it would take for him to melt completely. Then I used my equation to calculate his weight after 12 days. After I divided, I made a new equation for the third question:  $Y = 28 - (1.3X) - 0.8$ . I knew that if I did this then I would be able to figure out the third question. Finally, I figured out that if the children added 0.8 pounds of snow to him everyday, he would weigh 35.7 pounds after 17 days.

#### My Solution

Knowing that he will lose 1.3 pounds per day, it will take 30 days before Frosty completely melts away. Using the equation I made, Frosty would weigh 22.4 pounds after 12 days. Finally, if the schoolyard children pack 0.8 pounds onto him everyday, then he would weigh 35.7 pounds after 17 days.

**File Name: I9-10R Secret Communication of Wolves****Informative/Explanatory****Grade 9-10****Range of Writing****The Secret Communication of Wolves**

A long piercing howl shatters the quiet night of a northern forest. The howl grows into a chorus of yelps and barks, and the valley echoes to the chilling sound. The leader of the pack starts the noise, while other pack members, as well as other wolf packs, join in (O'Toole 22).

Among wolves, communication is a very highly developed skill.

For instance, the howl of the pack leader has many different meanings. Most of the time a lone howl is a warning for other packs. It tells them to stay away, for there are many young to be protected and food to be guarded (O'Toole 23). A howl can also be a way of marking their territory. Many wolves howl when they feel another pack is too close. Some wolves howl when they are lost or trying to find another member of the pack. Most wolves use this howl at least once a day to locate missing pups or other pack members (Primate).

To wolves, the territory that they occupy (the territory of some packs may cover 20-120 square miles) is like a house to a human being. They feel that they must protect it all times, and, other packs must not trespass. Neighboring packs may share up to a mile of territory, but rarely will they share more than that (Primate). All wolves know that if they run through another pack's territory, they run the risk of being killed (Primate). In addition, wolves mark their territory by scent (mostly urine). This helps all wolves know where their territory begins.

**Introduces the topic:** The writer gives context that sets the stage for the essay; includes **topic / focus** of the piece, which previews what is to follow (the howls and

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic**

**Uses appropriate, varied transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts and create cohesion**

Like humans, the wolf has three main avenues of communication, postural (body language); vocal (the howl or snarl); and olfactory (scent) (Wolfhaven). The scent is the most commonly used, and probably the most important. Besides marking territory, it helps show food ownership, as well as acting as a road map for themselves. Wolves also have scent glands between their toes, which leaves their scent wherever they go (Primate).

Moreover, much communication is done through body language. Many postures have been evolved to reduce conflict and aggression among pack members. Facial expressions are the most obvious. Generally, bared teeth with ears erect and pointed back can indicate a threat by a dominant male (Wolfhaven). In contrast, a closed mouth, slitlike eyes, and ears pulled forward (and close to their head) will most likely indicate subordinate behavior (Wolfhaven). Wolves also use their tail position to communicate emotion. Threatening wolves hold their tails high, almost perpendicular, while more submissive wolves lower themselves before dominant pack members. These lower class members often have their tails tucked between their legs (Primate). A wolf that has been defeated in a fight can avoid being attacked by its victorious companion by taking a posture similar to that of a pup begging for food (University of Oklahoma Press 91).

Wolves must communicate at all times when they are hunting. They have to work together to catch most of their food (due to the size of the food that they hunt). The concept that wolves use is called the “Pincer Attack” (Baily 91). When using the pincer attack, the pack splits in two groups and surround the prey (mostly deer, sheep, and other medium-sized mammals). One of the groups causes a diversion, while the other half ambushes the helpless prey. Wolves can move quickly and quietly. Many of them operate on stamina rather than on sudden bursts of speed (Baily 85). Because of the cooperation of the group, when it comes to hunting, the pack usually ends up victorious, and they have enough food for a couple of days. If they pack gets a big kill, then the leader will have the next strongest male guard the kill during the night to keep off other animals.

**Organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections, the various factors in the communication of wolves**

**Develops topic with well-chosen, relevant, sufficient, accurate facts and concrete details**

**Establishes and maintains a formal style and objective tone while attending to norms and conventions of**

**Develops topic with well-chosen, relevant, sufficient, accurate facts and concrete details**

Like other animals,

wolves communicate with a social ladder. They have one dominant male (usually the leader of the pack) (Primate). This wolf has many responsibilities. He has to make sure that all the other wolves don't get out of line, and makes sure that there is harmony among the group. The pack leader does this by barking at the other wolves and fighting with the other males. Normally, the pack leader will not fight with the females of the pack unless it is necessary (Timberwolf). With the leader comes a dominant female. Together they are known as the breeding pair. These two are in charge of the pack, raising the young, selecting denning areas and rendezvous sites, capturing food, and maintaining the pack's territory (Primate). These two wolves are also responsible for the offspring. Not many of the other wolves mate for offspring because that is the dominant pair's job. Every year the dominant pair will produce one litter of pups. These pups take the place of the older wolves that are too old to hunt. Because the pack is so close and they communicate all the time, many of the other female wolves help the dominant female with taking care of the young (Wolfhaven). The dominant female will assign each pup to an older female. This helps the other females learn how to be a mother, and it helps the dominant female so she can hunt and not have to worry about taking care of her young.

**Analyzes ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections**

If only humans could communicate as well as wolves, today's society would be wonderful. Wolves' methods of communication are simple and usually resolve conflicts without violence. Wolves have been living together for many, many years so they must be doing something right. Maybe we can learn something from the wolves instead of trying to make them extinct.

**Provides a conclusion that follows from and supports the information presented by articulating**

In this assignment, students were asked to research a topic of their choice (here, wolves), and establish a focus within that topic (how/why wolves communicate). This writer provides some context about wolves' communication in the introduction and then states his main point that among wolves, communication is a highly developed skill.

The writer organizes ideas, concepts, and information clearly by category, using aspects of communication to develop the main point. The writer uses appropriate and varied transitions to clarify relationships and create cohesion (*"Like humans, the wolf has three main avenues of communication..."*). Within each chunk of the essay, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic (explaining the aspects of wolf communication), which he cites. While this subject does not call for much analysis, the writer occasionally analyzes evidence so that the reader grasps the complexity of the topic.

The essay has an appropriately formal style and objective tone. The conclusion follows from and supports the information presented.

**File Name: I9-10R Secret Communication of Wolves****Informative/Explanatory****Grade 9-10****Range of Writing****The Secret Communication of Wolves**

A long piercing howl shatters the quiet night of a northern forest. The howl grows into a chorus of yelps and barks, and the valley echos to the chilling sound. The leader of the pack starts the noise, while other pack members, as well as other wolf packs, join in (O'Toole 22).

Among wolves, communication is a very highly developed skill. For instance, the howl of the pack leader has many different meanings. Most of the time a lone howl is a warning for other packs. It tells them to stay away, for there are many young to be protected and food to be guarded (O'Toole 23). A howl can also be a way of marking their territory. Many wolves howl when they feel another pack is too close. Some wolves howl when they are lost or trying to find another member of the pack. Most wolves use this howl at least once a day to locate missing pups or other pack members (Primate).

To wolves, the territory that they occupy (the territory of some packs may cover 20-120 square miles) is like a house to a human being. They feel that they must protect it all times, and, other packs must not trespass. Neighboring packs may share up to a mile of territory, but rarely will they share more than that (Primate). All wolves know that if they run through another pack's territory, they run the risk of being killed (Primate). In addition, wolves mark their territory by scent (mostly urine). This helps all wolves know where their territory begins.

Like humans, the wolf has three main avenues of communication, postural (body language); vocal (the howl or snarl); and olfactory (scent) (Wolfhaven). The scent is the most commonly used, and probably the most important. Besides marking territory, it helps show food ownership, as well as acting as a road map for themselves. Wolves also have scent glands between their toes, which leaves their scent wherever they go (Primate).

