



Nevada Formative Writing Tools

Fifth Grade

Formative Writing Tasks

2014

GRADE

5

Nevada Department of Education

Dale A. R. Erquiaga
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Dr. Steve Canavero
Deputy Superintendent for Student Achievement

Cynthia Sharp
Director of Assessment, Program Accountability, and Curriculum

For additional information, please contact:

Darrin Hardman,
Education Programs Professional
dhardman@doe.nv.gov
702.486.6602

Lisa Ford
Education Programs Professional
lford@doe.nv.gov
702.486.6561

Carson City (Main)
700 E. Fifth Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Las Vegas (Southern Office)
9890 South Maryland Parkway, Suite 221
Las Vegas, Nevada 89183

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Introduction to the Writing Tasks

The Nevada Formative Writing Tasks (Formative Tasks) were developed to help students, teachers, and administrators implement the Nevada Academic Content Standards for English Language Arts (NACS for ELA) and prepare for the administration of the spring 2015 Smarter Balanced assessments. The tasks are intended to:

- Encourage students to read closely and analyze information;
- Enable students to produce effective and well-grounded writing for a range of purposes and audiences;
- Empower teachers to shift and improve instruction to meet the demands of the NACS;
- Inform teachers and students when timely adjustments can be made; and
- Provide an early look into the types of writing performance tasks expected on the Smarter Balanced assessments.

The Nevada Formative Writing Tasks illustrate the depth of understanding of the Nevada Academic Content Standards for English Language Arts that will be measured on the Smarter Balanced assessments.

The Formative Tasks are timed, on-demand, classroom writing assignments. They include uniform student directions for writing responses and uniform teacher directions for administering the tasks. Each task was carefully created for consistency of format, content, and administration procedures, allowing teachers to monitor student progress over time. This consistency also makes it possible for teachers to participate in collaborative groups to discuss student progress and refine delivery of writing instruction.

“[Students] need to be able to use technology strategically when creating, refining, and collaborating on writing. They have to become adept at gathering information, evaluating sources, and citing material accurately, reporting findings from their research and analysis of sources in a clear and cogent manner. They must have the flexibility, concentration, and fluency to produce high-quality first-draft text under a tight deadline as well as the capacity to revisit and make improvements to a piece of writing over multiple drafts when circumstances encourage or require it.”

Nevada Academic Content Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy in History, Social Studies, Science, & Technical Subjects (p. 41)

All fifth and eighth grade students are required by NRS 389.550 to participate in at least one Nevada Formative Writing Task during the 2013-14 school year. However, the NDE has provided multiple tasks for use in third through eighth grades, allowing teachers to monitor students at multiple points during the school year and adjust their instruction to match the needs of students.

To improve the consistency of evaluating the tasks and other classroom writing assignments, the NDE released The Nevada Formative Writing Tools: Grade 5 Evaluation Guides (Evaluation Guides) that include:

- Analytic writing rubrics developed by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium;
- Checklists to support teachers when learning the rubrics and documenting student progress;
- Student writing guides to support students in all phases of the writing process (before, during, and after); and
- A glossary of terms used in the *Evaluation Guides* to establish a common vocabulary for writing.

The Evaluation Guides identify a student's level of command for each of the five characteristics of writing and can be downloaded at

http://www.doe.nv.gov/Nevada_State_Writing_Assessment/.

Knowing these levels will help teachers and students identify student strengths and areas to improve. The NDE encourages districts and schools to establish policies for how and when to use the rubrics and checklists for grading other classroom assignments.

However, the NDE **strongly** discourages teachers and schools from using the results of the Formative Tasks as part of their grading, since they were **not** designed as summative or interim assessments. Instead, teachers and schools should use the formative tasks to gather information needed to inform and enhance both teaching and learning.

Results from the Nevada Formative Writing Tasks will not be used to calculate a school's rating on the Nevada School Performance Framework. However, the NDE will collect and report participation rates on each school's report card (as required by NRS 389.550).

Since the results of the tasks are relatively low stakes for schools and teachers, keep them low stakes for students by not assigning grades to them.

Guidelines for Administering the Tasks

WHO: All fifth and eighth grade students who are enrolled in public schools, including charter schools, are required to take at least one Formative Task during the 2013-14 school year. It is strongly recommended for students in third, fourth, sixth, and seventh grades. Students with disabilities and students classified as having limited English proficiency (LEP) must also participate.

Accommodations are made for IEP, LEP, and/or 504 students who have testing accommodation plans. The classroom teacher must make certain that all students with special needs receive permissible appropriate accommodations, as indicated in IEPs, LEPs, 504 plans, and Testing Accommodation Plans.

WHAT: The Formative Tasks have students read closely and analyze information to produce effective and well-grounded writing for a range of purposes and audiences. For the 2013-14 school year, the NDE provides tasks for the three text types in the NACS (opinion/argumentative, informative/explanatory, and narrative).

Since the tasks are formative, classroom teachers will evaluate their own students' responses using the Evaluation Guides provided by the NDE (http://www.doe.nv.gov/Nevada_State_Writing_Assessment/). It is strongly recommended that each task be evaluated twice: by the student's classroom teacher and by another teacher. This will facilitate collaborative teams that build a vision of good writing and can focus on using the results of the Formative Tasks to improve teaching and student learning.

The NDE will neither score student responses nor collect student results. However, the NDE will collect participation data in May from each school and each classroom in accordance with NRS 389.550. Participation rates will be published on every school's Nevada Accountability Report.

WHERE: It is strongly recommended that the Formative Tasks be administered by the student's classroom teacher in the regular classroom or computer lab.

WHEN: March 3, 2014, through May 9, 2014, is the timeframe for administering the Formative Tasks. Each district and school may determine exact testing days and times within this testing window. Please check with your district's test director for specific days and times within the mandated timeframe.

WHY: Descriptive feedback is widely considered an important element of improved writing performance. When students understand their **strengths and weaknesses** and are taught how to improve their writing, they learn faster and retain what they have learned longer.

The Formative Tasks and Evaluation Guides can help teachers provide constructive feedback and help students become self-regulated learners. Since the tasks and Evaluation Guides are based on the NACS and performance task specifications for the Smarter Balanced assessment, they also play an essential role in aligning teaching, learning, and assessment while allowing districts, schools, and teachers to use them to begin planning the shifts in instruction that will be required to help students meet the demands of the standards and prepare for the Smarter Balanced assessment in 2015.

HOW:

The Formative Tasks are timed, on-demand classroom writing assignments. The tasks include uniform student directions for writing responses and uniform teacher directions for administering the tasks. The tasks have been carefully designed for consistency of format, content, and administration procedures, allowing teachers to monitor progress over time.

Each task is administered in two timed sessions that should not exceed 45 minutes each. Teachers may administer the sessions over two consecutive days or on the same day with a 15 minute break between sessions. The first 45 minute session involves introducing students to the writing task, helping students understand how the tasks will be evaluated, having students independently read information, and beginning to draft a well-grounded response. The second 45 minute session involves writing, revising, and editing their final draft.

Teachers should provide each student with a paper copy of the student directions for the selected task. Please check with your district to determine if the district has selected a task for the entire district to use. The NDE will not provide printed copies for schools.

Teachers may also provide each student with a copy of the Student Writing Guide that matches the writing mode of the task (i.e., the Grade 5 Student Writing Guide for Argumentative Writing for fifth grade students responding to the fifth grade argumentative tasks). These guides can be found in the Evaluation Guides at http://www.doe.nv.gov/Nevada_State_Writing_Assessment/.

Since the 2015 administration of the Smarter Balanced assessment is computer based, students should use a word processor (i.e., Microsoft Word) to write their responses. Using technology to produce and publish writing is part of the NACS and keyboarding skills are introduced in second grade in the Nevada Computer and Technology Standards (2010).

Students may use spell check and grammar check. They should **not** use any other electronic resources, including the Internet, during the task. All students are expected to word process their responses to the Formative Tasks. Students with IEPs may use pre-approved electronic devices as designated in their IEPs and are consistent with their testing accommodations.

In addition, each student should have at least one blank sheet of paper (lined or unlined) and a pencil. Students can use these tools to plan their writing (i.e., individually brainstorm, create graphic organizers) and create their first drafts. However, students may also word process their first drafts on computers, if they prefer.

Students may also use highlighters and colored pencils for planning, revising, and editing.

Regular paper Standard English dictionaries are also allowed for all students. In addition, paper bilingual dictionaries with word-to-word translations are approved for LEP students identified to receive this accommodation and used previously as part of regular instruction. Teachers do **not** need to cover bulletin boards, posters, or other materials used as part of daily instruction.

Teachers will NOT translate any part of the directions.

Teachers will NOT read any part of the student directions that call for the student to read, unless such accommodations are specified in a student's accommodation plan.

Teacher Checklist for Administering the Writing Tasks

Completing the following steps will help ensure successful administration of the Formative Tasks.

- Carefully read all of the contents of this manual.
- Check your district testing schedule for any specific test dates for your district.
- Check with your district to determine if they have selected a task for the entire district to administer.
- Check with the special education facilitators, LEP testing coordinators, and 504 building officers for any students who need to receive special accommodations.
- Ensure that procedures and materials for testing special student populations follow those specified by the Nevada Department of Education and that students with special needs receive the appropriate accommodations.
- Ensure that you have all of the materials for administering the formative task:
 - ___ Print copies of the student directions
 - ___ Optional: Print copies of the student guide that matches the task (i.e., opinion guide for opinion task) (see page 13-15 in *The Nevada Formative Writing Tools: Grade 5 Evaluation Guides* at http://www.doe.nv.gov/Nevada_State_Writing_Assessment/)
 - ___ Pencils
 - ___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)
 - ___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)
 - ___ Bilingual dictionaries with word-for-word translations (only for LEP students approved to receive this accommodation and who use them as part of their classroom instruction)
 - ___ Highlighters and colored pencils or pens during testing sessions (if students have been using these during regular classroom instruction)
 - ___ Printer paper (optional for printing hard copies of student essays)
 - ___ Books for students to read if they finish early (paper only)
- Check computers to make sure they are ready.
- Check with your school/district for special procedures on how to save essays on the school/district network.
- Review computer procedures with your students:
 - ___ Open a new blank document
 - ___ Maintain default font size and color (i.e., 12 point and black)
 - ___ Save documents
 - ___ Print files
- Make arrangements with another teacher to exchange and evaluate tasks.
- Make plans for how you will provide feedback to students for improving their writing (i.e., conferences).

Teacher Checklist for Evaluating the Writing Tasks

Completing the following steps will help ensure consistent evaluation of the Formative Tasks.

- Work with another teacher so that each student's essay is evaluated twice.
- Reread the Evaluation Guides (rubric or checklist) for the type of writing that matches the task (opinion/argumentative, informative/explanatory, or narrative) and highlight or underline key information. (Evaluation Guides can be downloaded at http://www.doe.nv.gov/Nevada_State_Writing_Assessment/)
- Reread the exemplar papers for the type of writing that matches the task and review how the characteristics of the paper relate to the level of each trait. (Argumentative Exemplars can be downloaded at http://www.doe.nv.gov/Nevada_State_Writing_Assessment/)
- Read entirely each essay before assigning a level for each of the five traits.
- Refer to the language in the rubric and the exemplar papers when assigning levels.
- Cover the first evaluator's levels before the essay is evaluated the second time (this is optional but many teachers find it helpful if they don't know how the first teacher evaluated the papers).
- Discuss the levels, understanding that it is normal for some traits to have some split levels (1-2 or 3-4).
- Discuss any discrepant levels. Levels are discrepant when one teacher evaluates a trait as proficient (4 or 3) and another teacher evaluates that same trait as not proficient (2 or 1).

When a trait is rated 1-3, 1-4, 2-3, or 2-4, both teachers should review the rubric, checklist, and exemplar papers to determine if the paper is proficient or not (for feedback purposes).

Proficient (Meets or Exceeds Standard)		Not Proficient (Below Standard or Emerging/Developing)	
4 Thorough Understanding	3 Adequate Understanding	2 Partial Understanding	1 Minimal Understanding

- Identify trends (i.e., overall, what traits were strong or weak) and how that will impact instruction.
- Prioritize the weakest trends and plan instruction to remediate weaknesses.

Student Directions

Grade 5 Opinion Writing Task A

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: You will read two letters about a disagreement over the ownership of a bicycle. Take notes as you read. You will later write an opinion about who is the rightful owner of the bicycle.

STEP 1

Read the passages and take notes on these sources.

Read the following letters written by the students who claim ownership of the bicycle. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passage and your notes as often as you like.

- “Letter 1 (Adrian Terrazas)”
- “Letter 2 (Jacqueline Jones)”

As you read each letter, think about the writer’s argument. You will use this information to write an opinion essay.

