

Southern Middle School

SOUTHERN



STORM

Writer's Reference Book

Name: _____

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Contents of a Portfolio or Working Folder

Each year you are responsible for completing a grade level portfolio. This is also known as a Working Folder. In 7th grade, you will select from this Working Folder to complete a Portfolio for the CATS assessment. The Working Folder will go with you to the next grade level.

At the end of each grade level your Working Folder should contain one piece from each of the following categories:

<u>REFLECTIVE</u> Personal essay Letter	<u>PERSONAL</u> Personal Narrative Personal Memoir Personal Essay
<u>LITERARY</u> Short story Poem Play	<u>TRANSACTIONAL</u> Feature Article Editorial Letter Speech

YOU NEED TO KNOW:

At least one of the pieces in your final Working Folder or Portfolio must come from a class other than Language Arts.

Pieces in your Working Folder must show process. That means you need to turn in your pre-writing and rough draft forms and be sure to put a date on everything. However, pieces in the 7th grade Portfolio should not have pre-writing and rough drafts attached – only the final drafts are required.

In the 7th grade, your Portfolio must contain one Reflective, one Transactional and either one Personal OR one Literary.

Description for each of the Categories of Writing

Reflective	Personal/Expressive
<p>An analysis and evaluation of personal progress in writing through literacy</p> <p>The writing...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemplates his/her literacy experience • Analyzes own strengths and areas of growth in writing • Allows the content to determine the form and audience • Analyzes and addresses needs of the intended audience • Speaks directly to the audience • Develops the connection between growth as a reader and skills as a writer • Analyzes the connections • Supports claims with personal experience about self through insight • Organizes the connections logically, effectively, using paragraphing, transitions, a variety of sentences, etc. • Uses grammar and word choice that is appropriate for purpose and audience 	<p>Narrative-focuses on a significant single event</p> <p>Memoir-focuses on the significance of a relationship with an individual person, place, animal, or thing</p> <p>Essay-focuses on a central idea about the writer or the writer's life</p> <p>The writing...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes the significance of one event, relationship, or central idea • Communicates the significance (impact) and/or leaves the reader with a single impression • Develops ideas by using relevant/ specific details from personal experiences • Shows emotions, thoughts and/or insight through descriptions as appropriate • Uses dialogue as appropriate • Uses grammar and word choice that is appropriate for purpose and audience

Description for each of the Categories of Writing

Literary	Transactive
<p>Communication through authentic literary forms to make meaning of the human condition created from the imagination of the writer</p> <p>The writing (short story, play)...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on some aspect of human experience • Contains elements that are characteristic of genre: plot (conflict, crisis, resolution), setting, character development, theme, and point of view • Uses thoughts, actions, descriptions to develop plot, setting, character, and theme • Develops the conflict and resolution • Manages literary techniques and effective organizational strategies to communicate ideas and feelings to reader • May use dialogue to enhance meaning • Uses grammar and word choice that is appropriate for purpose and audience <p>The writing (poetry)...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on the purpose (e.g., paints a picture, recreates a feeling, tells a story, captures a moment, evokes an image, shows an extraordinary perception of the ordinary based on human experience) • May use insight and reflection to show depth of idea development • Uses sensory details and/or poetic devices to create a mood, scene, and/or image • Does not sacrifice meaning for rhyme • Maintains coherence and unity • Uses white space, line breaks, and/or shape to enhance meaning • Uses grammar and word choice that is appropriate for purpose and audience 	<p>Informative and persuasive writing that presents ideas and information in letters, speeches, editorials, and articles</p> <p>The writing...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is from the perspective of an informed writer to a less informed reader (may even be a new perspective on the topic) • Contains a specific purpose and makes it clear what the reader should know, do, and/or believe as a result of reading the piece • Is intended for an authentic audience and strives to meet the needs of the audience • Employs a suitable tone for purpose and audience • Presents ideas and information to accomplish the purpose • Provides specific, relevant support, (facts, examples, reasons, anecdotes, comparisons, quotes, charts, graphs) showing knowledge of the subject • Reveals ability to think logically for the purpose and explain clearly/persuasively • Organizes logically, effectively, using paragraphing, transitions, headings, etc. (text features) • Uses grammar and word choice that is appropriate for purpose and audience • Documents sources appropriately

The Writing Process

1. Focusing

- Think about a subject, an experience, a question, an issue or a problem to determine a meaningful reason to write before you start
- Connect to content knowledge, prior learning and/or experience

2. Prewriting

- Begin collecting ideas by drawing, listening, listing, free writing
- Choose your best idea or the idea about which you have the most to write
- Organize your information
- Write details about it
- Consider who will read your piece (audience) and why (purpose)
- Discuss ideas with others
- Read published pieces to see how other authors craft their pieces
- Make a graphic organizer, if necessary

3. Drafting

- Write the piece without worrying about making errors
- Have others read it and offer suggestions

4. Revising

- Reread what you wrote
- Add, remove, move, and substitute ideas
- Consider suggestions and questions given to you
- Add snapshots, thought shots, and/ or dialogue
- Replace overused words

5. Editing




- Correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.
- Check for subject-verb agreement
- Check for consistent verb tenses
- Complete all sentences

6. Publishing




- Type on computer
- Share with an audience

10 Ways to REVISE to Make Your Draft BETTER




1. Inserting snapshots:

-  To add the specific details of the setting to set the mood
-  To describe important characteristics or actions of a character
-  To support a statement that the reader might not understand

2. Inserting thought shots

-  To show reflection at an important moment
-  To show the thought process that went into decisions
-  To show what people or characters are thinking during a scene

3. Insert meaningful dialogue

-  To move the plot of the action along
-  To show realistic conversations during the action
-  To replace boring dialogue