Moreover, much communication is done through body language. Many postures have been evolved to reduce conflict and aggression among pack members. Facial expressions are the most obvious. Generally, bared teeth with ears erect and pointed back can indicate a threat by a dominant male (Wolfhaven). In contrast, a closed mouth, slitlike eyes, and ears pulled forward (and close to their head) will most likely indicate subordinate behavior (Wolfhaven). Wolves also use their tail position to communicate emotion. Threatening wolves hold their tails high,



almost perpendicular, while more submissive wolves lower themselves before dominant pack members. These lower class members often have their tails tucked between their legs (Primate). A wolf that has been defeated in a fight can avoid being attacked by its victorious companion by taking a posture similar to that of a pup begging for food (University of Oklahoma Press 91).

Wolves must communicate at all times when they are hunting. They have to work together to catch most of their food (due to the size of the food that they hunt). The concept that wolves use is called the “Pincer Attack” (Baily 91). When using the pincer attack, the pack splits in two groups and surround the prey (mostly deer, sheep, and other medium-sized mammals). One of the groups causes a diversion, while the other half ambushes the helpless prey. Wolves can move quickly and quietly. Many of them operate on stamina rather than on sudden bursts of speed (Baily 85). Because of the cooperation of the group, when it comes to hunting, the pack usually ends up victorious, and they have enough food for a couple of days. If they pack gets a big kill, then the leader will have the next strongest male guard the kill during the night to keep off other animals.

Like other animals, wolves communicate with a social ladder. They have one dominant male (usually the leader of the pack) (Primate). This wolf has many responsibilities. He has to make sure that all the other wolves don't get out of line, and makes sure that there is harmony among the group. The pack leader does this by barking at the other wolves and fighting with the other males. Normally, the pack leader will not fight with the females of the pack unless it is necessary (Timberwolf). With the leader comes a dominant female. Together they are known as the breeding pair. These two are in charge of the pack, raising the young, selecting denning areas and rendezvous sites, capturing food, and maintaining the pack's territory (Primate). These two wolves are also responsible for the offspring. Not many of the other wolves mate for offspring because that is the dominant pair's job. Every year the dominant pair will produce one litter of pups. These pups take the place of the older wolves that are too old to hunt. Because the pack is so close and they communicate all the time, many of the other female wolves help the dominant female with taking care of the young (Wolfhaven). The dominant female will assign each pup to an older female. This helps the other females learn how to be a mother, and it helps the dominant female so she can hunt and not have to worry about taking care of her young.

If only humans could communicate as well as wolves, today's society would be wonderful. Wolves' methods of communication are simple and usually resolve conflicts without violence. Wolves have been living together for many, many years so they must be doing something right. Maybe we can learn something from the wolves instead of trying to make them extinct.

**File Name: I11-12R McValues****Informative/Explanatory****Grade 12****Range of Writing****McValues**

Looking at this ad, who would guess that those golden arches bring home approximately fourteen billion dollars a year customers worldwide? Who would guess that McDonald's is the world's leading food organization and employs over 28,000 workers in 120 different countries? The ad is, in fact, an image of a completely different nature. It is a calm, nostalgic looking ad; nothing in the peaceful summer scene hints that McDonald's has or ever will represent anything other than quality family living.

The characters in the ad are strategically positioned to inspire within the viewer, feelings of fun and familiarity. The picture located at the center of the page, depicts an older woman with a little girl—perhaps her granddaughter—beside her. The two are lying on their stomachs, propped up by elbows in the sand. Neither looks up as the camera clicks, catching them at play. The little girl giggles as her tiger toy leaps over the walls of her castle made of sand. Her grandmother looks on with a knowing smile, perhaps remembering the days when she used to play such innocent games. The sun shines down on their backs and speckles the older woman's face through her woven sunhat. Behind, their legs are crossed at the ankles in carefree swing—the girl in imitation of her clearly admirable grandmother. They have obviously been to this beach before, and are having the time of their lives.

As with the characters, the placement of the props in the ad is very significant. The slightly unfocused images of the beach gear on their right are clearly placed as a backdrop, almost as a side note—not directly related to the McDonald's message about family values, but still essential. The responsible grandmother planned ahead and brought along all they might need for a day on the beach, but does not need to broadcast it to the viewer. In the far corner, an umbrella stands shading their picnic blanket; beside the grandmother's arm is a pair of sunglasses, and

**Introduces the topic:** The writer provides background information describing the McDonald's ad that he will analyze, and then states the main point.