STEP 2

Plan and write your opinion.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

You are a member of the Mediation Team. Write a formal letter to the other members of the team expressing your opinion as to the rightful owner of the bicycle.

STEP 3

Revise and edit your opinion.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Statement of Purpose/Focus – how well you clearly state your opinions on the topic and maintain your focus
- Organization – how well your ideas logically flow from the introduction to conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Evidence – how well you provide evidence from sources about your opinions and elaborate with specific information
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

GO ON 

Adrian Terrazas and Jacqueline Jones have a disagreement over the ownership of a bicycle. Their school has a peer mediation program, which is designed to help students resolve conflicts. Adrian and Jacqueline have submitted the following statements to the mediation team. Each hopes to resolve the disagreement in his or her own favor.

Letter 1 (Adrian Terrazas)

Dear Mediation Team:

- 1 Jacqueline Jones has my bicycle, and I want it back.
- 2 That’s the bottom line, but to give you the full story, I need to go all the way back to last year, fourth grade. For my tenth birthday, my uncle Diego gave me the neatest, sweetest present in history: a stripped-down, high-performance, full-suspension, steel-frame mountain bike. Let me tell you a little bit about this masterpiece. Diego made this bike by hand. He welded the frame together—those welds cascade like a perfect stack of dimes around each joint—and he attached all the hardware himself. He did everything. It was the third bike Diego ever made. He’s made four more since then. It isn’t a fancy machine; it’s a beast. It was built to go off-road and to handle steep and rough terrain. It can skip across loose sand and loose gravel. It can fly over washouts and ruts. It’s a dream. Or it was a dream. Now it’s a nightmare.
- 3 Flash forward to last month. I was heading down North Central to the library and I stopped at a convenience store to get a drink. I left Percy—that’s my bike, Percy—out front. I figured she’d be fine. I was just in there for a minute. Maybe a minute and a half. And when I came out, she was gone. Do you know what that feels like? It’s heart-stopping. One minute, everything is great. The next minute, your whole world is destroyed. And I am not exaggerating. Destroyed. Not only did I love that bike, I relied on it. I rode it to school every day. I rode it to baseball practice twice a week. I rode it on trails with Diego. I was devastated to lose that bike.
- 4 Now, I know what you’re going to say: I should have locked my bike up. I agree completely. It was stupid to leave it unlocked, even for a minute. But that doesn’t change the fact that it is illegal to steal someone’s property. And that bike is mine.
- 5 Flash forward again to last Wednesday. I was walking (no bike, remember) to school when I noticed Jacqueline Jones tooling by on some hideous pink monstrosity with tassels on the handlebar grips, reflectors in the spokes, and a basket on the front. What made the image so wrong was that all this junk was ruining a fine-looking mountain-bike frame. Then it hit me. It was *my* mountain-bike frame.
- 6 I realize I acted unreasonably when I first discovered that this pathetic pink thing was my bike. I shouldn’t have jumped to conclusions. I know now that Jacqueline didn’t steal my bike. I apologize for yelling, and I assure you that I have learned a valuable lesson that will govern my behavior in the future.
- 7 But regardless of my behavior, the bike belongs to me, not to Jacqueline. I ask you to consider the evidence I have presented and to rule that my beloved bike be returned to its rightful owner: me.

Sincerely,

Adrian Terrazas

“Letter 1 (Adrian Terrazas)” © WestEd.

Working Copy March 14, 2013



Letter 2 (Jacqueline Jones)

Dear Mediation Team,

- 1 Thank you for taking the time to review my case. With your wisdom and experience, you will, no doubt, untangle this tricky ownership web.
- 2 Here is the problem: Last week, Adrian Terrazas confronted me in the street on the way to school and started yelling at me, saying that my new bike was actually his bike. Maybe it used to be his bike, but it is mine now, legally and morally. Allow me to explain why.
- 3 Everyone at school remembers the destruction of my last bicycle. It was crushed when the trash truck accidentally set one of the dumpsters on top of it after emptying the trash. (I shouldn't have left my bike leaning against the back of the dumpster, I know.) So I asked my parents to please get me a new bicycle. I can't take the bus because we live just under a mile from school, so without a bicycle, I have to walk to school. That means I have to get up half an hour earlier every morning, which is really difficult for me because I'm really more of a night person. Two weekends ago, my dad came home with a new bike. Well, a new used bike. He got it at the second-hand shop down the road. I'm afraid he was more excited about the bike than I was; it was really kind of ugly and beat up. It was plain metal, with no paint or anything on it. But my dad was going on and on about how great it was, its power and balance and speed. I didn't want to disappoint him by telling him that it was too ugly to ride. Instead I said thanks, and I asked if I could paint it like my last bicycle. That seemed to pain him a little, but he agreed.
- 4 Painting my new bicycle was a bigger job than I expected. After conducting an Internet search to find out the best approach, I began by taking the bike apart. Off came the wheels, seat, handlebars, chain—everything. Then I covered a low table in the garage with newspapers and put the frame on top. Using gloves, I cleaned the frame carefully, with a strong cleaner, to remove the dirt and oil so that the paint would stick to the metal and not flake off. Then I applied a surface primer, which is a kind of paint that is good to use for the first coat. Finally, I applied the top coat with a different kind of paint, which was almost the exact shade of pink as my last bike. It was a hard job, but it looked really good!
- 5 Putting the bicycle back together was even harder. Once again, I had to go on the Internet to figure it out. But I did it! And the experience of transforming that ugly duckling into a beautiful swan made me really love my new bike. After I got it all back together, my dad took me to the store for a few finishing touches. I got a cute seat cover, which has a cool lightning bolt. I got some tassels to put on the handlebar grips. They sparkle in the sun and catch the wind when I pedal really fast. And as a finishing touch, I got a basket to put on the front, so I can put my backpack in it while I ride.
- 6 You can see that not only did I acquire my new bicycle legally, I also put a great deal of work into it, improving its appearance and making it mine. Adrian obviously did not respect his bike because he didn't take very good care of it. Even with the new paint, you can still see all the scratches on the frame from when he owned it. I hope the wise mediation team will agree with me and recognize that, regardless of Adrian's prior ownership, the bicycle is now legally and morally mine.

- 7 Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Jones

"Letter 2 (Jaqueline Jones)" © WestEd.

Working Copy March 14, 2013



Directions for Administering the Grade 5 Opinion Writing Task A

Session 1 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials

Do: Hand out the materials students will need to complete the formative writing task:

- ___ Student Directions Opinion Writing Task A
- ___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Opinion Writing (optional)
- ___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)
- ___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)
- ___ Pencils
- ___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Read the Directions Aloud to the Students

Say: *Over two sessions, you will write an opinion essay about who is the rightful owner of a bicycle. During the first session, you will have 45 minutes to read the directions, read some information about a disagreement over the ownership of a bicycle, read how the teachers will evaluate your essay, and begin planning and drafting your essay. During the second 45 minute session, you will finish drafting your essay and then revise and edit your final draft.*

*You have a pencil and blank paper to use for taking notes and planning your essay. You may write, highlight, and underline on the student directions and passages. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Find the YOUR ASSIGNMENT section at the top of page 1 of the student directions. Read along while I read aloud. It says:

You will read two letters about a disagreement over the ownership of a bicycle. Take notes as you read. You will later write an opinion about who is the rightful owner of the bicycle.

Next, find STEP 1. It says:

Read the passages and take notes on these sources.

Read the following letters written by the students who claim ownership of the bicycle. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passage and your notes as often as you like.

- *“Letter 1 (Adrian Terrazas)”*
- *“Letter 2 (Jacqueline Jones)”*

As you read each letter, think about the writer’s argument. You will use this information to write an opinion essay.

You will read this on your own; I will not read this to you.

Now, find STEP 2. It says:

Plan and write your opinion.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

You are a member of the Mediation Team. Write a formal letter to the other members of the team expressing your opinion as to the rightful owner of the bicycle.

3. Read the Evaluation Information

Say: *Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says:*

Revise and edit your opinion.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- *Statement of Purpose/Focus* – *how well you clearly state your opinions on the topic and maintain your focus*
- *Organization* – *how well your ideas logically flow from the introduction to conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay*
- *Elaboration of Evidence* – *how well you provide evidence from sources about your opinions and elaborate with specific information*
- *Language and Vocabulary* – *how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose*
- *Conventions* – *how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling*

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

4. Answer Any Questions

Say: *I can read the directions as often as needed, but I cannot translate, edit your work, explain, or give examples on what or how to write. Do you have any questions before we begin?*

Do: Answer questions by rereading the directions.

5. Begin Planning and Drafting

Say: *Now, go back to STEP 1 of the student directions sheet. You have 45 minutes to read these passages, take notes, and start planning and drafting your essay. You should think about the information you have read, which should help you write your essay.*

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the first session will end.

Say: *Now, read your assignment and begin your work. Manage your time carefully so that you have time to plan and draft your essay. I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may begin.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

6. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left.*

7. End Session 1

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. Write your name on the top of your directions paper and the scratch paper. You will finish writing your essay during the next session.*

Do: If your next session will start on the next day, collect all materials. If your next session will continue on the same day, provide a 15 minute break before beginning the second session.

Session 2 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials (if necessary)

Do: Hand out the things students will need:

- ___ Student Directions Opinion Writing Task A
- ___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Opinion Writing (optional)
- ___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)
- ___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)
- ___ Pencils
- ___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Review the Directions

Say: *During the first session, you read some information about a disagreement over the ownership of a bicycle, took notes on these sources, and started planning and drafting an opinion essay. Now, you will have 45 minutes to review, revise, and edit your essay. You may reread the passages and use the notes you wrote on your scratch paper. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Let's review how your essay will be evaluated and then you can reread your essay and begin revising and editing. Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says: evaluated. It says:

Revise and edit your opinion.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Statement of Purpose/Focus – how well you clearly state your opinions on the topic and maintain your focus
- Organization – how well your ideas logically flow from the introduction to conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Evidence – how well you provide evidence from sources about your opinions and elaborate with specific information
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

3. Reread, Revise, and Edit

Say: *Now, continue working on your essay. Manage your time carefully so that you can reread the essay you started during the last session, finish any drafting, and revise and edit for your final draft.*

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the second session will end.

Say: *I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may continue writing your essay now.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

4. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left. Please work quickly to finish your final draft. Remember, teachers reading your essay will only evaluate the final draft.*

5. End Session 2

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. I will collect your pencils and scratch paper.*

Do: Collect student writing by asking students to print their essays, or email them to you, or drop them in your virtual inbox.

Student Directions

Grade 5 Opinion Writing Task B

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: You will read a passage about life at the South Pole. Take notes as you read. You will later write an opinion essay based on what you have read.

STEP 1**Read the passage and take notes on this source.**

Read the following passage about living at the South Pole. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passage and your notes as often as you like.

- “A Day at the South Pole”

As you read, take notes on specific details about life at the South Pole. You will use this information to write an opinion essay.

STEP 2**Plan and write your opinion.**

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

Would you enjoy living at the South Pole? Why or why not?

STEP 3**Revise and edit your opinion.**

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Statement of Purpose/Focus – how well you clearly state your opinions on the topic and maintain your focus
- Organization – how well your ideas logically flow from the introduction to conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Evidence – how well you provide evidence from sources about your opinions and elaborate with specific information
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

A large black arrow pointing to the right with the words "GO ON" written inside in white capital letters.