4. Cut details that are repetitious or irrelevant

5. Use strong nouns and verbs

6. Choose a title that is creative, original, and connected to writing

7. Include references to the focused purpose throughout the writing

8. Use transitions to move the reader through the piece smoothly

9. Use figurative language, imagery, and/or sensory details to describe

10. Make the lead and the ending connect somehow (circular writing)

Kentucky Writing Scoring Rubric

0	1	2	3	4
CONTENT				
Purpose and Audience; Idea Development and Support				
<p>The writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks purpose <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks awareness of audience <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks idea development; may provide random details 	<p>The writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to establish a general purpose; lacks focus <input type="checkbox"/> Indicates limited awareness of audience's needs <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates limited idea development with few details and/or weak support; may attempt to apply some characteristics of the genre 	<p>The writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Attempts to establish and maintain a narrowed purpose; some lapses in focus <input type="checkbox"/> Indicates some awareness of audience's needs; makes some attempt to communicate with an audience; may demonstrate some voice and/or tone <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates some idea development with details/support; support may be unelaborated, irrelevant and/or repetitious; may apply some characteristics of genre 	<p>The writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Establishes and maintains an authentic focused purpose throughout <input type="checkbox"/> Indicates an awareness of audience's needs; communicates adequately with audience; conveys voice and/or appropriate tone <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates depth of idea development with specific, sufficient details/support; applies characteristics of genre 	<p>The writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Establishes and maintains an authentic and insightful focused purpose throughout <input type="checkbox"/> Indicates a strong awareness of audience's needs; communicates effectively with audience; sustains distinctive voice and/or appropriate tone <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates reflective, analytical and/or insightful idea development; provides specific, thorough support; skillfully applies characteristics of genre
0	1	2	3	4
STRUCTURE				
Organization: unity and coherence; Sentences: structure and length				
<p>The writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates random organization <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks transitional elements <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates incorrect sentence structure throughout 	<p>The writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates ineffective or weak organization <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates limited and/or ineffective transitional elements <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates some ineffective or incorrect sentence structure 	<p>The writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates logical organization with lapses in coherence <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates some effective transitional elements <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates simple sentences; may attempt more complex sentences but lacks control of sentence structure 	<p>The writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates logical, coherent organization <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates logical, effective transitional elements throughout <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates control and variety in sentence structure 	<p>The writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates careful and/or subtle organization that enhances the purpose <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates varied and subtle transitional elements throughout <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates control, variety and complexity in sentence structure to enhance meaning
0	1	2	3	4
CONVENTIONS				
Language: grammar and usage, word choice; Correctness: spelling, punctuation, capitalization, abbreviation and documentation				
	<p>The writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates lack of control in grammar and usage <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates incorrect or ineffective word choice <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates lack of control in correctness 	<p>The writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates some control of grammar and usage with some errors that do not interfere with communication <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates simplistic and/or imprecise word choice <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates some control of correctness with some errors that do not interfere with communication 	<p>The writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates control of grammar and usage relative to length and complexity <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates acceptable word choice appropriate for audience and purpose <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates control of correctness relative to length and complexity 	<p>The writing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates control of grammar and usage to enhance meaning <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates accurate, rich and/or precise word choice appropriate for audience and purpose <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates control of correctness to enhance communication

CONTENT

To be a Distinguished Writer in the area of Content on the Writing Rubric, you must concentrate on these three areas:

PURPOSE:

- Establishes and maintains an authentic and insightful focused purpose throughout

Ask yourself:

- ? What topic/issue do I really care about or what significant person/event has happened in my life that I want to tell others about?
- ? What different or new angle can I bring to this topic/issue/story that readers have not thought about or would be interested in reading? How will I repeat my purpose throughout the piece?
- ? Where and how will I repeat my purpose throughout the writing piece?

AUDIENCE AWARENESS

- Indicates a strong awareness of audience's needs; communicates effectively with audience; sustains distinctive voice and/or appropriate tone

Ask yourself:

- ? Have I included enough relevant details and background information about my topic/issue/story?
- ? Have I made my audience feel like they were there or made them feel what I was feeling?
- ? Is my voice present throughout the writing or have I used the appropriate tone for this type of writing throughout the piece so that the reader knows I have a sincere investment in the presentation of this information?

IDEA DEVELOPMENT

- Demonstrates reflective, analytical and/or insightful idea development; provides specific, thorough support; skillfully applies characteristics of the genre

Ask yourself:

- ? Have I stated what I now know/understand/realize about my topic/experience/the world throughout the writing piece?
- ? Have I stated how I'm affected or how others are affected by this topic or experience?
- ? Did I use lots of specific examples, details, and descriptions that supported my focused purpose?
- ? Did I include enough characteristics that readers can tell the type (genre) of writing it is?

Idea Development Supports for Literary Writing

To be Distinguished in the area of Content, most of these should be found in your writing:

- **Focused purpose is on some aspect of the human experience and is sustained** – even in stories that are fantasy or science fiction, at the base should always be something that humans experience and can learn from (theme). Usually, this involves relationships or solving problems or fixing a problem that lies within the characters.
- **Specific names of characters and places**
- **Background information provided as needed** – readers have a need for writers to show that their characters have had lives happening before page one of the story. Who are they? Where are they? Why are they essential to the story? And, how did they get to the point that is going to become the focus of the story? This helps readers understand the importance of the events and characters of the story that will be told.
- **Main conflict that needs to be resolved**
- **Obstacles/crises for the main character to overcome** – should appear in the rising and falling action parts of the story. These should be realistic and logical to the story and, in the end, make the main character more appreciative and appreciated at the conclusion/resolution.
- **Meaningful dialogue** – for the purpose of moving the plot forward, essential to the story. Should only be used at important points in the story and directly related to the focused purpose or the main conflict. Also, characters should speak realistically, given their background and location.
- **Descriptive setting details** – woven throughout the story to keep the reader informed of place and time.
- **Character thoughts**
- **Character feelings**
- **Specific, important, and realistic character action**
- **Explaining sentences** – help the reader further understand the action taking place.
- **Literary techniques to enhance plot and characters** – flashbacks, foreshadowing, symbolism, irony, similes, metaphors add to the plot action, add to the picture the writer is painting for the reader, and/or gives the readers something to think about or relate to.
- **Essential character descriptions** – should be tied to the focused purpose or the conflict.
- **Mood creators** – adjectives that describe the atmosphere surrounding conflict(s) and/or characters.
- **Sensory details** – what can be seen, felt, heard, smelled, etc... at times in the story that is important to the focused purpose or main conflict of the plot?
- **Engaging lead** – hooks the reader's interest and curiosity about these characters and the situation they are facing.
- **Climax** – the most dramatic point; the turning point of the story
- **Strong verbs** – verbs the reader can see and feel.
- **Tie-ups of loose ends before conclusion** – it is important that all obstacles/crises and the main conflict is resolved realistically so that the reader feels satisfied when the story is over.
- **Logical resolution/conclusion to the main conflict** – should be tied realistically to the characters, the situation of the story, and the focused purpose.