States the focus / **topic** of the piece

**Develops topic thoroughly with accurate evidence—concrete details, most significant and relevant facts for analysis** of the images in the ad

**Uses precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as imagery to manage the complexity of the topic**

**Uses appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to create cohesion and clarify relationships among ideas and concepts; organizes so that each new chunk builds from one which precedes it to create a unified whole**

upon her head rests a hat to protect her from the sun. Oh, and what's that in the corner? Ah yes, the McDonald's Happy Meal they picked up on their way. Cheeseburgers with french-fries is far from the healthiest picnic Grandma could have brought for her granddaughter, but what does that matter? They're spending time together.

The summer scene in black and white instantly creates a feeling of nostalgia. It is a time warp of sorts, to the safety of the 1950s when family values were still a part of American society. It jumps back to simpler days when children did as they were told and a day on the beach with family was an acceptable way to spend the weekend—the “good old days” when all was well with the world.

The busy parents of today can be assured that McDonald's is just as wholesome and just as capable of creating memories as their mothers' picnics were in the 1950s. The first line of print below the picture reads, “Some connections never seem to fade.” The statement refers to the family connection that existed for the parents of today when they were young. The message makes it very clear that the dwindling respect for quality family values is kept alive with McDonald's.

In stark contrast to the quiet shades of gray and the general feeling of calm in the photo, the McDonald's logo stands out sharply in the lower corner. Being the only colored object in the ad, the ketchup and mustard “M” is impossible to miss. There can be no confusion over whose product is being sold.

The few sentences about, and the image of, Pooh corner appeals to the whole family—the parents and their Pooh-loving kids. Above the logo and the scene of contentment, the page is blank except for one sentence: “Suddenly the house on Pooh corner doesn't seem so far away.” This statement, coupled with the image of the girl recreating Pooh's world on the beach, emphasizes the idea that McDonald's makes dreams come alive. The ad states that Pooh corner doesn't seem so far away, and right below it is their proof—a little girl playing in “Pooh corner”

In the lower right corner, below the hideously-bold, trademark “M”, the ad makes yet another pitch. In this modern world of work and stress, McDonald's kindly asks everyone to “smile.” In that one, simple word, so

**Analyzes content of ad for overall effect**

**Organizes complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole:** The writer draws a connection between the imagery in the ad and the message for today's parents.

**Analyzes content of ad for overall effect**

**Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as personification to manage the complexity of the topic**

**Maintains formal style, objective tone**

much more is implied. “Slow down, take a break, we’re here to help, be happy, come to McDonald’s, we understand.”

The entire ad is an attempt to appeal to the parental ideal.

Connecting McDonald’s food with an image of family fun provides an “equal” alternative for busy parents who don’t have room in their lives for quality time with their families. McDonald’s is the world’s largest and fastest growing food chain. It brings in billions of dollars a year, has thousands of stockholders and represents one of the biggest food monopolies in the world, but none of that matters in the ad. Life can be good, and it can be bought at McDonald’s.

**Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information presented:** The writer assesses the appeal the ad has for today’s busy parents and then **articulates the significance of the topic**

In this piece of twelfth-grade informative/explanatory writing, the writer addresses the underlying messages of an ad for McDonald’s. She provides some context about McDonald’s and the ad itself in the introduction so that the reader can clearly follow her thinking even without having seen the ad. The writer then indicates that the main analytical purpose of the essay is to unpack the ad’s imagery and to contrast the ad’s implicit messages with the reality of the McDonald’s food empire.

The writer organizes the essay clearly and carefully so that each chunk builds upon the one that precedes it. She describes the ad, analyzes its messages, and assesses the appeal of those messages to today’s busy parents. She uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to describe and analyze the ad. This makes the writer’s thinking and understanding easy to follow.

The tone of the essay is objective and the style formal, both appropriate for an essay in cultural criticism. The conclusion follows from and supports the information presented, and reflects on the significance of the topic.