A Day at the South Pole

- 1 All is dark and silent. The moon and stars give the only light. Eventually one becomes aware that there is a sound, one constant sound: the roaring wind. It is night at the South Pole.
- 2 If we measure a day as the amount of time between sunrise and sunset, a day in the South Pole lasts six months. Then sunset brings six months of night. This long night, when there is no sun at all, is the polar winter. Temperatures drop to -76 degrees Fahrenheit. Strong winds rush at speeds of 50 miles an hour. The cold, the wind, and the dark make it impossible for planes to land. In winter, the South Pole is completely cut off from the rest of the world.
- 3 Even in summer, the South Pole is never warmer than -18 degrees Fahrenheit. There's no rain and no snow. The snow at the South Pole is blown there by wind. The South Pole is so cold and dry that no animals can survive there. The only native plant life is a kind of moss.
- 4 Still, people live in the South Pole year-round. The Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station is home to a team of scientists and a support crew who live and work there.
- 5 Life in the South Pole takes extra effort—and lots of special gear. You had better bundle up before you open the heavy steel door to go out. You have to wear bulky snowsuits; hooded, fur-trimmed parkas; strong boots; and thick gloves. The suits and parkas are bright red so that you can be seen even in the whirling white of a snowstorm.
- 6 In summer, you might ski or go running. But an hour or two is about the longest you can stand to be outside at a time. At the South Pole Station, most of your life happens indoors.
- 7 You wake up in your wooden bunk in a cozy room with just enough space for a bed, drawers, and a desk. Down the hall you go for a breakfast of ham and eggs or pancakes in the galley, where there is a large kitchen and cafeteria. If it's summer, you eat a bowl of berries flown in from New Zealand, but in winter, the only freshies—fresh fruits and veggies—are those grown in the station greenhouse.
- 8 Some days, you go straight to work in the lab. When you have free time, you watch movies in the theater, a room with a large screen and comfy couches. You might hang out in the lounge with your friends, where you can play pool or video games or read. The largest indoor space in the station is the gym, where there's a basketball court and an exercise room. When it's time for band practice, you head to the music room to play drums or guitar. Back in your room, you go on the Internet and write e-mails to your family and friends. You can even call them on a satellite phone. If you don't feel well, you stop at the medical clinic to see the doctor.
- 9 Everything you need is inside the station; you can't just run out to the store or order something online. The station is packed with supplies to last through the winter. Water is precious; each person only gets to shower twice a week, for two minutes each time. Trash must be packed up. There's no garbage dump at the South Pole, so all the trash is flown to New Zealand.
- 10 It takes a lot of work and planning to live at the South Pole. Not everyone can adapt. Living so far from the rest of the world feels strange. But for the few people who get the chance, life at the South Pole is an exciting adventure.

"A Day at the South Pole" © WestEd.



Directions for Administering the Grade 5 Opinion Writing Task B

Session 1 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials

Do: Hand out the materials students will need to complete the formative writing task:

- ___ Student Directions Opinion Writing Task B
- ___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Opinion Writing (optional)
- ___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)
- ___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)
- ___ Pencils
- ___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Read the Directions Aloud to the Students

Say: *Over two sessions, you will write an opinion essay about living at the South Pole. During the first session, you will have 45 minutes to read the directions, read some information about the South Pole, read how the teachers will evaluate your essay, and begin planning and drafting your essay. During the second 45 minute session, you will finish drafting your essay and then revise and edit your final draft.*

*You have a pencil and blank paper to use for taking notes and planning your essay. You may write, highlight, and underline on the student directions and passage. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Find the YOUR ASSIGNMENT section at the top of page 1 of the student directions. Read along while I read aloud. It says:

You will read a passage about life at the South Pole. Take notes as you read. You will later write an opinion essay based on what you have read.

Next, find STEP 1. It says:

Read the passage and take notes on this source.

Read the following passage about living at the South Pole. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passage and your notes as often as you like.

- *“A Day at the South Pole”*

As you read, take notes on specific details about life at the South Pole. You will use this information to write an opinion essay.

You will read this on your own; I will not read this to you.

Now, find STEP 2. It says:

Plan and write your opinion.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

Would you enjoy living at the South Pole? Why or why not?

3. Read the Evaluation Information

Say: Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says:

Revise and edit your opinion.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Statement of Purpose/Focus – how well you clearly state your opinions on the topic and maintain your focus
- Organization – how well your ideas logically flow from the introduction to conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Evidence – how well you provide evidence from sources about your opinions and elaborate with specific information
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

4. Answer Any Questions

Say: I can read the directions as often as needed, but I cannot translate, edit your work, explain, or give examples on what or how to write. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Do: Answer questions by rereading the directions.

5. Begin Planning and Drafting

Say: Now, go back to STEP 1 of the student directions sheet. You have 45 minutes to read this passage, take notes, and start planning and drafting your essay. You should think about the information you have read, which should help you write your essay.

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the first session will end.

Say: Now, read your assignment and begin your work. Manage your time carefully so that you have time to plan and draft your essay. I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may begin.

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

6. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left.*

7. End Session 1

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. Write your name on the top of your directions paper and the scratch paper. You will finish writing your essay during the next session.*

Do: If your next session will start on the next day, collect all materials. If your next session will continue on the same day, provide a 15 minute break before beginning the second session.

Session 2 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials (if necessary)

Do: Hand out the things students will need:

- ___ Student Directions Opinion Writing Task B
- ___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Opinion Writing (optional)
- ___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)
- ___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)
- ___ Pencils
- ___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Review the Directions

Say: *During the first session, you read some information about the South Pole, took notes on this source, and started planning and drafting an opinion essay. Now, you will have 45 minutes to review, revise, and edit your essay. You may reread the passage and use the notes you wrote on your scratch paper. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Let's review how your essay will be evaluated and then you can reread your essay and begin revising and editing. Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says: evaluated. It says:

Revise and edit your opinion.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Statement of Purpose/Focus – how well you clearly state your opinions on the topic and maintain your focus

- Organization – how well your ideas logically flow from the introduction to conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Evidence – how well you provide evidence from sources about your opinions and elaborate with specific information
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

3. Reread, Revise, and Edit

Say: *Now, continue working on your essay. Manage your time carefully so that you can reread the essay you started during the last session, finish any drafting, and revise and edit for your final draft.*

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the second session will end.

Say: *I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may continue writing your essay now.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

4. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left. Please work quickly to finish your final draft. Remember, teachers reading your essay will only evaluate the final draft.*

5. End Session 2

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. I will collect your pencils and scratch paper.*

Do: Collect student writing by asking students to print their essays, or email them to you, or drop them in your virtual inbox.

Student Directions

Grade 5 Informative/Explanatory Writing Task A

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: You will read two passages about people who explore the extreme climate of the South Pole. Take notes as you read. You will later write an explanatory essay about what you have read.

STEP 1

Read the passages and take notes on these sources.

Read the following passages about explorers at the South Pole. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passage and your notes as often as you like.

- “Explorer Wanted: Scout the South Pole”
- “A Day at the South Pole”

As you read, notice specific details from the text that show the challenges of living and working at the South Pole.

STEP 2

Plan and write your essay.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

Explain why living and working at the South Pole can be challenging.

STEP 3

Revise and edit your essay.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Statement of Purpose/Focus – how well you clearly state and maintain your controlling idea or main idea
- Organization– how well the ideas progress from the introduction to the conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Evidence – how well you provide evidence from sources about your topic and elaborate with specific information
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

GO ON 

Explorer Wanted: Scout the South Pole

- 1 In the early 1900s, explorers climbed the highest heights and crossed the deepest oceans. They boldly sought Earth's last great frontiers. These adventurers from around the world raced to the South Pole.
- 2 Before, the Antarctic had only been seen by hunters chasing whales and seals. No one had yet tried to find the South Pole. In December of 1911, Captain Roald Amundsen from Norway was the first to plant a country's flag there. A month later, Captain Robert Scott of England followed in Amundsen's footsteps. Scott was disappointed at being second. He complained that the "terrible" South Pole was "an awful place."
- 3 Years after billowing snowdrifts erased all traces of those journeys, Commander Richard Byrd planned to lead an expedition to the icy Antarctic in 1928.
- 4 A strong believer in scouting, Byrd launched a national contest to find a Boy Scout to join him. There were almost a million American Scouts. Thousands applied for a spot on Byrd's team. Only 88 of these would-be thrill-seekers met the requirements. Only six Scouts made it to the final round. The winner was Paul Siple of Erie, Pennsylvania.
- 5 Having risen from Boy Scout to Eagle Scout and Sea Scout, Paul sailed through hours of tests. He proved that he had what it took to survive the South Pole. But the trip was costly. A local newspaper article inspired people to help. Pennies, nickels, and dimes rolled in. Soon Paul had enough to pay for the trip.
- 6 When Paul waved goodbye to his family, he was only 19 years old. Paul's first job was as the mess boy. Paul's hard work in the kitchen was rewarded. He became one of Byrd's most trusted men. He didn't return to the United States until he was 22.
- 7 Paul didn't share Captain Scott's opinion of the South Pole. He fell in love with the "awful" Antarctic. During his life, he made five more trips to the South Pole. He served as a biologist and studied the lichen, or moss, that grows in the region. Then Paul learned how to be a dog sledder. He camped out in the bare, snowy flatlands. He studied how humans could survive the bitter cold and raging winds. This helped him invent the formula that measures wind-chill factor. This formula is still used today.
- 8 Paul's greatest achievement lives on at the South Pole. In the summer of 1956–57, Paul founded the first permanent station at the South Pole. This paved the way for future scientific studies there. Once just a Boy Scout from Pennsylvania, Paul Siple changed our understanding of the world we live in.

Explorer Wanted

Must be an experienced Boy Scout, with excellent camping skills, between the ages of 17 and 20. Must be in excellent health, and able to stand cold weather.

To apply, you must provide:

- Proof of scouting skills from the troop leader
- School records that show good grades
- Proof of good health from a doctor
- A letter from parents giving permission
- Letters and other proof of good character and bravery
- An essay explaining why you want to go on the expedition and what makes you a good candidate



A Day at the South Pole

- 1 All is dark and silent. The moon and stars give the only light. Eventually one becomes aware that there is a sound, one constant sound: the roaring wind. It is night at the South Pole.
- 2 If we measure a day as the amount of time between sunrise and sunset, a day in the South Pole lasts six months. Then sunset brings six months of night. This long night, when there is no sun at all, is the polar winter. Temperatures drop to -76 degrees Fahrenheit. Strong winds rush at speeds of 50 miles an hour. The cold, the wind, and the dark make it impossible for planes to land. In winter, the South Pole is completely cut off from the rest of the world.
- 3 Even in summer, the South Pole is never warmer than -18 degrees Fahrenheit. There's no rain and no snow. The snow at the South Pole is blown there by wind. The South Pole is so cold and dry that no animals can survive there. The only native plant life is a kind of moss.
- 4 Still, people live in the South Pole year-round. The Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station is home to a team of scientists and a support crew who live and work there.
- 5 Life in the South Pole takes extra effort—and lots of special gear. You had better bundle up before you open the heavy steel door to go out. You have to wear bulky snowsuits; hooded, fur-trimmed parkas; strong boots; and thick gloves. The suits and parkas are bright red so that you can be seen even in the whirling white of a snowstorm.
- 6 In summer, you might ski or go running. But an hour or two is about the longest you can stand to be outside at a time. At the South Pole Station, most of your life happens indoors.
- 7 You wake up in your wooden bunk in a cozy room with just enough space for a bed, drawers, and a desk. Down the hall you go for a breakfast of ham and eggs or pancakes in the galley, where there is a large kitchen and cafeteria. If it's summer, you eat a bowl of berries flown in from New Zealand, but in winter, the only freshies—fresh fruits and veggies—are those grown in the station greenhouse.
- 8 Some days, you go straight to work in the lab. When you have free time, you watch movies in the theater, a room with a large screen and comfy couches. You might hang out in the lounge with your friends, where you can play pool or video games or read. The largest indoor space in the station is the gym, where there's a basketball court and an exercise room. When it's time for band practice, you head to the music room to play drums or guitar. Back in your room, you go on the Internet and write e-mails to your family and friends. You can even call them on a satellite phone. If you don't feel well, you stop at the medical clinic to see the doctor.
- 9 Everything you need is inside the station; you can't just run out to the store or order something online. The station is packed with supplies to last through the winter. Water is precious; each person only gets to shower twice a week, for two minutes each time. Trash must be packed up. There's no garbage dump at the South Pole, so all the trash is flown to New Zealand. Student Page 4
- 10 It takes a lot of work and planning to live at the South Pole. Not everyone can adapt. Living so far from the rest of the world feels strange. But for the few people who get the chance, life at the South Pole is an exciting adventure.



Directions for Administering the Grade 5 Informative/Explanatory Writing Task A

Session 1 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials

Do: Hand out the materials students will need to complete the formative writing task:

- ___ Student Directions Informative/Explanatory Writing Task A
- ___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Informative/Explanatory Writing (optional)
- ___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)
- ___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)
- ___ Pencils
- ___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Read the Directions Aloud to the Students

Say: *Over two sessions, you will write an explanatory essay about the challenges of living and working at the South Pole. During the first session, you will have 45 minutes to read the directions, read some information about explorers at the South Pole, read how the teachers will evaluate your essay, and begin planning and drafting your essay. During the second 45 minute session, you will finish drafting your essay and then revise and edit your final draft.*

*You have a pencil and blank paper to use for taking notes and planning your essay. You may write, highlight, and underline on the student directions and passages. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Find the YOUR ASSIGNMENT section at the top of page 1 of the student directions. Read along while I read aloud. It says:

You will read two passages about people who explore the extreme climate of the South Pole. Take notes as you read. You will later write an explanatory essay about what you have read.

Next, find STEP 1. It says:

Read the passages and take notes on these sources.