Idea Development Supports for Personal Writing

To be Distinguished in the area of Content, most of these should be found in your writing:

- **The focused purpose is clear and sustained**
- **Background information-** date, time, place, location - explaining of previous events to understand the importance of the event being told (It was a scorching July 2007 afternoon at my Uncle Dave's house in the loft of the barn when the surprise of a lifetime happened. My cousin Dave Jr. carried in a small crate from which a small meow could be overheard. After four years of waiting for a pet to become my own, my wait was finally over.)
- **Description of people, places, and objects-** those things that usually go unnoticed by the average person (The line from the I.V. had shifted from morning to afternoon almost creating a loop near dad's bruised arm).
- **Sensory detail-** sights, sounds, smells, etc.
- **Specific, important action**
- **Thoughts of the writer and others** - (My mind filled with wonder about how our life without a dad would be different.)
- **Feelings of the writer and others** (My heart raced with fear that I would. . .)
- **Inside Talk; talk inside the writer's mind** (Why? Why did I not get to the hospital faster when I knew that I should have?)
- **Outside Talk** - specific- focused dialogue at important points in the story
- **Comparisons in important places** - helps readers understand the depth and complexity of what is happening (Winning the academic award was like. . .)
- **Direct talk to the reader** (I know you may be wondering about...)
- **Exact names**
- **Exact colors**
- **Exact numbers**
- **Exact dates and times**
- **Particular facts** (The nurse standing directly to my left lifted the pillow and gave it a quick fluff.)
- **Guesses, speculations, imaginings, wonderings-** (I wondered if things would ever be the same. I imagined us happily strolling along the path at Jacobson Park before the accident ever happened.)
- **Explaining sentences-** help the reader further understand
- **Think-About-It sentences-** Interpret the information given or the action for the readers (It is important to know that the decision to go into the hospital was a difficult one for me because)
- **Strong verbs-** verbs that the readers see and feel. Sis's news stabbed into my heart creating a wound that never closed.
- **Repetition of an important detail about a person, feeling, or place in the story** (Her soft, yellow cardigan smelled of sugar cookies.)
- **Repeat certain-words or phrases that help portray you or others**
- **Insight** (I realized, I knew, I understood)
- **Wonderings-** What if.....
- **Revisit the focused purpose through action**
- **Tie the conclusion back to the focused purpose/lead**

Idea Development Supports for Transactive Writing

To be Distinguished in the area of Content, most of these should be found in your writing:

- **Your Purpose is Clear, Focused, and Sustained**
- **Examples**
- **Mini Personal Stories** (that inform or persuade one's point)
- **Interview and Inquiry Notes**
- **Statistics** (Over 80% of citizens think....)
- **Graphs**
- **Tables**
- **Charts**
- **Photos**
- **Sketches**
- **Diagrams**
- **Maps**
- **Opinions**
- **Comparisons**
- **Predictions** (If we, . . . then)
- **Explaining Sentences-** Tell Why/Tell How
- **Think-about-Sentences-** Interpret information and draw conclusions for the readers
- **Reflection**
- **Insight-**I knew, I realized, I understood
- **Raising and answering questions for the readers** - (I know that you're wondering where the funds for this idea will come from. Well, I've already thought of that. You see, existing funds can be used to solve this problem.)
- **Quotes from experts and others** - (Exercise guru, Jacob Thompson of Making America Fit (2004) said, "Children often don't exercise because parents don't make it an important part of their daily routine.")
- **References to experts** - (According to Alice Adams (1997) historic Rosenwald schools-are disappearing-at an-enormous-rate. Thusly,)
- **Rational Appeal-** Reasons
- **Emotional Appeal-** Emotional response
- **Ethical Appeal-** Right/Wrong
- **Documentation of sources**
- **Other Points of View**

STRUCTURE

To be a Distinguished Writer in the area of Structure on the Writing Rubric, you must concentrate on these three areas:

ORGANIZATION:

- Demonstrates careful and/or subtle organization that enhances the purpose

Ask yourself:

- ? Did I use the most appropriate organizational pattern for this writing piece?
- ? Was I purposeful about how I organized my paragraphs and/or details?
- ? Does each paragraph have a main topic that relates to the focused purpose and do all the sentences in each paragraph support that main topic?
- ? Does my organization help get across my focused purposed the best way possible?

TRANSITIONS:

- Demonstrates varied and subtle transitional elements throughout

Ask yourself:

- ? Did I effectively transition the reader from one paragraph to the next?
- ? Did I use transitional words and phrases at the beginnings of sentences when necessary?
- ? Does my use of transitions help the flow of my writing and enhance the reader's understanding?

SENTENCES:

- Demonstrates control, variety and complexity in sentence structure to enhance meaning

Ask yourself:

- ? Have I used short and long sentences in a way that enhances my writing piece?
- ? Do I have a balance of the four major types of sentences?
- ? Have I varied the beginnings of my sentences?
- ? Have I gotten rid of any awkwardly written or unclear sentences?

Organization

One of the best methods to use to be sure that you have “*careful and subtle organization that enhances the purpose*” is **circular writing**. That means your lead paragraph and your concluding paragraph repeat your key points from the writing. When you use **circular writing** effectively your readers should be able understand your purpose and main ideas easily.

