



TEACHING INFORMATIVE WRITING

GRADES 6-12



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Research a focused topic  [Narrow down to a thesis]

Develop & organize ideas

Fine-tune word choice  [Weave facts with description]

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TEACHING SKILLS: **Research a focused topic**



Identify a topic/thesis

Choose an angle that is interesting to you



Narrow down to a thesis

IN ONE SENTENCE ...

1. Identify the subject or issue.
2. Narrow the topic to a specific focus to be proven.
3. Give an opinion/take a stand/convey a tone.

Over the last 20 years, changes in technology have made a profound difference in the way American students communicate.

1

Over the last 20 years, changes in technology have made a big impact on how people communicate.

2

The technological changes of the last hundred years have made a big impact on how people communicate.

3

The technological changes of the last hundred years have been amazing.

4

There have been a lot of technology changes.

5



List facts & details

Include the important & the interesting

Gather the essential information.

.com— commercial or business
.edu— college or school
.gov— government
.org— organization or group
.mil— military organization
.net— Internet administration
.sci— special knowledge news group

Hunt for interesting information, too.

TEACHING SKILLS: **Develop & organize ideas**



Pump up ideas

Include reasons, examples, facts, & quotes

Elaborate to avoid listing.

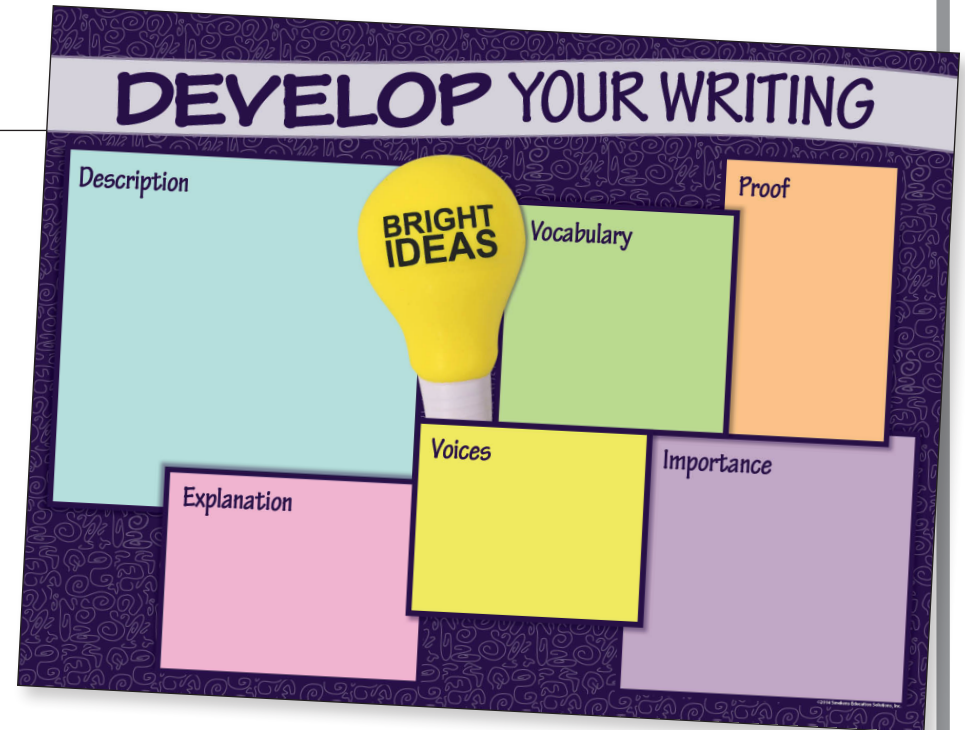


Group & organize ideas

Sort details into beginning, middle, & end

Choose an effective introduction.

- Kick off with a startling fact.
- Give context/background information.
- State the problem.
- Lead with an attention-grabbing quote.
- Reveal what is to be achieved.



Include a strong concluding statement/section.

- End with a powerful quote.
- Draw a connection/make a comparison.
- End with something funny.
- End with good news.
- End with the accomplishment.

TEACHING SKILLS: **Fine-tune word choice**



Use topic-related words

Sound like an expert with vocabulary terms

Utilize specialized vocabulary with definition details.