Read the following passages about explorers at the South Pole. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passage and your notes as often as you like.

- *“Explorer Wanted: Scout the South Pole”*
- *“A Day at the South Pole”*

As you read, notice specific details from the text that show the challenges of living and working at the South Pole.

You will read this on your own; I will not read this to you.

Now, find STEP 2. It says:

Plan and write your essay.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

Explain why living and working at the South Pole can be challenging.

3. Read the Evaluation Information

Say: *Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says:*

Revise and edit your essay.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- *Statement of Purpose/Focus – how well you clearly state and maintain your controlling idea or main idea*
- *Organization– how well the ideas progress from the introduction to the conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay*
- *Elaboration of Evidence – how well you provide evidence from sources about your topic and elaborate with specific information*
- *Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose*
- *Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling*

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

4. Answer Any Questions

Say: *I can read the directions as often as needed, but I cannot translate, edit your work, explain, or give examples on what or how to write. Do you have any questions before we begin?*

Do: Answer questions by rereading the directions.

5. Begin Planning and Drafting

Say: *Now, go back to STEP 1 of the student directions sheet. You have 45 minutes to read these passages, take notes, and start planning and drafting your essay. You should think about the information you have read, which should help you write your essay.*

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the first session will end.

Say: *Now, read your assignment and begin your work. Manage your time carefully so that you have time to plan and draft your essay. I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may begin.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

6. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left.*

7. End Session 1

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. Write your name on the top of your directions paper and the scratch paper. You will finish writing your essay during the next session.*

Do: If your next session will start on the next day, collect all materials. If your next session will continue on the same day, provide a 15 minute break before beginning the second session.

Session 2 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials (if necessary)

Do: Hand out the things students will need:

- ___ Student Directions Informative/Explanatory Writing Task A
- ___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Informative/Explanatory Writing (optional)
- ___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)
- ___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)
- ___ Pencils
- ___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Review the Directions

Say: *During the first session, you read some information about explorers at the South Pole, took notes on these sources, and started planning and drafting an informative/explanatory essay. Now, you will have 45 minutes to review, revise, and edit your essay. You may reread the passages and use the notes you wrote on your scratch paper. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Let's review how your essay will be evaluated and then you can reread your essay and begin revising and editing. Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says: evaluated. It says:

Revise and edit your essay.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Statement of Purpose/Focus – how well you clearly state and maintain your controlling idea or main idea
- Organization– how well the ideas progress from the introduction to the conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Evidence – how well you provide evidence from sources about your topic and elaborate with specific information
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

3. Reread, Revise, and Edit

Say: *Now, continue working on your essay. Manage your time carefully so that you can reread the essay you started during the last session, finish any drafting, and revise and edit for your final draft.*

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the second session will end.

Say: *I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may continue writing your essay now.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

4. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left. Please work quickly to finish your final draft. Remember, teachers reading your essay will only evaluate the final draft.*

5. End Session 2

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. I will collect your pencils and scratch paper.*

Do: Collect student writing by asking students to print their essays, or email them to you, or drop them in your virtual inbox.

Student Directions

Grade 5 Informative/Explanatory Writing Task B

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: You will read two passages about people who explore the extreme climate of the South Pole. Take notes as you read. You will later write an explanatory essay about what you have read.

STEP 1

Read the passages and take notes on these sources.

Read the following passages about explorers at the South Pole. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passage and your notes as often as you like.

- “Explorer Wanted: Scout the South Pole”
- “A Day at the South Pole”

As you read, consider how living and working at the South Pole has changed over time and how it has stayed the same.

STEP 2

Plan and write your essay.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

Compare the experiences of early explorers and modern-day scientists at the South Pole.

STEP 3

Revise and edit your essay.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Statement of Purpose/Focus – how well you clearly state and maintain your controlling idea or main idea
- Organization– how well the ideas progress from the introduction to the conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Evidence – how well you provide evidence from sources about your topic and elaborate with specific information
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

GO ON 

Explorer Wanted: Scout the South Pole

- 1 In the early 1900s, explorers climbed the highest heights and crossed the deepest oceans. They boldly sought Earth's last great frontiers. These adventurers from around the world raced to the South Pole.
- 2 Before, the Antarctic had only been seen by hunters chasing whales and seals. No one had yet tried to find the South Pole. In December of 1911, Captain Roald Amundsen from Norway was the first to plant a country's flag there. A month later, Captain Robert Scott of England followed in Amundsen's footsteps. Scott was disappointed at being second. He complained that the "terrible" South Pole was "an awful place."
- 3 Years after billowing snowdrifts erased all traces of those journeys, Commander Richard Byrd planned to lead an expedition to the icy Antarctic in 1928.
- 4 A strong believer in scouting, Byrd launched a national contest to find a Boy Scout to join him. There were almost a million American Scouts. Thousands applied for a spot on Byrd's team. Only 88 of these would-be thrill-seekers met the requirements. Only six Scouts made it to the final round. The winner was Paul Siple of Erie, Pennsylvania.
- 5 Having risen from Boy Scout to Eagle Scout and Sea Scout, Paul sailed through hours of tests. He proved that he had what it took to survive the South Pole. But the trip was costly. A local newspaper article inspired people to help. Pennies, nickels, and dimes rolled in. Soon Paul had enough to pay for the trip.
- 6 When Paul waved goodbye to his family, he was only 19 years old. Paul's first job was as the mess boy. Paul's hard work in the kitchen was rewarded. He became one of Byrd's most trusted men. He didn't return to the United States until he was 22.
- 7 Paul didn't share Captain Scott's opinion of the South Pole. He fell in love with the "awful" Antarctic. During his life, he made five more trips to the South Pole. He served as a biologist and studied the lichen, or moss, that grows in the region. Then Paul learned how to be a dog sledder. He camped out in the bare, snowy flatlands. He studied how humans could survive the bitter cold and raging winds. This helped him invent the formula that measures wind-chill factor. This formula is still used today.
- 8 Paul's greatest achievement lives on at the South Pole. In the summer of 1956–57, Paul founded the first permanent station at the South Pole. This paved the way for future scientific studies there. Once just a Boy Scout from Pennsylvania, Paul Siple changed our understanding of the world we live in.

Explorer Wanted

Must be an experienced Boy Scout, with excellent camping skills, between the ages of 17 and 20. Must be in excellent health, and able to stand cold weather.

To apply, you must provide:

- Proof of scouting skills from the troop leader
- School records that show good grades
- Proof of good health from a doctor
- A letter from parents giving permission
- Letters and other proof of good character and bravery
- An essay explaining why you want to go on the expedition and what makes you a good candidate



A Day at the South Pole

- 1 All is dark and silent. The moon and stars give the only light. Eventually one becomes aware that there is a sound, one constant sound: the roaring wind. It is night at the South Pole.
- 2 If we measure a day as the amount of time between sunrise and sunset, a day in the South Pole lasts six months. Then sunset brings six months of night. This long night, when there is no sun at all, is the polar winter. Temperatures drop to -76 degrees Fahrenheit. Strong winds rush at speeds of 50 miles an hour. The cold, the wind, and the dark make it impossible for planes to land. In winter, the South Pole is completely cut off from the rest of the world.
- 3 Even in summer, the South Pole is never warmer than -18 degrees Fahrenheit. There's no rain and no snow. The snow at the South Pole is blown there by wind. The South Pole is so cold and dry that no animals can survive there. The only native plant life is a kind of moss.
- 4 Still, people live in the South Pole year-round. The Amundsen-Scott South Pole Station is home to a team of scientists and a support crew who live and work there.
- 5 Life in the South Pole takes extra effort—and lots of special gear. You had better bundle up before you open the heavy steel door to go out. You have to wear bulky snowsuits; hooded, fur-trimmed parkas; strong boots; and thick gloves. The suits and parkas are bright red so that you can be seen even in the whirling white of a snowstorm.
- 6 In summer, you might ski or go running. But an hour or two is about the longest you can stand to be outside at a time. At the South Pole Station, most of your life happens indoors.
- 7 You wake up in your wooden bunk in a cozy room with just enough space for a bed, drawers, and a desk. Down the hall you go for a breakfast of ham and eggs or pancakes in the galley, where there is a large kitchen and cafeteria. If it's summer, you eat a bowl of berries flown in from New Zealand, but in winter, the only freshies—fresh fruits and veggies—are those grown in the station greenhouse.
- 8 Some days, you go straight to work in the lab. When you have free time, you watch movies in the theater, a room with a large screen and comfy couches. You might hang out in the lounge with your friends, where you can play pool or video games or read. The largest indoor space in the station is the gym, where there's a basketball court and an exercise room. When it's time for band practice, you head to the music room to play drums or guitar. Back in your room, you go on the Internet and write e-mails to your family and friends. You can even call them on a satellite phone. If you don't feel well, you stop at the medical clinic to see the doctor.
- 9 Everything you need is inside the station; you can't just run out to the store or order something online. The station is packed with supplies to last through the winter. Water is precious; each person only gets to shower twice a week, for two minutes each time. Trash must be packed up. There's no garbage dump at the South Pole, so all the trash is flown to New Zealand. Student Page 4
- 10 It takes a lot of work and planning to live at the South Pole. Not everyone can adapt. Living so far from the rest of the world feels strange. But for the few people who get the chance, life at the South Pole is an exciting adventure.



Directions for Administering the Grade 5 Informative/Explanatory Writing Task B

Session 1 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials

Do: Hand out the materials students will need to complete the formative writing task:

- ___ Student Directions Informative/Explanatory Writing Task B
- ___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Informative/Explanatory Writing (optional)
- ___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)
- ___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)
- ___ Pencils
- ___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Read the Directions Aloud to the Students

Say: *Over two sessions, you will write an informative/explanatory essay about how living and working at the South Pole has changed over time. During the first session, you will have 45 minutes to read the directions, read some information about explorers at the South Pole, read how the teachers will evaluate your essay, and begin planning and drafting your essay. During the second 45 minute session, you will finish drafting your essay and then revise and edit your final draft.*

*You have a pencil and blank paper to use for taking notes and planning your essay. You may write, highlight, and underline on the student directions and passages. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Find the YOUR ASSIGNMENT section at the top of page 1 of the student directions. Read along while I read aloud. It says:

You will read two passages about people who explore the extreme climate of the South Pole. Take notes as you read. You will later write an explanatory essay about what you have read.

Next, find STEP 1. It says:

Read the passages and take notes on these sources.

Read the following passages about explorers at the South Pole. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passage and your notes as often as you like.

- *“Explorer Wanted: Scout the South Pole”*
- *“A Day at the South Pole”*

As you read, consider how living and working at the South Pole has changed over time and how it has stayed the same.

You will read this on your own; I will not read this to you.

Now, find STEP 2. It says:

Plan and write your essay.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

Compare the experiences of early explorers and modern-day scientists at the South Pole.

3. Read the Evaluation Information

Say: *Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says:*

Revise and edit your essay.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- *Statement of Purpose/Focus – how well you clearly state and maintain your controlling idea or main idea*
- *Organization– how well the ideas progress from the introduction to the conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay*
- *Elaboration of Evidence – how well you provide evidence from sources about your topic and elaborate with specific information*
- *Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose*
- *Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling*

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

4. Answer Any Questions

Say: *I can read the directions as often as needed, but I cannot translate, edit your work, explain, or give examples on what or how to write. Do you have any questions before we begin?*

Do: Answer questions by rereading the directions.

5. Begin Planning and Drafting

Say: *Now, go back to STEP 1 of the student directions sheet. You have 45 minutes to read these passages, take notes, and start planning and drafting your essay. You should think about the information you have read, which should help you write your essay.*

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the first session will end.

Say: *Now, read your assignment and begin your work. Manage your time carefully so that you have time to plan and draft your essay. I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may begin.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

6. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left.*

7. End Session 1

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. Write your name on the top of your directions paper and the scratch paper. You will finish writing your essay during the next session.*

Do: If your next session will start on the next day, collect all materials. If your next session will continue on the same day, provide a 15 minute break before beginning the second session.

Session 2 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials (if necessary)

Do: Hand out the things students will need:

- ___ Student Directions Informative/Explanatory Writing Task B
- ___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Informative/Explanatory Writing (optional)
- ___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)
- ___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)
- ___ Pencils
- ___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Review the Directions

Say: *During the first session, you read some information about explorers at the South Pole, took notes on these sources, and started planning and drafting an informative/explanatory essay. Now, you will have 45 minutes to review, revise, and edit your essay. You may reread the passages and use the notes you wrote on your scratch paper. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Let's review how your essay will be evaluated and then you can reread your essay and begin revising and editing. Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says: evaluated. It says:

Revise and edit your essay.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Statement of Purpose/Focus – how well you clearly state and maintain your controlling idea or main idea
- Organization– how well the ideas progress from the introduction to the conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Evidence – how well you provide evidence from sources about your topic and elaborate with specific information
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

3. Reread, Revise, and Edit

Say: *Now, continue working on your essay. Manage your time carefully so that you can reread the essay you started during the last session, finish any drafting, and revise and edit for your final draft.*

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the second session will end.