Different Types of Leads

1. **Rhetorical Question** – Why do adults insist that kids have to go to bed so early?
2. **Dialogue** -"I can't believe we're actually going to play in the Little League World Series!"
3. **Mystery Statement** - Deep down in the ocean lurks a dangerous killing machine.
4. **Shocking Statement** - Stone Cold Steve Austin, WWF superstar, is going to be our substitute teacher tomorrow!
5. **Humorous Statement** - Don't ask me why, but my little sister can get into more trouble than a bunch of monkeys on the loose.
6. **Onomatopoeia** - Crash! Ka-blam! Car wrecks can happen at any speed, so it is important to wear your seatbelt at all times.
7. **Strong Persuasive Statement** – Every kid who cares about the Earth should start recycling.
8. **A snapshot** - It's ten degrees below zero and the river is frozen thick. It makes snapping sounds . .
9. **A thought shot** – *Is he going to be okay? Will he live?* I nervously wondered at the hospital.
10. **A controversial statement** – I think they should outlaw bubble gum.
11. **An action** – We had been trying to find our way out of the jungle for days
12. **An emotion** – He had an unpleasant feeling about that day.
13. **Foreshadowing** – If he had only known what he was getting himself into.
14. **Setting** – West Ninth Street was quiet that day.
15. **Flashback** – When I was a little girl, I loved to visit Grandpa

Different ways to conclude your writing

I hope I've convinced you about the importance
of...

Now you see why...

My life will never be the same because...

I hope next time you'll remember to...

Next time I'll remember...

I learned the valuable lesson that...

I hope you can agree with me that...

The world would be a different place if we all...

One thing I know for certain is...

The truth is...

We'd all be better off if...

So, you see, it's a good idea to...

The main thing is...

Transitions

Transitional words and phrases are used to help the reader move from one idea to the next or to signal the organizational pattern of a piece of writing. It can also be used to clue in the reader about what is really important. Try using words from these lists to help your writing flow smoothly:

<p><u>Sequence Transitions</u> first later second next third earlier then now before while after until since during in the first place finally from then on soon last but not least gradually</p>	<p><u>Illustration Transitions</u> for example for instance such as In the same way specifically to illustrate evidently in this case in fact therefore</p>	<p><u>Change of Direction Transitions</u> although though despite conversely however instead of in spite of yet rather otherwise while on the other hand but even though nevertheless</p>																								
<p><u>Addition Transitions</u> and again moreover also besides in addition a final reason furthermore above all else even more surprising meanwhile</p>	<p><u>Comparison/Contrast Transitions</u> yet more than either despite still after all at the same time likewise then usually</p>	<p><u>Change of Direction Transitions</u> different from of course by comparison on the contrary similarly for the same reason indeed whereas in other words</p>																								
<p><u>Emphasis Transitions</u></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">certainly</td> <td style="width: 33%;">most of all</td> <td style="width: 33%;">a key point</td> </tr> <tr> <td>surely</td> <td>in all likelihood</td> <td>there is no doubt that</td> </tr> <tr> <td>indeed</td> <td>without a doubt</td> <td>for this reason</td> </tr> <tr> <td>in fact</td> <td>mainly</td> <td>as a result</td> </tr> <tr> <td>definitely</td> <td>most importantly</td> <td>again</td> </tr> <tr> <td>absolutely</td> <td>more than anything else</td> <td>suddenly</td> </tr> <tr> <td>always</td> <td>consequently</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>never</td> <td>all in all</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			certainly	most of all	a key point	surely	in all likelihood	there is no doubt that	indeed	without a doubt	for this reason	in fact	mainly	as a result	definitely	most importantly	again	absolutely	more than anything else	suddenly	always	consequently		never	all in all	
certainly	most of all	a key point																								
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absolutely	more than anything else	suddenly																								
always	consequently																									
never	all in all																									
<p><u>Spatial Transitions</u> between beyond here next to near alongside across in front of below beneath on the opposite side around</p>	<p><u>Conclusion Transitions</u> in conclusion in short as a result so you can see thus simply stated to sum up hence finally</p>																									

*****Remember, you should include transition sentences at the ends of your paragraphs that will transition your readers from one paragraph's main idea to the next paragraph's main idea.**

Example:

“Exercising will not only help improve your appearance, it will also make you feel better on the inside.”

Sentences

To “*demonstrate control, variety and complexity in sentence structure in order to enhance meaning*”, you have to understand the different types of sentences.

Sentence Types

1. **Simple** – usually one subject and one verb. *“The dog chased the cat across my yard.”*
OR two subjects and one verb. *“The dog and cat ran after each other all day long.”*
OR one subject and two verbs. *“The dog ran down the steps and followed the cat.”*
2. **Compound** - two complete sentences joined together with a subject and verb in each part
“The dog chased after the cat, and the cat ran to the neighbor’s yard.”
“The dog chased after the cat; the cat ran to the neighbor’s yard.”
3. **Complex** – one dependent clause (sentence) that cannot stand alone connected to a complete sentence. Each part has its own subject and verb.
“After the dog chased the cat, he went to his water dish.”
“The dog went to his water dish after he chased the cat.”

There are more types of sentences, but these three are the ones used most frequently, and the ones you need to understand the most in order to write well. **Your writing should have a variety/balance of these three types of sentences**, not just mostly one type or the other. One way to “enhance meaning” is to use your sentences to control the pace of the reader. Use short, simple sentences when you want the reader to speed up during sections of your writing that are more thrilling or startling. Use longer compound and complex sentences to slow the reader down in sections that are calmer or need more explanation.