**File Name: I 11-12R McValues**

**Informative/Explanatory**

**Grade 12**

**Range of Writing**

### **McValues**

Looking at this ad, who would guess that those golden arches bring home approximately fourteen billion dollars a year customers worldwide? Who would guess that McDonald's is the world's leading food organization and employs over 28,000 workers in 120 different countries? The ad is, in fact, an image of a completely different nature. It is a calm, nostalgic looking ad; nothing in the peaceful summer scene hints that McDonald's has or ever will represent anything other than quality family living.

The characters in the ad are strategically positioned to inspire within the viewer, feelings of fun and familiarity. The picture located at the center of the page, depicts an older woman with a little girl—perhaps her granddaughter—beside her. The two are lying on their stomachs, propped up by elbows in the sand. Neither looks up as the camera clicks, catching them at play. The little girl giggles as her tiger toy leaps over the walls of her castle made of sand. Her grandmother looks on with a knowing smile, perhaps remembering the days when she used to play such innocent games. The sun shines down on their backs and speckles the older woman's face through her woven sunhat. Behind, their legs are crossed at the ankles in carefree swing—the girl in imitation of her clearly admirable grandmother. They have obviously been to this beach before, and are having the time of their lives.

As with the characters, the placement of the props in the ad is very significant. The slightly unfocused images of the beach gear on their right are clearly placed as a backdrop, almost as a side note—not directly related to the McDonald's message about family values, but still essential. The responsible grandmother planned ahead and brought along all they might need for a day on the beach, but does not need to broadcast it to the viewer. In the far corner, an umbrella stands shading their picnic blanket; beside the grandmother's arm is a pair of sunglasses, and upon her head rests a hat to protect her from the sun. Oh, and what's that in the corner? Ah yes, the McDonald's Happy Meal they picked up on their way. Cheeseburgers with french-fries is far from the healthiest picnic Grandma could have brought for her granddaughter, but what does that matter? They're spending time together.

The summer scene in black and white instantly creates a feeling of nostalgia. It is a time warp of sorts, to the safety of the 1950s when family values were still a part of American society.

It jumps back to simpler days when children did as they were told and a day on the beach with family was an acceptable way to spend the weekend—the “good old days” when all was well with the world.

The busy parents of today can be assured that McDonald’s is just as wholesome and just as capable of creating memories as their mothers’ picnics were in the 1950s. The first line of print below the picture reads, “Some connections never seem to fade.” The statement refers to the family connection that existed for the parents of today when they were young. The message makes it very clear that the dwindling respect for quality family values is kept alive with McDonald’s.

In stark contrast to the quiet shades of gray and the general feeling of calm in the photo, the McDonald’s logo stands out sharply in the lower corner. Being the only colored object in the ad, the ketchup and mustard “M” is impossible to miss. There can be no confusion over whose product is being sold.

The few sentences about, and the image of, Pooh corner appeals to the whole family—the parents and their Pooh-loving kids. Above the logo and the scene of contentment, the page is blank except for one sentence: “Suddenly the house on Pooh corner doesn’t seem so far away.” This statement, coupled with the image of the girl recreating Pooh’s world on the beach, emphasizes the idea that McDonald’s makes dreams come alive. The ad states that Pooh corner doesn’t seem so far away, and right below it is their proof—a little girl playing in “Pooh corner”

In the lower right corner, below the hideously-bold, trademark “M”, the ad makes yet another pitch. In this modern world of work and stress, McDonald’s kindly asks everyone to “smile.” In that one, simple word, so much more is implied. “Slow down, take a break, we’re here to help, be happy, come to McDonald’s, we understand.”

The entire ad is an attempt to appeal to the parental ideal. Connecting McDonald’s food with an image of family fun provides an “equal” alternative for busy parents who don’t have room in their lives for quality time with their families. McDonald’s is the world’s largest and fastest growing food chain. It brings in billions of dollars a year, has thousands of stockholders and represents one of the biggest food monopolies in the world, but none of that matters in the ad. Life can be good, and it can be bought at McDonald’s.