Say: *I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may continue writing your essay now.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

4. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left. Please work quickly to finish your final draft. Remember, teachers reading your essay will only evaluate the final draft.*

5. End Session 2

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. I will collect your pencils and scratch paper.*

Do: Collect student writing by asking students to print their essays, or email them to you, or drop them in your virtual inbox.

Student Directions

Grade 5 Informative/Explanatory Writing Task C

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: You will read two passages about how astronauts sleep in space. Take notes as you read. You will later write an explanatory essay about what you have read.

STEP 1

Read the passages and take notes on these sources.

Read the following passages about sleeping in space. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passage and your notes as often as you like.

- “Floating to Sleep”
- “Space Sleep”

As you read, consider the problems astronauts face while sleeping in space and how they solve these problems.

STEP 2

Plan and write your essay.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

Write an essay about the problems of sleeping in space and explain how astronauts solve these problems. Be sure to include details from both passages.

STEP 3

Revise and edit your essay.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Statement of Purpose/Focus – how well you clearly state and maintain your controlling idea or main idea
- Organization– how well the ideas progress from the introduction to the conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Evidence – how well you provide evidence from sources about your topic and elaborate with specific information
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

GO ON 

Floating to Sleep

by Marianne J. Dyson

- 1 On a space station, you can sleep on the ultimate air mattress. In fact, forget the mattress—just sleep on air! No lumps, no springs, no sloshing water. No sheets to tangle or wash.
- 2 Beds are useless, but not bedrooms. After months of being cooped up together, even best friends can get on your nerves. Time alone is therefore important. Cabins about the size of a shower stall give astronauts their own personal “space” in space.
- 3 Astronauts don’t have to sleep in their rooms, though. They can sleep anywhere they want. But unless they use tethers or straps, they may wake up stuck like leaves to an air vent somewhere.
- 4 Most astronauts use a sleeping bag, but some prefer to sleep in their clothes. After all, clothes don’t wrinkle while floating.
- 5 What kind of clothes? NASA provides shirts, shorts, pants, underwear, and socks. No shoes needed. Astronauts often add personal items, like jewelry.
- 6 If cabins aren’t available, astronauts change clothes in whatever part of a module they call home. Astronaut Marsha Ivins said, “I normally change my clothes in the bathroom with the door closed.”
- 7 On Earth, people sleep flat or curled. In space, everyone takes the same position. Like plants waving under water, the arms naturally float in front of the body with wrists limp.
- 8 Some people miss a pillow pressing against their head. Therefore, NASA provides a headband “pillow.” According to NASA researcher Dr. John Charles, when astronauts want to feel like they’ve rolled over, they slide the pillow to the other side of their head.
- 9 But some habits are hard to break. “The first few nights I was restless,” astronaut Don Thomas said after a shuttle flight. “I’m sleeping in this box on my back,” he said with a smile. “I would flip over and float on my stomach. It somehow felt better.”
- 10 Unfortunately, if someone snores, flipping over won’t help. Luckily, earplugs, music, and eyeshades are available to block disturbing noise and lights. Astronaut Mike Coats said, “As soon as I put the eyeshades on, I’m asleep. I never remember getting more than halfway through a song.”

“Floating to Sleep” by Marianne J. Dyson, from *Space Station Science: Life in Free Fall*. Copyright © 1999 and 2004 by Marianne J. Dyson. Reprinted by permission of the author.



Space Sleep

by NASA

- 1 After a long day at work, there is nothing like a good night's sleep! Just like on Earth, a worker in space goes to bed at night, then wakes up the next day and prepares for work all over again. There are a few differences, though.
- 2 In space there is no up or down and there is no gravity. As a result, astronauts are weightless and can sleep in any orientation. However, they have to attach themselves to a wall, a seat, or a bunk bed inside the crew cabin so they don't float around and bump into something.
- 3 Space shuttle and space station crews usually sleep in sleeping bags. On the space shuttle, astronauts also sleep in the commander's seat or the pilot's seat or in bunk beds. There were only four bunk beds in the space shuttle. So that meant that on missions with five or more astronauts, the other crewmembers had to sleep in sleeping bags attached to their seats or to a wall.
- 4 On the space station there are two small crew cabins. Each one is just big enough for one person. Inside both crew cabins is a sleeping bag and a large window to look out in space. Currently, space station crews have three astronauts living and working in space for months at a time. Where does the third astronaut sleep? If it's okay with the commander, the astronauts can sleep anywhere in the space station as long as they attach themselves to something.
- 5 Astronaut Susan Helms slept in the huge Destiny Laboratory Module by herself while she was living aboard the International Space Station. This is on the opposite side of the station from the Service Module where her crewmates slept. The length of the International Space Station during that mission was 52 meters (171 feet).
- 6 Generally, astronauts are scheduled for eight hours of sleep at the end of each mission day. Like on Earth, though, they may wake up in the middle of their sleep period to use the toilet, or stay up late and look out the window. During their sleep period, astronauts have reported having dreams and nightmares. Some have even reported snoring in space!

"Space Sleep" by NASA. In the public domain.



Directions for Administering the Grade 5 Informative/Explanatory Writing Task C

Session 1 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials

Do: Hand out the materials students will need to complete the formative writing task:

- ___ Student Directions Informative/Explanatory Writing Task C
- ___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Informative/Explanatory Writing (optional)
- ___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)
- ___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)
- ___ Pencils
- ___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Read the Directions Aloud to the Students

Say: *Over two sessions, you will write an explanatory essay about the problems of sleeping in space and how astronauts solve these problems. During the first session, you will have 45 minutes to read the directions, read some information about sleeping in space, read how the teachers will evaluate your essay, and begin planning and drafting your essay. During the second 45 minute session, you will finish drafting your essay and then revise and edit your final draft.*

*You have a pencil and blank paper to use for taking notes and planning your essay. You may write, highlight, and underline on the student directions and passages. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Find the YOUR ASSIGNMENT section at the top of page 1 of the student directions. Read along while I read aloud. It says:

You will read two passages about how astronauts sleep in space. Take notes as you read. You will later write an explanatory essay about what you have read.

Next, find STEP 1. It says:

Read the passages and take notes on these sources.

Read the following passages about sleeping in space. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passage and your notes as often as you like.

- *“Floating to Sleep”*
- *“Space Sleep”*

As you read, consider the problems astronauts face while sleeping in space and how they solve these problems.

You will read this on your own; I will not read this to you.

Now, find STEP 2. It says:

Plan and write your essay.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

Write an essay about the problems of sleeping in space and explain how they solve these problems. Be sure to include details from both passages.

3. Read the Evaluation Information

Say: *Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says:*

Revise and edit your essay.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- *Statement of Purpose/Focus* – *how well you clearly state and maintain your controlling idea or main idea*
- *Organization*– *how well the ideas progress from the introduction to the conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay*
- *Elaboration of Evidence* – *how well you provide evidence from sources about your topic and elaborate with specific information*
- *Language and Vocabulary* – *how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose*
- *Conventions* – *how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling*

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

4. Answer Any Questions

Say: *I can read the directions as often as needed, but I cannot translate, edit your work, explain, or give examples on what or how to write. Do you have any questions before we begin?*

Do: Answer questions by rereading the directions.

5. Begin Planning and Drafting

Say: *Now, go back to STEP 1 of the student directions sheet. You have 45 minutes to read these passages, take notes, and start planning and drafting your essay. You should think about the information you have read, which should help you write your essay.*

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the first session will end.

Say: *Now, read your assignment and begin your work. Manage your time carefully so that you have time to plan and draft your essay. I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may begin.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

6. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left.*

7. End Session 1

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. Write your name on the top of your directions paper and the scratch paper. You will finish writing your essay during the next session.*

Do: If your next session will start on the next day, collect all materials. If your next session will continue on the same day, provide a 15 minute break before beginning the second session.

Session 2 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials (if necessary)

Do: Hand out the things students will need:

- ___ Student Directions Informative/Explanatory Writing Task C
- ___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Informative/Explanatory Writing (optional)
- ___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)
- ___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)
- ___ Pencils
- ___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Review the Directions

Say: *During the first session, you read some information about sleeping in space, took notes on these sources, and started planning and drafting an informative/explanatory essay. Now, you will have 45 minutes to review, revise, and edit your essay. You may reread the passages and use the notes you wrote on your scratch paper. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Let's review how your essay will be evaluated and then you can reread your essay and begin revising and editing. Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says: evaluated. It says:

Revise and edit your essay.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Statement of Purpose/Focus – how well you clearly state and maintain your controlling idea or main idea
- Organization– how well the ideas progress from the introduction to the conclusion using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Evidence – how well you provide evidence from sources about your topic and elaborate with specific information
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express ideas using precise language that is appropriate for your audience and purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

3. Reread, Revise, and Edit

Say: *Now, continue working on your essay. Manage your time carefully so that you can reread the essay you started during the last session, finish any drafting, and revise and edit for your final draft.*

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the second session will end.

Say: *I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may continue writing your essay now.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

4. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left. Please work quickly to finish your final draft. Remember, teachers reading your essay will only evaluate the final draft.*

5. End Session 2

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. I will collect your pencils and scratch paper.*

Do: Collect student writing by asking students to print their essays, or email them to you, or drop them in your virtual inbox.

Student Directions

Grade 5 Narrative Writing Task A

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: You will read two passages about the Gold Rush. Take notes as you read. You will later write about an imagined experience while traveling west during the Gold Rush.

STEP 1

Read the passages and take notes on these sources.

Read the following passages about the Gold Rush. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passage and your notes as often as you like.

- “The Journey to Gold Country”
- “A Surprise from the Past”

As you read, consider information you might use to write your narrative essay about traveling west during the Gold Rush.

STEP 2

Plan and write your narrative.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

Write a narrative that tells about traveling west during the Gold Rush. Be sure to use details from the passages in your narrative.

STEP 3

Revise and edit your narrative.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Narrative Focus – how well you maintain your focus, and establish a setting, narrator and or characters
- Organization – how well the events logically flow from beginning to end using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Narrative – how well you elaborate with details, dialogue, and description to advance the story or illustrate the experience
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express experiences or events using sensory, concrete, and figurative language that is appropriate for your purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

**GO ON**

The Journey to Gold Country

by Don Brown

On January 24, 1848, James W. Marshall discovered gold at Sutter's Mill in northern California. Later that year, President James Polk gave a speech, telling the nation about the discovery. The news brought a flood of about 30,000 people to "the golden state." These people came to be called "forty-niners" because most arrived in 1849. Read the passage.

- 1 By January 1849, thousands of people abandoned their families and jobs and headed for California. They'd be remembered as the forty-niners, in recognition of the great rush that started that year.

Most of the forty-niners lived closer to the Atlantic Coast than they did to the goldfields on the Pacific Coast. The land between the two was an uncharted mystery. No road or railroad connected one coast to the other.