You will also need to find a variety of ways to start your sentences. Many novice writers begin most of their sentences by using the same words such as “I”, “Then”, “Well”, “The”, or the name of the main character. Here are just a few suggestions on how to start sentences differently and effectively:

1. **Two Adjectives** - *Lovely, graceful ballerinas dance.* OR *Lovely and graceful ballerinas dance.*
2. **A Question** - *Who are those graceful ballerinas dancing across the stage?*
3. **A Prepositional Phrase** – *In the spotlight, the ballerinas dance gracefully.*
4. **Infinitive Verb (“to” + verb)** – *To dance at night before an audience is a pleasure for ballerinas.*
5. **Gerund Verb (verb + “ing”)** – *Smiling at the vast audience, the ballerinas dance gracefully.*
6. **Interjection** – *Amazing! The ballerinas are unbelievably graceful.*
7. **A Transitional Word or Phrase** – *Unfortunately, the ballerinas’ performance had to come to an end.*

CONVENTIONS

To be a Distinguished Writer in the area of Conventions on the Writing Rubric, you must concentrate on these three areas:

GRAMMAR AND USAGE:

- Demonstrates control of grammar and usage to enhance meaning

Ask yourself:

- ? Have I used strong nouns, verbs, and adjectives throughout my writing?
- ? Do I have subject–verb agreement in every sentence and I am using the correct verb tense throughout?
- ? Do I show that I can use items in a series, adverb phrases, and repetition of key words and phrases effectively?

WORD CHOICE:

- Demonstrates accurate, rich and/or precise word choice appropriate for audience and purpose

Ask yourself:

- ? Have I used the most accurate and effective words throughout my writing?
- ? Is my word choice appropriate for my audience?
- ? Did I make purposeful choices with words for emotional effect or by using a specific dialect?

CORRECTNESS:

- Demonstrates control of correctness to enhance communication

Ask yourself:

- ? Did I proofread or let others proofread my writing to catch any punctuation errors in my writing?
- ? Did I use specific punctuation, such as dashes, colons, and period of ellipses, to enhance my communication with the readers?
- ? Did I use bolded words or words in all capital letters when needed to enhance communication?
- ? Did I document the sources of my information by using quotation marks when necessary and by including a bibliography at the end?

Vivid Verbs

aim	dread	kick	sabotage	tease
anticipate	droop		sassed	thaw
arrange	dust	leap	saunter	throttle
		lumber	scour	thundered
backtrack	ease		scrape	tickle
ballooned	eject	magnify	scratched	tip-toe
bamboozle	enveloped	manipulate	scribble	toasted
bandage	erase	meander	scrub	trespass
blast	evaporate	measure	shave	tuck
boil		melted	shiver	twist
bolt	fired	monopolize	shriek	twitched
botch	flatter		shrug	
bound	flip	ooze	shudder	view
bulldoze	flirt	outwit	slam-dunked	vindicate
bullied	focused		slimed	volunteer
burp		parachute	slither	
	glow	paste	smirk	waltzed
chastise	goof	pat	sneeze	weighed
chatter	greased	peer	snoop	wiggle
cherish	grilled	pluck	snooze	wipe
chuckle	groan	pound	splatter	wisecracked
conduct	gurgle	praise	splurge	wither
console		pranced	sprint	wormed
crawl	hammered		squish	worship
croon	haul	raged	stamp	wrangle
	hiccupped	ransack	steamed	wrenched
decorate	high-fived	reassure	strain	wrinkled
delve	howl	record	stretch	
demolish	humiliate	rejoice	strode	yelp
despise		relish	stuffed	
devour	iced	rescue		
discipline	irritate	rip		
dog paddle		rocked		
douse	jab			
drain	juggle			

Precise Word Choice

Sometimes, there are better, more precise words to use in your writing. That does not mean you should stop using the more general words completely, but you should actively look for places in your writing where they could be replaced by more accurate words. Think about sometimes replacing:

“said” with a specific emotional version

Excited

cheered
exclaimed
shouted
shrieked
squealed
yelled

Happy

giggled
grinned
laughed
smiled
snickered
teased

Grumpy

complained
grumbled
moaned
mumbled
snapped
whined

Proud

announced
bragged
boasted

Scared

gasp

Sad

cried
groaned
whimpered
sobbed

Embarrassed Sorry

choked
apologized
stammered
whispered

“said” with the way it is meant

Loudly

called
hollered
roared
screamed
shouted

Quietly

muttered
whispered

Helpfully

assured
consoled
explained
encouraged
suggested

Bossy

bossed
declared
insisted
ordered

Asked

implored
inquired
questioned
requested
wondered

Answered

declared
explained
replied
responded
stated
remarked

Promised

vowed

Argued

debated
disagreed
objected
protested

“said” with many other words

accused	invited
added	joked
admitted	laughed
agreed	mentioned
announced	mocked
begged	mumbled
blabbed	mutter
blurted	pleaded
claimed	proclaimed
complained	quoted
demanded	rambled
described	reasoned
echoed	recited
encouraged	reminded
growled	repeated
guessed	revealed
hinted	scolded
informed	sighed
interrupted	uttered

Precise Word Choice

Sometimes, there are better, more precise words to use in your writing. That does not mean you should stop using the more general words completely, but you should actively look for places in your writing where they could be replaced by more accurate words. Think about sometimes replacing:

Ugly

bizarre	monstrous
disgusting	repulsive
dog-faced	revolting
grotesque	unattractive
hideous	undesirable
homely	unsightly
loathsome	wretched

Small

diminutive	minute
dwarfed	paltry
itsy-bitsy	pee-wee
wee	petite
microscopic	puny
midget	tiny
miniature	

Happy

blissful	jovial
cheerful	joyous
contented	overjoyed
elated	perfect
flawless	proper
glad	thrilled
jolly	useful

Pretty/Cute

adorable	divine
appealing	elegant
attractive	exotic
beautiful	exquisite
charming	stunning
dazzling	foxy
desirable	glamorous
gorgeous	good-looking
handsome	magnificent
lovely	striking

Big

ample	large
bulky	leviathan
colossal	mammoth
jumbo	massive
enormous	monstrous
epic	stupendous
gargantuan	super-sized
giant	titanic
gigantic	towering
herculean	tremendous
huge	vast
humongous	voluminous
immense	whopping

Good

beneficial	first-rate
convenient	great
delightful	marvelous
desirable	outstanding
enjoyable	pleasant
excellent	super
exceptional	suitable
exemplary	terrific
excellent	wonderful
fantastic	
favorable	
fine	

Bad

evil	unfavorable
immoral	inferior
wicked	imperfect
corrupt	unpleasant
sinful	nasty
rotten	horrible
spoiled	wrong
tainted	putrid
harmful	deplorable

Laugh

cackle	hoot
chortle	roar
chuckle	snicker
giggle	whoop
guffaw	

Walk/ Went

amble	march
promenade	strut
stroll	rushed
ramble	traveled
hike	saunter
race	trek
trudge	shuffle
parade	jogged
ran	hiked
crawled	climbed
hopped	soared
sprinted	floated

Rich Language

One way to show richness in language is to use figurative language and sensory details to help your reader more clearly understand what you are trying to say. Examples of figurative language include:

Simile – a comparison of two things using “like”, “as” and sometimes “than”

A gentle summer wind feels like a soft cotton sheet.