Describe examples

Use precise nouns & verbs to explain ideas



Weave facts with description



- Specific synonyms
- Action verbs
- Descriptive phrases
- Sensory details
- Close-up details
- Interesting comparisons

8 TYPES OF DEFINITION DETAILS

- 1 Authors sometimes print a simple definition to an unfamiliar term.
*Among the corals, you'll also discover thousands of species of **invertebrates**—animals without backbones.*
- 2 Sometimes an author will restate the word in a simpler way.
*My favorite color is **teal**. That's a fancy way of saying people.*
- 3 Explanations can come before or after the term.
*But Ted wanted to be great. He wanted to hit a .400. He knew he wouldn't get a hit every time he got up to bat -- no major leaguer has ever done that. In fact, major leaguers don't even get hits half the time they're at bat. But getting a hit 40 percent of the time—**batting .400**—Ted thought it might be possible.*
- 4 Some authors include a literal translation of the word's meaning.
*Slugs, like snails, are **GASTROPODS** (gas-trah-pods), which means "stomach-foot" (although they don't digest with their feet).*
- 5 Authors may describe the purpose of something to make it more clear.
*Unlike snails, which have a shell to stick into, slugs have only a head-covering called a **mucilo**, a loose flap of skin they can hide under if they get scared.*
- 6 Authors include an example of the term to help to clarify meaning.
*Some feared that it could be dangerous to object. **Vigilante groups**, like the Ku Klux Klan, reacted violently against those who tried to change the way blacks were treated.*
- 7 Authors often put related words/ideas in a series separated by commas. The recognizable words may be a clue as to the meaning of the unfamiliar word.
*The four-sided shapes included squares, rectangles, and **rhombuses**.*
- 8 Authors might define a word by using an antonym in the same or nearby sentence.
*Some sensors offer only a few words in support of an issue, while others provide a **full-blown**.*

8 TYPES OF DEFINITION DETAILS

1 Authors sometimes print a simple definition to an unfamiliar term.

Among the corals, you'll also discover thousands of species of invertebrates—**animals without backbones.**

2 Sometimes an author will restate the word in a simpler way.

My favorite color is fuchsia. **That's a fancy way of saying purple.**

3 Explanations can come before or after the term.

But Ted wanted to be great. He wanted to hit a .400. He knew he wouldn't get a hit every time he got up to bat – no major leaguer has ever done that. In fact, major leaguers don't even get hits half the time they're at bat. **But getting a hit 40 percent of the time—batting .400**—Ted thought it might be possible.

4 Some authors include a literal translation of the word's meaning.

Slugs, like snails, are GASTROPODS (gas-trah-pods), **which means "stomach-foot"** (although they don't digest with their feet).

5 Authors may describe the purpose of something to make it more clear.

Unlike snails, which have a shell to duck into, slugs have only a **head-covering called a mantle, a loose flap of skin they can hide under if they get scared.**

6 Authors include an example of the term to help to clarify meaning.

Some feared that it could be dangerous to object. **Vigilante groups, like the Ku Klux Klan**, reacted violently against those who tried to change the way blacks were treated.

7 Authors often put related words/ideas in a series separated by commas. The recognizable words may be a clue as to the meaning of the unfamiliar word.

The four-sided shapes included **squares, rectangles, and rhombuses.**

8 Authors might define a word by using an antonym in the same or nearby sentence.

Some senators offer only a **few words in support of an issue**, while others provide a **filibuster**.

Discussion: Turn & Talk

Discuss the facets/skills associated with informative/expository writing.

- Which of the 6 essential skills do your students execute well?
- Which of the 6 essential skills do your students need explicit instruction on?

Assess how savvy your students are on the Internet.

- Have you assumed they know more than they do about online researching?
- Do they consider perspectives/biases based on domain-name endings?
- Are they using quotation marks around key phrases to narrow searches?
- Are they researching within a variety of search engines (e.g., Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc.)?
- What additional online tips & tricks would they benefit from to improve their navigation and research skills?

Take stock of your mentor text.

- Are you revealing strong and weak examples of informative thesis statements, introductions, conclusions, etc.?
- Where could you acquire additional writing samples?

Teaching Informative Writing: Grades 6-12

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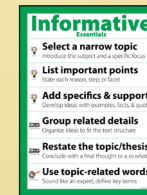
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Informative Poster



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