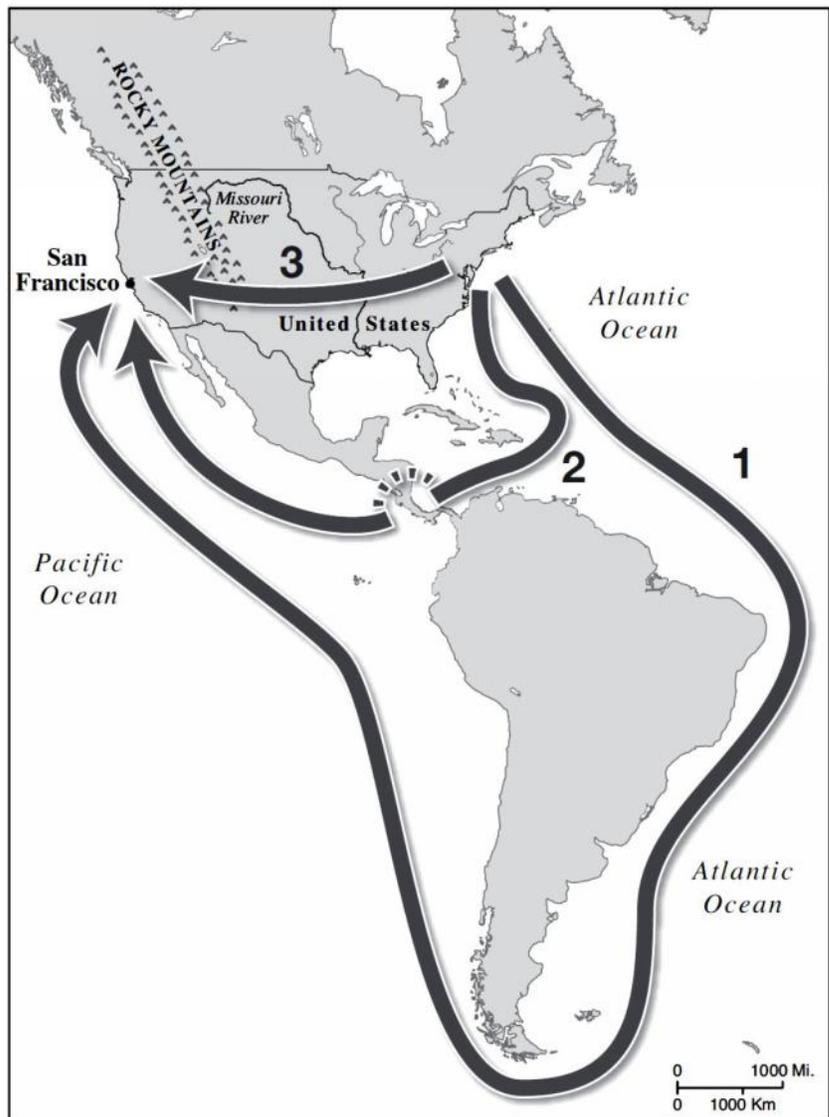
How, then, to get to California?

The forty-niners had three choices. One way was to sail more than thirteen thousand miles from the Atlantic Coast, around the bottom tip of South America, and then to California.

- 5 A typical journey would take four to six months; one feeble tub, the *Harford*, took nearly a year. Boredom, seasickness, bad food, and foul water came with every trip . . . as did impossibly cramped decks and quarters.

"Four young men, finding no room for a table to play cards . . . used a [stout man's] stomach for a card table," one traveler said.

Gold seekers could follow a second path and shorten the sea journey by landing on the Atlantic



side of the narrow Isthmus of Panama. They then trekked crosscountry to the Pacific Ocean. There, another ship would take them to San Francisco . . . if they could find space.

Forty-niner Daniel Kowner arrived on the Pacific Coast after a harrowing jungle tramp across the Isthmus and discovered a thousand others competing for sixty berths aboard a single steamer making the California run. Kowner's entire journey to California took months.

Most gold rushers took the third and most direct path: over land, across the continent. In 1849 alone, 22,500 gold seekers took this route.

- 10 With wagons painted with "Wild Yank," "Rough and Ready," "Gold Hunter," or some other inspiring name, they assembled in groups or companies at places like St. Joseph, Missouri, and Council Bluffs, Iowa, on the Missouri River. From there, it was 2,100 miles on the California Trail to the great fortune they were sure awaited them.

The forty-niners pushed off in May as the prairie grass started growing. The new grass would provide feed for the tens of thousands of horses, mules, and oxen dragging the wagons. Then, they traveled for four to five months at sixteen miles a day, day after day, without fail, disregarding sickness, injury, or breakdown. Failing to keep the pace meant the travelers might not make it to the gold fields before winter, leaving them stranded on a snowy, mountainous trail.

But the hazards didn't dampen the forty-niners' enthusiasm. They'd abandoned or postponed their old lives as farmers, dentists, clerks, landlords, shopkeepers, and meant to make the best of the decision. Brimming with supplies and optimism, their eyes fixed on the horizon, they started west . . . and immediately hit a traffic jam.

Hundreds of wagons had to wait their turn to be ferried across the Missouri River, which was something of the border for settled America. "As soon as one wagon enters the boat, the next moves down to the edge of the bank. . . . This goes on from the earliest dawn till midnight, day after day," remarked one forty-niner.

Eventually they joined the snaking line of wagons that at times seemed endless. One traveler noted, "For the whole distance in view . . . before and behind us, long trains were in motion or encamped on the grassy bottom."

- 15 Overloaded wagons slowed travel and taxed draft animals. Supplies not essential for the trek were soon tossed aside. Another traveler noted, "We saw castaway articles strewn by the roadside one after another in increasing profusion."

As the forty-niners crossed the plains, spring changed to summer, and then fall. The weather could be unforgiving and cruel. In rain, the trail turned to mud, sticking the wagons fast in the deep muck.



Parching winds and stifling dust blistered lips. Sleet robbed drivers of feeling in their fingers, making it nearly impossible to hold the reins.

The chance for accidents and mishaps during the tough travel was always there, but it was disease, especially cholera, that proved the deadliest risk and greatest killer. One observer counted four fresh graves every day for 170 miles. How many died from disease? Some people say a thousand, others say four thousand.

Although some people gave up and went home, most others doggedly kept up the two-miles-an-hour march. They crossed the plains and reached the Rocky Mountains, something of a halfway mark. Still, a thousand miles remained, including a wasteland known as the Forty Mile Desert.

20 “Expect to find the worst desert you ever saw, and then find it worse than you expected,” advised one veteran of the wasteland.

Another observed, “[It was] the most dreary desolate place. . . . The mules were so hungry they ate dust and gravel. . . . All along the desert road . . . was strewn the dead bodies of oxen, mules, and horses & the stench was horrible.”

The path then climbed the Sierra mountains. Travelers arriving before winter counted themselves

fortunate. But even snow-free trails wrecked wagons and sent mules pitching off cliffs.

The forty-niners who made it this far were close now. Traveling through slots in the heights called passes, they finally reached Sacramento, the town closest to the goldfields. It had sprung up after the discovery of gold.

“The Journey to Gold Country” by Don Brown, from *Gold! Gold! From The American River*. Copyright © 2011 by Don Brown. Reprinted by permission of Roaring Brook Press. Map © WestEd.



A Surprise from the Past

1 When Mom said that we were going to spend Saturday afternoon at the history museum, I couldn't believe my ears. It was a summer weekend, and I'd rather be doing . . . well, just about anything else, especially since I had some new computer games.

"You can play on the computer anytime, Seth," said Mom. "The museum's exhibit about the Gold Rush is only open for a few more days. Besides," she added, "you just might learn something interesting. You never know!"

I was pretty sure I did know, but I didn't say anything. I knew better than to argue with Mom. People always tell me I'm stubborn, but I didn't get that from nowhere.

When we arrived at the museum and entered the rooms with the Gold Rush exhibit, I didn't want to admit that some of the artifacts (to use a fancy museum word) were kind of cool. There were axes and picks, shovels, and special pans for sifting gold bits out of water. There was even a life-size model of a covered wagon, just like the kind that some miners used to travel west. Best of all, there were a few precious nuggets of real California gold.

5 Mom spent a long time reading some old letters and diaries, and I wondered whether I could use those old tools to dig around in our yard (though I wouldn't want to wear those heavy boots and pants). The first miners couldn't have found all of the gold, right?

When I asked Mom that question, she just laughed. "Goodness, Seth, you're a chip off the old block."

"What?"

"I mean you're just like your great-great-great-grandfather—he was also named Seth, by the way. Did I tell you that he took his family to California during the Gold Rush? That's how we ended up out here."

"WHAT?"

10 For the second time that day, I couldn't believe my ears. My own great-great-great-grandfather had used mining tools just like the ones I was looking at (though Mom said he didn't find much gold and decided to open a hardware store instead). My own relatives had traveled all the way across the United States in one of those wooden wagons. Maybe a kid just like me had worn some of those funny-looking clothes, and a woman like Mom had written those letters to friends back at home.

Suddenly, I was glad that Mom was stubborn enough to drag me to the museum. Our pioneer relatives must have been awfully stubborn, too, if they had made it to California in a covered wagon.



As we drove home, I tried to imagine that I wasn't going back to our house in Mom's car, but instead was riding west in a wagon with my great-great-great-grandparents. My life—even my computer games—began to seem kind of boring. I said so to Mom, and her answer surprised me.

“Well, Seth, your great-great-great-grandparents probably didn't think their life was all that exciting, either. They didn't know that their tools and letters and clothes would ever be in a museum, or that their great-great-great-grandson would care about all that old stuff.” I'm not sure, but I think she winked at me.

“Mom, do you think anything of mine will ever be in a museum?” I giggled a little to think about some kid a hundred years from now looking at Mom's car, or at my computer. Would people even know what a computer was, or would the museum need to have a little sign explaining how computers work and why they were such a big deal in the year 2013?

15 “Who knows, Seth?” said Mom. “But let's hope your great-great-great-grandkids won't be too busy to go to a museum and find out.” That time, I know she winked at me.

“A Surprise from the Past” © WestEd.



Directions for Administering the Grade 5 Narrative Writing Task A

Session 1 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials

Do: Hand out the materials students will need to complete the formative writing task:

- ___ Student Directions Narrative Writing Task A
- ___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Narrative Writing (optional)
- ___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)
- ___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)
- ___ Pencils
- ___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Read the Directions Aloud to the Students

Say: *Over two sessions, you will write a narrative about traveling west during the Gold Rush. During the first session, you will have 45 minutes to read the directions, read some information about the Gold Rush, read how the teachers will evaluate your essay, and begin planning and drafting your essay. During the second 45 minute session, you will finish drafting your essay and then revise and edit your final draft.*

*You have a pencil and blank paper to use for taking notes and planning your essay. You may write, highlight, and underline on the student directions and passages. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Find the YOUR ASSIGNMENT section at the top of page 1 of the student directions. Read along while I read aloud. It says:

You will read two passages about the Gold Rush. Take notes as you read. You will later write about an imagined experience while traveling west during the Gold Rush.

Next, find STEP 1. It says:

Read the passages and take notes on these sources.

Read the following passages about the Gold Rush. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passage and your notes as often as you like.

- *“The Journey to Gold Country”*
- *“A Surprise from the Past”*

As you read, consider information you might use to write your narrative essay about traveling west during the Gold Rush.

You will read this on your own; I will not read this to you.

Now, find STEP 2. It says:

Plan and write your narrative.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

Write a narrative that tells about traveling west during the Gold Rush. Be sure to use details from the passages in your narrative.

3. Read the Evaluation Information

Say: Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says:

Revise and edit your narrative.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Narrative Focus – how well you maintain your focus, and establish a setting, narrator and or characters
- Organization – how well the events logically flow from beginning to end using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Narrative – how well you elaborate with details, dialogue, and description to advance the story or illustrate the experience
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express experiences or events using sensory, concrete, and figurative language that is appropriate for your purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

4. Answer Any Questions

Say: I can read the directions as often as needed, but I cannot translate, edit your work, explain, or give examples on what or how to write. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Do: Answer questions by rereading the directions.

5. Begin Planning and Drafting

Say: Now, go back to STEP 1 of the student directions sheet. You have 45 minutes to read these passages, take notes, and start planning and drafting your essay. You should think about the information you have read, which should help you write your essay.

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the first session will end.

Say: *Now, read your assignment and begin your work. Manage your time carefully so that you have time to plan and draft your essay. I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may begin.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

6. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left.*

7. End Session 1

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. Write your name on the top of your directions paper and the scratch paper. You will finish writing your essay during the next session.*

Do: If your next session will start on the next day, collect all materials. If your next session will continue on the same day, provide a 15 minute break before beginning the second session.

Session 2 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials (if necessary)

Do: Hand out the things students will need:

___ Student Directions Narrative Writing Task A

___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Narrative Writing (optional)

___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)

___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)

___ Pencils

___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Review the Directions

Say: *During the first session, you read some information about the Gold Rush, took notes on these sources, and started planning and drafting a narrative. Now, you will have 45 minutes to review, revise, and edit your essay. You may reread the passages and use the notes you wrote on your scratch paper. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Let's review how your essay will be evaluated and then you can reread your essay and begin revising and editing. Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says: evaluated. It says:

Revise and edit your narrative.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Narrative Focus – how well you maintain your focus, and establish a setting, narrator and or characters
- Organization – how well the events logically flow from beginning to end using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Narrative – how well you elaborate with details, dialogue, and description to advance the story or illustrate the experience
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express experiences or events using sensory, concrete, and figurative language that is appropriate for your purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

3. Reread, Revise, and Edit

Say: *Now, continue working on your essay. Manage your time carefully so that you can reread the essay you started during the last session, finish any drafting, and revise and edit for your final draft.*

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the second session will end.

Say: *I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may continue writing your essay now.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

4. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left. Please work quickly to finish your final draft. Remember, teachers reading your essay will only evaluate the final draft.*

5. End Session 2

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. I will collect your pencils and scratch paper.*

Do: Collect student writing by asking students to print their essays, or email them to you, or drop them in your virtual inbox.