Metaphor – a comparison of two things by saying one “is” the other

The streetlight was my security guard.

Personification – giving human characteristics to non-human things

The rocks refused to move.

Onomatopoeia – words that make the sounds

hiss, snap, crack, buzz, roar

Hyperbole – exaggeration

I am hungry enough to eat a horse.

Repetition – the repeating of words or phrases for effect

The wind hissed, hissed down the alley.

Pun – a play on words

That story about rabbits was a real hare raiser.

Examples of **sensory details** include:

Sight

bright	misty
brilliant	stained
colored	straight
curved	striped
faded	transparent
flashing	

Taste

bitter	juicy
burnt	peppery
buttery	spicy
cheesy	spoiled
chocolaty	sour
fishy	sweet

Touch

brittle	slick
cottony	slimy
crusty	silky
flexible	stiff
velvety	sticky
sandy	wiry
moist	furry
rough	gritty

Sound

beating	roaring
booming	rustling
chiming	scraping
clanging	screeching
crackling	slurping
crashing	ticking
dripping	wailing
honking	whistling
humming	popping

Smell

decayed	musky
dusty	pungent
flowery	rotten
fruity	smoky
strong	woody
old	leathery
fresh	new
rosy	putrid


Correctness

17 Ways to EDIT to Make Your Draft BETTER

1. Read your paper silently and slowly. Look for mistakes.
2. Read your paper aloud. Listen for left-out or repeated words.
3. Look up the correct spelling and make corrections in your writing.
4. If you're working on a computer, use spell-checker.
5. Look for beginning and ending punctuation.
6. Check dialogue punctuation. ("Hello," said the teacher.)
7. Check for capital letters at the beginning of sentences.
8. Make sure every sentence has a subject and verb.
9. Be sure you don't start too many of your sentences with the same word.
10. Check "there", "their", and "they're"/ "your" and "you're"/ "know and "no"/ and other homonyms that sound alike but are spelled differently.
11. Check paragraphing. Break long ones or combine short ones.
12. Use apostrophes to show possession.
13. Check verb tenses.
14. Check for run on sentences and fragments.
15. Capitalize all proper names and "I".
16. Use "and" instead of a symbol, such as "&"
17. Remember standard writing and text message writing are different. So, you should not use abbreviations or single letters to represent the actual words.

Correctness

Proofreading Symbols for Revising and Editing

SYMBOL	MEANING	EXAMPLE
^	Insert a missing word or punctuation mark	The girl smiled^ me.
≡ or c	Capitalize	betty smiled at me. ≡
/	Make lower case	Betty smiled At me.
	Insert or something is wrong	John (rote) letter.
Sp	Fix spelling	John rote a letter. Sp
RO	Run-on sentence	Jill ran up the hill and she fetched a pail of water and she fell down. RO
frag	Incomplete sentence	After Jill ran up the hill. Frag
p	Punctuation error or punctuation is missing	Liz was late for school p
awk	Writing is unclear or awkwardly worded	Our teachers took top honors with survival of the crazy games and denied the access to the TV show. Awk
WW	Wrong word has been used	You get to go, and I want to go to. WW
WC	Word choice is wrong or weak	WC The bad event made people depressed.
v.t.	Verb tense needs to be fixed	v.t. She told a lie. She says she didn't like me.
_____	A problem is occurring in the underlined area	Alicia loves to work on <u>math she is smart</u> .
S – v	Subject – verb agreement problem	S – v Frank like chocolate cake.
P – a or #	Pronoun – antecedent agreement problem	# Annie and Becky like her new poodle.

Transactive Writing

In middle school, you are expected to write transactive pieces. Transactive writing is meant for a real audience in the real world and not just for your teacher or your peers. The transactive types of writing you will be asked to do the most will be **editorials, letters, feature articles, and speeches**.

<u>Editorial</u> Characteristics	<u>Feature Article</u> Characteristics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The writer’s opinion on a current, relevant topic – usually a controversial one. 2. The writer’s purpose is to persuade the reader to think in a certain way or do something. 3. The writer uses facts, supporting details, and personal experience to persuade the reader 4. The writer might make suggestions to improve the problem. Present “cons” with the current situation and “pros” with your suggestions. 5. A variety of people might read your editorial, so use expressive language that is not complicated. 6. End with a strong conclusion that makes a call to action – to tell the reader what to do or think. 7. The title should be a short statement that gives the reader a preview of your opinion – not a question. 8. When typing, using columns is preferred. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The writer provides new information or a fresh angle on old information. 2. The purpose is to persuade or inform about a human interest topic. 3. The article should provide depth and meaning to the topic. 4. The writer should be more informed about the topic writing to a less informed reader. Research is usually involved, but, it is NOT a research report. 5. The lead should hook the reader and the conclusion should connect back to the lead. 6. The conclusion should give the readers something to think about and/or provoke an emotional response.
<u>Letter</u> Characteristics	<u>Speech</u> Characteristics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The purpose is usually to persuade. 2. The format should look like a letter by including the date, the recipient’s name and address, a proper salutation, and a closing with signature. 3. The purpose should be clearly stated in the first paragraph. 4. The body of the letter should thoroughly explain the details used to support the focused purpose. 5. The conclusion should restate the purpose, explain why the issue is important, and thank the reader. 6. The word choice to be appropriate and effective to the intended reader. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The speech has a clear context or is about a special occasion. 2. The purpose is usually to persuade, inform, entertain or demonstrate. 3. The speech addresses the audience’s needs by referring to them, using the appropriate tone or by using humor, stories, and specific details to get the point across. 4. The opening of the speech should get the audience’s attention. 5. Statistics, details, contrasts, examples, and reflections are used in the body for support of the purpose. 6. The speech repeats key words or ideas throughout to remind audience of the purpose. 7. The main points can be found in the opening and conclusion. 8. Remember, speeches are meant to be heard, so choose words wisely.