Student Directions

Grade 5 Narrative Writing Task B

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: You will read two passages about astronauts sleeping in space. Take notes as you read. You will later write a narrative about what it would be like for you to sleep in space.

STEP 1

Read the passages and take notes on these sources.

Read the following passages about sleeping in space. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passage and your notes as often as you like.

- “Floating to Sleep”
- “Space Sleep”

As you read, consider information you might use to write your narrative essay about you sleeping in space.

STEP 2

Plan and write your narrative.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

Write a narrative that tells about your imagined experience sleeping in space. Be sure to include details from both passages.

STEP 3

Revise and edit your narrative.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Narrative Focus – how well you maintain your focus, and establish a setting, narrator and or characters
- Organization – how well the events logically flow from beginning to end using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Narrative – how well you elaborate with details, dialogue, and description to advance the story or illustrate the experience
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express experiences or events using sensory, concrete, and figurative language that is appropriate for your purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

GO ON 

Floating to Sleep

by Marianne J. Dyson

- 1 On a space station, you can sleep on the ultimate air mattress. In fact, forget the mattress—just sleep on air! No lumps, no springs, no sloshing water. No sheets to tangle or wash.
- 2 Beds are useless, but not bedrooms. After months of being cooped up together, even best friends can get on your nerves. Time alone is therefore important. Cabins about the size of a shower stall give astronauts their own personal “space” in space.
- 3 Astronauts don’t have to sleep in their rooms, though. They can sleep anywhere they want. But unless they use tethers or straps, they may wake up stuck like leaves to an air vent somewhere.
- 4 Most astronauts use a sleeping bag, but some prefer to sleep in their clothes. After all, clothes don’t wrinkle while floating.
- 5 What kind of clothes? NASA provides shirts, shorts, pants, underwear, and socks. No shoes needed. Astronauts often add personal items, like jewelry.
- 6 If cabins aren’t available, astronauts change clothes in whatever part of a module they call home. Astronaut Marsha Ivins said, “I normally change my clothes in the bathroom with the door closed.”
- 7 On Earth, people sleep flat or curled. In space, everyone takes the same position. Like plants waving under water, the arms naturally float in front of the body with wrists limp.
- 8 Some people miss a pillow pressing against their head. Therefore, NASA provides a headband “pillow.” According to NASA researcher Dr. John Charles, when astronauts want to feel like they’ve rolled over, they slide the pillow to the other side of their head.
- 9 But some habits are hard to break. “The first few nights I was restless,” astronaut Don Thomas said after a shuttle flight. “I’m sleeping in this box on my back,” he said with a smile. “I would flip over and float on my stomach. It somehow felt better.”
- 10 Unfortunately, if someone snores, flipping over won’t help. Luckily, earplugs, music, and eyeshades are available to block disturbing noise and lights. Astronaut Mike Coats said, “As soon as I put the eyeshades on, I’m asleep. I never remember getting more than halfway through a song.”

“Floating to Sleep” by Marianne J. Dyson, from *Space Station Science: Life in Free Fall*. Copyright © 1999 and 2004 by Marianne J. Dyson. Reprinted by permission of the author.



Space Sleep

by NASA

- 1 After a long day at work, there is nothing like a good night's sleep! Just like on Earth, a worker in space goes to bed at night, then wakes up the next day and prepares for work all over again. There are a few differences, though.
- 2 In space there is no up or down and there is no gravity. As a result, astronauts are weightless and can sleep in any orientation. However, they have to attach themselves to a wall, a seat, or a bunk bed inside the crew cabin so they don't float around and bump into something.
- 3 Space shuttle and space station crews usually sleep in sleeping bags. On the space shuttle, astronauts also sleep in the commander's seat or the pilot's seat or in bunk beds. There were only four bunk beds in the space shuttle. So that meant that on missions with five or more astronauts, the other crewmembers had to sleep in sleeping bags attached to their seats or to a wall.
- 4 On the space station there are two small crew cabins. Each one is just big enough for one person. Inside both crew cabins is a sleeping bag and a large window to look out in space. Currently, space station crews have three astronauts living and working in space for months at a time. Where does the third astronaut sleep? If it's okay with the commander, the astronauts can sleep anywhere in the space station as long as they attach themselves to something.
- 5 Astronaut Susan Helms slept in the huge Destiny Laboratory Module by herself while she was living aboard the International Space Station. This is on the opposite side of the station from the Service Module where her crewmates slept. The length of the International Space Station during that mission was 52 meters (171 feet).
- 6 Generally, astronauts are scheduled for eight hours of sleep at the end of each mission day. Like on Earth, though, they may wake up in the middle of their sleep period to use the toilet, or stay up late and look out the window. During their sleep period, astronauts have reported having dreams and nightmares. Some have even reported snoring in space!

"Space Sleep" by NASA. In the public domain.



Directions for Administering the Grade 5 Narrative Writing Task B

Session 1 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials

Do: Hand out the materials students will need to complete the formative writing task:

- ___ Student Directions Narrative Writing Task B
- ___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Narrative Writing (optional)
- ___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)
- ___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)
- ___ Pencils
- ___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Read the Directions Aloud to the Students

Say: *Over two sessions, you will write a narrative about sleeping in space. During the first session, you will have 45 minutes to read the directions, read some information about sleeping in space, read how the teachers will evaluate your essay, and begin planning and drafting your essay. During the second 45 minute session, you will finish drafting your essay and then revise and edit your final draft.*

*You have a pencil and blank paper to use for taking notes and planning your essay. You may write, highlight, and underline on the student directions and passages. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Find the YOUR ASSIGNMENT section at the top of page 1 of the student directions. Read along while I read aloud. It says:

You will read two passages about astronauts sleeping in space. Take notes as you read. You will later write a narrative about what it would be like for you to sleep in space.

Next, find STEP 1. It says:

Read the passages and take notes on these sources.

Read the following passages about sleeping in space. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passage and your notes as often as you like.

- *“Floating to Sleep”*
- *“Space Sleep”*

As you read, consider information you might use to write your narrative essay about you sleeping in space.

You will read this on your own; I will not read this to you.

Now, find STEP 2. It says:

Plan and write your narrative.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

Write a narrative that tells about your imagined experience sleeping in space. Be sure to include details from both passages.

3. Read the Evaluation Information

Say: Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says:

Revise and edit your narrative.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Narrative Focus – how well you maintain your focus, and establish a setting, narrator and or characters
- Organization – how well the events logically flow from beginning to end using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Narrative – how well you elaborate with details, dialogue, and description to advance the story or illustrate the experience
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express experiences or events using sensory, concrete, and figurative language that is appropriate for your purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

4. Answer Any Questions

Say: I can read the directions as often as needed, but I cannot translate, edit your work, explain, or give examples on what or how to write. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Do: Answer questions by rereading the directions.

5. Begin Planning and Drafting

Say: Now, go back to STEP 1 of the student directions sheet. You have 45 minutes to read these passages, take notes, and start planning and drafting your essay. You should think about the information you have read, which should help you write your essay.

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the first session will end.

Say: *Now, read your assignment and begin your work. Manage your time carefully so that you have time to plan and draft your essay. I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may begin.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

6. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left.*

7. End Session 1

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. Write your name on the top of your directions paper and the scratch paper. You will finish writing your essay during the next session.*

Do: If your next session will start on the next day, collect all materials. If your next session will continue on the same day, provide a 15 minute break before beginning the second session.

Session 2 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials (if necessary)

Do: Hand out the things students will need:

___ Student Directions Narrative Writing Task B

___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Narrative Writing (optional)

___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)

___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)

___ Pencils

___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Review the Directions

Say: *During the first session, you read some information about sleeping in space, took notes on these sources, and started planning and drafting a narrative. Now, you will have 45 minutes to review, revise, and edit your essay. You may reread the passages and use the notes you wrote on your scratch paper. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Let's review how your essay will be evaluated and then you can reread your essay and begin revising and editing. Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says: evaluated. It says:

Revise and edit your narrative.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Narrative Focus – how well you maintain your focus, and establish a setting, narrator and or characters
- Organization – how well the events logically flow from beginning to end using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Narrative – how well you elaborate with details, dialogue, and description to advance the story or illustrate the experience
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express experiences or events using sensory, concrete, and figurative language that is appropriate for your purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

3. Reread, Revise, and Edit

Say: *Now, continue working on your essay. Manage your time carefully so that you can reread the essay you started during the last session, finish any drafting, and revise and edit for your final draft.*

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the second session will end.

Say: *I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may continue writing your essay now.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

4. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left. Please work quickly to finish your final draft. Remember, teachers reading your essay will only evaluate the final draft.*

5. End Session 2

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. I will collect your pencils and scratch paper.*

Do: Collect student writing by asking students to print their essays, or email them to you, or drop them in your virtual inbox.

Student Directions

Grade 5 Narrative Writing Task C

YOUR ASSIGNMENT: You will read two passages about museums. Take notes as you read. You will later write your own narrative based on what you have read.

STEP 1

Read the passages and take notes on these sources.

Read the following passages about museums. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passages and your notes as often as you like.

- “Learning from Museums”
- “A Surprise from the Past”

As you read, think about objects that are commonly used today that might one day be in a museum.

STEP 2

Plan and write your narrative.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

Imagine that it is the year 2050 and you are visiting a museum with collections from the early 2000s. Write a narrative about this experience. What objects will be in the museum, and what will people think about them?

STEP 3

Revise and edit your narrative.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Narrative Focus – how well you maintain your focus, and establish a setting, narrator and or characters
- Organization – how well the events logically flow from beginning to end using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Narrative – how well you elaborate with details, dialogue, and description to advance the story or illustrate the experience
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express experiences or events using sensory, concrete, and figurative language that is appropriate for your purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

GO ON 

Learning from Museums

- 1 People have always been curious about the past. People have also always been proud of the valuable things they have created. This curiosity and pride helped lead to the creation of museums. For many years, museums have protected and displayed the world’s great and small treasures.
- 2 The first museums were private collections of interesting things. Scholars who study the ancient world have found collections that are almost 3,000 years old. Over the years, different people and groups continued to collect art, natural treasures, and other special items. As a result, many amazing objects were kept safe for the future.
- 3 Eventually, many of these collections were shared with the public. Grand buildings were made to show them off. Visitors could study objects and learn about history, art, and faraway lands. The people who worked in museums became experts at taking care of old, rare items.
- 4 Some museums choose to focus on certain subjects or collect certain kinds of items. Today, there are art museums, science museums, nature museums, and history museums, to name a few. Museums carefully arrange items into groups, which are called *exhibits*. The exhibits include helpful signs that explain why items are important.
- 5 History museums have become very common. Some history museums have information about just one place or time. Your town might have its very own history museum! Other history museums tell about an important event, like World War II, or an important person, like a U.S. president.
- 6 The National Museum of American History is one of America’s most important museums. Its collection includes everything from children’s toys to old coins to train engines—anything that can show visitors how people used to live in America. The museum tells the story of America through the objects it contains.
- 7 Education is one of the main goals of history museums. People who study history often use museums for research. However, the education of each museum visitor is just as important. History museums are thought to be the best sources of information about the past—even better than history books!
- 8 Of course, no book can compare with seeing important objects up close. Most museums have special programs for students of all ages, so it’s not surprising that, each year, more than 55 million schoolchildren visit museums in America. There are more than 850 million total museum visits each year in America. Museums have more visitors than visitors to sports events and theme parks put together!
- 9 As technology changes, museums find new ways to help people learn. Museum exhibits can use videos or computers to help tell about a topic or an event. Also, many museums have websites that show their collections. These “virtual collections” let people explore museums without leaving their homes or schools.
- 10 The ways that museums retell history are always changing, but their mission remains the same—to help us understand the present by bringing the past to life.

“Learning from Museums” © WestEd.



A Surprise from the Past

1 When Mom said that we were going to spend Saturday afternoon at the history museum, I couldn't believe my ears. It was a summer weekend, and I'd rather be doing . . . well, just about anything else, especially since I had some new computer games.

"You can play on the computer anytime, Seth," said Mom. "The museum's exhibit about the Gold Rush is only open for a few more days. Besides," she added, "you just might learn something interesting. You never know!"

I was pretty sure I did know, but I didn't say anything. I knew better than to argue with Mom. People always tell me I'm stubborn, but I didn't get that from nowhere.

When we arrived at the museum and entered the rooms with the Gold Rush exhibit, I didn't want to admit that some of the artifacts (to use a fancy museum word) were kind of cool. There were axes and picks, shovels, and special pans for sifting gold bits out of water. There was even a life-size model of a covered wagon, just like the kind that some miners used to travel west. Best of all, there were a few precious nuggets of real California gold.

5 Mom spent a long time reading some old letters and diaries, and I wondered whether I could use those old tools to dig around in our yard (though I wouldn't want to wear those heavy boots and pants). The first miners couldn't have found all of the gold, right?

When I asked Mom that question, she just laughed. "Goodness, Seth, you're a chip off the old block."

"What?"

"I mean you're just like your great-great-great-grandfather—he was also named Seth, by the way. Did I tell you that he took his family to California during the Gold Rush? That's how we ended up out here."

"WHAT?"

10 For the second time that day, I couldn't believe my ears. My own great-great-great-grandfather had used mining tools just like the ones I was looking at (though Mom said he didn't find much gold and decided to open a hardware store instead). My own relatives had traveled all the way across the United States in one of those wooden wagons. Maybe a kid just like me had worn some of those funny-looking clothes, and a woman like Mom had written those letters to friends back at home.

Suddenly, I was glad that Mom was stubborn enough to drag me to the museum. Our pioneer relatives must have been awfully stubborn, too, if they had made it to California in a covered wagon.



As we drove home, I tried to imagine that I wasn't going back to our house in Mom's car, but instead was riding west in a wagon with my great-great-great-grandparents. My life—even my computer games—began to seem kind of boring. I said so to Mom, and her answer surprised me.

“Well, Seth, your great-great-great-grandparents probably didn't think their life was all that exciting, either. They didn't know that their tools and letters and clothes would ever be in a museum, or that their great-great-great-grandson would care about all that old stuff.” I'm not sure, but I think she winked at me.

“Mom, do you think anything of mine will ever be in a museum?” I giggled a little to think about some kid a hundred years from now looking at Mom's car, or at my computer. Would people even know what a computer was, or would the museum need to have a little sign explaining how computers work and why they were such a big deal in the year 2013?

15 “Who knows, Seth?” said Mom. “But let's hope your great-great-great-grandkids won't be too busy to go to a museum and find out.” That time, I know she winked at me.

“A Surprise from the Past” © WestEd.



Directions for Administering the Grade 5 Narrative Writing Task C

Session 1 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials

Do: Hand out the materials students will need to complete the formative writing task:

- ___ Student Directions Narrative Writing Task C
- ___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Narrative Writing (optional)
- ___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)
- ___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)
- ___ Pencils
- ___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Read the Directions Aloud to the Students

Say: *Over two sessions, you will write a narrative about objects commonly used today that might one day be in a museum. During the first session, you will have 45 minutes to read the directions, read some information about museums, read how the teachers will evaluate your essay, and begin planning and drafting your essay. During the second 45 minute session, you will finish drafting your essay and then revise and edit your final draft.*

*You have a pencil and blank paper to use for taking notes and planning your essay. You may write, highlight, and underline on the student directions and passages. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Find the YOUR ASSIGNMENT section at the top of page 1 of the student directions. Read along while I read aloud. It says:

You will read two passages about museums. Take notes as you read. You will later write your own narrative based on what you have read.

Next, find STEP 1. It says:

Read the passages and take notes on these sources.

Read the following passages about museums. Take notes to use later while writing your essay. You may look back at the passages and your notes as often as you like.

- *“Learning from Museums”*
- *“A Surprise from the Past”*

As you read, think about objects that are commonly used today that might one day be in a museum.

You will read this on your own; I will not read this to you.

Now, find STEP 2. It says:

Plan and write your narrative.

Now, review your notes and sources, then plan and draft your essay on the following topic:

Imagine that it is the year 2050 and you are visiting a museum with collections from the early 2000s. Write a narrative about this experience. What objects will be in the museum, and what will people think about them?

3. Read the Evaluation Information

Say: Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says:

Revise and edit your narrative.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Narrative Focus – how well you maintain your focus, and establish a setting, narrator and or characters
- Organization – how well the events logically flow from beginning to end using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Narrative – how well you elaborate with details, dialogue, and description to advance the story or illustrate the experience
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express experiences or events using sensory, concrete, and figurative language that is appropriate for your purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

4. Answer Any Questions

Say: I can read the directions as often as needed, but I cannot translate, edit your work, explain, or give examples on what or how to write. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Do: Answer questions by rereading the directions.

5. Begin Planning and Drafting

Say: Now, go back to STEP 1 of the student directions sheet. You have 45 minutes to read these passages, take notes, and start planning and drafting your essay. You should think about the information you have read, which should help you write your essay.

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the first session will end.

Say: *Now, read your assignment and begin your work. Manage your time carefully so that you have time to plan and draft your essay. I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may begin.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

6. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left.*

7. End Session 1

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. Write your name on the top of your directions paper and the scratch paper. You will finish writing your essay during the next session.*

Do: If your next session will start on the next day, collect all materials. If your next session will continue on the same day, provide a 15 minute break before beginning the second session.

Session 2 (45 minutes)

1. Distribute the Materials (if necessary)

Do: Hand out the things students will need:

___ Student Directions Narrative Writing Task C

___ Grade 5 Student Guide to Narrative Writing (optional)

___ Standard English dictionaries (optional)

___ Blank scratch paper (lined or unlined)

___ Pencils

___ Highlighters, colored pencils or pens (optional)

2. Review the Directions

Say: *During the first session, you read some information about museums, took notes on these sources, and started planning and drafting a narrative. Now, you will have 45 minutes to review, revise, and edit your essay. You may reread the passages and use the notes you wrote on your scratch paper. You will write your essay using the word processor on the computer. You may use spell check and grammar check. However, you may **not** use any other programs on the computer, and you may **not** use the Internet.*

Let's review how your essay will be evaluated and then you can reread your essay and begin revising and editing. Find STEP 3 and read along as I tell you how your essay will be evaluated. It says: evaluated. It says:

Revise and edit your narrative.

The teachers evaluating your essay will be assigning levels for:

- Narrative Focus – how well you maintain your focus, and establish a setting, narrator and or characters
- Organization – how well the events logically flow from beginning to end using effective transitions and how well you stay on topic throughout the essay
- Elaboration of Narrative – how well you elaborate with details, dialogue, and description to advance the story or illustrate the experience
- Language and Vocabulary – how well you effectively express experiences or events using sensory, concrete, and figurative language that is appropriate for your purpose
- Conventions – how well you follow the rules of usage, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling

Teachers reading your essay will evaluate only your final draft.

3. Reread, Revise, and Edit

Say: *Now, continue working on your essay. Manage your time carefully so that you can reread the essay you started during the last session, finish any drafting, and revise and edit for your final draft.*

Do: Write the ending time on the board to let students know when the second session will end.

Say: *I'll announce when you have 10 minutes left. You may continue writing your essay now.*

Do: Start timing now. Monitor the class to ensure students are working productively, not using any other programs on the computer, and not using the Internet.

If students finish early, encourage them to reread their work or silently read a book.

4. Announce 10 Minutes Remaining

Say: *You have 10 minutes left. Please work quickly to finish your final draft. Remember, teachers reading your essay will only evaluate the final draft.*

5. End Session 2

Say: *Please stop writing. Save your work on the computer. I will collect your pencils and scratch paper.*

Do: Collect student writing by asking students to print their essays, or email them to you, or drop them in your virtual inbox.

Teaching Tips

Citing/Using Evidence

Students need ample practice in using evidence to support their opinions/arguments with reasons and details. It is never acceptable to simply copy verbatim from a text as their reasons or details. While students are not expected to use formal citations (i.e. APA or MLA) on the Formative Tasks, it is important that they acknowledge the source of their evidence because citing sources gives credibility to their opinion and makes for proficient writing. Appropriate phrases might include: “According to the table...” or “Scientists found....” Students may also use parenthetical citations, such as, (Pros column). Students may reference their experiences as an elaborative technique, such as, “On a trip to the beach I discovered...”

Highlighters to the Rescue!

Teach students to use highlighters, colored pencils, or colored pens to emphasize important information as they read. At first it may be tempting for them to highlight everything, since it all seems important. But be patient and model the process a few times.

1. Look briefly over the entire book, article, or assignment to get a feel for its structure and how it is organized.
2. Pay particular attention to introductory and concluding paragraphs. These often contain summaries of important points.
3. Look for certain words and phrases that can tip you off that something important is coming up, such as "In sum," "The point is," "Most importantly," and so on.
4. Consider reading the conclusion first. It's like doing a maze backwards: If you know where you're trying to end up, you can find and understand the path better.
5. Look back over the book, article, or assignment the next day/class/session, reading only the highlighted material.



Elaborating Information in Tables

Tables and charts can provide a lot of information. Unfortunately, when students are writing opinions, arguments, or informative/explanatory essays using information from tables and charts, they do not elaborate. Simply repeating something from a chart is not very interesting. Teach students elaborative techniques such as adding sensory details, adding anecdotes, providing examples, and giving reasons. Students can become better writers by employing elaborative techniques that take their writing from mundane to interesting and even exciting!

To Title or Not to Title

Students often ask, “Does my essay need a title?” Confront this issue while you are teaching and before you administer the formative tasks. Although the rubric does not specifically reference a title, teach students how to write effective and engaging titles.

On-Demand Writing

Remind students that authors write for different purposes. During instruction, there are definitely times when it is important for writers to take a piece through the entire writing process. However, the formative assessments are designed as “on-demand” writing, to see how well students can write to an assigned task in a finite amount of time. This is an important skill as on-demand writing will often be required of them in the college and career world. In on-demand writing, students need to be able to go from their pre-writing/brainstorming to drafting on computer, rather than a paper/pencil created draft. Be sure to incorporate opportunities for on-demand writing in regular instruction so it is not a surprise to students when they take the Formative Tasks.



Word Processing

Be sure students have ample practice and feel confident with the word processing program they will be using for the formative assessments. It is important students are familiar with how to save their documents and use the spell check and grammar check features. Ample practice drafting, re-reading, revising, and editing on-screen will also be beneficial for students so these become comfortable and expected parts of the writing process.



Word processing programs come with many bells and whistles that can enhance the publishing process. However, it is important during the Formative Tasks that students are focused on their writing and not wasting valuable time playing with features such as font and colors. While there are no specific guidelines in these areas for the assessment, it is important students understand the focus of the task is their actual writing. Teachers may want to establish their own parameters for font size/type. Only spell check and grammar check features are permitted.

Collecting the Finished Tasks

Consider setting up a shared drive where students can save their word-processed final drafts. Create folders for each of your classes on this drive. When students save their essays, have them name their file with their last name and first initial (i.e., Jamie Martinez = martinezj). The names will appear alphabetically in the file and make it easy for both you and the student to locate.

Meet with Your Colleagues

Plan to meet with colleagues after scoring all of the papers for your grade. Start a discussion about writing trends. What are some things that are working well? What are some areas that need to be addressed? Create a plan that maintains what is working well and addresses areas that need improving.

Workgroup 2

Valorie A. Bringle
Team Leader
Clark County School District

Sue Slocum
Team Leader
Clark County School District

Jessica Bañales
Clark County School District

Kate Ferro
Washoe County School District

Kay Mobley
Nye County School District

Tearra Bobula
Carson City School District

Katie Floyd
Nye County School District

Susan Moore
Douglas County School District

Nathalie Brugman
Southern Nevada Regional
Professional Development Program

Desiree Gray
Northwestern Regional
Professional Development Program

Tina Quintana
Clark County School District

Shan Cannon
Southern Nevada Regional
Professional Development Program

Mary Greenblat
Washoe County School District

Amy Raymer
Clark County School District

Debbie Carle
Southern Nevada Regional
Professional Development Program

Katrina Hashimoto
Clark County School District

Thomasina Rose
Southern Nevada Regional
Professional Development Program

Christine Chapin
Somerset Academy Charter School

Mendy Henry
Southern Nevada Regional
Professional Development Program

Kevin Sigl
Clark County School District

Cybil Covert
Clark County School District

Margaret Kiser
Clark County School District

Chelli Smith
Southern Nevada Regional
Professional Development Program

Kristin Crawford
Silver Sands Montessori Charter School

Saralyn Lasley
Southern Nevada Regional
Professional Development Program

Carolin Steele
Nye County School District

Kim Cuevas
Washoe County School District

Jeremy Lewis
Carson City School District

Susan Van Doren
Douglas County School District

Jennifer Ward DeJoseph
Carson City School District

Lauren R. Lewis
Clark County School District

Desiree L. Veloz
Nye County School District

Stacy Drum
Washoe County School District

Miyoko Loflin
Carson City School District

Ann Warren
Washoe County School District

Pamela Ertel
Douglas County School District

Robyn Markovic
Southern Nevada Regional
Professional Development Program

Jessie Westmoreland
Northern Nevada
Professional Development Program