Text Features

Your writing (especially transactive writing) should contain text features to enhance your focused purpose and to enhance your communication with the targeted audience.

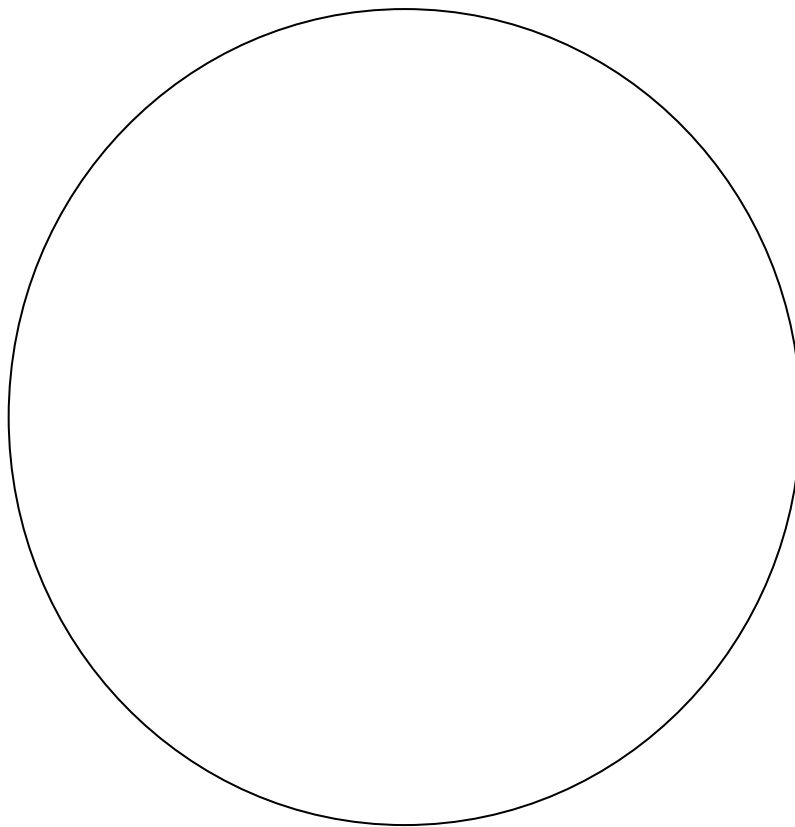
Types of Text Features:

- **Bold words and phrases** – Now, Pluto is **not** classified as a planet.
- **Italics** – *Now*, Pluto is *not* classified as a planet.
- **Underlined words and phrases** – Smoking is the main cause of lung cancer.
- **Words in all capital letters** – BANG! BANG! went the percussion section.
- **Bullets and numbered lists**
- **Parenthetical information**
King Tut (who died young) was a very powerful leader.
- **Subheadings**
- **Statistics** – Over 95% of our students love coming to school.
- **Graphs** – refer to the graph, table chart, diagram, map in the text and explain the content if necessary
- **Tables**
- **Charts**
- **Photos with captions** – must really be meaningful/useful for your readers according to the topic
- **Sketches/illustrations**
- **Diagrams**
- **Maps/keys**
- **Quotation Marks** – Many students enjoy “Spirit Days” and “Dress Down Days”.
- **Sidebars** – runs down the left or right side of a page and supplies extra information about the topic or defines complex vocabulary from the article
- **Boxed information** – use when you want a sentence or a quote from the article to stand out more
- **Different font color with a word or phrase for effect**
- **Glossary** – to define and clarify words your reader may not know
- **Footnotes/asterisks** – use a number or * to direct reader’s attention to the bottom of the page
- **Different size font with a word or phrase for effect** –
“I want you out of my room!”

“Slicing the Pie” for Focused Purpose and Format

When trying to decide what to write, what to write about, and/or who to write to, “**slicing the pie**” can help you out. With the first “pie”, write all the topics you are interested in with that subject area. Next, choose the slice that appeals to you the most. Then, create a new “pie” in which the slices are about what you know about the topic you selected from the first one. Focus on one slice of this new pie that you want to write about. Finally, with the last “pie”, think of several new “slices” that will have the purpose for writing, the targeted audience and the most effective writing format to get across your focused purpose to your audience. Choose the one you really want to do and start writing!

Slice the Pie

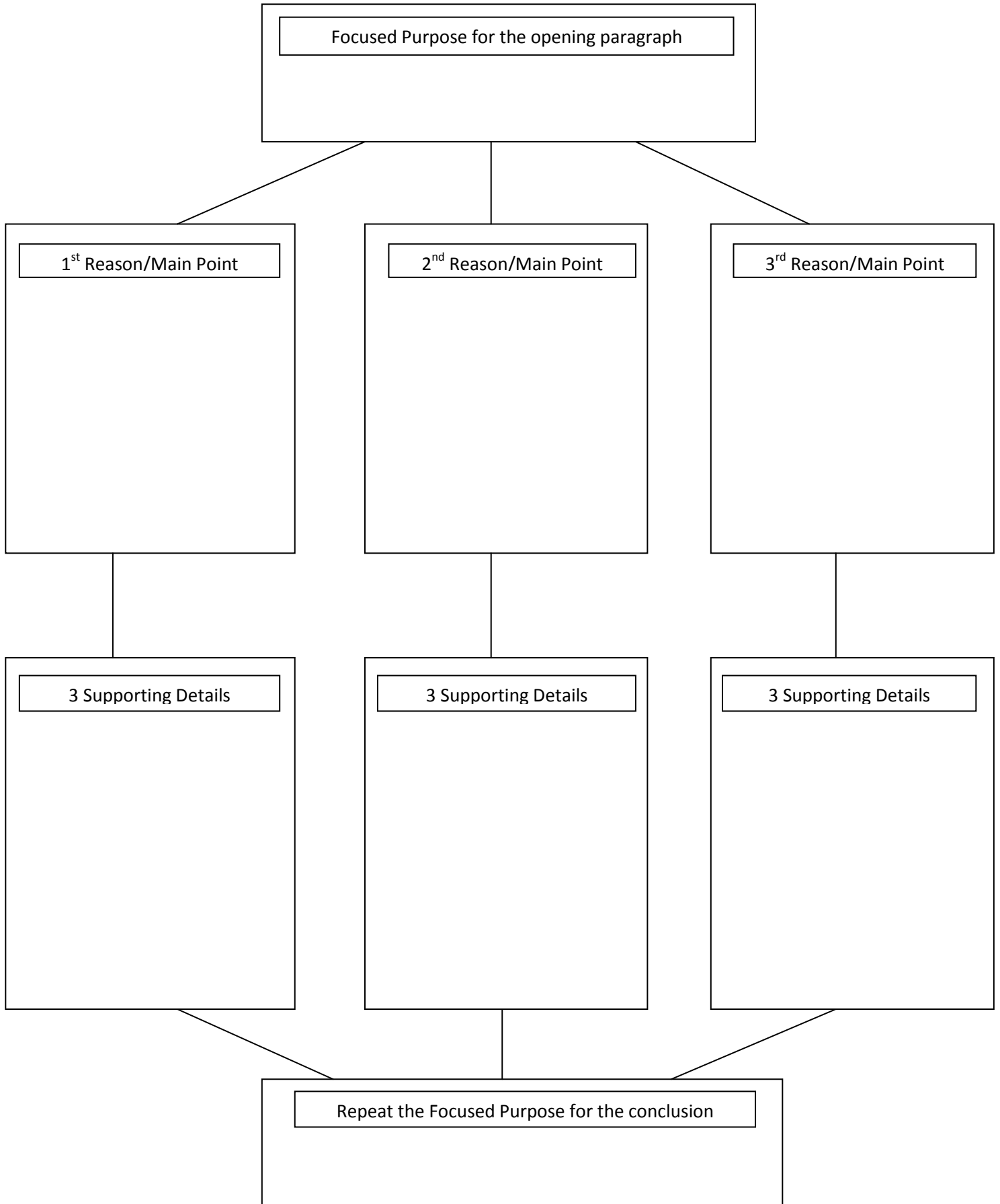


Select the slice of the pie you will focus on, and complete the following purpose statement:

As a _____, I am writing a _____
(your connection with this writing) (form)

for _____ to develop my idea that _____
(reader) (main idea, specific purpose in writing)

Transactive Pre-Writing Graphic Organizer



“Narrticle” (Narrative Article) Graphic Organizer

Topics I'm interested in researching	A personal story I can tell about this topic:	How my story is connected to this topic:
Narrative Section (about selected my topic)		
Title – Interesting and catchy yet relevant to the focused purpose:		
Lead – What I'll write to “hook” by reader and introduce my topic:		
The parts of my personal story that must be told for this topic (sequence of events or personal inspiration for this topic):		
Transition from my personal story to the informative part of the article will be:		
Article Section (about my selected topic)		
1st Subtitle:	2nd Subtitle:	3rd Subtitle:
Main idea: Supporting Details:	Main idea: Supporting Details:	Main idea: Supporting Details:
Text Features I must use in the article to enhance the meaning of the information (bold, italics, bullets, pictures/captions, charts, quotes, sidebar...)		
Conclusion – Refer back to my story and article: What can I say in reflection about a lesson learned or what I know now that I didn't know then?		

Avoiding PLAGIARISM in Transactive Writing

Plagiarism is using other authors' words and ideas in your writing without giving them credit and presenting those words and ideas as if they were your own.

Plagiarism is a serious offense, and if it is discovered in the transactive piece that you put in your 7th grade portfolio, ALL three pieces will be scored a ZERO so that your portfolio will receive an overall score of ZERO.

Plagiarism happens when you simply:

- cut and paste from a online source
- copy another author's words directly from a source
- change just a few words from a source for your piece of writing
- use another author's ideas without acknowledging the source
- use another student's work as your own

Easy ways to avoid PLAGIARISM:

- Most of your transactive writing should be your own thoughts, ideas, and development in the first place. You should only use other people's research, quotes, and statistics as support for your own ideas and opinions and **always** give them credit.
- You should never copy word for word from another source and use it as your own writing.
- You need to understand what you have researched and be able to put it in your own words.
- If you do need to copy someone else's words, use quotation marks.
- You should write down all the sources you use while you research so that you can give those sources proper acknowledgment in your piece on in your bibliography attached to the end of your piece.

Proper ways to cite sources in your bibliography, using the MLA style (the punctuation used for each of the sources below should be followed exactly when you write your bibliography):

Book

Author's last name, Author's first name. Title of Book. Place of publication: Publisher, Date.

Magazine or Newspaper Article

Author's last name, Author's first name. "Title of Article." Name of Magazine or Newspaper. Day, Month, Year: Page numbers used.

Encyclopedia or other Reference Book

"Title of Subject." Title of Source. Volume, Publisher, Date, Page numbers used.

Internet Site Article

Author's last name – if known, Author's first name. "Title of Article." Day, month, year site was accessed by you. <Full URL address>.

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Other sources:

Adams, Sandy. Principal of Julius Marks Elementary. "Idea Development Supports for Personal and Transactive Writing."

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The Southern Middle School Writing Reference Booklet was compiled and created by Frank Coffey, Instructional Coach, Southern Middle School (with the help of Jane Dreidame and Liz Berryman). Fall 2008.